



## Woman Empowerment- The key to Achieve Social and Economic Growth of the country

PRIYA DESHPANDE

Asst. Professor, Dr. H. R. Gajwani College of Education – Adipur (Kutchh)

### Abstracts

*Empowerment of woman through education brings about changes in the society by way of reduced child mortality, reduced fertility rates and overall increased well being of the whole family. It also automatically helps in environmental and ecological sustainability. If there is gender equality it will achieve a good level of peace, social justice and ecological balance along with economic participation of whole potential population of our country leading to targeted economic growth.*

*Thus, one can say that, as there is a correlation between increased gender equality and social development with economic growth, we need to empower women by encouraging and acknowledging them on all levels of society, the family and community. True are these beautiful words of wisdom by Mahatma Gandhi, Women are the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity.*

**Key words** – development, economic, education, empowerment, employment, equality, gender, social, woman.

### Introduction

Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. Empowerment allows people to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately helps them develop, within themselves or in the society.

### Woman empowerment and Social Development-

Social development implies to the change in social institution's progress towards an inclusive society. For example, it implies that individuals treat each other fairly in their daily lives whether in the family, workplace or in public to have a good social cohesion. It also relates the peaceful and safe environment within neighborhoods and communities.

Our History suggested that even before independence Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Rajendra Prasad had began to think deeply about the urgent need for woman emancipation. After independence, social activists like Jyotiba Phule

and Savitribai Phule and many others have worked hard in identifying systems that value women and worked on programs based upon value of gender justice and equality. Gender oppressive values that are embedded within family, religion, education, law, community and government are addressed by many social reformers from time to time. All of them were touched by the fact that, women in their community were seen as weak, and were always considered to be in need of their husband to take their care. Thinkers felt for the fact that women were not seen as capable of living their own lives and making important decisions about their own lives.

Fortunately with continuous awareness created by some great social worker and activists women themselves have made to find out ways by discussions to achieve peace and gender justice. They have now started moving side by side with men in every walk of life. They are academically better and socially more active. The most significant attribute of women is their emphasis on values such as peace, social justice, equality, human rights and ecological stability. These characteristics are near to impossible if we insist on patriarchal societies.

### Woman empowerment and economic development-

The progress of economic reforms in India is followed closely and it has progressed towards free economy. The World Bank suggests that the most important priorities are public sector reforms, infrastructure, agricultural and rural development, removal of labour regulations, reforms in lagging states, and HIV/AIDS.

Indian economy is grown at 7.6 and 7.1 in FY 2015 – 2016 and FY 2016-17 respectively. Major reforms have been taken place like demonetization and implementation of GST in FY 2016-17. The economic growth has shown slow down in 2017-18 and it is expected to grow/rebound at 7.4% in 2018-19.

To monitor the expected targeted economic growth the government is expected to tackle the major issues like - **regulations, public sector, and the major problem of corruption.**

Corruption in many forms has been one of the pervasive problems affecting India. For decades the red tape bureaucracy and the License Raj had strangled private enterprise. The economic reforms of 1991 have cut some of the worst regulations that had been used in corruption. Corruption is still large. The TI India study estimates the monetary value of petty corruption in 11 basic services provided by the government, like education, health care, judiciary, police, etc. to be around Rs. 211 billion.

Another important aspect is India's labour force, which is growing by 2.5% every year, but employment is growing only at 2.3% a year. Official unemployment exceeds 9%. Almost 30% workers are casual workers who work only when they are able to get jobs and remain unpaid for the rest of the time. Only 10% of the work force is in regular environment.

From the overall stock of an estimated 458 million workers, 394 million (86%) operate in the unorganized sector.(of which 63% are self employed) mostly as informal workers. There is a strong relationship between the quality of employment and social characteristics. Present government is continuously doing an effort to create more job avenues in manufacturing sector which can deal with the problem of unemployment.

Children under 14 constitute 3.6% of the total labour force in the country. Child labour is a complex problem that is basically rooted in poverty. The Indian government is implementing the world's largest child labour elimination program, with primary education targeted for ~250 million.

Environmental degradation is another aspect to worry for. The major concern is ecological imbalance leading to changes in biodiversity, Energy crises and rapid increase in water borne diseases. The untreated water is used for drinking, bathing and washing because of partial water treatment facilities.

In areas where people cook with fuel wood and coal over open fires, more than 4 billion people suffer continuous exposure to smoke. In India, particulate concentrations in houses are reported to range from 8300 to 15000 micro gram per mt<sup>3</sup>.

To tackle with the issue of poverty, Indian Government is continuously putting efforts to encourage Women employment. It is strongly believed that, communities where woman have empowered have a higher social capital. Woman promote corruption free environment and can also solve the problem of child labour by increasing the earnings for the family. Women are better placed at resource management which can minimise the problem of environmental

degradation. Women have the most important attribute of being responsible in their duties.

