

Searching Identities: Exploring Global Perceptions on Women Empowerment in 21st Century

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Abstract: Women empowerment – this topic in broader terms has always talked about women getting equal rights and position equal to that of men in the society, such equality which gives freedom, sense of independence and equal existential importance to women which men carry in the society.

It's an attempt to throw light on the various aspects of women empowerment across the world. To glance through the struggles of women and to talk about their journey of self-exploration, a journey of reassertion and making their mark in social, political, economic and other areas of life.

A well-known US writer, Sherrilyn Kenyon, gave a quote which says – “Power, true power, comes from within. Not without.” The statement stands true to the as regards the women empowerment, it is very much evident that women have won their struggles by realisation of ever existent power within her. It has provided an opportunity to the women, not only to grow but also to stand for their own rights. Women have to be aware of their rights to make most of the opportunity available to them.

The willingness to grow is the determining factor for women empowerment and gender equality. Another factor that has help to define women empowerment on clear terms is financial independence among women. This has added a new chapter to her self-worth, equipping herself with the new role of an empowered women.

Although even now, discrimination against women and girls, which includes gender-based violence, economic discrimination, reproductive health disparities, and harmful cultural practises, continues to be the most ubiquitous and continuous type of inequality that exists in the world.

Another focus regarding women empowerment is that there have numerous organisations and trusts that have campaigned for women, pushing for legal and policy reforms, gender-sensitive data gathering, and sponsoring programmes that boost women's health and have broaden their life opportunities. This in turn, has impacted the growth of women empowerment by educating them and making them known about their rights and standing for the same.

Keywords: women empowerment, reproductive, discrimination, independence, gender sensitive etc.

Introduction:

To dive deep into the topic, we need to understand more about as to how the concept was initiated for women empowerment and with time, be it decades, how such concept has been evolved and broadened itself in positive ends.

The postulation of empowering women got into existence when the lack of gender equality started to pinch in the minds and hearts of people, mainly, females.

Gender equality is a human right primarily. A woman has the right to a dignified life free of hunger and terror. Women's empowerment is also an important approach for development and poverty reduction. Gender equality is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals, demonstrating the importance of the issue.

Inequality towards females, even after much of involvement of social and traditional barriers, has remained the most extensive and persistent type of inequality. Such inequality now remains in forms of under-estimating females in terms of work, physical capabilities, etc. They have comparatively lower access to primary treatment, home ownership, and finance, learning, and profession opportunities than men even now in selected sections of the society.

The concern was initially to find out the why for such inequalities, but now, with progress of time, the focus is more on the “how” instead of the why of such differentiation. The question of gender inequality is not be answered but is chased to be removed from society.

Equal gender rights imply to a community in which females and males have equal access to opportunities,

achievements, liberties, and responsibilities in all aspects of living. Parity exists between men and women when both of them are able to share equally in the share of money and authority, enjoy identical prospects for economic freedom through job or owning a business, and have access to quality education as well as the opportunity to pursue personal goals.

Women's empowerment, with a focus on recognizing and rectifying social disparities and letting women have more liberty to handle their individual lifestyles, is a vital part of fostering gender equality. Female empowerment is necessary for long-term growth and the contentment of all civil rights.

Evaluating Aspects of Empowering Women and Establishing Equality:

It has been not a case that the issues related to women gender disparity have not been put a light upon. They have been tried to get through a limelight and get resolved. Several organisations and institutions have fought for women's rights, advocating for legal and policy reforms, gender-sensitive data collection, and funding programmes that enhance women's health and expand their opportunities in life.

The world has made a lot of notable progress of approximately ultimate gender parity, but it can often feel like growth has come to a standstill. For instance, Women comprise less than a fourth of the 535 members of the U.S. Congress, and only 5% of Fortune global 500 organizations have female CEOs as of previous year.

Apart from business holding and financial independence, the power of women to maintain their own fertility is essential to their empowerment and equality too. If a female is capable of planning her family, she is smart enough to plan the rest of her life too. She can be more dynamic and efficient in her work only when she is physically fit. And thus, when her reproductive rights are supported and secured, she has the freedom to participate more equally and fairly in society, comprising the right to choose the number, timeframe, and spacing of her kids, as well as the right to make reproductive choices free of bias, oppression, and abuse.

