

Women Empowerment

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Abstract

The study on women is one of the most diversified areas of study as it includes various areas, such as history of women struggle, the movements and various changes that has taken place in years. The study of multiple movements has always shown how women throughout the world has stood together raising their voices and attained the rights they demanded from the society. But still society continues with the stereotype norms of patriarchy, and still is a big question to the post-modern world, as the level of patriarchy is different in different societies. Hence this paper is a general study, over the changing mentality of the society regarding women and the attainment of empowerment in different stages of life.

Keywords : Women and Aspects Related to Women, Women Struggle, Changing Status of Women, Social Perception, Empowerment and Women Development

INTRODUCTION :

Gender is a socially constructed version of sexes. And society has always attached social rules, norms, social structure and expectation related to the gender. When the norms get attached with a particular sex, the social aspects and its control over the particular gender becomes different. In terms of gender, women are considered as the “minors” of the society, for which the sufferings of women are always been neglected, and on the other hand men are privileged to enjoy the social freedom, patriarchy. Though, women are considered as the creators of human society, they are always been deprived from their deserving status and rights. Studies of generation has said that, the consciousness of women for their equal right as a human being has been continuing from generation. But the mode of equality and rights for their respect and status has been changing from generations and will be continued. Beside the struggle women have faced, women empowerment also plays a vital role to describe how they raised their voices for their basic human right, how discrimination on them and patriarchy pressure was overcome by various

movements, getting right to vote and taking part in the politics, raising the bars against the limitation that was created by the patriarchal society and many such struggle take us to the roots of women empowerment. The term “empowerment”, talks about the strength and power. And when it is “women empowerment”, it basically talks about the acceptance of women ideas and thoughts by the patriarchy society. But as every society of the world has set some specific rules and regulations for the women in the society, hence it becomes a difficult task for the women to attain empowerment socially. But with a prolonged struggle of women in various stages and

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countries at the post-modern world, we see women have acquired empowerment to some extent. Though women at the present society are able to have education and have the right to choose their life in their own way, still in many perspectives the women are still struggling with basic rights as human, and the rights for their own development, right to choose their way of living, right to education and many such struggle are still faced by women, rather it be a developed region or underdeveloped. Every generation has set some new changes in the society against the stereotyped social norms of the society for women.

Background Study on Women Status:

A prolonged study on women status and analysis on their changing pattern, it has been noticed that, every period shows the struggle, women has struggled in diverse areas. History reveals the struggling paths of women, from basic human rights to protect one from the evil of the society. This struggle has always been significant and immensely affective in the society to bring change in every aspect of the society. Though this struggle was not easy, it included immense sufferings and contribution to the women's history for which presently women are at a state of liberty and raising voice accordingly.

These struggle and raising voice of women have been also termed as feminism. Discriminated socially when human is parted by gender, the rules and norms of the society also get diversified accordingly. Society has always tried imposing specified rules and condition over women than men, considering women to be the weaker and men as superior. Patriarchy is not just limited to traditional society, rather it has its root in the concept of society itself. People always has believed that women need to have a limited life rules whereas men should have the freedom to live life freely. But as change is the other side of the coin named society, rules of the society along with the women status are also the concepts touched by the concept "change".

Adjusting with the tough rules and norms of the society, women at a peak point started getting conscious regarding the unnecessary rule imposition and exploitation done by the patriarchal society. As said by Karl Marx in his theory of capitalism, that class consciousness makes a class conscious regarding the injustice an exploitation. Similarly, women got conscious and started revolting against the injustice happening and raised voice. This social phenomenon is being termed as feminism by scholars and philosophers. But many a times it has been

misguided and misunderstood that the concept of feminism is basically against men. But actually, the perspective of feminism is something different then the society understands, as women actually are not against masculinity, rather it is against the typical rules that are been imposed only to the women and are making limitation towards women's life. It is all about to have a simple and liberal life for women as a human being.

