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A PARADIGM SHIFT IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

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Introduction

There was such a fixed period in India's ancient history in which women's place was very important. This epoch means the period of the powers of women. It was the epoch of hunters in the ancient India. The hunters production method in this period was backward (under developed) its production of food was uncertain but later on women discovered agriculture. The credit of catching the attention of very backward production method like hunters to the highly agriculturally developed method in society goes to women only. This selected (fertile) and alluvial agricultural land of the bank of Sindhu River was discovered by women only. The roaming tribes were made stable only because of this revolutionary discovery. Society dominated by women i.e. matriarchal society was relatively based more on the equality between women and men. But his glorious matriarchal society came to an end later on. A conflict took place between old matriarchy had to accept her defeat in it Because men had started the method of producing more in the agriculture with the help of cattle keeping aside the alluvial land. Men's power rose from this happening only in India. The system of four castes came into existence along with it. The conversion of our castes in the ancient society took place in the caste-system. Society was entangled into the new fetters of castes. The biggest victims of all the caste systems were women. A woman was the gateway to the caste-system. Very enormous restrictions were imposed on women in order to maintain the caste system. Women were bound up with the channels of various religious traditions. Even though there were different classes and castes in society there was basically a difference between every class or internal distinction between men and women in their respective castes. Women's place is secondary and subordinate to man's place and there is a manly dominance on every woman.

For centuries women in india have been deliberately denied opportunities of growth in the name of independence women were prey to many abhorrent customs, traditional rigidities and vices due to which their status in the society touched its nadir. At the personal social plan, women were victim of widespread illiteracy, feeble health, segregation in the dark and dingy rooms in the name of 'purdah'. Most women were reduced to dumb driver cattle and led an inhumane, beastly life. Women suffered from the denial of freedom even in their own haves, since long women have been deprived from decision making. Their potentials remain largely unrecognized and their contributions are often overlooked. As long as women must depend on her husband for her existence, her home will be his castle and he will be her master, she has no chance to give equal lights. Women have to play her role in different spheres of life like in politics, family, in business, in education and many other fields. But in each field women show their efficiency, aridity and honesty in all fields if she has opportunities to prove herself. We focus on the various sectors of her activities and condition.

During the period 1974 the Indian women's are obsessed were focused patriarchal or male power physical politics, sex indiscrimination, sex politics because the crucial concept of attitude of the Indian women's activities are somewhat change and autonomous feminist attitude, thought have been presented. The beginning of the 90th century, reformist like Raja ram Mohan Roy, Swami Sahajanand Ishwarchandra, Vidyasagar, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Dayanannd Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda not only started political movement but also social reforms movement. 'Rajaram Mohan Roy was the symbol of this new era. The process of Renaissance started in this era. This moment gave new shape to political, social, religious, cultural and economical fields. Also Mahatma Jyotiba Fule, Rajeshri Shahu Maharaj, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar play active role for empowerment of women.

Of course today we people are living in modern era, it is an era of globalization, technology but till when we take glims of her condition specially women from countryside. At home she has been deprived since long. As long as her labor was hidden in the house hold family fields, she has no chance to gain equal rights. No doubt, at independence on constitutions granted women equal rights of voting of participations in the political process. As far as, heard of domestic role of women is concerned health plays very crucial role, the environment affect women's overall ability to live, give birth and bring up and to be got healthy children's. Proper nourishment, immunization against deadly disease, sanitary living conditions all constituted essential respects of the development process.

The most positive development last few years has been the growing involvement of women in the Panchayati Raj institutions. There are many elected women representatives at the village couled level. At present all over india there are total 20,56,887 faces of representatives member, out of this women representatives are 8,38,211 (40.48%) and total panchayat members are 1,00,00,000 out of this women members are 41,00,000 (41%) and women

is 11, 708, out of this women members is 4, 923 (42.05%). At the central and state levels too women are progressively making a difference. Today we have seen women chief ministers, women president, different political parties leader well establish businessmen etc. The most notable amongst these are Mrs. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, Shila Dixit, Mayawati, Sonia Gandhi, Bindu Karat, Nazma Heptulla, Indra Nuye (Pepsi Co), BJP leader Susma Soraj, railway minister Momta Benarji, 'Narmada Basao' leader Medhapatekar, Indian Iron Woman, EX-prime minister Idira Gandhi etc. Women are also involving in human development issues of child rearing, education, health, and gender parity. Many of them have gone into the making and marketing of a range of cottage products-pickles, tailoring, embroidery etc. The economic empowerment of women is being regarded these days as a sine-quo-non of progress for a country; hence, the issue of economic empowerment of women is of paramount importance to political thinkers, social thinkers and reformers.

Empowerment is social action process that promotes participation of individual groups in gaining of powers and ability to take control over their lives in their community. It involves access to resources, results in increased participation in decision making and bargaining power and increased control over benefits resources and own life increased confidence, self esteem and self respect increased well being. Multifold concept that includes economics, social and political empowerment. The importance of women to the economic development of India was first recognized during countries struggle to independence. For economic empowerment it is necessary for women to have access to control over productive resource and to ensure some degree of financial autonomy. To achieve, the grass root level women empowerment, women's mind set of depending must be changed so that they become conscious of their abilities to change themselves, their families, their community. Where empowerment would lie becoming creative dependent individuals. The year 1975 was declared as 'Year for women' also decade from 1975 to 1985 was declared as a decade for women. During this period, the empowerment of women received a fillip. The year 2001 was declared as a year of women empowerment. It was only from the 6th five year plan onward that woman secured a special niche and space in the national plans and planning process primarily with thrusts on health, education and employment of women.

A paradigm shift occurred in the eight plan where Empowerment of women was recognized and accepted as a Distinct strategy. The Tenth five plan, 2002/2007 called for the three pronged strategy of social empowerment economic empowerment and providing gender justice to create an enabling environment of positive economic and social politics for women.

Steps taken in India for the women empowerment:

- **Swanwalamban:** To provide training and skills to women to facilitate them to obtain employment
- **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK):** RMK or National Credit Fund for women set up in 1993. It aims to facilitate credit support or micro-finance to poor women to start income generating activity such as dairy, agriculture, shop keeping and handcrafts.
- **Swadhar:** Scheme launched in 2001-02 by the central government to provide holistic and integrated services to women in difficult circumstances.
- **Janani Suraksha programme:** Modified form of the national maternity benefits scheme provide for 100% central assistance to the states financial benefits of Rs. 500 per pregnancy.
- **Swayamsiddha:** The objectives of scheme are establishment of self help group regarding the status health nutrition and education of women and their control over resources improving access to micro finance.
- **Self Help Group:** SHG's have now involved as movements for unreached poor.
- **Ramai Mahila Shakshamikaran (SCP):** Through the programme, Training were arranged on gender equality, women's empowerment, social awareness, entrepreneurship and other related capacity building aspects.
- **Tejaswini Maharashtra Rural Women Empowerment Programme:** In 2007 the state government sanctioned a new programme for MAVIM supported by IFAD known as the TMRWEP. The programme aimed for providing stability and sustainability to SHG movement.

The aim of these schemes to provide strength to the self help groups which are already in existence and under the scheme should be given more preference.

Conclusion

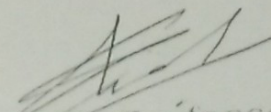
The Empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century not only at national level but also at the international level. Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and Women have full opportunities of self decision making and participating in the Social, Political and Economic life of the Country with a

issue of equality. To conclude, there is an urgent need for a sustained, comprehensive effort at all levels to attack this problem of gender bias from all sides in a focused manner.

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