

Women Empowerment: The Changing Political Climate and its Implications

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Abstract

Women empowerment is the global demand of 21st century for a balanced society. We are know that women are the approximately half of the total population, there are single largest minority of total population. Empowerment of women means rearranging gender relations within the family and in the society. It also means giving societal recognition to gender equality and considering the contributions of each gender equality and considering the contributions of each gender as independent persons. There is not denying the fact that empowerment of women gives them the capability of challenging and changing their subordinate positions in society. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental duties and directive Principles. All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision making bodies at every level, including the legislative, executive, judicial, committees and trusts also. Due to illiteracy women have been left behind to know new technology so they have fear in the mind where as men are advanced in using technology in their work right from farming to space. Both the UPA and NDA government had not taken essential steps for women emancipation from injustice. Today, women are crying for Justice and equality. But the condition of women in India is not satisfactory because lack of political will in political leaders and the parties. Political parties often do not actively seek and cultivate potential female candidates in the way they do male candidates. There are many reasons for unsatisfactory representation of women in the political bodies. Mainly, political parties attitude are responsible for inadequate representation of women. Women reservation bill is pending from a long time. The political parties do not want to give proper representation of women because the society is 'man-dominated' in India. The 73th and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution have served as a breakthrough towards ensuring equal access and have increased participation in political power structure for women. Today, we are living in equal society that is why we should not bias about women. We should have to strengthening the consistent process of women empowerment. In the 21st century, we can't ignore the women empowerment through inclusive process. We should have to foster our effort for women empowerment with proper measures. Today, the empowerment approach is considered as the most important measures by the society and government. The empowerment approach lays emphasis to bring forth change in the women through their participation in development and decision making.

Introduction-

The paper describes the status of women in India and Indian government willingness to facilitate more laws for empowerment of women. The total population of women in India is approximately 48%.

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percent. All the government agencies are fully committed to facilitate women rights in changing global scenario. Violence against women is a violation of human rights that cannot be justified by any governments and person. Violence against women is spreading all the societies from India to world. A global culture of man-dominated society allows violence against women to occur daily and with impunity. The research found that rape and others forms of gender discrimination were used in every society. The discriminations of women is a long standing problem without any proper solutions¹

Therefore, it has been recognised that violence against women including rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy is an obstacle to equality, development and peace. A pointer in this direction is the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action following the Fourth World Conference on Women. Earlier on 20 December 1993 the General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women condemned all violence against women including sexual violence² In addition, the necessity of women's equal participation in peace process was asserted again, directly and indirectly, in the UN Charter, the Beijing platform for action, by ECOSOC, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Hague Agenda for Peace and the Namibia Plan of Action, among others. Yet women's participation in peace processes and in peace operations in particular, had been anything but equal or fair.³

The Constitution of India, 1950 is the supreme law of the land. Any law which is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution is liable to be struck down by the courts of law as ultra virus to the extent of inconsistency. Under the Indian Constitution, the status of women is equal to that of men⁴ Indian government is aware about the difficulties of women. There is not denying the fact that Indian government have been enacted many laws to secure the rights of women in further future. The Indian Constitution Article 14 deals with equality every citizen of India without any biased. The Indian government established a women body named 'National Women Commission' in 1990. Indian government are more cautious about women prosperity and development.

Status of Women in India-

The condition of women in India is not satisfactory. Violent is spreading everywhere against women. Yet the law for women have enough, but its implementation is not satisfactory. Indian society is a man-dominated society. Man dominated every sphere of life. Women have not proper representation. There is not denying the fact Women faced a diverse type of problem. Indian Parliament did not passed women reservation bill successfully. Many of the political parties against women reservation. Neither the NDA nor the UPA are serious for women reservation. Both the parties acting against women reservation. Their efforts are not enough to provide women reservation. Rape and violent are spreading against women. It is high time to taken essential steps for women empowerment.

The Changing Perception of Indian about Women-

Global view has been changed very fast about women. Many of law are formulated for women empowerment. Indian women are aware its political, social and economic empowerment. The Indian laws are stronger to tackle women problem. After Delhi gang rape, Indian government are more serious about women security. Women cells and police stations have been established for women security. Polish and judiciary are more serious about women safety. That is why we can say that women issues are more relevant than others. Indian society is man dominated from a long time, this is the reason of women difficulties. Man dominated society behaved with women very poor standard. All the toppers of UPSC are women. More MLA and MP's are women. Many are the political parties are headed by women. Women are more active in sports and business. Many of women are elected 'sarpanch' of their related villages.

What should be done by Indian government for Women empowerment ?