Getting empowered is not a fight for women where women are raising voice against the society, rather it is the society and its social norms, that makes boundaries for women in every society. rather it be any remote area or a developed industrial and modern society, the social norms are always seen to be strict toward women, as women are considered to be weak and must have a limited world, thus raising their voice is against the injustice norms set by the society.

Understanding Society:

Every society has its own rules and regulations, that helps the people to have control over and maintain balance among all. But one of the most drawback is that every society throughout the world has discriminated and divided the society on base of gender. Where men have the privileged to have a better exposure of social life, but on the other hand, women are considered as the minor section of the society where, they have to follow patriarchy and other strict rules made by society and controller of the social norms. Women are given a limited world within the household and its work, weaving and rearing children, without understanding that women also have the right to live their life with their own choice.

Society thus always have played a vital role in forming norms and segregating the society in base of gender. Study over Indian society shows the degree of discrimination done on basis gender to women in name of "Sati pratha", "child marriage", "dowry" and many such social evil practices, that continued in Indian society for longer period, until when women realized their capacity and realized the need to raise their voice against the injustice happening to them.

Talking of Indian society, women of India have a huge history of suffering in names of patriarchy and domination done by the society. But the recognition of women was always missing in the society. Only when women understood the value of standing for their right. which later was seen in the nationalist movements of India. As in those movements when the leaders were

jailed by the British rulers, women took the lead to carry forward the movement by contributing every single penny and gold ornaments they had with them. Hence, the nationalist movement has a huge impact on “role of women” which made their turning point in the Indian society.

Though history and many socialists have taken multiple initiative to raise the status and role of women, but they are still struggling to make their place in a judgmental free society and acquire the platform of power to achieve their goal.

Understanding Empowerment in Context of Women:

The term “empowerment”, means to have power and authority on something. But the concept of women empowerment was never that easy for the society to accept. Attaining education for women was the first struggle in the society like India. As it was a belief that, girls should not have education rather they must concentrate in their household work as the world for women were very much limited and all other privileges were attained by the man of the society. The social rules and restriction in Indian society were more complicated and stricter towards the women which clearly shows how difficult it was to attain empowerment in multiple sectors.

But, as it said that, there is always a ray of hope within the struggle and storm. Hence, Savitri Phule was the first Indian women educator, breaking all the strict social norms of the Indian society.

At time of British rule, it was only the upper-class women, who were actively taking part in the social and national activities. But it was the time when all the nationalist were jailed by the Britishers, then the women of the nation had to come out and take part in the nationalist movement, to protest and take part as a major role player in the freedom fight of India.

That was the first time, when women of India break the boundaries and the social norms, which helped women to show their power and patriotism toward the nation.

Although India being a patriarchal society, it was the men who stood against the social evil and injustice done by the society towards women. Swami Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and many such socialist fought to attain equality for women.

Since then, till now, if a comparative study is done on women patriarchy, then the transition of social norms

and social inequality can be clearly seen. Women previously were eliminated from education, but now women have moved a long way with education and further developments, achievements, and goals. Having a world outside kitchen also was a bigger dispute, but with changing time and changing social norms, women are able to maintain both home and work. previously women were seen limited only within the household and doing only those works set by the society, but with changing dimension and mentality of the society, women have raised the bars a lot and established their status in the society with power and achievement and strength in multiple dimensions.

Globalization and modernity of society also has played a very vital role in changing the women status in the society and attaining empowerment. The concept of domination and violence are no more inside the four walls of the households, rather the advanced technology and communication, social media, plays a vital role in making people conscious regarding their rights, raising voice, standing together for their deserving. As every coin has two sides, similarly the impact of globalization and modernity has helped the women of the society a lot in attaining the equal power as human in the society, develop themselves, know their own potentiality and then stand for their own rights and injustice happening to them.

