

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Ms. Prabhjot Kaur

Faculty in Department of Commerce, Govt. College Derabassi, Punjab

ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurs have been in the minority in comparison to their male counterparts and are still the largest underrepresented group in entrepreneurship. However, it is now widely accepted that women as entrepreneurs make a valuable contribution to national economies around the world in terms of job creation, economic growth, and wealth generation. Contrary to traditional perceptions about women entrepreneurs starting mainly small and home-based enterprises, it has also been reported that women are now leading the so-called “new economy companies,” with success in high technology, life sciences, and professional services. Thus, the need to increase their participation in the enterprise arena is becoming more important to future economic growth. Research on women’s entrepreneurship has developed significantly in recent years. It begins with a consideration of the underrepresentation of women in entrepreneurship globally and makes the economic case for encouraging more women to become entrepreneurs. A major theme in the literature on women’s entrepreneurship has been the barriers and challenges they face in their efforts to engage in entrepreneurship. Women are generally perceived as home makers with little to do with economy or commerce. Women Entrepreneur is any women who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business. The transition from homemaker to sophisticated business woman is not that easy. But the trend is changing. Women across India are showing an interest to be economically independent. In this background, self employment is regarded as a cure to generate income Women is coming forth to the business arena with ideas to start small and medium enterprises. They are also enjoying the impact of globalization and making an influence not only on domestic but also on international sphere. Women are doing a wonderful job striking a balance between their house and career. There are different categories of women entrepreneurs like Self-employed entrepreneur: a woman who establishes a new venture as her primary occupation, typically in a traditional sector. Traditional, self-employed worker: a woman who takes over and runs an existing company. Growth-oriented entrepreneur: a woman who sets up a limited company and may be viewed as a salaried employee of that company. Leisure or hobby entrepreneur: a woman who starts a business to generate a second income. Family-owned business: a woman who inherits a company from her parents. Networked entrepreneur: a woman

who is a free agent and works from project to project .When compared to men, it would appear that most women enter self-employment with less management experience and fewer financial assets and are relatively under-resourced in terms of human capital. It has been noted that, in terms of new-venture creation, women tend to be more attracted to the services sector, starting businesses in training and consultancy, beauty, design, and a range of professional and therapeutic services. Women entrepreneurs face three main types of barriers. Firstly, there is the socio cultural set of barriers, which suggest that women's primary role is embedded within the family. In this regard, women are viewed in the traditional sense as wives, mothers, and caregivers, with mainly childcare and domestic responsibilities. This perception, in many ways, prevents society from credibly viewing women as having a business or commercial role. Secondly, there are barriers relating to networks of information and access to assistance. Such networks and information are critical to the success of any business but are sometimes more easily accessible to men than they are to women. Thirdly, access to finance and investment funds is a particularly significant barrier, as it impacts the potential growth and sustainability of women-led businesses.

Key words: Women Empowerment, Importance, Methods

INTRODUCTION

Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights, such as:

- To freely live their life with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity,
- To have complete control of their life, both within and outside of their home and workplace,
- To make their own choices and decisions,
- To have equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities,
- To have equal social status in the society,
- To have equal rights for social and economic justice,
- To determine financial and economic choices,
- To get equal opportunity for education,
- To get equal employment opportunity without any gender bias,
- To get safe and comfortable working environment.

- Women have the rights to get their voices heard

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the reasons why women start business of their own.
2. To explore the characteristics of women entrepreneurs.
3. To critically examine the types of issues & problems they encounter in order to reach the level of success.
4. To suggest different remedial measures in helping and accelerating women entrepreneurs

