A STUDY OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH AND SOUTH DELHI

SUMMARY

A THESIS
Submitted to the
Faculty of Arts
PANJAB UNIVERSITY CHANDIGARH
For the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
2012

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SUMMARY

A STUDY OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH AND SOUTH DELHI

“Women empowerment in India with special reference to North and South Delhi” is a study of status of women in the National Capital Territory of India. The present study has taken up to find out the difficulties faced by the women in the metropolitan cities inspite of the education, job and high social status. The present study had comprised of the socio-economic, political and legal dimension of the women. It has also analyzed the all the government policies, which have helped in the upliftment of the women in India and specifically Delhi. The various NGOs working for the empowerment of women are also studied.

We are living in a critical juncture of human history, under the shades of ethnic and nuclear warfare and an essentially discriminatory economic regime. Some of the issues concerning human civilization are product of our consumerist life style and others are the result of the doctrine of domination and power game. However, the crux of present world order is the issues of ecology, development and gender that need specific attention. Among all these issues, gender has gained primacy in recent discourses on social analysis because of its spread and effect. Women who constitute half of the population have been subjected to the tyranny of a patriarchal order for centuries, which continues largely even today. Throughout the world women, have usually fewer rights and lower social status then men. The traditional roles of a wife and a mother dominate most women’s lives. Hence, women the world over, are still demanding equality and justice because of the widespread discrimination they face in all lifestyles.

Accordingly, many policies and programmes are being drafted in most of the countries with some awareness of their marginalized position. Therefore, gender analyst must pay special attention to the wide – ranging frameworks regarding the perspective, approach and strategies advocated at different forums for understanding and combating women’s unfavourable placement in the society if we have to get rid of gender discrimination.

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What does empowerment means?

Empowerment is a process that helps people to gain control over their lives through raising awareness, taking action and working in order to exercise greater control. In other words, empowerment facilitates, change and enable a person to do what one wants to do. Empowerment is a feeling that activates the psychological energy to accomplish one’s goals. From the institutional perspective empowerment is the process of setting the right environment and structure and creating the circumstances where people can use their facilities and abilities to fully actualize their potential. Women should get access to those modes and mediums of expression of their self and self-actualization and through that, they can achieve empowerment.²

“The empowerment idea manifests itself at all levels of societal interaction. It is found in giving a voice to the disenfranchised, in allowing the weak and the marginalized to have access to the tools and the materials they need to forge their own destinies”.³

Women and Empowerment

In context of women empowerment it is defined as a process of exposing the oppressive power of the existing gender relations critically challenging their roles in society and trying to shape different social relations.

Constituting half of the humanity, women are endowed with certain particular features both physical and temperamental. Men and women are complementary to each other. Their diverse physical and temperamental qualities together form the complete human race. Hence, logically both should have equal status. However, unfortunately, Women have seen so many difficulties in the society as far as their social status is concerned.

It is envisaged that empowerment is also an aid to help women achieve equality with men, or at least reduce gender discrimination considerably. Women participation in the political process of development is of crucial importance from the consideration of both equality and development. Political emancipation and social empowerment will also act as the catalysts in achieving the empowerment of women largely. There have been various shifts in policy approach during last 20 years from the concept of “welfare” in
the 70’s to “development” in the 21st century. Empowerment denotes, building of positive self-image and self-confidence, developing ability to think critically, building group cohesion and improving decision making and action ensuring equal participation in the process and bringing about change in society and providing the resources for economic independence. Thus, the women will become empowered through collective reflection and decision-making.\textsuperscript{4}

Empowerment of women promotes sustainable development of a community. Sustainability develops and determines, based on equilibrium structure of society, a society that does not make discrimination or is biased against any social group or gender. Sustainable social structure comprises social and political empowerment, financial freedom of women and for other backward groups who live in society. These factors promote their active involvement in development of their own, society and whole nation. Women being the major proportions of society get chance in all spheres of life and definitely become the part of sustainable development. Women held responsibilities of many facets of family structure. Therefore, empowering women means empowering whole family, because women serve families on various aspects, which fall under the category of human resources development, etc. Women by sitting idle at home even watch the progress of the activity of the family members and interfere in the matter to promote their career.\textsuperscript{5}

The approach of women in empowering women have become more of concrete and focussed over years as various women related plans and policies have come up every time with a renewed focus on the empowering women’s lives, some of these are swalamban, swayamsiddha, Support and Training for Employment Programmes (STEP), Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) etc. The \textsuperscript{93}rd and \textsuperscript{94}th constitutional Amendment Act of 1993 marked historic event in the empowerment of the women as they ensure 1/3rd seats for women in local bodies and further the reservation bill for the parliament seats for the women is also an important step taken as this will me a landmark decision in the history of women empowerment. To sensitize planners, policy makers, and the citizens the enforcement agency and development agency have launched country gender sensitization programmes such as Women Empowerment Policy (2001), National Mission for Women Empowerment (2011). The 2001 programmes have focussed on integration rather than fragmentation,
greater gender sensitivity and accepting women as active partner in the development of the country.

The post independence era in which lot of legal measures has been taken for the emancipation of the women. Right from beginning, the women were given equality before law or equal protection of law to avoid discrimination of women on the ground of sexes. Moreover, government have passed special laws to protect them from age-old evils such as dowry, polygamy, child-marriage, sati pratha, etc. Also as the time passed the government made laws to combat the evils in the modern society e.g. Female feticide, indecent representation of women, human trafficking, protection against sexual harassment, protection at work place honour killing time and again government has been working on its toes to make society safer for them.