With a prolonged analysis of women status throughout the world shows us that women due to modernity has developed and progressed a lot. In the sector of education, job, technology, and many diverse sectors have achieved a lot. but all coins have two side there are negative impacts of women modernity also. Many issues as infertility, disbalance of sex ratio, disbalance in birth rate are many a times held as the result of women modernity. As many studies also have proved that, the modern lifestyle where, both men and women have settled themselves with the urban lifestyle, where the career growth and life standard matter the most, in such post-modern society. The life style includes multiple aspects which helps us to understand the degree of modernity which is leading to multiple changes in the society.

Present society where the communication and information are advanced and easier to access. The world is no more limited with distance rather it is transforming in a global village. Thus, it is resulting to impactful changes in the society. Women modernity and the urban lifestyle is the reason which is also leading multiple changes in the society. As women now are no more bounded in the household work and limited duties, women

are imparting higher education, they are now entrepreneur, leaders, educators and inspiration for the society. Even though patriarchy has always continued in the society and it is also been accepted that many societies will also carry forward themselves with patriarchy but those social norms are getting weaker now as women due to the impact of the advancement technology and ability to stand for their own and societies acceptance has been able to stand for what they need and achieved their goals.

Thus, in the present modern world, it is now easier to belief that women after a prolonged struggle have achieved a lot in compared to the primitive society but it is also important to analyses that, there are still a lot to change and develop. as it is always important to understand that, when a woman develops the society also develops with it.

Studies and daily update has proven that women are still been discriminated on the base of inequality, in education sector, jobs, freedom, safety. Though women have crossed a long bridge of dominance and fight for their own development, changes, but the amount of sacrifice and struggle has also increased as now it's not a limited world for them, rather it is two world concepts where women have to manage both house and career, rituals and duties together. But at the end it is always the patriarchal society and social norms that restricts women at different phases. Even at the post-modern society women are still unaware about technology, fighting for education, rape cases are still happening with minors, domination and domestic violation cases are no less in this modern society. Talking about empowerment doesn't only means the changing status of women, hence it also includes the change of social norms, and social acceptance where the discrimination and women objectifying as limited to household should be removed, only then women will attain a pure form of empowerment.

Developing the society is always an important concept of every social reformer, from a very primitive age theorist and social reformist have tried to make people conscious about the social development, equality, inequality and injustice. But the society always follows the discrimination of the society on the basis of gender. Rather it is always the responsibility of both men and women to fight against inequality and injustice. only them attaining equality for women will bring social development. Thus, it is very clear that to have an all-round social development, we need to have women in a

better position by eliminating inequality, and promoting and utilizing women potentialities.

The transition of societies into the modern one and then to post modern societies, has led to multiple changes in various social aspects. Hence women education is no more a social issue. Women are now both working and managing the work life together, which in results shows that women are now scientist, astronauts, engineers, entrepreneurs. but within all these we also see women as a victim of domestic violence, rape, faces work place harassment, eve teasing. Hence there is fine line between a patriarchal society, and a modern society where women play multiple roles at a time and also struggles with patriarchal mindset and rules. Thus the term, "working mother" is one of the most inspiring one where the word itself shows how much women are struggling to make a place in the society. And to fulfill her own wishes, one has to carry forward themselves with both social norms and their goals together.

Thus, women have fought a prolonged fight in the society to attain empowerment, and at the present era, though women have achieved a lot liberty to achieve their goals but still have to deal with the traditional patriarchy.

Changing Status of Women Struggle of Women in India:

The history and study on women struggle, has proved that, the domination and discrimination over women have been continuing from eras. Consciousness of the women against the domination and discrimination has created a turning point for them. Raising voice has started making changes in their status. For which we can see the mode of feminism has been gone through many stages and will be going through many stages.

