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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND IT'S CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

“Pita rakshati kumara pati rakshati yavvane rakshanti stavire putra; na stree swatantram arahati” One of the major smritikara Manu states in his smriti that a girl should never be left free; instead, she should always have protection from her father throughout her childhood, her husband during her marriage and her son during her old age¹. The underlying meaning of this verse, according to British author Kerry Brown, is that women are cared for in Hinduism not because they are less than or incapable of doing things, but rather because they are valued. She is the society's pride and strength. Women should always be protected, just as the crown jewels should always be kept safe. There was time when a woman was confined within the four walls of the kitchen looking after the household chores which mainly included cooking and looking after the primary requirements of the husband, children and family members there was increasing emphasis on women's education as the society realized that education was the foundation on which a woman had to build up her all round personality which in the analysis was beneficial to the family concerned as well as the society². Over the course of the year, human development has undergone several phases of change and has highlighted the necessity of empowering everyone, especially women, by advocating, creating and organizing programs inside the framework of the agenda for human development. They will be able to contribute to the process of national development as a result, becoming self-sufficient on the basis of social justice, equality and participation.

KEYWORDS

Women empowerment, Self-sufficient and Conceptual perspective.

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INTRODUCTION

The literal meaning of empowerment is “to enable”. Greater power access for the disadvantaged or vulnerable population is referred to as empowerment. In its most basic form, woman empowerment refers to the redistribution of power in opposition to male authority and patriarchal ideology. It is a procedure as well as the outcome of the procedure. In essence, empowerment is changing

the organizations or structures that support and uphold gender inequality. It's a procedure that gives women authority over and access to material and information resources. On the other hand, equality, independence, and respect for women start at home. The achievement of gender equality within the family serves as the cornerstone for women's empowerment in other spheres. The women's movement established the notion of women's empowerment globally. It ~implies struggle that is, learning to deal with the forces of oppression. It involves an intentional and conscious intervention together with efforts to enhance the quality of life with a vision of a new society.

The ability of women to make wise decisions in life when they had previously been denied that ability is referred to as women's empowerment. Women empowerment is a process through which women acquire authority and autonomy over their lives, enabling them to participate in decision-making and exercise choice. One of the definitions of women empowerment is "Women's empowerment is, basically, giving power to women in a space of society where they didn't have it. It is a process of making them part of the decision process in a certain area where they didn't have it."

Sustainable Development Goal 5, is "to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". Women's empowerment has five elements: Women's self-esteem: (i) their independence in decision-making (ii) Their right to make decisions (iii) Their right to resources and opportunities (iv) The capacity to manage their own lives, both within and without the familial sphere: (v) Their capacity to effect social change to establish a more equitable social and economic system both domestically and internationally³. Empowerment is a process that involves both the individual and the group. People most frequently start to gain knowledge and the capacity to plan, act, and effect change through their participation in groups. Empowerment, then, is a process of raising consciousness and developing ability that results in increased involvement in making decisions (control and power) and taking transformative action. Women's empowerment's primary goal is to

Achieve fairness and equality for men and women. Provide women the chance to reach their greatest potential.

Complete female participation in the formulation of public policy, the process of making decisions, and all facets of the political, social, and cultural spheres as participants, beneficiaries, and active decision-makers.

To guarantee that both men and women obtain the education needed to fulfill their fundamental needs and enjoy their human rights⁴.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT MEDIEVAL AND MODERN ERA:

When looking into ancient history women have been given adorable positions or status by worshipping her as goddess. During the Vedic time, she was referred to as Sahadharmini. She was associated with nature. She possesses creative prowess. In the Vedic period, women had the right to education. Consequently, Brahmavadini remained unmarried throughout her life and pursued enlightenment. Nonetheless, restrictive traditions like as child marriage and sati were absent until the time of marriage; however, women lacked property rights. There exist two perspectives concerning women in India. One perspective advocates for gender equality, whilst the other perspective regards women as inferior. It is referred to as "Apastambhthat" when a woman is traversing the street, and all individuals should pause for her⁵.

Women students were divided into 2 classes brahmavadhini and sadyodyas. Many lady scholars such as Maitreyi and Gargi actively participated in debates and political affairs.

The Islamic dominion in India commenced during the medieval era. Consequently, the interplay between Hindus and Muslims shaped the tradition. Efforts were undertaken to safeguard Hinduism and women from Islam, owing to the cultural disparities between the two religions. As a result, the woman's already low standing was further lowered, making her already poor status even more subordinate¹². Hindu women were thus restricted behind four walls. Muslim women too lived in appalling conditions. She had to spend her life under a *parada* because she

was not granted any rights. They consequently had a very low quality of life.