#### Observations-

Empowering woman to facilitate their employment has resulted in remarkable changing trends in the overall role of women in 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The action plans for violence prevention and gender equality in the society in urban areas has resulted in positive impact on our economy too.

The social change in this regard has helped women to prove themselves successful in various areas. They have occupied top ranks in all fields such as sports, politics, performing arts, police, administration, medicine, scientific research as well as space and many more. They are driving trains, aeroplanes and fighter planes independently. They have proved to be the best administrators who are actively taking efforts to create corruption free working environment which is must for our developing economy.

The examples of Indira Nooyi, Chandra Kocher, Kiran Bedi, Saina Nehwal, P.T. Usha, Kalpana Chawla, all inspire us. They are the proof that woman have started marching side by side with men in every work of life. They are definitely proving to be academically better and socially more active most importantly they are successful in proving their worth towards the social transformation and building of the nation. All of them give credit of this to their upbringing, the environment around them and of course the continuous support and motivation of the family. All the above mentioned and many more women have proved that, women are very responsible, better at multitasking, sincere and better at selfless corruption free service. **This shows that, if women are empowered, they can become a solution for the major challenges for both economic as well as social development.**

The serious matter of concern is, although there is a change in the way our women are treated, still in some traditional societies and specially in the rural areas, women are not effectively taking part in the social and economic development of our country. In some parts of our country women are still treated as second class citizens. Now also in some families women's role is only to nurture the family. Still people are not able to understand the fact that in this era of automation, women are not required to do only the household jobs. We are just simply wasting a great amount of talent pool which would otherwise be effective in the development of community, society, and economy. We still face many issues of women in many parts of the country. Unless we continue to work

hard for achieving proper social development we cannot achieve the targeted economic development.

#### **Suggested Future plan-**

**It is important to note that, Sustainable Development goals target gender equality and woman's empowerment for the global development agenda.**

The formal institutional reforms have to be consistently helping by way of provisions of enshrined legal rights, better law enforcement or more participatory governance. This will bring changes in the way people relate to people irrespective of gender. We have to bring changes and encourage the changes overtime and compare them globally.

**Effectiveness of woman empowerment for the families and societies as a whole can be highlighted and explained to the people as follows -**

**i) Woman empowerment strengthens families --**Two incomes for the family is a lot more robust and better option to handle problems. If only the man works and then he becomes unemployed, it's a **disaster but if both work and one of them becomes unemployed the situation becomes easier to handle.**

**ii) Woman empowerment ensures that the best qualified people can do the jobs irrespective of gender---** This can help us to get better performance and thus the predictable result.

**iii) Political empowerment of woman ensures that more voices are heard--**The society works best when everyone is heard.

**iv) Woman empowerment gives women necessary freedom --**If the women are economically self-sufficient there is increase in the amount they spend on purchasing products and services , which is good for economy.

**v) Woman empowerment can free women from torture or victimization---**Most important is, it gives woman the power to leave dysfunctional or abusive relationships. In the absence of empowerment many woman feel they have no choice but to remain married even if the marriage is unhappy or abusive one.

**vii) Empowerment of woman makes the society safer and more peaceful.--** Research has shown that, mixed groups of people with reasonable gender representation tend to be more harmonious and have less conflicts than groups dominated by one gender, most important is it improves efficiency and thus productivity.

Along with the general awareness of the people and changing their attitude in positive direction for

woman empowerment, government needs to work aggressively for-

1) Better access to educational opportunities in rural areas as 70% population lives in the rural areas. As both the sexes require teachings in the aspect of gender equality, formal education can specifically change the mindset of students at proper age.

Better use and implementation of value education books can also prove to be an effective option.

2) Better use of e-education, to give equal opportunity for both sexes in an efficient and equitable manner in all the parts of the country can prove to be helpful.

This is important as poverty puts the girl child at a greater disadvantage, so better educational facilities made accessible in the remote areas may prove to reduce cost on education for economically unprivileged girls which will naturally empower them.

#### **Conclusion –**

If we can harness these attributes effectively for woman empowerment, India's growth will become more inclusive and women will be able to contribute to all sectors of life to the fullest extent of their abilities. Most importantly, this will make us successful in engaging our much neglected 50% population to the full capacity. Think, is it not a step towards better economic development.

We need to accept the fact that, woman who makes up half of our society are if only relegated to the kitchen we won't be able to develop at better and faster rate. The best part is, once we educate and empower one woman, we set off a chain reaction that transforms the life of her family and the community she lives in.

Lastly I would like to conclude that, all successful woman give credit to education and upbringing which helped them instill a strong sense of self-belief and a "never –say-die" attitude.

**By investing in woman and their education we are thus investing in our present and in future so as to achieve our targeted social and economic goals.**

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