

The Realization of Gender Equality VIA Economic Empowerment of Women in West Bengal

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Abstract

Education and Employment occupy top priority amongst various measures, taken to improve the status of women in India. A situational analysis of social and economic status of women reflect less than satisfactory achievement in all most all important human development indicators such as education employment health etc. Education backwards is a major reason for the women lagging behind (Valsamma Antony 2005). The national commission on status of women (1975) status, “denial of education and early marriage prevented the development of personality and nationality of women. Stinted and crippled personality affected the harmony of the family atmosphere, working the bonds of family” Mahajon opines “Moran more educated women are taking up new occupational roles. Employment and income provide them with recognition, status of scene of achievement and ensure for them and quality of status with men”. The disadvantage situation of women in the employment exclude them from the structure of decision making of power. So education employment and empowerment and the true vital weapons that have been recognised as powerful tools in ensuring the up liftmen of women, with education comes employment and with this comes economic freedom, upon which the edifice of empowerment is built, only when this achieved, can we hope for a transformation in the feudalistic pattern of society in India. In recognise of the fact, the present study attempted to determine the employment status of women. It also attempted to find out the relationship between employment and women empowerment.

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Introduction

Women workforce constitutes an integral part of total workforce in India. On 31st March 2004, women constituted 19 per cent of the total workforce. The participation of women in the labour force has always been lower than that of men, in the rural as well as urban areas. The work participation rate for women has increased significantly. In 1981, work participation rate for women only 19.67 per cent which increased up to 22.73 per cent in 1991 and 26.68 per cent in 2001. In the women workforce, women from rural areas are greater in number as compared to the urban women. Amongst rural women workers, a majority is employed in agriculture and some are employed in cottage industries. In the urban areas, women workers are primarily employed in the unorganised sectors. As on 31st March, 2005 a total number of 50.16 Lacs women employee were engaged in the

organized sector, out of which 29.21 Lacs (58 per cent) in the public sector and 20.95 Lacs (42 per cent) in the Private Sector.

Objective of the Study

1. To study the participation rate of women in employment in India.
2. To analyses the nature of participation of women in employment in India.
3. To study occupational distribution of women in India.
4. To study gender gap in participation of economic activities in India.
5. To study an inter-state analysis of women participation of labour force.
6. To study the study occupational distribution of women in West Bengal.

7. To study Rural-urban disparity in female participation in workforce in West Bengal.
8. To study the relationship among education, employment and women empowerment.
9. To study the government policies, programmes and Schemes for women empowerment leading women empowerment.
10. To study an inter-district analysis of women participation in labour force in West Bengal.
11. To suggest some measures to improve the status of women in society.

Justification of the Study

The process of empowerment of women depends crucially on their economic empowerment women economic empowerment is also futile essential for raising their status. Education and employment have direct bearing on economic empowerment.

Economic condition determine the social status of an individual "Freedom depends on the economic condition even more than political. It a women is not economically free and self-earning she will have to depend on her husband on some one class and depends are never tree." (Pandit Nehru). Economically independent women will be a force in political decision making and development of areas. So making women economically independent is the first step to women empowerment. This makes a significant difference in women status.

Employment that can be termed as human capital is the key factor and important investment in the development process. It is the deciding factor by way of which, the quality of life of people can be measured. According to UNDP guidelines women's economic participation is an important element of the gender empowerment measures (GEM). Earned income is initiator in the process of increasing capabilities and entitlement of women.

Unemployment means wastage of man power and productive effort (Lucy Mair, an introduction to social Anthropology, Oxford University press, London, 1972).The problem of poverty is the problem of unemployment, Employment of women paves the way for women's integration in the process of national development. As a wife the women's status did not give her control over the family income which remained with the husbands who decided the expenditure pattern for the family. An increase of women anticipation in employment would help in improving their economic and social status. There is also a direct relationship between women's employment and well-being of the community.

The status of women like that of any section of population is connected with their economic position and their opportunities for participation in economic activities. The rational for (Economically empowering women) employment of women is for both for its own sake (intrinsic) and for the spill over benefits (instrumental): Research indicated that economic participation of women their presence in the work force is quantitative terms is important not only in reducing the disproportionate levels of poverty among women, but also as an important step toward raising household income and encouraging economic development in countries as a whole.

The Department of Economic and social Affairs world's women 2000 noted higher rates of employment for women than for men and a higher proportion of women than men in the informal economy. The Report found that women spend more time doing unpaid work and less time earning money for their labour than men. It suggest that assets controlled by

women have a more positive and significant effect on expenditures for children.

