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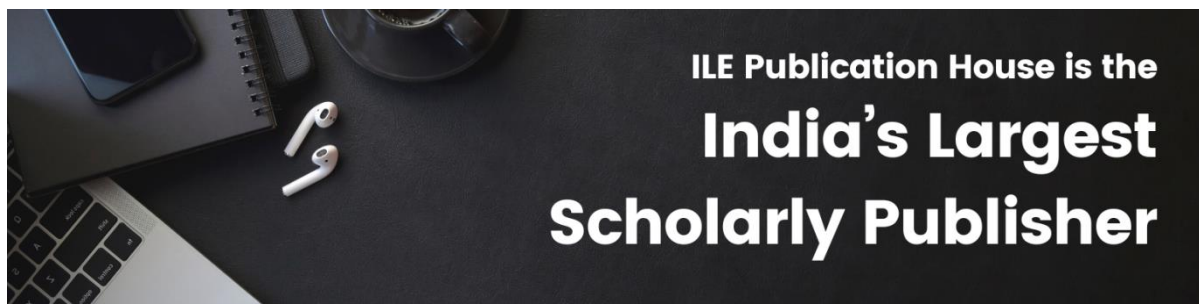
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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is the process of enabling women to take control of their lives, make informed decisions, and participate fully in society. It involves challenging and changing the social, economic, and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality and limit women's opportunities. Empowering women is essential for achieving gender equality, promoting human rights, and unlocking human potential. Women empowerment is a critical component of achieving gender equality and promoting human rights. This Article examines the challenges that hinder women's empowerment, such as gender-based violence and discriminatory norms. It also explores the strategies for promoting women's empowerment, including education, economic opportunities, and policy reforms. It also includes the social, economic, and cultural benefits of empowering women, including improved education, health, and economic outcomes. The Article concludes by highlighting the Legislative Measures and Government Schemes in India that has enacted several laws to promote women's empowerment and protect their rights. The Article also includes a survey on women that shows how women's thought had been greatly developed. By empowering women, we can unlock human potential, promote sustainable development, and create a more just and equitable society.

Introduction

Women's empowerment may be defined in several method, including accepting women's viewpoints, making an effort to seek them and raising the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, equal status in society, better livelihood and training. Women's empowerment equips and allows women to make life-determining decisions through the different societal problems. They may have the opportunity to re-define gender roles or other such roles, which allow them more freedom to pursue desired goals. Women's empowerment, a multifaceted concept, encompasses the process of enabling women to achieve their full potential and participate equally in all aspects of society, including economic, political, and social spheres. Women's empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development and economics. Economic empowerment allows women to control and

benefit from resources, assets, and income. It also aids in the ability to manage risks and improve women's well-being. Women empowerment helps boost women's status through literacy, education, training and awareness creation. Furthermore, women's empowerment refers to women's ability to make strategic life choices that were previously denied them.

In the ancient Indian society women were adored and worshiped as goddesses. However, in the Middle Ages, the status of women got down to a great extent. Women are considered a burden in the society who's only work is to perform duties like bring up children, taking caring every family member, and other household activities. There is old and traditional faith of people coming out for years that men are for the field whereas women are only for the home. Now-a-days, women are breaking all the



barriers of social issues and problems against them in the society.

Challenges that hinder women's empowerment:

1. Inadequate Nutrition
Inadequate nutrition in the childhood affects women in their later life especially women belonging to the lower middle class and poor families.
2. Disparity in education
The level of women education is less than men still in the modern age. Female illiteracy is higher in the rural areas.
3. Child marriage
Early marriage of the girls by their parents in order to be escaped from dowry. It is highly practiced in the rural India.
4. Dowry and Bride burning
It is another problem generally faced by women of lower- or middle-class family during or after the marriage. Parents of boys demand a lot of money from the bride's family to be rich in one time. Groom's family perform bride burning in case of lack of fulfilled dowry demand.
5. Domestic violence
It is like epidemic and widespread disease affects almost 70% of Indian women according to the women and child development official. It is performed by the husband, relative or other family member.
6. Sexual harassment
It is the form of sexual exploitation of a girl child at home, streets, public places, transports, offices, etc by the family members, neighbours, friends or relatives.
7. Selective abortion and female infanticide
It is the most common practice for years in India in which abortion of female Fetus is performed in the womb of mother after the Fetal sex determination and sex selective abortion by the medical professionals.
8. Status of widows

Widows are considered as worthless in the Indian society. They are treated poorly and forced to wear white clothes.

Scholars have identified two forms of empowerment: Economic Empowerment and Political Empowerment.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is a critical aspect of women's empowerment, enabling women to take control of their financial lives, make informed decisions, and participate fully in the economy.