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The required data has been collected through secondary source like Text books, Journals, internet and other publication and supported by primary data collected through observation technique.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr. Rajeshwari M. Shettar in (2015) studied that the attainment in the field of income / employment and in educational front, the scenario of women empowerment seems to be comparatively poor. The need of the hour is to identify those loopholes or limitations which are observing the realization of empowerment of women and this initiative must be started from the women folk itself as well as more importantly policy initiative taken by the state and society. Let us take the oath that we want an egalitarian society where everybody whether men or women get the equal opportunity to express and uplift one's well being and well being of the society as whole. Women's empowerment is not a Northern concept women all over the world, including countries in South, have been challenging and changing gender inequalities since the beginning of the history. Women represent half the world's population and gender inequality exists in every nation on the planet. Until women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform below their true potentials. The greatest need of the hour is change of social attitude to women. "When women move forward the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves". It is essential as their thought and their value systems lead the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation. The best way of empowerment is perhaps through inducting women in the mainstream of development. Women empowerment will be real and effective only when they are endowed income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. 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 social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality

Manav Aggarwal in (2014) studied that Education among women is the most powerful tool of attaining power in the society. Higher Education of women plays a very important role in releasing their energy and creativity and enabling them to meet the complex challenges of the present world. It helps in lessening inequalities and functions as a means for improving their status within the family. The higher education increases the women to take independent decisions, to reduce violence, women's ability to claim legal rights, participation in civic society, economic independence and many more. The biggest challenge before the Government and NGO's is to create awareness and sensitization among people of all levels, especially in rural areas, about the special needs of women and girls.

Sandip K.Nimbalkar and Dr. R.R.Berad (2014) in his paper titled Role of Information Technology for Promoting Women Empowerment Especially with reference to Members of Self Help Groups in Ahmednagar District studied that this study shows that self help group played vital role for women empowerment in India. Information Technology gave various benefits for the well being of Human. In urban area maximum women access information technology resources but in rural area majority of the women only heard the name of Internet. This study indicates that maximum women could not access internet and various information technology resources due to non-availability of resources such as computer, internet and other services. Majority of the women of self help groups opined that they are not aware about proper usage of internet. On the basis of analysis researcher revealed that women want to acquire various information by using information technology especially economic, political social, new entrepreneurship related, Government schemes, Information sharing, information storage etc. As internet is huge source of Information and knowledge. It is also observed that information technology play vital role for women empowerment, members of self help groups viewed that if sources are available then information technology can empower women in economic, social, political and other ways. Lot of self help groups nowadays are expanding their operations in various farm related business. Various new trends are also playing vital role for business operations such as E-commerce, Online Trading, and Online Banking etc. If all members of the

self help groups are get aware about this they can enjoy lots of benefits through this IT enabled services.

DISCUSSION

Meaning of Women Empowerment: Women Empowerment' refers to complete emancipation of women from socio-economic shackles of dependency and deprivations. Often made synonymous to gender equality, the term women empowerment encompasses a much larger set of principles that needs whole-hearted attention. The concept of empowerment flows from the word power. Empowerment of women would mean encouraging women to be self-reliant, economically independent, have positive self-esteem, generate confidence to face any difficult situation and incite active participation in various socio-political development endeavors. The growing conscience is to accept women as individuals capable of making rational and educated decisions about them as well as the society, increasing and improving the economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right as men, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for their families and communities. The various facets of women empowerment that needs to be addressed for a rounded out development are listed as:-

Human Rights or Individual Rights: A woman has the right to express her thoughts and opinions freely, without any restriction. Individual empowerment may be achieved by imparting self-confidence to articulate and assert the power of independent decision making. Women should be aware of their rights and social positions that they are entitled to constitutionally.

Social Empowerment of Women: The most critical aspect of social empowerment of women is the promotion of gender equality. Gender equality implies that in society women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

Educational Empowerment of Women: It means enabling women to grab the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. Giving preference to the girl child for educational opportunities is a start.

Economic and Occupational Freedom: It means reducing the financial dependence of women on their male counterparts by making them a significant part of the human resource. A better quality of material life, within the family as well as for the overall society, can be achieved through promotion of sustainable livelihoods like cottage industries, small entrepreneurial efforts owned and managed by women.

