



Women employees empowerment in India

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Abstract

In the present social and economic environment women are not treated on equal parameters with the males regarding issues like having authority in the family, property rights, employment opportunities, social and security aspects. National data collection agencies accept that statistics seriously understate women's contribution as workers. However, there are far fewer women than men in the paid workforce. Development of women has been a policy objective of the government since independence. Until the 70s the concept of women's development was mainly welfare oriented. In 1970s, there was a shift from welfare approach to development approach that recognized the mutually reinforcing nature of the process of development the civilization of the country will undergo a noteworthy positive change with educated and financially sound women folk. Given that one-third of the estimated 480 million jobs in the country are being performed by women, more than half of the advertising is targeted towards the homemaker.

Keywords: women, empowerment, development, employment and trends

Introduction

The early Vedic period suggests that Indian women enjoyed the status of equality with men in terms of social freedom, education and other rights. But with time their condition deteriorated as we started living in a male dominated society. In the present social and economic environment women are not treated on equal parameters with the males regarding issues like having authority in the family, property rights, employment opportunities, social and security aspects. Females face different kinds of exploitation in Indian economy and the panacea to all female exploitation is women empowerment in terms of financial status. A strong patriarchal society with deep-rooted socio - culture values continues to affect gender equity and women's empowerment. With time Indian women have evolved under the British rule as well as in the independent economy due to various cultural and economic exposures. Now they participate fully in areas such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology, etc.

Overview of the currently wage-employed women

Education and employment are the two basic tools which can change the economic and social status of females in the near future as well as over a long time. Further women empowerment is the utmost requirement for the inclusive growth and development of a nation like India which is emerging over time and accounts for 614.4 million female population (1.27 billion total populations). According to the 2011 census female literacy rate happens to be 65.56% as compared to male literacy of 82.14%. If we consider the next major issue which can lead to female empowerment then disguised employment underpayment of remuneration is quite visible. Contrary to common perception, a large percentage of

women in India work. National data collection agencies accept that statistics seriously understate women's contribution as workers. However, there are far fewer women than men in the paid work force. In urban India, women participate in the workforce in impressive numbers.

According to the ILO's Global Employment Trends 2013 report, India's labour force participation rate for women fell from just over 37 per cent in 2004-05 to 29 per cent in 2009-10. Out of 131 countries with available data, India ranks 11th from the bottom in female labour force participation. Also according to the International Labour Organization, India ranks in the bottom 20 of a list of 131 countries in female labour force participation. Senior level female employees in India are just 5 per cent compared to the global average of 20 per cent. In India almost 48 per cent women drop out of workforce before they reach the middle of their careers, compared to the Asia regional average of 29 per cent. If we consider women employment in general, Indian women lack behind when compared to south Asian countries or even the BRICS. Female employment in India grew by 9 million between 1994 and 2010, but the ILO estimates that it could have increased by almost double if women had equal access to employment in the same industries and occupations as their male counterparts.

As per Census of Central Government Employees, in 2001, the female employment in Central Government is 2.92 lakhs which is only 7.53 % of the total employment in Central Government. As per Census 2001, at all India level, 10.35 % households are female headed and the average size of female headed households is 4.00 whereas the average household size for male headed households is 5.4. Further the knowledge economy has certainly created a large number of never before opportunities for women particularly in the service sector.

In our day to day life we meet many management and techno-savvy women professionals who are eager to plunge into the world of business. Recent statistics show that as per Census 2011, the work participation rate for women is 25.51 percent as compared to 25.63 per cent in 2001. The Work Participation Rate of Women has reduced marginally in 2011 but there is an improvement from 22.27 per cent in 1991 and 19.67 per cent in 1981. The work participation rate for women in rural areas is 30.02 per cent as compared to 15.44 per cent in the urban areas. In so far as the organized sector is concerned, in March, 2011 women workers constituted 20.5 percent of total employment in organized sector in the country which is higher by 0.1 percent as compared to the preceding year.

As per the last Employment Review by Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T), on 31st March, 2011, about 59.54 lakh women workers were employed in the organized sector (Public and Private Sector). Of this, nearly 32.14 lakh women were employed in community, social and personal service sector.