It is very important for a woman to be economically independent because it gives a woman more freedom of choice action and thought and enhance the ability to make decision. This motivates researcher to select the problem.

Methodology

It is documentary study. Documentary survey of primary and secondary sources is unable to researcher to make content analysis and to arrive at conclusions. The primary sources is government report and book. The secondary sources were different books and journal published by different writers and scholars.

DE-limitation

There are two official sources of data on employment in India. The decennial population census and the National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted by the National Sample Surveys organisation (NNSO) of the government of India. So the study is de-limited true latest census report and NSSO reports, India and West Bengal.

Significance of the Study

The study may have sociological, economical and educational significance. It will be of immense value to researcher, social scientist, educationist's women's associations, social agencies, NGO's etc. It provoke new thoughts and strengthen the existing knowledge related to the field. It wills great interest and curiosity among the student, scholars, various organisation of women welfare, social Scientist, economist and the general Leader. It will be useful to those concerned with the up liftmen of women. It would help to emerge for the researchers. The study will also very helpful to planners, administrator and policy maker of formulate plans, policies. Perform strategies in right perspective as far as development of women is connected. It is hopped that this study will enlighten women social workers. Their organisation, social welfare administration and social researchers are alike.

Research Questions

- What is the women's employment participation Rate?
- What is the nature of participation of women in employment?
- What is the role of education in empowering women?
- What is the government steps for empowering women including economic empowerment?

Terms Defined

Economic Participation

Economic participation means any incomes generating activities. The terms used in this study such as work, employment and economic participation are synomanus.

Empowerment

- It means recognising women's contribution women's knowledge.
- It means helping women fight their own fears, and feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.
- It means women enhancing their self-respect and self - dignity.
- It means women controlling their own bodies.
- It means women becoming economically independent and self-reliant.

- It means women controlling resources like land and property.
- It means reducing women's burden of work, especially within the home.
- It means promoting qualities of nurturing, carrying, Gentleness, not just in.

Findings

- Throughout India labour force participation by women is much higher in rural than in urban areas. And the rural, urban differences are substantial.
- Women's work participation rate differs widely from state to state the study revealed that there are wide variations in the female participation rate within the state.
- Majority of women workers are employed in the rural areas. Amongst rural women workers, 87% are employed in agricultural as labourers and cultivators. Amongst women workers in urban areas, about 80% are employed in unorganised sectors like household industries, pretty trades and services, building and construction, etc.
- In primary sector, they play an important role in the crop production as cultivators and agricultural labourers. Participation rate of women in non-agricultural work is very low in India as well as West Bengal.
- In the state, 29.5 million population forming 36.8 percent of the population.
- At the state level 7.1 million females (18.3%) had been recorded as worker in 2001. The female work participation rate has increased.

Suggestion

- Formation of adolescent girls plumbs at each gram panchayat who are not going for formal education.
- Provision of life skill education.
- Provision of nutrition and home nursing training.
- Provision of vocational training leading to self-employed.
- Basic literacy and numeric skills.
- Adolescent anemia program.
- Provision of learning through exposure visits.
- Legal literacy.
- Create awareness among them about social civil search as child marriage, illiteracy, etc.
- Women aware of their own potential.
- Equity with appropriate skill for save mother hood.
- To increase the participation in development program.
- Provides services to improve working condition.
- Encourage to take up employment and income generation activity.
- Mobilization of banking sector to increase landing on easier terms to women entrepreneurs and producers, especially entrepreneurs and producers, especially in the rural areas.
- The ratio of female to male workers concentrated in the unorganised sector is also unfavorable to women workers concentrate.

Conclusion

The study revile the women constitute a significant part of the workforce in India. Inspire of government effort in counter parts. There are some problems before women which prevent them to participating activity in economic activities. If this problem is minimized. They can contribute more in development activities. In the context of economic liberalisation, the quality of women's empowerment will

depend upon several factors. Chief amongst these are access to education and skill development training.

In both these areas women continue to lag behind men. The solution lies in creating condition and opportunities which are conducive for women to work in increasingly productive and remunerative sectors of the economy with freedom. The issues requiring priority attention in the coming years are.

- a) Creating and strengthening an accurate and authentic data base on women workers in all sectors of employment. Covering both organized and unorganised sectors. This could be used as a tool of planning for both legislative as well as administrative intervention by the Government to protect and safeguard the interest of women workers in different fields of work and under different conditions of employment.
- b) Technological change tend to displace women more than men primary on account of lack of education, orientation, trainning and skill development programmes.
- c) Carrying out research studies on problem of women workers, their employability and the extent of their displacement on account of technological and various other changes.

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