Empowerment through Legal Knowledge: Not only does it suggest the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women empowerment, there also is the need to spread awareness among women about their legal rights and laws preventing their exploitation. It means addressing the gaps between what the law prescribes and what actually occurs.

Political Empowerment of Women: The existence of a political system encouraging the participation of women in the political decision-making process and in governance. Indian constitution has provided the bulwarks for gender equality in the country in the following articles:-

Article 14 – Equality before law “The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth”

Article 16 (2) – Equal Opportunities “No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect or, any employment or office under the State”.

Article 23 – Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour.

Article 39(a) – The citizen, men & women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.

Article 40 (after the 73rd Amendment) – 1/3rd of seats in panchayats shall be reserved for women.

Article 42 – State shall make provisions for just and humane working conditions & maternity relief.

Article 51 A (e) – One of the duties of every citizen is to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of woman.

Government Laws and its subsequent amendments have seen larger inclusion of women with respect to their standing in the society. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005 stating that women get equal share in the ancestral property or the Equal remuneration Act, 1976, has contributed towards a better footing in the society. The Dowry prohibition Act, 1961, Child marriage (prohibition) Act, 1929, The indecent representation of women (prohibition) Act, 1986 and the Hindu marriage Act, 1955, preventing polygamy and bigamy, and their strict enforcements has to a large extent contributed towards lessening women exploitation. Various government schemes like Rastriya Mahila Kosh and STEP (Support to training cum Employment

for women) have managed to bring financial development of rural women through self-sustainable employment. The recent Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao scheme as well as the SABLA scheme has been aimed at reducing female infanticide and promoting the importance of educating the girl child. A number of councils and bodies have been established for the well-being of women such as the National Commission for Women, Department of Women and Child Development and the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women which has reviewed various laws and recommended amendments. The National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) is aimed at addressing all forms of violence against women including physical, mental and that arising from customs and traditions.

Some of the Women Empowerment Schemes in India

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme

One Stop Centre Scheme

Women Helpline Scheme

UJJAWALA: A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Working Women Hostel

Ministry approves new projects under Ujjawala Scheme and continues existing projects

SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances)

Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)

Awardees of Stree Shakti Puruskar, 2014 & Awardees of Nari Shakti Puruskar

Awardees of Rajya Mahila Samman & Zila Mahila Samman

Mahila police Volunteers

Mahila E-Haat

Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)

Importance of women empowerment

Under-employed and unemployed: Women population constitutes around 50% of the world population. A large number of women around the world are unemployed. The world economy suffers a lot because of the unequal opportunity for women at workplaces. (Also read: Paragraph on Women Employment)

Equally competent and intelligent: Women are equally competent. Nowadays, women are even ahead of men in many socio-economic activities.

Talented: Women are as talented as men. Previously, women were not allowed higher education like men and hence their talents were wasted. But nowadays, they are also allowed to go for higher studies and it encourages women to show their talents which will not only benefit her individually but to the whole world at large.

Overall development of society: The main advantage of Women Empowerment is that there will be an overall development of the society. The money that women earn does not only help them and or their family, but it also help develop the society.

Economic Benefits: Women Empowerment also leads to more economic benefits not to the individuals but to the society as well. Unlike earlier days when they stayed at home only and do only kitchen stuffs, nowadays, they roam outside and also earns money like the male members of the society. Women empowerment helps women to stand on their own legs, become independent and also to earn for their family which grows country's economy.

Reduction in domestic violence: Women Empowerment leads to decrease in domestic violence. Uneducated women are at higher risk for domestic violence than an educated women.

Reduction in corruption: Women Empowerment is also advantageous in case of corruption. Women empowerment helps women to get educated and know their rights and duties and hence can stop corruption.

Reduce Poverty: Women Empowerment also reduces poverty. Sometimes, the money earned by the male member of the family is not sufficient to meet the demands of the family. The added earnings of women help the family to come out of poverty trap.

