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Women and Development: A Literature Review

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For all the citizens' preamble to the Indian Constitution sets the nation's highest goal to be justice, equality, liberty and community. Achieving development requires the attentions of various aspects. Gender equality is now a genuine political claim at local, national and global levels. The role of women's are high in the progress of society as well as country. But the attentions of various aspects are required for achieving the development of women. The main barriers in most of the developing countries for women development is education, which prevents further growth and power of decision and leads to more inequalities between men and women. The women health and clarification of religious beliefs is another factor that legitimates inequalities. Crime against women and sex ratio is other main issue which shows barrier in gender and development. Our purpose in this paper is to highlight the main issues and challenges which are barriers in the growth of Gender and development.

Keywords: Development, Gender Equality, Sex Ratio, Education



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Introduction

The one of the top agenda across the world is issue of women and development. In developing countries, gender disparity is widespread compared to the developed countries about the concept of development there is many theories which varies according to agencies involved, area of focus, environments, etc. the development of women depends upon various aspects like education, sex ratio, health, etc. development of women is essential for the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women. From last couple of decades both national and international development community governments has increasingly focused its efforts to promote gender equality as a means for better social, economic and health outcomes. Women constitute almost 50% of the world's population but India has shown disproportionate sex ratio the population of females has been comparatively lower than males. As far as their social status is concerned, they are not treated as equal to men in all the places. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. Gender and development also involves the building up of a society, a political environment, wherein women can breathe without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination. general feeling of harassment which goes with being a woman in a traditionally male dominated structure. Education is also consider as the most important factor of development. Education brings reduction in inequality and mold the shape toward the development of a country. In all aspects women have got equal right and status with men in western society. But in India the paradoxical situation has such that she was sometimes concerned as Goddess and at other times merely as slave. Some Gender discrimination and disabilities are as:

Educational Status of Women in India

To change the position of women in society education is the most powerful tool. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. Education brings reduction in inequalities and grow the status of a person. In India education for women has a major worry for both the government and civil society. For Women growth, education is landmark because it empowers them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. According to Census 2011, the female literacy rate is 65.5% against the male literacy rate of 82.1%. Although there has been a considerable improvement in literacy rate of female but still it is much lower compared to male. Male-female gap is predominant and nearly 20% gap is remaining

between male-female literacy rates. The problem of literacy is serious in rural India where nearly 43% female are illiterate. Different scheme regarding education of women is started by the government of India.

Women Health

The health of Indian women is basically linked to their status in society. Health is generally regarded as the most vital component of growth and development of a nation. The status of health of Indian women becoming worse due to the dominant culture and traditional practices in India. Indian women are generally vulnerable to poor nutrition, especially during pregnancy and lactation. However, in India the field of health is the most neglected aspect of development especially in case of women. It was found that the contributions Indian women make to families often are overlooked, and instead they are viewed as economic burdens. Even today the issue of family welfare and reproductive health is much more important to policy makers than the issue of providing basic level of nutrition, better health, better control over women's body etc.

Crime against Women

Crimes against women is a day to day phenomenon in recent days. Women are often viewed as the property of the men in their lives, whose responsibility is to protect them, conflict between men and women over any issue provokes violence against women (Centre for women development studies 2002). Exhibitions of violence include physical aggression, burns, attempted hanging, sexual abuse and rape, psychological violence through insults, humiliation, coercion, blackmail, economic or emotional threats, and control over speech and actions. In extreme, but not unknown cases, death is the result. Crimes against women and incident of rape have risen sharply over the last few years. The latest National Crime Records Bureau data reflect how incidents of rapes have gone up by 12-15%, while other crimes have risen by 3-5%.

Sex Ratio

The sex ratio is revealing of the arrangement of population. Sex ratio is defined as the number of females per thousand males or in a given population the ratio of males to females. Falling of sex ratio is one of the conspicuous examples of gender inequality. Preference for boys over girls that exists in many male dominated society, gender inequality can manifest itself in the form of the parents, wanting the new born to be a boy rather than a girl (Sen and Drez 2005). In spite of having higher level of female education,



greater economic participation of women, these countries are facing sharp decline and below average sex ratio. The Sex ratio in India 2011 is 918 girls for 1,000 boys. Government launces various schemes regarding to improve the sex ratio.

Review of Literature

Bhoganadam, Malini and Rao (2014) studied on women's empowerment and economic development and concluded that the women empowerment plays a major role in developing countries through which the organizational problems can be solve and it also can reduce the poverty level and improve the economic growth.

Bayeh, (2016), worked on the role of empowering women and achieving gender equality to the sustainable development of Ethiopia, and finding based on the data analyzed shows that role of women of sustainable development is less reflected in the country. This study also expose that Ethiopian women account for the half of the total population of the country. This paper suggested that the Government need to maintain the gender equality and need to make effort to change the existing position of the woman.

Hopkins and Patel, (2007) analyzed the impact of religious beliefs and practices on gender inequality is the issue that cannot be ignored and summarized the key discussion and findings of two workshops held by Oxfam GB, on the challenges of working on gender equality in Muslim contexts and finally concluded that there is need to highlight and understand the local context and in each country that how specific issues affect gender relations.

Mikkola, (2005) suggested about the issues from which the gender inequality is associated with such as the overall economic developmental level, values and religion, cultural restrictions and roles, legal and inheritance laws and practices, the marital pattern of resource allocation, monogamy vs. polygyny, labor market access, education, fertility, gender specific market failures in finance, power in the political decision making etc.

Duflo, (2011) studied review on the women empowerment and economic development and said that the development may influenced by the women empowerment. Also reviewed on both the literature of empowerment development and about the weakness of inter relationship to be self-sustaining, and also about the policy commitment to equality between men and women.

Chakravarty, Kumar and Jha, (2013) studied about the concept of women empowerment on a holistic basis and also examined the effort made for the empirical works towards the empowering the women with Self Help Groups (SHG) initiated in Ranchi district of Jharkhand state of India. This study also suggested to accelerate the empowerment drive to the local level area for the developing country like India and point the further research in this area.

Nayak and Mahanta, (2017) analyzed the status of women empowerment in India using various indicators based on the secondary sources and concluded that the enabling factors to empowerment and to achieve the goal are the access to education and employment which depends upon the attitude of the people toward gender equality.

Conclusion

The gender and growth is one of the most important concerns of 21st century not only at national level but also at the international level. Women are the most target population in gender development. Government are taking steps by launching various schemes regarding girls as Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna., Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Balika Samridhi Yojna and many more. But the initiatives by government alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self-decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality. Women have to be fully involved in the process by being trained to leadership positions in order to be part of the decision making process and be able to design policies that bring change for a consistent reduction of gender disparities and inequalities towards women.



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