The Analysis of Rural Women Empowerment in India

S. Vijayalakshmi

Guest Lecturer, Department of Economics Thiruvalluvar University, Serkkadu, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

Email: vijayalakshmi2488gmail.com

Abstract

India is one of the world's fastest growing economies, with women mainly from the middle class increasingly entering the workforce. In rural India, women's economic opportunities remain restricted by social, cultural, and religious barriers. Empowerment is now increasingly seen as a process by which the one's without power gain greater control over their lives. This means to the control the over of material assets, intellectual of the resources and ideology. It involves power of capacity building leading to greater than participation, effective decision-making power and control leading to transformative action. This involves ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns. With reference to women the power relation that has to be involved includes their lives at multiple levels, family, community, market and the state. Importantly it involves at the psychological level women's ability to assert themselves and this is constructed by the gender roles' assigned to her specially young women from semi-urban and rural parts of the country, living alone and redefining themselves. However, the story of economic empowerment for women is not a singular narrative rather it is located in a complex set of caste, class, religious, and ethnic identities. It involves power within. Some define empowerment as a process of awareness and conscientization, of capacity building leading to greater participation, effective decision-making power and control leading to transformative action. This involves ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns.

Keywords: Rural women Empowerment, Decision Making, Economic opportunities

Introduction

The appreciate that women require principally social support to fight their sense of inadequacy and fears to enhance their self-respect and dignity. Empowering women means control over their bodies and becoming economically independent, controlling resources like

land and property and reduction of burden of work. A society or programme which aims at women's empowerment needs to create and strengthen sisterhood and to promote overall nurturing, caring and gentleness. emphasis on emphasis on women SHG's as a collective is one such efforts. Being conference 1995 had identified certain quantitative and qualitative indicators of women empowerment. Most notably inheritance laws embedded to marginalize women in the household and the larger community. Rural women, particularly of lower caste and class, have the lowest literacy rates, and therefore do not have the capacity to negotiate pay or contracts and most often engage in the unorganized sector, self-employment, or in small scale industry.

SHGs in Women Empowerment

Self-help groups (SHGs) are a widely practiced model for social and economic mobility by NGOs and the government. SHGs provide women with the opportunity to manage loans and savings that can be used by members for varying needs. SHGs also are used to promote social change among the members and the community at large. Members of SHGs have used their experiences as leverage to enter other local institutions such as the Rural, low caste, and tribal women also make up 70% of domestic workers in India, a sector which is largely unregulated and unorganized. India’s growing economy has allowed for many upper and middle-class women to enter the workforce, and while poor rural women have little access to education and training, there is a high demand for domestic workers in urban hubs, power with and power within. Some define empowerment as a process of awareness and conscientization,

Women’s empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban/rural), educational status, social status (caste and class), and age. Policies on women’s empowerment exist at the national, state, and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence, and political participation. However, there are significant gaps between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. The impact of the patriarchal structure can be seen in rural and urban India, although women’s empowerment in rural India is much less visible than in urban areas. This is of particular concern, since much of India is rural despite the high rate of urbanization and expansion of cities. Rural women, as opposed to women in urban settings, face inequality at much higher rates, and in all spheres

of life. Urban women and, in particular, urban educated women enjoy relatively higher access to economic opportunities, health and education, and experience less domestic violence. Women (both urban and rural) who have some level of education have higher decision-making power in the household and the community. Furthermore, the level of women's education also has a direct implication on maternal mortality rates, and nutrition and health indicators among children.

Methodology

Present study is based on Secondary data and the data was collected from various Census report, Books, Journals, and articles used in websites in Women Empowerment Rural in India.

Objectives

1. 1.to exchange experiences in promoting the empowerment of women through different educational programme
2. to discuss the issues arising from the practice of the education of women empowerment
3. to develop research on women's education and SHGs empowerment for possible collaboration

They are often unable to access health and educational services, lack decision-making power, and face higher levels of violence. Among women of lower caste and class, some level of education has shown to have a positive impact on women's empowerment indicators. Social divisions among urban women also have a similar impact on empowerment indicators. Upper class and educated women have better access to health, education, and economic opportunities, whereas lower class, less educated women in urban settings enjoy these rights significantly less. Due to rapid urbanisation and lack of economic opportunities in other parts of the country, cities also house sprawling slum areas. Slums are informal sprawls, and most times lack basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and health facilities. Additionally, slum dwellers mostly work in unorganized and informal sectors, making them vulnerable to raids by the state, abuse by employers, and other forms of insecurity. Women and children in slums are among the most vulnerable to violence and abuse, and are deprived of their basic human rights. As a result of a vibrant women's movement in the last 50 years, policies to

advance human rights for women in India are substantial and forward-thinking, such as and the Amendments to the Constitution that provide reservations for women to enter politics at the Panchayat level. Women's security, decision-making power, and mobility are three indicators for women's empowerment. In India, and more so for rural and less educated women, these three indicators are significantly low. Data from the survey on women's decision-making power shows that only about one third of the women interviewed took decisions on their own regarding household issues and their health. Decision-making power among employed urban women was higher than among rural and less educated women. The survey also found that older married women had more decision-making power than the younger married women.

Younger women and girls experience an additional layer of discrimination as a result of their age. Data on women's mobility in India indicates the lack of choices women have, and that urban and educated women have more mobility choices than rural women. The data shows that about half the women interviewed had the freedom to go to the market or a health facility alone. Seventy-nine percent of urban women from the highest education brackets and only about 40 percent of rural women without education were allowed to go to the market alone. Mobility restrictions for women are dependent upon how the family and community view women's rights. They also, however, are intrinsically dependent on the prevailing levels of violence against women in the household and the community. Abuse and violence towards women is predominantly perpetrated within the household, and marital violence is among the most accepted by both men and women. Wife beating, slapping, rape, dowry related deaths, feudal violence towards tribal and lower caste women, trafficking, sexual abuse, and street violence permeate the Indian social fabric, and create one of the most serious obstacles in achieving women's empowerment.

