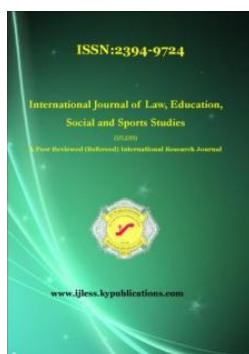




EMPOWERMENT OF DIS-ADVANTAGED SECTIONS OF INDIAN WOMEN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANDHRA

Dr. M. BOSU BABU

Lecturer in History (Retd),Hindu College, Guntur.



Article Info

Received on:01/02/2015

Revised on:20/03/15

Accepted on: 27/03/15

Available online:31/03/15

ABSTRACT

One of the main burning problems for the upliftment of women is the inequality of gender, literacy etc. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has rightly pointed out that the ramifications of gender inequality in Indian Society are much deeper and boarder than man he thought of. Empowerment defines that every woman should have the same opportunities at all levels. This is a form of awareness and also it is a long process.

This article deals with the harassment, oppression and exploitation faced by the disadvantaged sections of women like dalits, tribals and other nomadic groups who are economically downtrodden, socially undeveloped and politically deprived of all opportunities to prove their mettle. Apart from these distinctions, women herself is a marginalized being. The women are discriminated in general and marginalized women are more discriminated. These are the actual marginalized human beings in Indian society.

The social barriers such as untouchability, caste, illiteracy, superstition etc. of the women are to be uprooted out. The government and other social organisations are working for the discrimination of common women in general. But we have to take special measures for sake of the needy disadvantaged women in particular. If all activities brought out in to action then there will be empowerment of women in all spheres.

©KY Publications

INTRODUCTION

Generally people used the 'Empowerment' as a common word. In fact, Empowerment defined that every woman should share in the activities of household or external or political or economical. So empowerment of women is a way of defining challenging and overcoming barriers the one's life through which she increase her ability to shape her own life and develop her personality.

It is a known fact that matrimonial system prevailed during Indus valley civilization. But the status of woman was degrade during vedic society. In the medieval period, her dignity was decreased and new traditional social evils were entered in her life. And medieval history denotes that she became so weak because of man domination. Here the patriarchal system replaced the matrimonial system in the society. As Angels pointed out that it was an historical failure that woman loses the matrimonial right. But in the modern period, the social reformists, scientists, western education and other factors made them revive and uplift their inabilities in the society. One of the main burning problems for the upliftment of women is the inequality of gender, literacy etc.,

As a result of the above mentioned factors, Empowerment emerges in the form of awareness and stimulates the women to work towards a better, more dignified life and more satisfied life with confidence and

competence. They become partners of development and partners of national life. So this development in all fields of activity becomes the process of empowerment. This implies a state of mind and attitude, empowered women have positive self image and she participates in active life either in their family, community or in the nation.

Formation : During the Second World War, one of the burning problems in the society is inequality of gender. In 1945 the U.N.O. recognized this issue and declared the year 1975 as 'International year' and a period of Ten years (1975 - 1985) as "International Women Millennium" towards gender equality.

Next the UNO formed the 'Convention on the elimination of all sorts of discrimination against women to review the women status. In 1995 the International Women Conference at Beijing in China thought that women could get their empowered by positive self image. From this event, the image of women empowerment was focused and the year 2001 has been declared the Government of India as the year of 'Women Empowerment'. Every year we celebrates the International Women's Day on 8th March and seminars, workshops and meetings are organized to take the stock of women problems and status and solutions to better the conditions of women.

Dis-advantaged Sections: In this article I have to deal with the "Empowerment of disadvantage sections of Indian Women with special reference to Andhra". Under these sections dalits, tribals and other nomadic groups who are socially un-developed, economically downtrodden and politically deprived from all opportunities in daily life. Apart from these distinctions women herself is a marginalized being. To promote equality, it is necessary to provide equal opportunities to all people sunk in ignorance, despised, degraded and persecuted must took to themselves for salvation. The attainment of equality of status fro women is one of the objectives aid down in the preamble of the constitution. There are many constraints and disabilities that effect women in their multiple roles in society, economy and politics, The social earners such as practice of untouchability, castiesm, illiteracy, socio-cultural variation, religious exploitation, superstition and class variation are the obstacle that prevent their participation in socio-economic and political life of the country.

Dalit Women: The economic oppression of dalit women made them lead a life below the poverty line, which is due to lack tads of education and exposure to society especially in the areas where these women have to depend upon the feudal lords for their wages. Physical violence has been practiced against dalits. Sometimes raids of upper caste people are followed by looting, kidnapping, insult, rape, physical violence and threats.

Dalit women suffer from more harassment, oppression and exploitations. The reasons are as follows:

- 80% of Women among the dalits are illiterate.
- 70% dropouts are girls.
- Less than 40% are enrolled in the schools, field and at every level.
- Sex discrimination is shown in every field and at every level.

