

Social Issues which Act as Hindrance to Women Empowerment

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Women have always been an integral and inseparable part of society. A society cannot progress and develop in proper sense by keeping its womenfolk backward. However, in spite of such importance of women in society, society has been discriminatory towards the women. Women's contribution and importance in the society has not been acknowledged. Hence they lag behind their male counterparts in many aspects of life. To enable the women to walk at equal pace with their male counterparts' women empowerment is necessary. There is less chance of overall development unless the condition of women is improved and no nation can flourish keeping half of its population in negligence and ignorance) so empowerment of women is preoccupation with political leaders and conscience keepers for a long time. As a result we have policies like giving 33% reservation to the women in rural and urban local govt. On educational front also govt. is giving free books to girl in school. In spite of all these policies and programmed we are yet to get desired result. It is so because there are some constraints in the women empowerment process. We need to recognize and understand these problems to get desired result. As per my understanding the factors which act as the hindrance to women empowerment are:-

1) Gender Typing;- "Gender typing is a term that is usually reserved for a description of the larger social process by which the tasks within a given sphere of activity are divided upon the basis of sex"¹. The role of man and woman in society are well defined. And both man and woman are expected to perform those functions within family and society which are assigned to them socially and culturally. From the childhood, boys and girls are treated differently. The girls are trained to bear and look after the children and household chores. On the other hand. Boys are considered as head of the family, decision makers, bread winner and owner of the family property. Boys and girls are brought up keeping these things in mind. Girls are expected to be gentle, mild, caring etc. On the other hand boys are encouraged to be bold, strong and assertive. As a result women remain under control of male member of their family.

2) Economic factor;- economic factor is another hindrance in the empowerment process. When we talk about women empowerment we cannot ignore property rights. In our male dominated society all the

moveable and immovable property belongs to the male member of the family. Father is the head of family. He distributes his property among his sons. If the parent wants to give some property to their daughter, they have to take consent of their son or clansmen. Without their consent a daughter could not get anything from their parents. So the male members of the society are more secure and independent economically. However, in case of women they have to struggle to become economically independent. At present time lots of working women are there. Nevertheless, the ratio of working women is far less than their male colleagues.

3) Patriarchal nature of the society: - our societies are patriarchal. Father or male member of the family is the head of the family. Every decision affecting the family is taken by the father. Consequently, the female members are not confident enough to take decision on their own. They become dependent on male members of their family.

4) Village councils: if we talk about Arunachal tribal societies, every tribe has their own village council. For instance, Adis Have Kebang, Apatani have buliang system etc. One common feature of these councils is absence of women member. For instance, Ac. talukdar wrote, "women taking part in kebang was considered as taboo"² while doing PhD I found that women were too busy in their household chores to participate in the deliberation of the Kebang. In due course of time it became convention that women should not take part in the proceedings of the Kebang. As a result women never get chance to take part in the decision making process pertaining to society.

However, we can overcome above cited hindrance. To overcome these hindrances we need to.

1) Reassess gendering process. Parents need to instill the sense of equality among their children. Treat them equally and make them feel that they are equally important. For example, in our society it is ok even if the son does not come home early in the evening. But in case of daughter they have to reach home by 6 or 7 pm. If girl do not come home on time then they will sent someone to look for their daughter.

2) To quote Bina Agarwal, "women's struggle for their legitimate share in the landed property can prove to be the single most critical entry point for women's empowerment"³. The women need the property rights. It will take some time to change the mindset of the people completely. However to bring complete changes in the outlook of the people the women themselves have to take initiative. Generally, the property especially, the immovable properties like landed property and houses are both-means of livelihood and security for the old age. So whosoever inherits the property have to take care of the real owner of the property as well. So the daughters have to prove to their parents in particular and society in general that they can be as good as son if not better in looking after their parents. The daughter should come forward to bear the responsibility of their old parents.

3) The male member of the society should come forward and help to bring out their female counterparts from their slumber. They should have faith on the capacity and efficiency of the women and encourage them (women) to participate in the decision making process

4) It is said education is the manifestation of the perfection which is already in man. So to bring out the ability of the women more emphasis should be put on girl's education. Along with regular course the educational institution should impart decision making and managerial skill. Moreover, govt. should

continue the reservation of seat for women in rural and urban local govt. Along with these govt. should implement adequate policy to help the women to become financially independent

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1. Siddiqi, F. Ehtesham." Women and politics, pressure of Ideology." Kanishka Publishers, 1999, p.143.
2. Talukdar, A.C." Political Transition in Grassroots in Tribal
3. Agarwal, Bina." A Field of one's own. Gender and Land Rights in South Asia". Cambridge University Press and Foundation Books, New Delhi, 1994. P. 18.

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