National Development: Women are increasingly participating in the national development process. They are making the nation proud by their outstanding performances almost every sphere including medical science, social service, engineering, etc.

Methods which help to empower women

Land rights offer a key way to economically empower women, giving them the confidence they need to tackle gender inequalities. Often, women in developing and underdeveloped nations are legally restricted from their land on the sole basis of gender. Having a right to their land gives women a sort of bargaining power that they wouldn't normally have; in turn, they gain the ability to assert themselves in various aspects of their life, both in and outside of the home. In rural areas, women are not at all supported for education.

When women have monetary power it is a way for others to see them as equal members of society. Through this, they achieve more self-respect and confidence by their contributions to their communities. Simply including women as a part of a community can have sweeping positive effects.

Participation, which can be seen and gained in a variety of ways, has been argued to be the most beneficial form of gender empowerment. Political participation, be it the ability to vote and voice opinions, or the ability to run for office with a fair chance of being elected, plays a huge role in the empowerment of women. However, participation is not limited to the realm of politics. It can include participation in the household, in schools, and the ability to make choices for oneself. It can be said that this latter participation need to be achieved before one can move onto broader political participation. When women have the agency to do what they want, a higher equality between men and women is established. It is argued that microcredit also offers a way to provide empowerment for women. There are many Governments, organizations, and individuals which support women financially. They hope that lending money and credit allows women to function in business and society, which in turn empowers them to do more in their communities. One of the primary goals in the foundation of microfinance was women empowerment. Loans with low interest rates are given to women in developing communities in hopes that they can start a small business and provide for their families. It should be said, however, that the success and efficiency of microcredit and microloans is controversial and constantly debated.

FINDINGS

- Despite of Globalization, Liberalization there are still many areas in which women status have not been given equal status and equal work opportunities.
- There needs to be a drastic change in the thinking process of the men too to recognize and give equal status to women
- There is still a wide gap that exists in society even with lots of NGO and Government schemes working for the upliftment of the society.
- Illiteracy among women is the root cause of their problems.
- Empowerment of Women is only possible when the status of women would be increased in terms of their economic and social status and they could realize on their own that even they are human beings with lot of potential.

SUGGESTIONS

Education of women should be considered as need of the hour and importance must be given on priority basis in implementing various schemes. Awareness programmes should be organised from time to time to make women aware about their rights. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. They should be provided with proper wages and work at par with men so that their status can be elevated in the society. Strict implementation of Programmes and Acts should be there to curb the mal-practices prevalent in the society

CONCLUSION

A strong patriarchal society with deep- rooted socio-cultural values continues to affect the progress of women's empowerment in the country. The need of the hour is an egalitarian society, where there should be no place for gender superiority. Aim of Government policies should be to identify and eliminate forces that are directed towards keeping the tradition of male dominance over its female counterpart alive. Women constitute roughly 50% of the nation's population and a majority of them remain economically dependent, without employment. Many of them are even unaware of the fact that they are eligible for positions that men enjoy. The result is that the economy of the country is skewed due to underutilization of available human resources. Women are generally considered less competent, both intellectually as well as physically as compared with men. As a result the opportunities extended towards them become biased and obtrusive without actual evaluation of their competencies. While scientific data proclaims women to be more adept at multi-tasking than men, they still remain the second choice for employers in the country.

REFERENCES

Retrieved from <https://www.importantindia.com/19050/essay-on-women-empowerment/>

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

Retrieved from <http://www.wcd.nic.in/schemes-listing/2405>

Retrieved from <http://iosrjournals.org/iosr-jbm/papers/Vol17-issue4/Version-1/B017411319.pdf>

Retrieved from <file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/My%20Documents/Downloads/276-671-1-PB.pdf>

Retrieved from <http://www.ibmrjournal.com/index.php/ibmr/article/viewFile/46895/38546> Nagaraja, B. (2013). Empowerment of Women in India: A Critical Analysis. Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSRJHSS), 9(2), 45-52