



An analysis of the problems and obstacles associated with women's empowerment in India

Souvik Bhatta

Assistant Professor of Vidyasagar College of Education, Phansidewa, Darjeeling

Abstract: *This paper attempts to analyze the problems and obstacles associated with women's empowerment in India. One of the most significant issues of the twenty-first century is now women's empowerment. Women's empowerment means creating a political and social climate in which they can live freely from the oppression, exploitation, fear, prejudice, and overall sense of persecution that comes with being a woman in a system that has historically been dominated by men. In India, violence against women refers to acts of physical or sexual abuse, particularly those perpetrated by men. Domestic abuse, sexual assault, and murder are prevalent types of violence against women in India. Since the victim is a woman, this action must be taken solely to raise awareness of violence against women. These acts are typically committed by men who conform to gender-biased roles. The National Offense Records Bureau of India reports that there has been a rise in the number of crimes committed against women, with one such offense occurring every three minutes. Indian planners and policymakers have given women's emancipation a lot of thought. The government's initiatives to empower women are covered in this section. Women's self-esteem and society as a whole depend on them being empowered. It is feasible for women to have equal rights in politics, the economy, society, and education. Women are free to follow their own happy lives in terms of work, language, religion, and other interests in addition to integrating into society. The empowerment of women is currently the most effective development approach in India; worldwide, women are actively pursuing leadership roles and surpassing males in all endeavors. The study concludes that one of the most significant issues of the twenty-first century, both domestically and globally, is the empowerment of women. To accomplish these goals, government measures alone are insufficient. Women should have full autonomy to self-determination so they can engage in the social, political, and economic life of the nation with a sense of equality. Gender discrimination should not exist, and society should take the effort to establish such an environment.*

Keywords: *Women Empowerment, Education, Article, Violence against women, Obstacles.*

Introduction:

India is a patriarchal country by tradition, with women playing a secondary role in every household. Though the course has seen adjustments over time and in accordance with changing circumstances, policymakers have prioritized problems pertaining to women's welfare since independence. It is a necessity that there has been a notable transition in the approach to women's affairs from welfare to development, starting with the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974 – 1978). The process of improving the economic, social, and political standing of traditionally underprivileged women in society is known as "empowerment of women." It's the process of

protecting them against any kind of aggression. Women's empowerment means creating a political and social climate in which they can live freely from the oppression, exploitation, fear, prejudice, and overall sense of persecution that comes with being a woman in a system that has historically been dominated by men. Despite the fact that women make up nearly half of all people on earth, India has a disproportionately low number of women compared to men due to its skewed gender ratio. They are not always placed on an equal footing with men in terms of social prestige. Women in Western nations enjoy the same rights and status as men in all spheres of life. However, prejudice and impairments related to gender still exist in India. She was concerned as a goddess at times and only as a slave at others due to the contradictory circumstances.

Review of related literature:

- ✓ Mundhe, E. S. (2021). Conduct a study on the issues and challenges of women empowerment in India, the objective of the study was to find out that women in India are relatively underdeveloped and, despite many efforts by the government. The power of decision making at home and freedom of movement of women very greatly in their age, education and employment status. It has been found that the acceptance of unequal sex norms by women is still prevalent in the society. The study concludes that access to education and employment are the only enabling factors although the focus on goal attainment depends largely on the attitudes of people towards gender equality.
- ✓ Singh, S. & Singh, A. (2020). Conduct a study on women empowerment in India: A critical analysis, the objective of the study was to find that the Indian status among other countries and tries to find out preparedness to achieve sustainable development goal 5 of the united nation. The critically examine women empowerment in India, various models and dimensions. The paper discusses constitutional save guards as well as plan and programmes by the government and their implementation, indicators of women empowerment.
- ✓ Shettar, R.M. (2015). Conduct a study on issues and challenges of women empowerment in India, the objective of the study was to find that the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. The study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by government. The study concludes by an observation that access to education, employment, and change in social structure are only the enabling factors to women empowerment.
- ✓ Tanna, S. (2018). Conduct a study on challenges, issues and status of women in present scenario, the objective of the study was to find that in 21st century role of women in social, economic and overall development of this country is inevitable. This paper shows the ups and downs and the roller coaster life of women and also the paradoxical shift of women who was once worshipped as few solutions to overcome them like education, employment and change in social structure.

Objectives of the Study:

- i. To understand the ideas behind women's empowerment.
- ii. To research India's gender-based violence.
- iii. To examine the variables influencing women's empowerment.
- iv. To determine the obstacles standing in the way of women's empowerment.
- v. To offer helpful recommendations in light of the results.

