



Women Empowerment And Gender Equality After Independence

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Abstract

The condition of women in India after gaining independence in 1947 has seen both progress and challenges. Women's empowerment is warranted in a developing nation like India where women are viewed as second-class citizens and under males. Independent India made significant strides in enacting laws and policies aimed at improving the status of women. Some notable legislations include the Hindu Marriage act 1955, the Hindu secession act (1956), and the dowry prohibition Act (1961), among others, which addressed issues related to marriage, inheritance and dowry. Women were granted the right to vote in India's first general elections in 1952, ensuring their participation in the democratic process.

The present paper aims to illustrate the constitutional reforms that were introduced in India over the period of time. It would also analyze the factor that will enhance the women participation in the working organizations. It is evident that government of India introduced various policies that increased the participation of women in the workplace.

Keywords: Women, emancipation, constitutional reforms, women's right.

Introduction

Nowhere in history can we find examples of men and women being treated equally or given the same status. Women have consistently fought for their privileges and standing in society. females have repeatedly pushed for equality so that females might live lives that are exactly equal to those of men. When referring to the position of women in Independent India, it has undoubtedly improved. There are now numerous chances for women in India thanks to structural and cultural improvements in the domains of politics, jobs, and education.

Since women now have the same status as males, these developments ultimately result in a decrease in the exploitation of women. The significant changes in law, economic sectors, social and cultural life, and other areas that have occurred since Independence may be used to analyze the advancement of women's standing.

Constitutional provisions and laws promoting gender equality

Article 14 of the Indian Constitution provides equal status to all citizens, including women, and prohibits discrimination based on gender. Additionally, article 15 gives the government the authority to provide unique protections for women. Women are free to engage in all political, religious, cultural, and economic activities. Additionally, they have had the right to vote and receive other special perks. The constitution guarantees equal rights and opportunities for women in all fields and prevents them from being exploited.

The Special Marriage Act of 1954, which only permits love marriages and inter-caste unions for females over the age of 18, gives women the right to these unions. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, which provides women the equal freedom to divorce and remarry, is a piece of legislation that protects their rights. Additionally prohibited by the legislation are child marriage, polyandry, and polygamy. Women have the legal right to inherit their parents' property under the Hindu Succession Act of 1956. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 - This legislation permits childless women to adopt children and permits divorced women to request spousal maintenance from their former partners. The Constitution Action Act of 1961 - This legislation declares the collection of dowries to be illegal, therefore protecting women from exploitation.

Women working in education

Following the declaration of independence, women's educational rights were supported and they were made aware of the importance of education. Since then, the proportion of women enrolling in higher education has progressively increased. The government offered women who wanted to pursue higher education a number of privileges, including scholarships, financing options, dormitory accommodations, etc. Many women are now able to seek higher education because to these incentives.

For women alone, separate schools and colleges have been built. In addition, separate universities have been founded, some of which are renowned today and allow female applicants with strong academic credentials. For girls specifically, India has a large number of engineering and medical schools that offer high-quality education and support for career advancement.

Women in the sectors of employment and the economy

Additionally, the proportion of working women has grown over time. In all of India's main cities, women have been hired for every position, including that of teachers, physicians, nurses, advocates, police officers, and bank personnel. Women have been accepted into the military, air force, and naval forces—the three branches of the armed forces—since 1991.

Women's rights are becoming more widely known

In Independent India, women enjoy the greatest number of rights, yet many of them are unaware of such rights. Women who lack education are unaware of their rights. The earlier research indicates that these 4 factors influence how well people are aware of their rights:

- Women's individual backgrounds
- Women's social environments and economic backgrounds.
- Women's subjective perceptions

Another conclusion that may be drawn is that most women are content with their family situations and defer to the judgment of their male partners in crucial choices.

They still have some influence from the socially accepted traditional norms. They are totally reliant on their husbands, yet many continue to be exploited. Therefore, passing more and more laws to provide women more opportunity is useless unless there is a significant shift in Indian culture, including how people view women and their place in society.