Also, educating girls is a step toward prosperity. It is the most effective method for reducing inequality and strengthening communities. Once we educate women, we too are helping to eliminate poverty. However,

girls and children all across the world suffer discrimination in numerous forms. Girls do not get enough nutrition, have inadequate access to primary healthcare, and there is a significant gender disparity in academics. As per a UN estimate, there are now 132 million females who are not in school. Poverty, sexual discrimination, gender-based assault, and a paucity of hygienic infrastructure in schools are some of the key obstacles that impede girls from getting educated.

Though various initiatives have been taken to boost women's education in India, the 86th Amendment To the constitution Act, 2002, is a notable achievement in this area. Elementary education became free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 14 years old as a result of this act. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was started as a result of this (SSA). SSA is the major initiative aimed at achieving Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) within a specific time frame.

It is not just the problems that have been shown a rose, but, definitely a massive notable positive change in the financial, academic, and overall growth has been seen in the last few years for women. Such changes, to be true, have happened solely because of the will power and efforts of women for their own development and getting rid of the disparities. As per a famous saying, by the renowned speaker Oprah Winfrey quotes "Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do."

Today, developing countries like India can see a lot of entrepreneurs and successful CEOs, on the urban level, as well as women leading self-help groups, having their small businesses set up along with government funding, when we talk about the rural level.

Pertaining to the disparities left, below could be some of the suggestions and usable solutions for achieving full gender equality and establishing the goals of feminism.

This begins from validating women's expression of self and implies that in the culture at large, women's experiences are largely undefined. So, when one witnesses a woman courageously speaking her mind and enabling herself to be open, one must celebrate her courage.

Next is acknowledging the discriminatory practises and biases against women based on the colour, age, sexual preference, gender, athletic capability, body structure, and socio - economic status. Structural

prejudice is caused mainly by unconscious disparities. When one observes a lack of recognition of skills and competency in the society for women specifically, one should start by reviewing their own opinions and facilitating the awareness of inequalities in the society. Men and male speeches are highly emphasized in executive groups, seminar programs, conference presentations, and press coverage. Thus, women supporting women is a necessity too. If one has been given opportunity to express themselves on these venues and pulpits being a woman, she must consider about how she could empower more women who really deserve recognition on such platform.

Also, females who run their own businesses are often mistreated and underestimated when it comes to raising capital for the business. According to statistics, there is a two times extra possibility of males of raising \$100,000 or more as compared to women. As a result, one must think towards ways to encourage women-owned and/or driven enterprises.

When a woman speaks upon a valid viewpoint, although it may contradict one's own opinion, one must respect the intellect and guts prior to expressing their alternate opinion.

According to numerous studies, women perform a significant level of administrative and psychological work, which mostly stays unappreciated and unacknowledged. Actively praising women's contributions to serve the organization, household, or society is a wonderful step to make them feel respected.

Honouring women in society for making the food, cleaning up the Messes, and for all the diverse tasks she does is a yet another way to achieve gender parity too.

Most of the above steps have been already initiated, but in a limited social group. The parity tends to take place when the entire society or community as a whole tries to make the change and treat women equally.

As a woman, it is also necessary to speak out and avail the rights and opportunities available to them in every sphere on the society. Globally, women, to name some, Malala Yousafzai, Kamla Bhasin, Greta Thunberg, Sudha Murthy are some great examples of leaders and activists who stood up for themselves and let the voice of the feminism rise.

Today, we live an era and a century wherein equality of opportunity is there, in every sphere, but the person

who wishes to avail the same will have to stand up, get it all by themselves. This is where women of the globe need to be aware of, all such opportunities, all the rights the constitution provides them with, and have all what they want to be.

The fact here is, with each decade passing by, definitely mentality and deeds of people towards women change, but such change is led by being aware of opportunities and rights available, and spreading such awareness among the needy.

Conclusion:

There is no finite limit up to which the discussion must be stretched for women empowerment or gender parity for women, as the topic comes a long way on its own journey.

But, to reach at the end, the actual end should be of the disparities happening globally against the females.

Considering women equal in minds and hearts by people and letting them feel equal to that of men, will be possibly leading to the righteous outcomes of this discussion.

Just the issues and launching of schemes, missions and movements are alone not enough to meet the needed results. Educated, aware and strong women are required to come up with their stand, raise their voices and set the goals of their wants of equality.

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