

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A KEY ASPECT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SANGLI AREA

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment in a social organization plays a crucial role to promote local development. Women's role in social entrepreneurship is to try to create a social value and social transformation in society. Many women in India are heeding the need for innovation in areas of agriculture, environment, among others, thereby contributing to the larger social good. There are lot many social issues in the weaker sector of society. This paper puts light on the role of women empowerment for the sustainable development of society. This paper follows a case study methodology and qualitative approach through an in-depth interview of five women social entrepreneurs who are working for the different social issues in different sectors of the society to create a social value in the society.

KEYWORDS: women empowerment, social entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

“Judge a country by the place it gives to its women” - Mahatma Gandhi

The empowerment of women is essential for the social development of families, communities, and countries. Empowerment of women through different sectors of society shows a positive sign for sustainable development of society. It is a wide concept that includes many dimensions like education, decision-making power, autonomy, freedom from domination, awareness, etc. It is saying that "an educated man can feed a family but an educated woman can speed its growth". Today women are working in different sectors of society and working for the sustainable development of society. Kabeer sees women as the key agents for feminist social change. She writes that "the capacity of those who have a stake in challenging the status quo to deal with resistance cannot be taken for granted; it has to be built up through processes of empowerment" (1999: 32). That is, women's empowerment is a process for developing agents of social change

Empowerment: Empowerment means an individual can make choices and decisions for himself. Having the power to decide whether to accept the status quo or being able to create change. (Judith Horowitz World Council of Conservative/ Masorti Judaism)

Women empowerment: Women empowerment is a situation in which women are allowed to participate fully in social, political, and economic spheres of life, (Sushama, 1998)

Social entrepreneur: Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. They are both visionaries and ultimate realists, concerned with the practical implementation of their vision above all else. (Ashoka [2012](#))

Social entrepreneurship: Social entrepreneurship is the process of applying entrepreneurial principles to creative vision, leadership, and the Will to succeed in inducing social change (Thompson, Alvy, and Lees 2000).

THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Women empowerment is an important tool to expand women's ability to have the resource and make strategic choices in life. Today, women in India, are still, relatively disempowered as compared to men and enjoy a lower status. Women empowerment becomes an important topic in the economic and social development of the country. If women are empowered then they will also be a part of the economic and social development of the country. There are many examples in society that show the role of empowerment of women is definitely helpful for society. Central and State Governments have different schemes and activities for the empowerment of women. In this paper, efforts have been taken to find out the role of empowerment of women through social entrepreneurship to create social value in society.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the dimension of the women empowerment.
2. To study the role of women empowerment for (Social transformation) sustainable development of society
3. To study the role of operational women social entrepreneurs for social transformation in the Sangli area

METHODOLOGY

This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. It is based on the case study method. The data used is from primary and secondary sources according to the need of the study.

Method: Here both primary and secondary data are used for the study. Primary data was collected through the depth interview and structured questionnaire of five women social entrepreneurs in Sangli city. Online depth interview with structured questionnaire interview is used. The secondary data is collected through different published papers and articles on women's empowerment.

Women empowerment through social entrepreneurship in India

Empowerment plays a very important role in women's life to develop her as well as society. Today women are nearly 50% of the total population but still, Women are at the back step in the social order. This major population Empowerment gives them power, confidence. There are lot many ways to empower women:

- Education: Easy access to education gives a chance to women to have participation in society. It helps them to grow intellectually and also motivates them in growing their potential for empowerment.

- Technology: Encourage to learn new technology will enhance the confidence of women to work in society.
- Giving chance to participate in politics and giving them a voice and power in life. Women's participation in the political domain and various decision-making bodies is a crucial tool for empowerment.
- Equality in the distribution of resources.
- Eliminating violence against women.
- Access to justice.
- Access to employment and freedom of financial decision making.

There are several examples of women who are working in different sectors of society and helping their families. Some women social entrepreneurs in India are really playing a vital role in social transformation and create awareness on different problems of society:

ADITI GUPTA: CO-FOUNDER OF MENSTRUPEDIA

She is a social entrepreneur working towards spreading awareness about menstruation. Menstrupedia provides a user-friendly guide to menstruation, hygiene, and puberty and helps break myths associated with them. She has become a voice of change in society through her persistent efforts to educate young girls of small towns and cities. She believes that being a women entrepreneur is one of the most empowering experiences in her life. She felt that Entrepreneurship can be a game-changer, as you get to lay down your own rules. Her work has been appreciated by prominent media houses as well viz. *The Wall Street Journal*, Reuters, CNBC, and BBC.

SAIREE CHAHAL: FOUNDER AND CEO OF SHEROES

- **Problem:** Today number of women leaves their job because of their family responsibilities or their parents call them back to home to get married. Once, they have a break in their career to take care of their children and then it becomes difficult for them to restart it. Many women, though talented, cannot work because they need to give priority to their families and they can't afford going to office daily.
- **The change brought in the society:** Sairee brought a change in this field. She brought business and women on the same platform. She started an online portal that helps to provide flexible jobs for women in any phase of their lives. Her venture has helped **10,00,000** women to become independent.