Whereas the laws and legislations are made to fit into, the diverse culture of the Indian society but many a times it does not always suits the need of the local areas and the sentiments of the people of the area. Therefore, the need arises of the organization that works at the grass-root level and there step in NGOs. In developing country like India many a times there are gaps left in the people needs and the policies of the government at times unknowingly and sometimes due to lack of awareness and funds and therefore the need of NGOs arise so that they work hand in hand for the local community. Many a times there are people from the community itself and so they understand the basic requirements and at times work better than government.

In this study, we have discussed SEWA and SWADHINA which has brought a drastic change in the life of women and had made them self-sufficient and to be masters in their own work. The three case studies of SEWA had been discussed to show how SEWA has worked to improve the life of the women and had made them self dependent and confident. These NGOs have identified problems of women at micro and macro level and organized them in such a way so that they work for their own good and are active participants in their self-reliance actions. Free and fuller participation of women at every stage, right from identification of issues, planning of actions until the evaluation, is emphasized by these organizations, which is essential sustainable development initiative whereby they become owner of the project rather than passive recipients of benefits.
Further in Delhi JAGORI and TARSHI, JAGORI raises the issues regarding single women, sexuality, mental health of women, and safe travel for women in the railways, and consistent advocacy on violence against women. Over the years, Jagori’s objectives have been bringing awareness on violence, health, education, development and other issues critical for women’s individual and collective empowerment, production and distribution of creative material on feminist issues is also one of the important function of this organization as to bring awareness regarding feminism in the Indian society. In addition, to develop organizations and advocacy on women’s rights and gender equality. Whereas TARSHI has been conducting trainings on sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights for practitioners. As part of its mission to create a broader public understanding about sexuality, reproductive health, and rights TARSHI, has also conducted learning programs it is working at the community and grass roots levels in reproductive health, sexuality, gender and violence against women.

**Objectives of Study:**

- To examine the empowerment of women by observing the existing socio-economic-political conditions.
- To analyze the role of government in improvement the empowerment of women with special reference to Delhi.
- To examine the role of NGOs in women empowerment with reference to Delhi.
- To examine the impact of education level on the empowerment of women.
- To analyze the relationship of occupation with empowerment of women.
- To analyze the relationship of decision-making on family matters with empowerment of women.
- To suggest measures to strength the women empowerment.

**Hypothesis:**

- Government policies have led to the empowerment of women.
- NGOs have significantly contributed in improving the empowerment of women.
- Higher the education level of women, higher is their empowerment.
• Higher the control of women in occupational matters, greater the level of empowerment.
• Higher the participation of women in family decisions, higher the level of empowerment.

**Research Methodology:**
The present study employs the qualitative analysis, which ensures the direction of each factor’s influence on the level of empowerment. The study looked into determinants of empowerment by employing logit model, where the dependent variable is obtained from the respondent perception about whether they feel empowered or not. Thus, in the present analysis if the respondent perceives that she is empowered then the value is given 1, and 0 if otherwise.

**Techniques of data Collection:**
The present study is based on the primary and secondary data. For the purpose of the primary data, structured questionnaire is developed by searching relevant literature on the respective subjects. The questionnaire comprises of both open-ended and close-ended questions. For the purpose of secondary data, various books, journals, newspapers are used. The government of India and state government reports is also referred. Various internet sites are also referred for the relevant data.

Viewed in relation to the objectives of the study, the study has tried to provide a holistic understanding in the empowerment of women. Different approaches and strategies to define empowerment of women had been dealt in the study. The concept of women empowerment continued to be influenced by disciplinary, ideological and cultural prospective. The different aspects that occur in women empowerment are:

• Women access to resources,
• Women control to resource,
• Economic opportunities for women,
• Social opportunities for women,
• Political opportunities for women,
Women role in decision-making,
Women controls over lives,
The significant point is to note the gap between the theoretical and practical aspect of the women empowerment. The data from the study indicates that women development project are not very clear about, objectives, and the process details to achieve objectives, the means and the sustainability of means.
When the status of women were viewed in relation to these indicators of empowerment, the status revealed that there is marginal improvement in relation to health and education in overall India compared to be low, although regional variations did exist. Although when concentrated on Delhi study women literacy levels are relatively high, improved economic status and political participation but low level of legal-awareness. Patriarchal values still exist and women lack access to land and assets. Value of women labour in household work is low but they have improved position in their office job and are paid adequately. As many of the women accept the fact that they are paid according to the qualification level and their capability to take up the job.
The primary role of the women is still seen as the reproductive function. The women compete in the economic world no more with the compulsion of economic compulsion to support the family but the priorities have changed to achieve sense of security and to utilize their education. Working six to eight hours a day is the usual working hours and about five to six days are the usual number of working days in a week. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that there is no inequality between men and women in wages.
Almost everyone feels that they have equal facilities with men but heavy pressure at work, strike and competition are some of the main difficulties faced by the respondents during their past working experiences. Women are not always allowed to spend their salary as they wish in both the communities. They have to consult with the parents or elders before spending their own income. Usually the head of the family spends more money for family matters. Very less proportion of women take active part in the decision-making process at home especially in economic matters. Considerably low proportions of women have their independent bank account.
Some of the women are still married at very young age and do not have say in marriage or control over their bodies. Even today, women deliver kids at very young age. The legal system is not very favourable for women, as sexual assault is not considered as
heinous crime as rape and marital rape is still not considered as an offence. The mobility of women and their presence in political sphere still needs attention. In spite of education or the fact that women are employed and considered empowered, there is considerable influence of family members on various aspects of a women’s life.
REFERENCES