As the imperative to ensure women's participation and rights in social, economic and political progress gains urgency, innovation presents a particularly exciting pathway for seizing the present moment and achieving the goals of women's empowerment and gender equality—goals that have been so difficult to realize in the past. At the most basic level, innovations can benefit women simply by improving their well-being in terms of health, nutrition, income, even life span. Beyond vital improvements in well-being, innovations can lead to women's empowerment, securing freedom and resources for women to make

decisions, build confidence and act in their own interests. Deeper and truly transformative innovations reshape men's and women's roles on a longer-term basis. Examples abound where only yesterday women were immobile, but today move freely, where women were silent but today have a voice, where women were dependent but today are the engines of progress for their families, businesses and communities. It is well known that innovation and shifting gender roles are each catalytic processes that drive change. But little is known about the connection between innovation and women's empowerment: How do innovations create long-term, positive shifts in gender relations? This research is the first scholarly assessment of its kind to understand how innovations have improved women's well-being, empowered women and advanced gender equality. We examine eight catalytic innovations in three domains that intersect areas with the greatest need and most creative entry points for realizing women's empowerment:

(1) technology use

(2) social norm change and

(3) economic resilience.

Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

Women's empowerment is defined as "women's ability to make strategic life choices where that ability had been previously denied them" . As we articulate it, empowerment is midway in the change processes that benefit women at individual, household, community and broader levels. At the most basic level, innovations can benefit women simply by improving their well-being in terms of health, nutrition, income, life span, etc. Beyond vital improvements in well-being, changes can result in women's empowerment, where women gain agency and resources to make decisions, build confidence By establishing the link between innovation and women's empowerment, our research is the first scholarly assessment of eight powerful innovations 1 in three distinct domains of innovation that intersect with the greatest need and most creative entry points for realizing progress in women's empowerment: (1) technology use (2) social norm change and (3) economic resilience. When women flourish in any of these areas—and especially when they thrive in all three—there is a demonstrable shift in gender relations. Historically, these three domains have been fundamental, persistent and universal barriers to gender equality in almost every known culture. At the same time, the world is experiencing technological change, social change and economic opportunity at a pace never before experienced in human history.

Culture and tradition: in all countries, expectations about attributes and behaviours appropriate to women or men are shaped by culture, tradition and history. the general pattern is that women have less personal autonomy, fewer resources at their disposal, and limited influence over the decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives. donor strategies can strengthen women's ability to formulate and advocate their own visions for their societies – including interpretations and changes to cultural and gender norms. Education and training: educating girls is one of the most powerful tools for women's empowerment. education provides women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence they need to seek out economic opportunities. removing school fees and providing financial incentives for girls to attend school have proven to be effective for increasing girls' enrolment and completion rates.

Women's Economic Participation and Empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society it is about creating just and equitable societies. women often face discrimination and persistent gender inequalities, with some women experiencing multiple discrimination and exclusion because of factors such as ethnicity or caste. the economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for sustainable development, pro-poor growth and the achievement of all the millennium development Goals (mdGs). Gender equality and empowered women are catalysts for multiplying development efforts.investments in gender equality yield the highest returns of all development investments . women usually invest a higher proportion of their earnings in their families and communities than men. a study in India showed that the likelihood of a child's survival sincreased by 20% when the mother controlled household income. increasing the role of women in the economy is part of the solution to the financial and economic crises and critical for economic resilience and growth. however, at the same time, we need to be mindful that women are in some contexts bearing the costs of recovering from the crisis, with the loss of jobs, poor working conditions and increasing precariousness.

Education for Women Empowerment

Over the past decade, education for women's empowerment of has been intensively in discus- sed. The education reason the lies in the disappointment over the "run-o f-t h e-mill" literacy pro- grammas. They are described as unsatisfactory- ry and limited to the three R's, a

handful of income-raising skills and certain components. These programmes center on areas pre- determined by women's reproductive func- tion to the exclusion of their equally impor- tant role as economic producers. The pro- grammes often leave women disillusioned as they quickly realize that the programmes do not help improve their lives. Despite such programmes, learners continue to face economic hardship, double responsibility and overall social inequality. Training for better productivity does not suffice because women need decision-making capacity and ability to orga- nize and take part in community and national activities.

Women's Empowerment Principles in Brief

Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.

1. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
2. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
3. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
4. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
5. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender

Leadership Promotes Gender Equality

a. Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights.
b. Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and include progress as a factor in managers' performance reviews.
c. Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality.
d. Ensure that all policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion.

Principle Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Non discriminiation As is evidenced in many studies level of awareness of government schemes is very low so more effective publicity is necessary. A more effective MIS system for monitoring women welfare, women

empowerment programmes is to be developed which is simple, transparent and involves both government and non government functionaries. Gender resource centres with autonomy need to be established in all states and in case of larger states there must be more than one such centre involving academic & activities.

Conclusion

Practically no schemes exist to encourage women in non stero typical occupations. Training of women in leadership market research and entrepreneurship with follow ups must be institutionalized. At the national as well as state levels we need a full fledged mechanism to ensure gender sensitive policy, implementation through a participatory apex body. and, increasing women's influence in governance structures and political decision-making. many of these dimensions are mutually dependent and reinforcing. Cultural barriers, including discriminatory practices and attitudes, also need to be actively identified and Clearer definition of work of women over resources as well as their acknowledgement in National income. Country's inclusive agenda requires a consistent engendering at all levels.

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rakeshphilosophy@yahoo.com

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