Strategies for the advancement of women

- The government of India's national manifesto, which was created to increase and extend possibilities for women, emphasizes the significance of three strategies:
- Increasing women's political engagement - According to the text, women must hold 33% of the seats in order to effectively participate in politics.
- Women's income-generating programs - According to the document, income-generating programs must be implemented. The IRDP, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, and TRYSEM are a few of the programs.
- Raising the literacy rate of women: According to the government, effective coordination between governmental and non-governmental organizations will help raise women's literacy rates, which will help them become more self-reliant.
- The 1993 73rd Constitution Amendment Act and women's empowerment
- The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 was created specifically to provide the Panchayati Raj system constitutional validity and to implement it uniformly. But aside from that, it also has a particular impact on the empowerment of women. The authors of the 73rd constitutional amendment thought that giving women political power was necessary in order to better their social and economic circumstances. At the very least at the rural level, the new Panchayati Raj was an attempt to empower women.
Reservation of seats for women of one third

The 73rd amendment aims to provide women specific privileges at each of the three Panchayati Raj levels. According to the statute, in addition to the seats designated for SCs and STs, one-third of the seats are designated for women. Indeed, that was a brave move. The rural women will now be able to participate in political decision-making and have some political influence over village affairs.

An evaluation of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act in brevity

As anticipated, the act has not had magical results. Although it has increased women's awareness to some level only. Following problems have been discovered after examining how the Act's implementation has affected them:

- Illiteracy - Women in rural regions are unable to exert themselves at various Panchayati Raj levels as a result of illiteracy. Instead, they are compelled to operate in accordance with the desires of the male members.
- Highly corrupt bureaucracy — Women find it very challenging to advance and accomplish goals in this environment due to the highly corrupt nature of our bureaucracy
- Lack of women - In rural regions, the majority of women are illiterate and unaware of their rights, making it exceedingly difficult to locate an appropriate number of women who are competent and aware of their rights.

Motivators for women's emancipation

Women's liberation, education, communication, media, political parties, and general awakening all contribute to women's empowerment. The following is a list of social, economic, and political aspects that support women's empowerment:

- Recognizing women's rights - Society should acknowledge that women have an equal entitlement to the same opportunities and rights as men. Women must have the flexibility to make crucial life decisions, such as when to get married and how many children to have, among other things.

Only through education and economic power can women become stronger; expectations alone are insufficient. It is necessary to establish the right conditions so that women may readily obtain school and afterwards find employment. In the end, it will help women become independent and dependable. Only through education and economic power can women become stronger; expectations alone are insufficient. It is necessary to establish the right conditions so that women may readily obtain school and afterwards find employment. In the end, it will help women become independent and dependable. Women must be given political sway and be permitted to participate freely in government.

Motivating factors for the desire for empowerment

Women's empowerment is warranted in a developing nation like India where women are viewed as second-class citizens and under males. The key reasons why the government chose to launch this project for women are listed below.

India is one of the nations with the highest percentage of illiterate citizens when compared to other nations. Compared to males, women are more illiterate. Before, people were prohibited from attending school and receiving an education, but now things are lot more solid. Still, women's greatest vulnerability is illiteracy. By giving them access to educational resources, we are enabling them to exercise their rights and contribute to the development of the country.

Women's poor health is another obstacle to their advancement. The customary priority placed on a male kid, which ignores the existence of a female child and results in less care being provided to her, is the primary cause of such health issues. Women are constantly encouraged to be timid and subservient, which is another factor. This frequently makes women accepting; as a result, they opt to avoid making complaints and instead choose to suffer in silence.

Due to years of schooling deprivation and unfavorable property rules, Indian women are economically underprivileged. They were financially reliant on males since historically, men had held all economic power. In order to stand on their own two feet and compete with males, women must have economic power. In many aspects of life, males have historically discriminated against women. They experience atrocities in a number of ways since there are instances of sexual harassment, molestation, abduction, dowry harassment, and other atrocities. Women require all forms of empowerment in order to protect themselves from such tragedies and to keep their purity and dignity.