The Indians were introduced to a new form of capitalism and colonialism at the outset of British administration in India in the early 1800s. In an effort to demonstrate their moral superiority at this time, the British assumed that Indian women belonged to a subjugated minority. With Lord Betting's assistance, Indian social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy passed the Prohibition of Sati Act for the first time in 1829. Acknowledging that the confinement of women was the primary cause of Indians' backwardness, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule established Pune's first school for females in 1848. The lives of Indian women started to alter as a result of this extremely revolutionary choice. 14 Widow remarriage was eventually legalized in 1856, but the community at the time did not accept it. Mahatma Phule later established a house to prevent child murder. According to Mahatma and Savitribai Phule, widows, abandoned, and destitute women in a society where men are the victims of injustice should not commit suicide. Instead, they should give birth to their children in a home intended to prevent child murder and then take the child home if they so choose.

The British educational system was initially used to educate women. Pandita Ramabai and Tarabai Shinde discussed the tradition of truth-seeking rebellion. Women made up a small minority of those involved in the freedom struggle. Women started to participate more in the political, social, economic, and educational arenas as well. However, women's status has not changed significantly in the system that is dominated by men.

Following independence, democracy was embraced. India approved its own constitution. Women and men are granted the same rights under the Constitution. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was chosen to serve as the Indian Legislative Council's Law Minister. In an attempt to advance gender equality, he introduced the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament, but the leaders of the day, who were mostly men, rejected it. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had the guts to leave his position in response to this. In order to offer women's intelligence, actions, and labor force

more visibility, numerous women's liberation organizations were founded after that. These groups promote awareness, self-worth, and self-respect in an effort to support women's holistic development. In the domains of education, literature, art, politics, and sociology, women have today proven themselves.

For Indian society, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are crucial. Indian women's lives have seen literally hundreds of significant transformations during this time. The woman's personality evolved during this time, and her existence in her family, community and culture took on new significance. A new perspective on women is emerging in society. The most important thing is that a woman develops a new viewpoint on herself and many aspects of life when she discovers her own worth. In the current day, you have learned to make decisions regarding your own personality development. As a result, as one becomes aware of all the hidden talents and experiences within their own personality, their own identity begins to change⁶.

GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Equitable access to socially valued commodities, opportunities, resources, and incentives for both men as well as women is essential for achieving gender equality. It expresses the concern that men and women should have an equal opportunity to make decisions and cooperate to achieve a shared goal. It is well acknowledged that women in our culture do not possess the same legal, political, and social rights as men. According to the economic profile, women makeup 50% of the population, 30% of the formal labor force, work 60% of the working week, earn 10% of global revenue and own less than 1% of all property. The socioeconomic impact of economic development on gender is a very vital area of concern economic development should provide better opportunities for females to have better health and other basic facilities, education, and employment and other basic amenities will lead to improved health status and can easily contribute for the family as well as for the society.

Currently, the most widely used indicators of empowerment are probably the hardest to measure. These include participation in household and

political-administrative power structures, access to financial resources, education, and knowledge, as well as general development index and human development index. All other indicators are calculated by a group.

Men and a woman are the two sides of the same coin; both are human beings. However, in a male-dominated society empowering women is very crucial. Women do have a fundamental right to leave and work with dignity. Even though from the ancient time women have been worshipped in India, it was in 1992 that the National Commission for a woman was established age it has been taught to women that real women are ones who do not and should not take care of themselves but always take care of others but now women have to muster the courage to take a charge of their life. They have to acquire knowledge for their empowerment because knowledge is the power and education is the foundation stone for a woman coming to their own.

Real empowerment means the power to bring about changes in a situation of inequality and discrimination. It also refers to having power over material possessions, knowledge, and ideas. It involves interrogating existing power systems and asserting more control over sources of power. The definition of empowerment is the growth of a woman's capacity to effectively manage her home and economic environment. It does not imply that some women will be empowered at the expense of other women. Rather, empowerment is self-governance, self-sufficiency and self-maintenance.

CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARD FOR WOMEN

The constitution of India is unique in its content our constitution throbbing as it is with the signature tune of Social Justice is the reserved not of a political revolution but is the result of intellectual deliberation debate and Persuasion by towering personalities values have since remained unsurpassed. The concept of equality and Justice in the entire constitution as justice constitutional law is not an omnipotent abstraction or a distant idolization but principled and result-oriented. By and large, the legislature has an acted law beneficial to the women

and the judiciary with the judicial dexterity and its command has contributed its might towards enhancing the status and comfortability of an Indian woman though taken at any point of a time there would be miles to go before we call it a day.

Women and equality and reservation: Article 14 15 16 243 D of the Indian Constitution. The right to equality as well as equal protection of the rights is dealt with under Article 14. The right not to be discriminated against is dealt with under Article 15. The right of equal opportunity in public employment is dealt with in article 16 article 243D deals with reservation for a woman in a Panchayat and municipality elections respectively. In the *Savita Shyam Devi*⁷ case Supreme Court held that the government cannot discriminate among women on account of marriage. According to the railway circular, a married daughter or retiring official may only be eligible for government quarter regularization if the father did not have any sons. A daughter is a daughter for the rest of her life, and a son is a son until he marries, according to a legal platform that supported the submission that the ruling was invalid because it was gender discriminatory.

Political reservation for women in panchayat: The Constitution's directive principle, as stated in Article 40, mandates that the state take action to establish village panchayats and offer them the essential powers to function as units of self-government. The 73rd and 74th Amendment Act of 1992 established reserved seats for women in panchayats.

Article 243 D of the Panchayat reserves a seat for a woman. Every panchayat has a seat set aside for members of the SC and ST. The number of seats reserved will correspond to the total number of seats up for election in that Panchayat, with the population of the SC and ST in that Panchayat being determined by the area's overall population.

Not less than 1/3 seats out of the seats reserved under clause (1) for ST and SC shall be reserved for women belonging to the scheduled cast and scheduled tribe.

Articles 19 through 21 grant women the freedom to exercise their right to freedom of speech and expression in association with or during an

assembly, as well as the right to reside and settle anywhere in India, as well as the ability to pursue any career path or engage in any type of business start or occupation.

The importance of life and personal liberty cannot be overstated; without them, all other rights and freedoms-whether fundamental or not-are nullified. Article 21 of the Constitution mandates that no person will be deprived of life or personal liberty except in accordance with appropriate legal process. Personal liberty was held to include all the Liberty mentioned in Article 19 with the new interpretation of personal liberty and life procedure established by Long Coat got armed with jurisdiction to entertain challenge to the loss fast by the legislatures questioning their reasonable lesson and justice ness.

*In Air India versus Nargesh Meerza*⁸, the court held that reasonable classification is permissible under Article 14 of the Indian Constitution discrimination against equals or individuals in similar circumstances is not allowed. The court condemned the authority's uncontrolled discretion and emphasized the significance of pertinent criteria and factors while determining the retirement age. Although the court threw down discriminatory and irrational clauses, it affirmed the validity of certain service laws.

*In Vaisakha Vs State Of Rajasthan*⁹ the Supreme Court ruled that it is the employer's duty to stop sexual harassment of working women in public or private institutions.

Women and right to basic needs and protection against exploitation Article 23 and 24: purchasing and selling of individuals as commodities, including the illicit trade in women and children for illegal or other purposes¹⁰.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL LEGISLATIONS

“Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good Nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of a woman is essential as the thoughts and their value systems lead to the development of good family, society and ultimately a good Nation.”

A.P.J Abdul Kalam.

Women constitute a particularly vulnerable group in our society for a variety of historical and sociocultural reasons. Numerous macro-indicators pertaining to economic activity, education, health, and unfavorable status of women. A large segment of women is physically weak but they are center of the family. Gender equality results in societal coherence, which is harmful to a country's growth process. Therefore, in any national planning process, women's empowerment must be given top attention.

Social legislation relating to women's issues

The Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act 1994

Hindu Widows Remarriage “Act 1856

The Child Marriage Restraint Act 1978

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971

The Dowry Prohibition Act” 1961

The Family Court Act 1984

Hindu Marriage Act 1955

In decent Representation of a Woman (prohibition) Act 1986

Hindu Succession Act 1956, amended in 2005.