There are many women in India playing a major role in society.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SANGLI AREA

Women empowerment plays a major role in social development through different social organizations in Sangli city. Without empowerment, certain social roles cannot be performed. Women play a distinct role in economic development as well. The role of few women entrepreneurs is discussed below:

MEDHATAI BHAGWAT: FOUNDER OF NIRAMAY REMEDIAL TRAINING CENTRE (NGO)

Problem: Children who are not able to learn at the speed of normal children have a problem of

learning. 15 years back, she identified this problem and started working for such children who were facing these problems. These children are not mentally disabled but somewhat slow learners. Parents have faced lot many challenges with the education of these children. The attitude of society towards these children was discouraging.

The change brought in society: After finishing basic education the students become confident and start some small business to earn some money and survive on their own. This is the best outcome to make a balance in society. Some students take admission in normal schools. The attitude of society towards such children is also changed and become positive. These children get directions for their lives.

MANJIRI GADGIL: FOUNDER OF AJINKIAN WOMEN FOUNDATION

Problem: The majority of the women in the society especially those who belong to middle-class family have lot many skills and willing to do some work after taking care of their families. But they didn't have a platform and ideas to start their small business. She established **the Ajinkian Women foundation** for women who want to start a new business for themselves. The foundation provides training and skill development activities to them. Basically, the foundation is focusing on everything, from product selection, quality, lab testing, training related to cost marketing platform. It organises some conferences to create awareness, knowledge and information about different go: government schemes for the women.

The change brought in society: Such type of platform helped women to develop their confidence, knowledge and their skills. Most of the women have started their own businesses and are getting a good amount of money to support their families.

JAI KULKARNI

There are various issues regarding the health of the weaker sector of society. The diseases like HIV, leprosy, TB, COVID-19 etc are very dangerous and need more awareness among the society. She is associated with the Yerala Project society Sangli and has been working for such people who are suffering from such diseases.

The change brought in society: people are getting aware of these diseases and are responding to the treatment positively.

KIRTI MAHAJAN

Problem: today problem of plastic use and recycling these is very challenging. It becomes a big environmental pollution issue too. It is a hazard to all animal and aquatic life. There are many issues which are related to the hazards of chemical fertilizers and their effect on human health. Through Inner wheel club she takes initiative for lot many projects to create awareness regarding minimum usage of plastic.

The change brought in society: Created awareness in society regarding to organic fertilizers and the effect of environmental pollution. Many people in society are now following the practice of segregation of household waste into different categories and prepare organic fertilizers from this household waste.

NANDATAI KULKARNI: SHRINIDI FOR CHARITY

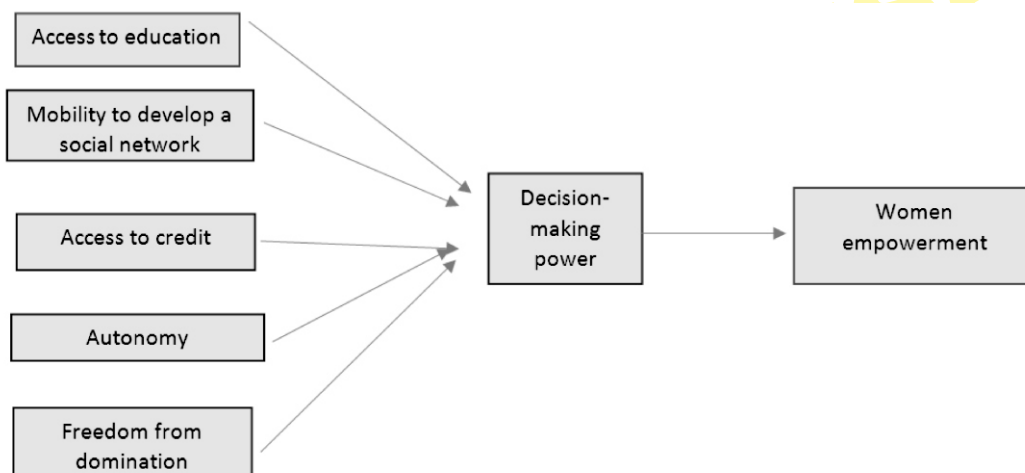
Problem: Encourages people to send in clothes, gifts items and many household things which they no longer need and gather points that can be exchanged on its e-Commerce platform. The organisation collects all the items, arrange exhibition and sale these items at a lower price. Money collected from this is donated to different organisations which are working for the weaker section of the society.

The change brought in society: Succeeded in keeping a balance in the society, bridge the gap between need and availability. The attitude of the people in the society has changed.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CASES

With regards to qualitative analysis, the in-depth interview with a structured questionnaire was initially recorded. Then it was read and notes were prepared and described the phenomenon which was studied from the data.

It was found that the entire respondents showed a positive attitude towards all the dimensions of women empowerment and also deliberated on how it can be exploited further to bring innovation in the society. The following diagram shows the measures of women empowerment that were tested in the research study:



It was found that women's role as mothers, sisters, wives and home maker is known to everyone but their role of shifting the society for sustainable development and creating a social value in the society could learn from the above example. If women are empowered definitely, they will bring social development to the local community.

CONCLUSION

Today, the issue of women empowerment is taken as a positive change and transformation in the society. But still need some improvements in the limitations that are observing in the realisation of women empowerment. If today's women get a decision-making power for her education to her personal development, developing social network, financial access she will bring a social transformation. This will help to strengthen her social relationships and position in social structure.

But still, with lot many challenges for women empowerment and equality, today majority of women lag behind and have little progress in social status. In the 21st century also, women empowerment has become one of the important concerns at the national and international level.

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