Research methodology:

The purpose of this research is to examine the various kinds of women's empowerment. The character of the study is both analytical and descriptive. According to the needs of this investigation, the only secondary

sources from which the data was drawn for this study. Secondary data was gathered from a variety of credible websites, periodicals, and e-content pertaining to women's empowerment, as well as reports from national and international authorities.

Violence in India against Women:

In India, violence against women refers to acts of physical or sexual abuse, particularly those perpetrated by men. Domestic abuse, sexual assault, and murder are prevalent types of violence against women in India. Since the victim is a woman, this action must be taken solely to raise awareness of violence against women. These acts are typically committed by men who conform to gender-biased roles. The National Offense Records Bureau of India reports that there has been a rise in the number of crimes committed against women, with one such offense occurring every three minutes.

I) Sexual offenses:

India is regarded as the nation with the highest risk of sexual violence against women worldwide. In India, one of the most frequent crimes is rape. The definition of rape in the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 is described as when a male approaches a woman's physical attractiveness without the subject's consent and without facing consequences. In India, a woman is raped every 20 minutes, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. In India, marital rape is not considered a criminal act. Among the fifty nations that do not yet have a prohibition on marital rape is India. Twenty percent of Indian males acknowledge pressuring their girlfriends or spouses into having sex. Despite being prohibited by Indian law, human trafficking is a significant issue in the country. People are frequently trafficked into India with the intention of using them as slaves or forced labor and for commercial sexual exploitation.

II) Acid Spilling:

In India, women are subjected to violent attacks using acid hurling, sometimes referred to as acid attacks, vitriol attacks, or vitriolage. Throwing acid refers to the act of hurling "acid seeds or alternative corrosive substances" into an individual's body with the intention of causing them pain, deformity, or even death. Acid assaults can result in social, psychological, and financial difficulties in addition to irreversible scars and blindness. The selling of acid seeds has been regulated by the Indian legislature. More Indian women than any other country are susceptible to acid attacks. In India, at least 72% of reported acid assaults are on female victims. In India, acid attacks have increased throughout the last ten years.

III) Domestic abuse:

When one partner mistreats the other in a close relationship—dating, married, intimate, or familial—it is referred to as domestic violence. Dating abuse, marital abuse, assault, and domestic violence are other names for domestic violence. Physical, emotional, verbal, financial, and sexual abuse are all forms of domestic violence. Domestic abuse can be violent, forceful, or subtle. Renuka Chaudhary, a politician, claims that 70% of Indian women experience domestic abuse.

IV) Murders:

Dowry killing is the act of a married woman taking her own life because of a disagreement over dowry. In certain instances, the father-in-law and husband persistently attempt to obtain further dowries by persistent harassment; in other cases, the wife has taken her own life; or there will be a family exchange of presents, cash, or property during the daughter's wedding. The majority of these suicides were carried out by self-immolation, poisoning, or hanging. It's known as "burning the bride" when the woman is set ablaze in exchange for the dowry. The bride's murder is often reported as a suicide or an accident; occasionally, the lady is set ablaze in a way that makes it appear as though she ignited the kerosene stove while cooking. Even though it's against the law in India, lavish gifts are frequently given to the bride and her family at weddings

that the bride's family arranges. The murder of a family member is known as honor killing, because it brings shame and disgrace onto the family. Even now, Indian women who are suspected of practicing witchcraft are still killed. The majority of victims of this kind of murder are poor women, widows, and women from lower castes. The deliberate killing of a baby or the sex-selective abortion of a female pregnancy is known as sexual femicide. They were inspired to have children by the Indian custom of protecting the family in old age and the ability to carry out rituals for departed parents and ancestors. Conversely, girls are viewed as a financial and social liability. The dowry ban is one instance of this. In impoverished households, female feticide may result from social marginalization and a fear of not receiving a dowry. Considering that the infant is still pregnant, modern medical technology has identified the baby's gender. Families can decide whether to undergo an abortion based on gender once the sex of the fetus is determined by this new prenatal diagnostic technology. According to one study, 7,997 of every 8,000 abortions were carried out on female fetuses. Medical practitioners' prenatal abortion and fetal sex determination have grown to be Rs 1000 crore industries.

The Need for Women's Empowerment:

Women's self-esteem and society as a whole depend on them being empowered. It is feasible for women to have equal rights in politics, the economy, society, and education. Women are free to follow their own happy lives in terms of work, language, religion, and other interests in addition to integrating into society. The empowerment of women is currently the most effective development approach in India; worldwide, women are actively pursuing leadership roles and surpassing males in all endeavors. The world watches in tense stillness, waiting for an amazing escape, while the country, led by outstanding woman governors, is bearing the burden and combating the COVID-19 pandemic alone. In India, a variety of factors, including age, social status, education level, and geographic area, influence how empowered women are. State, local, and federal governments are addressing the issue of women's empowerment. However, discrimination against women still exists in most areas, such as education, employment opportunities, healthcare, and political participation. This shows that there is a big gap between how strategies are developed and how they are used in local areas.