This consciousness regarding their own status and raising voice against the created injustice of society has not only initiated an upliftment in a social manner, but also, they have been able to remove the injustice and discrimination of the society. The status has changed and is in the path of progress. Multiple aspects of society have opened up for the development and progress of them throughout the society. Previously the social structure had a very limited world for female. But in the process of change and development of the society, the aspects and the limitation has also changed equally.

In context, of India, the picture of women started changing from the British rule period. the evil practices as the "Sati Pratha System", the odd rules for widow, child marriage and many more started getting change.

But the most important root of women discrimination is the patriarchy rule of society where the men are been priorities. That is the point where the discrimination and different social contradiction is being made on gender basis.

But change is an important part of the society and accordingly, change is found in all the aspects of the society. Thus, with the time being, as society has moved forward with overall changes where the evil practices are left behind, where women are having a broader world in comparison to the earlier one. History says that women has always been a contributor in social, economic and political aspects of the society as men. But the mindset of the people always wants women to be dominated and create a superior world for men. This mind set has not only created struggles for women but also is a disadvantage itself, which leads to harmful consequences like domestic violence, job place discrimination, increasing rape, human trafficking and many such difficulties.

This shows that, though we have legally removed the evil practices against women, but the mindset of the people is still the same where the women are objectified and utilized. rather it be a social life or a social life it is been made sure that women are always put forward the discrimination. Even in social institution like family and marriage, women have to deal with different violence.

Status After Freedom of India:

The rule of Britishers have initiated many changes in India. not only in terms of politics and technology, but also in terms of women status in India. Education for women is the turning point for women. Not only women got conscious and aware about their empowerment and progress, equally the government also got concern in terms of women development and welfare. But the other side of the coin still shows that a section of the society still exists where the women are still bounded with tradition. Marriage is still the first choice and then the education. India is a country which is more culturally rooted in its society is still not ready to except the advancement and development of women. The opposition for women welfare and development is still carried forward by the patriarchal society. Government in form of constitution has and is still playing a vital role in women progress but with opposition in one hand.

Education, health, employment, political participation, economic contributor are the sectors where government have taken initiatives for women welfare and progress.

Multiple schemes under government have been taken but due to lack of education and lack of awareness among women still the backwardness of women is continuing.

But after the education and government initiatives, women are still struggling because of the schemes left unimplemented among the illiterate, the domination on women due to patriarchy and inequality, gender biasness. Only introducing new schemes by the government is not sufficient until they are executed and the entire society is made aware, and realized the importance of women progress. Women progress is not only the development of the female section of the society, rather the entire society will move forward. Women education is not only about education women, rather a sustainable and secured generation will be created. the participation of women in politics and economical development will not only show equality of both the sexes but also will enlarge the areas of ideas and thoughts. Progress of women will not only develop only one section of society, rather the enter society will develop in all aspects of society.

The concept of women development, is an overall concept of progress for the entire society. Any society that expects to be developed, must accept the concept of women development. As the progress of women is still a factor of debate in a patriarchal society of India, people need to change their mindset and up come with equality and being the commons we all need to put our hands forward for removing discrimination and initiate gender equality.

CONCLUSION

Since primitive era to modern and postmodern, hundreds of studies and analysis has been carried away to understand the degree of women empowerment. but every stage is important as well as every stage shows change in different aspect of women life. But in clear words, it can be accepted that women have acquired lots of positions in many political, social and economic aspects, they also have eliminated many social strict rules and restrictions, achieved power in multiple fields, even have developed many decision-making powers in different fields like education, jobs, work place. But equally on the other hand, there are many drawbacks continuing in the society, with many injustices, over burden with career and house hold work.

But the ultimate understanding of women status development and attaining empowerment is, that when

women, men the society and the government takes complete initiative and accept women equality and development as one of the important aspects of the society, only then the society will develop and women will attain empowerment. Especially when it will be a joint effort of all to remove inequality, then no women have to ask for empowerment, rather it will be an obvious condition of the society, as men attains equal rights and privileges in the society women without any doubt will attain empowerment in the society.

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