Still, schedule caste women who are engaged in agricultural sector constitute (17.51%), agricultural labourers (66.54%) constitute over; 31 % of the total agriculture labour force. Lack of year around employment, low and discrimination of wages, lack of social security are some of the problems faced by these women. In factory sector, migrant workers, sweepers and scavengers, domestic workers, vendors and hawkers comprise the factory sector. Rural women workers either they are dalit or backward class community, they work mostly under un-healthy and unhygienic condition. They are forced to do heavy and strenuous work.

They have no access to adequate safe drinking water and maternity facilities. Moreover violence, molestation, rape, murder and all atrocities are being committed on women in rural areas. Every year approximately 18,900 atrocities are being committed on rural poor, and most of the cases the victims are women due to gender and caste discrimination. The struggle for empowerment of women for social justice will help the economic empowerment of rural women.

Tribal Women: Almost the same conditions are faced by the tribal women in this country. Most of the tribal women do the agricultural work sowing, weeding, reaping, thrashing and marketing of grains besides marketing of forest produce to supplement the family income. The village economy revolves around women's

Labourers. Still patriarchal system prevails among them. Only sons have the rights to inherent land. An unmarried tribal girl is raped and seduced by non-tribal. A non-tribal man marries her for the sake of the properties. Socially this tribal women are facing many difficulties. Sometimes violence against women often take the form of witch killings. There is also the system of polygamy prevailing in the tribal society. Because of the influence of non-tribal influx, the tribal girls are getting married at the age of 12 or 13 which are not known to them before. Some of the tribal are still in the primitive hunting and food gathering stage and bringing them in to the mainstream and their education is also neglected.

The major health problems of female in tribal areas occur during the period of pregnancy, childbirth and lactation. Anaemia is one of the major nutritional deficiencies of pregnant women in, our rural India. The link between good health, consumption of specific foods and drinking of uncontaminated water has to be planned to the S.C. communities. Presently, the Ashram Schools are providing opportunities to tribal girls to improve the Literacy rate. Education greatly strengthens women's ability to perform the vital role in creating healthy household. Now days the development programs through women thrift and credit groups are working well and are improving the status of women in their societies.

Nomadic Group: One of the dis-advantaged sections of Women empowered is nomadic groups. These categories will come under backward classes, a group of them are folk artists or performers of art. They are the carriers of culture. We call them as the performers. They are called as 'Bhikshuka gayakulu'. Still they are nomadic groups and at least for six months they will be wondering from place to place and earn their subsistence. Most of these backward caste follow their caste profession and some cultivate the land or do cooly work. For example Banda, Budabukkala, Dommara, Gangireddula, Jangam, Jogi, Katikapari, Pichiguntla, Pamula, Veeramusti communities are still beggars. But they are not ordinary beggars, but experts in their performing arts. These people have no education at all. They are harassed by the people for begging in the streets. These are not allowing their women folk to participate along with them. Among them some of the nomadic groups were dubbed as Criminal Tribes by the colonial administration. The changing occupational trend towards agriculture is a part of their desire to settle down in a permanent settlement. There is an emerging social consciousness among them to get rid off their professional nomadic habits by taking to agriculture. Their customs and traditions should be respected. Here we have to find out the position of the women folk of these categories. These women are illiterate and ignorant and avoid of education. They are not admitted into the fold of performing arts in some of the Yakshagana & like 'Chindu Bhaghavathulu' The role of 'Yellamma' is played by them due to some, un-avoidable circumstances. When they are not educated they cannot motivate their girl children for studies.

World Bank experts surveyed the reason for the backwardness of education of girls as follows:

1. Lack of education & exposure on the part of the mother
2. Dowry system.
3. Preference to son rather than the girl.
4. Security problems.
5. Discrimination in wages, etc

World Bank experts surveyed the reason for the backwardness of education of girls as follows:

These are the things that stand on her way to get education in their childhood. Another important aspect is even before the birth of girl child the parents are concerned about the marriage. The second aspect is that her virginity should be protected. Moreover, the culture of the family rests with the girl child and the whole family is dependent on her backbone. So they are confined to the four walls. Indian womanhood despite being an outstanding symbol and adoration has not been free from the stains of exploitation. One of the classic examples of social oppression is Devadasi system prevailed in all over South India. When devadasi system was in vogue, the kings and landlords used to purchase girls from backward classes and dedicated to temples for the attainment of salvation. Never in the history of mankind the rich people dedicated their own daughters to the temples.