Government Programs aimed at Empowering Women: In India, government programs for women's development were started as early as 1954, but genuine participation didn't start until 1974. Currently, various departments and ministries under the Government of India oversee over 34 programs specifically designed for women. Here are a few of these:

- Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) 1992-1993
- Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) October, 1993.
- Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) 1995.
- Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP).
- Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG) (2010).
- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
- Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY).
- Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS).
- Indira Mahila Kendra.
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission.
- Kanyashree Prakalpa.
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV).

Nongovernmental groups are a valuable addition to the government and its various agencies, as they are also contributing significantly to the empowerment of women. There are some gaps, even with governments and NGOs working together. Undoubtedly, women's empowerment has come a long way, but the road ahead will not be easy or simple.

Challenges of Women's Empowerment:

Women's rights issues in India face numerous obstacles. Addressing these problems will have a direct positive impact on Indian women's empowerment.

i. Women's Health and Safety:

Women's health and safety are vital to the welfare of the country and greatly influence the degree of women's empowerment in it. However, there are concerning concerns regarding mothers.

ii. Education:

Since gaining independence, the nation has advanced and has become concerned with education. There is a big difference between males and women. Higher education has gender bias, and specialized vocational training has a big impact on women's employment and aspirations to top leadership in all fields.

iii. Family Inequality:

Gender disparities are evident in family connections globally, particularly in India, where they manifest in subtle yet significant ways. Dividing up little tasks, childcare, and homework according to the theoretical division of labor.

iv. Poverty:

Eliminating poverty should be a key national goal, right up there with eliminating illiteracy, since it is thought to pose the biggest threat to global peace. This leads to the exploitation of women as domestic servants.

v. Unemployment:

Finding the ideal career for oneself is getting harder and harder for women. They become more susceptible to harassment and exploitation at work.

vi. Unbearable Conditions:

Women with less education have a higher chance of divorcing and leaving their husbands at any age. They will have to live in constant fear of getting divorced. Sometimes they are forced to take their own lives because of intolerable conditions.

Findings of the Study:

- India has passed numerous laws, but the number of crimes against women has not decreased.
- In India, there are numerous obstacles to women's empowerment.
- Deficits in education and poverty pose significant barriers to women's empowerment. Women can only be empowered when their social and economic standing improves. This is only achievable if specific social and economic policies are relied upon to support women's holistic development and acknowledge their ability to mature into capable men.
- Women's confidence must be cultivated if they are to be empowered.
- In order to build a sustainable world, we must first empower women.

Conclusion:

The hamlet and the country advance when women leads the household. This is required because of their beliefs and moral code, which create good families, good societies, and eventually excellent nations. Including women at the core of growth is the best approach to empowering them. Only when women have money and resources to support themselves and forge their own identities in society will their empowerment

truly and successfully take root. One of the most significant issues of the twenty-first century, both domestically and globally, is the empowerment of women. To accomplish these goals, government measures alone are insufficient. Women should have full autonomy to self-determination so they can engage in the social, political, and economic life of the nation with a sense of equality. Gender discrimination should not exist, and society should take the effort to establish such an environment.

Reference:

Mundhe, E.S. (2021). The Study on Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment in India. ISSN No. 0976-0822.

Singh, S. & Singh, A. (2020). Women Empowerment in India: A Critical Analysis. ISSN: 2320-0693.

Shettar, R.M. (2015). The Study on Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment in India. e-ISSN: 2278-487X.

Tanna, S. (2018). A Study on Challenges, Issues and Status of Women in Present Scenario. ISSN: 2321-2853.

Mandal, B. (2018). A Study on Women Empowerment in 21st Century. e-ISSN 2349-5138.

Sobha rani, K.V. (2021). A Study on Women Empowerment in India. ISSN: 2455-3778.

Duflo, E. (2011). Women's Empowerment and Economic Development. Working Paper 17702.

<https://femaleonezero.com/society/women-empowerment-in-india>

<https://hindrise.org/resources/women-empowerment-in-india-and-its-importance/>

<https://dmeo.gov.in/article/portrait-womens-empowerment-india>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_empowerment

Citation: Bhatta, S. (2024). "An analysis of the problems and obstacles associated with women's empowerment in India". *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (BIJMRD)*, Vol-2, Issue-2(1) March-2024. https://doi-ds.org/doi/10.24243/BIJMRD/Vol2_Issue2_1_2024