Problems faced by women employees

Women in India and even other countries face gender biasness and at times working in government or private organizations lead to any types of exploitations like low wage rates as compared to their male counterparts, sexual harassment, family pressure etc. Self-employed women or upcoming female entrepreneurs are free from few of the above mentioned problems. The government is also trying to tap the skills of these ambitious females by providing them the required support. But the fact remains that females face immense problems in rural as well as urban areas to start a business.

Government schemes to empower women

Development of women has been a policy objective of the government since independence. Until the 70s the concept of women's development was mainly welfare oriented. In 1970s, there was a shift from welfare approach to development approach that recognized the mutually reinforcing nature of the process of development. In the 80s a multi-disciplinary approach was adopted with an emphasis on three core areas of health, education and employment. The government has come up with many schemes from time to time to educate females. To name a few: Mahila Samakhyas Programme, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, and National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level. Also a Nirbhaya scheme was started in the union budget in 2013 to support initiatives by the government and NGOs working towards protecting the dignity and ensuring safety of women in India. Though the government has come up with many schemes for social welfare of the weaker sex, the end result has been depressing because the implementation process is either very slow or graft and nepotism is very prevalent in the economy. Government should take special care to implement the policies with honesty and on time so that the growth process of the nation speeds up. Along with it the private sector should also take the initiative in assisting women skill formation. And finally well educated, financially sound and resource full women should take necessary steps to help uneducated and

poor women in attaining education as well as vocational trainings for required skill formation which open up employment opportunities for the needful.

Growth trends in women employment in recent years

The ministry of labour and employment has published few facts regarding growth trends in women employment. Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce. According to the information provided by the office of Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, As per Census 2011, the total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million and female workers in rural and urban areas are 121.8 and 28.0 million respectively. Out of total 149.8 million female workers, 35.9 million females are working as cultivators and another 61.5 million are agricultural labourers. Of the remaining females' workers, 8.5 million are in household Industry and 43.7 million are classified as other workers.

According to one study few facts are worth mentioning

- The workforce participation rate of females in rural sector was 26.1 in 2009-10 while that for males was 54.7. In Urban sector, it was 13.8 for females and 54.3 for males
- Among the States/Union Territories, workforce participation rate of females in the rural sector was the highest in Himachal Pradesh at 46.8% and in the urban sector it was the highest in Mizoram at 28.8%.
- In the rural sector, 55.7% females were self-employed, 4.4% females had regular wage/salaried employment and 39.9% females were casual labourers compared with 53.5%, 8.5% and 38.0% males in the same categories respectively.
- A total of 20.4% women were employed in the organized sector in 2010 with 17.9% working in the public sector and 24.5% in the private.
- The labour force participation rate of women across all age-groups was 20.8 in rural sector and 12.8 in urban sector compared with 54.8 and 55.6 for men in the rural and urban sectors respectively in 2009-10

Impact of women employment on Indian economy

India is an emerging economy with eye catching demographic dividend within its reach. As the economy has to compete with developed south Asian countries as well as western economies, full utilization of the available limited raw material as well as manpower resources is the only way to grow faster and capture international markets. Therefore women literacy and women employment will add to the gross domestic product of the nation and raise the per capita income of the country also. Female consumers have impacted the market structure. The rural as well as urban women have shown interest in having financial status in the family. So with the increase in population and female awareness, the growth prospects of a nation will also change leading to development in the long term. Indian women are moving towards achieving high growth targets along with their male counterparts and adequate assistance will embrace a bright future in rural and urban areas.

Conclusion

Despite significant problems in a male dominated society,

Indian women have found their way out for growth and empowerment either through self-help groups, NGOs, banks, government assistance, and micro finance institutions or through private sectors. In the coming years the role of women will be of immense importance for competing with the developed world as they are man power source as well as diverse consumer group. The civilization of the country will undergo a noteworthy positive change with educated and financially sound women folk. Given that one -third of the estimated 480 million jobs in the country are being performed by women, more than half of the advertising is targeted towards the homemaker.

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