POLICIES AND VARIOUS PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

Various initiatives and programs are being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to empower women by integrating them into all areas of the national economy. Here are the specifics:

One Stop Centre and Universalization of Women Helplines: The One Stop Center and the Universalization of Women Helplines programs are two Nirbhaya Fund initiatives that are managed by the Ministry of WCD. The One Stop Centers (OSCs), also referred to as Sakhi Centers, are designed to provide women who have experienced violence-that includes domestic abuse-with various integrated services under one roof. These services include police support, medical assistance, legal aid as well as counseling, psycho-social counseling and temporary housing, among other things. The Women Helpline (WHL) Program connects women who have experienced violence in public and private settings with the necessary authorities, including the police, one-stop center, hospital, legal services, etc., offering them a round-the-clock emergency and non-

emergency response. WHL offers information about women's welfare programs and schemes across the nation, as well as rescue van and counseling services to assist women in need. Women can use the Women Helpline's services by dialing the short code 181.

Swadhar Greh Scheme

The Swadhar Greh Scheme is a centrally sponsored program designed to assist women who have been subjected to adversity and require institutional support for rehabilitation in order to live respectable lives.

Ujjawala Scheme

A centrally sponsored program called Ujjawala is being implemented to prevent human trafficking and to rescue, rehabilitate, reintegrate and repatriate victims of trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.

Working Women Hostel

The government's Working Women Hostel Scheme seeks to provide working women with secure, conveniently located lodging and, when possible, childcare services in urban, semi-urban, or rural locations with employment prospects for women.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao(BBBP)

Initiated on January 22, 2015, the BBBP Scheme seeks to tackle declining child-sex ratios (CSR) and associated issues concerning the empowerment of women and girls over their lifespans. The effort seeks to prevent gender-biased sex-selective elimination, ensure the survival of female children, and foster their education and participation.

Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK)

In order to empower rural women via community involvement, the Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) Scheme was approved in November 2017 as a centrally supported initiative. The intends to make it easier for plans and initiatives targeted at women to converge across sectors. Except for the Northeast and Special Category States, which have a funding ratio of 90:10, the program is managed by State Governments and Union Territory Administrations at a 60:40 cost-sharing ratio with the states. Central financing is fully available for Union Territories.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

This is a Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme that is centrally sponsored and is slated to be implemented nationwide on January 1, 2017. All pregnant women and lactating mothers (PW and LM) are eligible for the maternity benefit under PMMVY, with the exception of PW and LM who work regularly for the federal government, state governments, public sector undertakings (PSUs), or who receive similar advantages for their first living child from any currently enacted law. When an individual satisfies specific nutritional and health-seeking requirements, the program pays out Rs. 5,000 in three payments to the qualifying beneficiary during pregnancy and lactation. Following an institutional delivery, the qualified recipient additionally receives the remaining monetary incentive under the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) towards maternity benefit, with an average payout of Rs. 6,000.

The Ministry has launched "Mission Shakti" (Integrated Women Empowerment Program), a comprehensive plan aimed at enhancing activities for women's empowerment, safety, and security. The initiative seeks to enhance digital infrastructure for last-mile service tracking while realizing the government's vision of "women-led development" by tackling issues affecting women throughout their lives and integrating them as equal partners in nation-building through collaboration among Ministries/Departments and various governance levels, augmented support and involvement from Panchayats as well as local governance bodies and Jan Sahabagita¹¹.

CONCLUSION

With significant continuity from the colonial past, the State's governmental system has stayed mostly unchanged during the last fifty years or so. The agencies responsible for putting various policies into action have not changed, despite the fact that they are constantly being developed and revised for the social advancement and empowerment of women. As a result, the standing of women belonging to these groups in society has not changed significantly. Through a variety of group activities both inside and

outside of these political organizations, the marginalized groups within society as a whole and women within these groups specifically, have defined the art of their fight against oppression and disempowerment. They have encountered modernity's powers. Now they face globalization and the danger of co-option in the integrated world. Will these processes of co-option and integration be on an equal term? Across caste, class, ethnicity and national barriers, women comprise the majority of marginalized groups. But given the change in the social development approach, women's status, particularly that of those from marginalized groups, is extremely precarious. For them, the empowering process goes beyond a mere legal mandate that they must receive from above. It is more of a process that needs to be revitalized via grassroots initiative. In actuality, the process of empowerment seeks to dismantle the subordination system. It instantly searches for changes to the societal structures that now exist and justifies the subordination of women and other oppressed groups. An alternative order that can sustain the process of new identity development for a significant amount of time is brought about by this shift, which is further enhanced by the process of new collective identity construction that has the ability to question and challenge the pre-existing order. In this case, social movements are essential to the development of a new collective identity.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We declare that we have no conflict of interest.

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