There are Challenges to Economic Empowerment:

1. Limited access to education and training: Women may face barriers in accessing education and training, hindering their economic empowerment.
2. Discriminatory laws and policies: Laws and policies that discriminate against women can limit their economic empowerment.
3. Societal and cultural norms: Societal and cultural norms that restrict women's participation in the economy can hinder their economic empowerment.
4. Limited access to credit and finance: Women faces challenges in accessing credit and finance, making it difficult to start or expand their businesses.

There are Strategies to get Economic Empowerment like Access to education and training: Providing women with education and training in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and vocational skills. One of them is Microfinance and credit programs: Offering microfinance and credit programs to enable women to access capital and start or expand their businesses. Another one can be Job creation and employment opportunities: Creating job opportunities and promoting employment for women in various sectors. And last but not the least Mentorship and networking: Providing mentorship and networking opportunities for women to connect with other entrepreneurs, business leaders, and professionals.



There are lots of Benefits of Economic Empowerment:

1. Increased income: Economic empowerment enables women to earn a steady income, improving their economic stability and security.
2. Financial independence: Women with economic empowerment have the freedom to make financial decisions, without relying on others.
3. Improved livelihoods: Economic empowerment enables women to invest in their families, education, and healthcare, improving their overall livelihoods.
4. Entrepreneurship opportunities: Economic empowerment provides women with the skills, knowledge, and resources to start and manage their own businesses.

Political Empowerment

Political empowerment is a critical aspect of women's empowerment, enabling women to participate in decision-making processes, influence policy, and hold leadership positions.

Challenges to Political Empowerment: Societal and cultural norms often discourage women from participating in politics, Women lack access to resources and funding, hindering their ability to run for office. Women in politics often face violence and harassment, deterring them from participating and Laws and policies discriminate against women, limiting their ability to participate in politics.

Strategies for Political Empowerment: Implementing quotas and reservations for women in politics and ensuring a minimum number of women are represented. Also providing training and capacity-building programs for women to enhancing their leadership and political skills. Establishing mentorship and networking programs that connect women with experienced politicians and leaders. Last but not the list Educating and mobilizing voters, particularly women, to

participate in elections and support women candidates.

Benefits of Political Empowerment: Women's political empowerment leads to increased representation in government, parliament, and other decision-making bodies, Women in politics can influence policy decisions, ensuring that women's perspectives and needs are taken into account. Political empowerment provides women with leadership opportunities, enabling them to inspire and motivate others. Also, Women in politics serve as role models, demonstrating to girls and women that they too can participate in politics and hold leadership positions.

Legislative Measures and Government Schemes India has enacted several laws to promote women's empowerment and protect their rights.

1. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005): Provides a civil remedy for victims of domestic violence and empowers them to seek protection orders and residence rights.
2. The Dowry Prohibition Act (1961): Prohibits the giving or taking of dowry and prescribes punishment for violations.
3. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013): Creates a mechanism for preventing and redressing sexual harassment at workplaces.
4. The Equal Remuneration Act (1976): Ensures equal pay for equal work for both men and women and prohibits discrimination against women in employment-related matters.
5. The Maternity Benefit Act (1961): Provides maternity leave and other benefits to women employed in establishments.
6. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006): Raises the legal age of marriage for girls to 18 years, aiming to eradicate child marriage and its associated harms.



7. The Women's Reservation Bill (2023): Reserves one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

Additionally, the Indian government has launched various schemes to promote women's empowerment, such as:

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Aims to promote girls' education and prevent sex-selective abortion.
2. One Stop Centre and Universalization of Women Helplines: Provides integrated services, including police facilitation, medical aid, and counselling, to women affected by violence.
3. Swadhar Greh Scheme: Provides institutional support for rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances.
4. Ujjawala Scheme: Aims to prevent trafficking and provide rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration services to victims of trafficking.

Laws for women's empowerment vary across the globe, but here are some key international laws and conventions that promote gender equality:

1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, CEDAW is an international treaty that aims to eliminate discrimination against women and promote gender equality.
2. The Beijing Platform for Action: Adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, this platform outlines strategic objectives and actions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
3. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The SDGs, adopted by the UN in 2015, include targets related to gender equality and women's empowerment, such as achieving universal access to education and healthcare for women and girls.

NGOs in India for Women Empowerment

1. Makaam: A national platform that protects the identities and rights of

women farmers in India, offering assistance to women from families affected by farm suicide.

2. Mitti Ke Rang: Focuses on rehabilitating and empowering disadvantaged women and children, providing training and education programs to make them self-reliant.

3. Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA): Empowers women to pursue careers in informal industries, owning and operating the SEWA Trade Facilitation Centre.

Here are some notable NGOs around the world that are dedicated to women's empowerment:

1. Global Fund for Women: Focuses on funding women's human rights initiatives, supporting initiatives that promote economic empowerment, end gender-based violence, and promote reproductive health and rights.
2. Women for Women International: Helps women survivors of war rebuild their lives through education, skills, and resources.
3. Care International: Fights poverty and social injustice globally, with a focus on empowering women and girls through education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

Survey Research

I conducted a Survey Research on 40 Working Women between the age group of 20 to 40 years. The area of survey was a Chawl in Bandra East, Mumbai and I surveyed the women who work as maids, cooking helper at other people's house and as Security Guard. I asked them 20 questions related to Dowry, Politics, Job, Violence, etc.

Some of the questions that I asked Women are as followed:

1. Women are less intelligent than men.
The Women between the age group of 20 to 30 answered that Women are



equally intelligent as men but according to the women above the age of 30 agreed that Women are less intelligent than men.

2. Women should always vote for the same political party that the men of the house suggest.

The Women's in their 20s straightly disagreed to the question but the older women's said it is okay to vote for the same political party that the men of the house suggest.

3. It is important to have a son in order to carry forward the family name.

The young women's completely disagreed to the question but the women's in their 30s said that we accept the daughters but a son is needed to carry forward the lineage.

4. Men resorting to violence is justifiable, but not women.

The Women between the age of 35 to 40 said men should not raise their hand on women but also women resorting to violence is not justifiable.

5. The legal marriageable age for a girl is:

Most of the Women are unaware about the legal age for a girl to get married.

The statements and Key findings highlight the persistent gender inequalities and biases that women face in society. These inequalities are reflected in: Restrictive social norms and expectations, limited access to education, economic opportunities, and healthcare. Normalization of violence and discrimination against women is a much-needed concern. There is a Lack of awareness and knowledge about women's rights and laws. To address these inequalities, it is essential to: Promote gender equality and challenge patriarchal norms, empower women through education, economic opportunities, and healthcare, strengthen laws and policies that protect women's rights, raise awareness and

promote knowledge about women's rights and laws.

Based on my experience with the Survey Research on the Women in Society, I suggest:

1. Establishing Sustainable Partnerships: Foster long-term collaborations with local organizations, community groups, and government agencies to ensure collective ownership and sustainability of initiatives.

2. Education and Economic Empowerment: Implement initiatives that promote education, vocational training, and economic empowerment for women, enabling them to make informed decisions and participate in decision-making processes.

3. Addressing Violence Against Women: Establish support systems, counselling services, and advocacy programs to address violence against women and promote a culture of zero tolerance.

4. Promoting Women's Leadership: Encourage and support women's leadership in community decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard and valued.

5. Conducting Regular Research and Analysis: Undertake regular research and analysis to inform policy and decision-making, ensuring that initiatives are evidence-based and effective.
6. Advocating for Policy Change: Utilize research findings to advocate for policy changes and reforms that promote women's empowerment, gender equality, and community development.

By implementing these suggestions, I believe we can create a more equitable and just society, where women and communities are empowered to thrive.

Conclusion

Women's empowerment is a critical component of achieving gender equality, promoting human rights, and unlocking human potential. Through education, economic empowerment, and political participation, women can take control of their lives, make informed decisions, and



contribute fully to society. Economic empowerment is a critical component of women's empowerment, enabling women to take control of their financial lives and participate fully in the economy. By providing access to education and training, microfinance and credit programs, job creation and employment opportunities, and mentorship and networking, we can promote women's economic empowerment and create a more equitable society. Women's political empowerment is essential for achieving gender equality and promoting women's rights. By implementing quotas, providing training and capacity building, and promoting voter education and mobilization, we can increase women's representation in politics and promote their leadership and influence.

"According to survey research, society is witnessing a positive transformation, with women's mindsets and perspectives undergoing significant development. While this progress is encouraging, it's clear that achieving full societal development will require ongoing effort and time."

The laws, NGOs, and initiatives discussed in this Article demonstrate the global commitment to promoting women's empowerment. However, despite progress, challenges persist, and continued efforts are necessary to address the social, economic, and cultural barriers that hinder women's empowerment. As we move forward, it is essential to: Strengthen laws and policies that promote women's empowerment and protect their rights, increase access to education and economic opportunities for women, promote women's participation in politics and decision-making processes and Support NGOs and initiatives that work towards women's empowerment. Together, we can create a brighter future where women are empowered to reach their full potential and contribute to a more just and equitable society.

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