Rights and protection to women given under the Constitution of India

The following articles of the Indian Constitution try to provide women equal opportunity, defend their rights, and assure their justice: o Right to Equality- The Constitution guarantees equality to all of its people, including women (Article 14). According to Article 15(1) of the Constitution, no one should be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of caste, class, creed, sex, race, or place of birth. When offering work possibilities, no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation should be made [Article 16]. Maternity benefits for female employees are to be provided by the State [Article 42].

Bringing peace and unity to those who have abandoned all female-respecting traditions. One-third reservation of women in the panchayats - Separate seats for women SCs and STs and separate seats for women in the panchayats shall be reserved for women [Article 243 D

(3)].Reserving seats for women in all offices at all levels of panchayats (Gram Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat, and Zilla Panchayat) with a one-third reservation for women in the presidential positions of the panchayats [Article 243 D(4)]. Separate seats for women in all town governments on a one-third reserve policy."Article 243(T) 3."A one-third reservation for women in town municipality president positions.

We now enter the era after independence and the passage of our Constitution, which codifies the goals and desires of the Indian people as well as the ideal of a society where everyone is treated equally, regardless of religion, caste, or gender. The Constitution was also inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which had just been enacted at the time. Numerous initiatives to improve the position of women were made in the years following Independence by the government and the nonprofit sector.

Our Constitution serves as the finest example of how important it is to protect the advantages and rights of women. It eliminated prejudice against women in the legal and public spheres. Women were protected from sex-based discrimination by the Constitution's Fundamental Rights. However, because of the centuries-long sex discrimination that women endured, the State was given the authority to engage in affirmative action. The state was required under the Directive Principles of State Policy to provide women with secure and humane working conditions. Every citizen has a fundamental obligation under Article 51 A (e) to refrain from engaging in behavior that is disrespectful to women's dignity. Constitutional safeguards were put into action by a number of laws that addressed many different aspects of women's lives. .Due to the significant involvement of women in the liberation movement and the progressive concepts advanced by social reformers in the 19th century, there was a frenzy of legislative activity in the 1950s that benefited Hindu women in particular. There are three of these: the 1956 Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, the 1955 Hindu Marriage Act, and the 1956 Hindu Succession Act. Laws have been passed to make abortion legal, raise the marriage age, and resolve family conflicts. Additionally, laws have been created to address societal ills such female infanticide, sati, dowager, rape, and obscene depiction of women.

Many of the Directive Principles, like The Maternity Benefit Act and Equal Pay for Equal Work, already exist as legislation. Despite the fact that there are many laws controlling employment, pay, working conditions, social security, welfare, and other areas of labor, few of them specifically apply to women. Some laws have been passed with consideration for the personal laws of different religious communities. The Five-year Plans have represented the major focus of development efforts in post-independence India. Women's wants and issues have changed over time, as have the methods used to analyze them and come up with solutions. The emphasis, organizational structure, and aims of tactics used have all changed. The development policies have shown a progression of strategies to address women's issues, starting with the "welfare" strategy (first through fifth plans), moving to "development" (sixth through eighth plans), and then to empowerment (ninth and tenth plans). welfare

strategy Resources were largely focused on market-oriented productive activities in the 1950s and the early 1960s, and the remaining social support was given to weaker groups, of which women made up a sizable portion. Women's roles as mothers, wives, and homemakers were intended to be strengthened via programs on nutrition, home economics, and child welfare. They were seen as being substantially in control of the family's well-being, and their involvement in activities that encouraged positive growth received less attention. This tactic was developed in response to the western nuclear family stereotype, which contends that women depend on their male spouses for financial support. Women simply passively accepted government assistance. It was expected that the women would certainly benefit from the family's increased economic prosperity.

Conclusion

The aforementioned debate leads to the conclusion that since Indian society's independence, women's standing has undergone a significant transformation. The government took significant steps to bring about a change and enhance the social, economic, and political circumstances of women after realizing the problems of women and their poorer place in society. Although it is impossible to say that the measures taken have been fully implemented in society because in a place like India, customs and traditions still hold a lot more weight, women have gradually changed over the years and are now much more independent and aware of the world around them.

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