Education is a true means of women empowerment in every society. Education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for women, as both the Cairo and Beijing conferences affirmed. It is also an area that offers some of the clearest examples of discrimination women suffer. Among illiterate adults there are twice as many women as men. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women establishes it as a basic human right. That women might have the chance of a healthier and happier life should be reason enough for promoting girl's education. There are also important benefits for society as a whole. An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen.⁵ There have been possible changes in some key indicators of women's empowerment in 21st century.

Political Unity towards Women Reservation:

We are observing that many of political parties are crying time to time for proper women representation in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies. They are rising the issue of women reservation in all political institutions. But all these political considerations are proved formalities due to lack of political consensus. This is growing concern that the bill of women reservation are pending in Lok Sabha. Many regional parties are opposing such type of women reservation due to its own interests. As per as the matter is concerned, we can say that political establishment of India is not fully serious about women reservation and they are under-estimate the issue. Women reservation bill is pending in Rajya Sabha/ Lok Sabha from a long time. All the political parties are supporting male-dominated political culture in Indian politics. They are not much sensitive in regard to women rights and issues of women dignity. That is why; we can say that the issue of women reservation are totally marginalised by various political parties.

What should be taken initiatives vis-a-vis Women Empowerment in 21st Century?

Women empowerment is the need of 21st century and paved a path to upliftment of half populations. It is high time to mobilise and awaken people regarding women development. Adhocism is not the solution of women participation. We would like to discuss some initiatives to empower women in globalised world. These initiatives are as follows:

- * Political establishment should have cooperated on the issue of women upliftment.
- All the women should be to protest against every type of exploitation.
- Women should be encouraged internally towards women empowerment.
- Every woman should be facilitating by government to refine its own personality.
- Women should be participating in political activity especially to contest elections.
- Every woman should be alert and pro-active the issues of women empowerment.

Overall Scenario:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, came into existence as a separate Ministry with effect from 30th January, 2006. It has the prominent agency to coordinate every institutions those who are closely related to women empowerment. The National Commission for Women is a national apex statutory body set up in 1992 for fostering and upliftment of women rights. The Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) scheme was launched as a Central Sector Scheme in 1986-87. India is also signatory to various International and Regional Convention such as UN Convention against transnational organised crimes. Ujjawala, a

comprehensive scheme to combat trafficking was launched on 4th December 2007. The objectives of this scheme to upgrading skills for employment on a self-suitable basis. The national mission for empowerment of women was introduced on 8th March, 2010 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to translate the convergence of women centric government schemes into reality. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2012 was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 26th February 2013. This bill was passed to facilitate women against exploitation on Workplace. Article 23 of Indian Constitution deals with prohibits trafficking in human beings and beggar. The convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a human rights instrument adopted by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979. That is why, we can say that overall efforts are taken to foster women rights. But the problem is in implementation due to lack of will-power.

Constitutional Provisions for Women & Gender Budgeting:

The commitment to gender equity is well entrenched at the highest policy making level. The some important Constitutional provisions for women as follows:

Article 14- Equal rights and opportunities in political economic and social spheres

Article 15- Prohibits discrimination on ground of sex

Article 15 (3)- Enables affirmative discrimination in favour of women

Article 39- Equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work

Article 42- Just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief

Article 51 (a)- Fundamental duty to renounce practices

Women constitute more than 48 percent of India's population and represent the fundamental building blocks of society. Gender budgeting is a process that entails maintaining a gender perspective at various stages like programmes/policy formulation, assessment of needs of target groups. Like every government the currently NDA government has taken many initiatives for women empowerment. The recently budget has indicated that Modi government is more serious in regarding to allocate more financial aid for women centred schemes. Yet the UPA had taken many essential steps to provided better facility of Indian women. It is high time to re-analyse the fact and facets of all development related women empowerment.

Conclusions and Suggestions-

In the conclusion it can be said that efforts should be taken for women development. The development of women has become one of the most crucial works of recent time. The NGOs have done impressive work for the empowerment of women and ensuring multi-dimensional development of women. Violence against women is a recent phenomenon of women exploitation. There are number of Constitutional provisions in India that provides special protection to women. The perception of general people of India has been changed very speedily regarding women. Many of laws have been enforced to combating problems related to women. The Indian government should ratify relevant international conventions that address gender biased and discrimination. Sexual discrimination in all its forms should be addressed as soon as possible by the Indian government by enacting legislations. There is not denying the fact that woman conditions are slowly improving. It is high time to empower women in every sphere of life in India. Women empowerment is the need of time. We cannot pend this serious issue of 21st century. Every possible step should be taken for women empowerment in 21st

century.

References-

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2. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104, 20 December 1993.

3. Elisabeth Rehn & Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Women War Peace, New York: UNIFEM, 2002. P.66.

4. Menon, Latika (2004) Female Exploitation and Women's Emancipation, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, Distributors, p.73.

5 "Girls Education: A Lifetime to Development", in Carol Bellamy, The State of the World's Children, Oxford University Press, 1996, p.71.