The young girls of schedule caste and backward class communities who are brutally exploited even this day, euphemistically labeled as "Jogins", "Matangies", "Basvies", "Devadasi", or "Muralies", "Bhavins", etc in south India. Any mishap in the family is a visitation of God and the only remedy is to dedicate a girl in the family to be a jogin or any counterpart to this. It is unfortunate that these girls are forced to take out their livelihood as "village sluts or "common women". The rational' beyond the entire system is the superstitious surroundings, which exploited hundred and thousands of women into this hapless condition. Their rehabilitation is to safeguard the dignity and self respect of women. To nip the problem in the bud and prevent further deterioration rehabilitation has taken place but still the problem is not solved completely. It is obvious that these jogins and their counterparts hail from the poorest of the poor.

Exploitation of women: Exploitation of dalit women in various places like chundurur, Karemchedu is taking place. Many of the dalit Women, tribal women or women of lower strata of society are faced with rapes, kidnappings and abductions. These are neither prevented nor controlled by the administration. There is no accountability for the infanticide, adoption of girl children to foreign countries and mock-marriage to sheiks in the minority communities. These are some of the examples of exploitation of women in our country. The map of prostitution or sex working is reaching alarming levels and who should be made accountable for girl's safety in this country. Child sexual abuse, child trafficking, obscene publication and indecent shows are prevalent in our society There are no potential detection mechanisms to protect these women from the clutches of poverty and exploitation. We are not in position to stop sexual harassment of women irrespective of caste or age discrimination. Counseling centres have not yet come up to fill this gap. The alternative arrangements have not been done by the administration.

The following changes should be brought out to change the situation;

1. To improve social attitude.
2. To introduce legal education at the primary level.
3. To change current laws pertaining to rapes, harassment and other things.
4. Establishment of District Women's Committee.
5. Even the State Women Commission should restructure laws.
6. Creating a Task Force in each state to monitor the system.etc.

Measures : If all above problems worked out in a phased manner then there will be some sort of solutions to the social evils prevalent in our society. In addition to them education and health problems of women and girl children should be given priority. The first step of women empowerment is to educate women.

The physical weakness of women in marginalised groups originate from the debilitated conditions. Female adolescent who is deficient in nutrition due to socio-economic neglect, the chain of continuous deprivation of good health problems for all the women of these groups from infant to old age needs to be undertaken very carefully. Every child should be brought up in a healthy environment. So intensive health care operation should be undertaken by the government from time to time.

Economic depression, competition in the international market, liberalization policies, the importance of Information Technology all these factors are transforming the society into a formal sector. Women is worst hit because of the globalization, liberalization, and privatization (LRG.) policies. Women is going to lose her employment in this sector or her wages become low. Women has to acquire new technology to safeguard her position in the competitive world, in addition to these factors, Globalization is felt at every level. Even the domestic harmony will be disturbed. What is required is that there should be a real change in the mind set of man. J.S.M111 said "If every opportunity is utilized properly, women will definitely prove to be better than man"

Women must enter the walls of power in government bodies, political parties, labor unions, and community organization local strategies must encompass Women's practical needs and cultural values to ensure that their political participation becomes a reality. Women should also have her own ability to generate self-strength also. For this long-term objectives of development program for disadvantaged women should be



developed to rise their economic social and political status in order to bring them into the mainstream of national development.

Conclusion

The main features of the this development should be

1. Inculcating confidence in the dis-advantaged sections of women.
2. An emphasis on income generating activities.
3. Accessibility of development resources and earning opportunities to all these women.
4. Development of leadership at the micro and macro level.
5. Empowerment of women specifically marginalised women.

The Education department and other Nodal organizations like UGC, AICTE, ICSSR, ICHR etc., have taking measures for the gender discrimination and women empowerment by conducting seminars, workshops and research from 1986 onwards. These activities are meant for the common women in general. But we have to take measures to the needy disadvantaged women in particular.

If all these brought out into action then there will be empowerment of women in all spheres of activities.

References

Prof. T. Jyothi Rani, "Manavabhivruddhi lo Mahilalu - Vasthavalu" (Telugu) *Sthri Vimukthi Sanghatana*, 2007.

V. Lalitha, Ashritha - Chindu Bhagavathulu (Telugu) - A.P History Congress, Vol XXI, 1997.

Dalits' struggle for identity - Y Chinna Rao, Kanishka Pub., New Delhi-2003

Devadasi Vyavastha (Telugu) by Dr. V. Lalitha and Dr. M. Prameela Reddy, Asmitha Publishers, 2007.

Globalisation. Education and Gender, Economic and Political Weekly, Feb, 17th, 2007 - Karuna Chanana.

History of Dalits-2 Vols (Tel) - Katti Padma Rao.

'Jogini Vyavastha' (Telugu) by Dr. V. Lalitha, Janachaitanya Vedika, A.P, 2007.

Mathangi Vyavastha (Telugu) - a paper presented by V. Lalitha, AP History Congress, Vol XX, 1996

Neumayer, Eric and De Soysa, Indra (2011) Globalization and the empowerment of women: an analysis of spatial dependence via trade and foreign direct investment. *World development*, 39 (7). pp. 1065-1074.

Statistical survey of India, 2001.