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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT ON CORPORATE SECTOR

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### ABSTRACT

India is the largest democratic country in the world, with a population size of 165crores. The Indian women, however, face innumerable problems at home and in society since their childhood. The most common and unfortunate trait of Indian society is that the girls need only basic levels of education and awareness so that they teach their children after their marriage. The girls in India are encouraged to learn dance, music, child education and an art of cooking at home. The hidden talents of the Indian women are buried under the disguise of House Wife. The present study explores the factors which inhibit the growth and the prospects of women in India. It urges the strong need of the constitutional amendments which facilitate the growth of the women in the areas of education, sports, industry, science and technology.

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## INTRODUCTION

The introduction chapter of this acquaints about the meaning of women empowerment, the background of women empowerment, the underlying problem in the society, the necessity for women empowerment, how it can help women and make them independent etc. The Supreme Court of India stated that "it is well accepted by thinkers, philosophers and academicians that if Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, including social, economic and political justice, the goals formulated by the Preamble of the Constitution, are to be achieved; the Indian polity has to be educated with excellence. Article 51 A(e) states that it is the duty of every citizen in India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 strives for removing gender based discrimination and effectuating economic empowerment of Hindu women. Article 15(3) of the Constitution of India positively protects such acts or actions. The Constitution of India is a basic document which provides for women empowerment within the framework of the plenary

provision of Articles 14, 15(3), 21, 39(a), 51A(e) and The women are protected within the area of social justice with these Articles.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To assess the factors which influence the women empowerment in global business organizations. To study the impact of demographic and psychographic variables on women empowerment in globalization.

## METHODOLOGY

The research is an attempt of exploratory research, based on the secondary data sourced from journals, magazines, articles, media reports and Web based research.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Giriappa (1997) analysed the women empowerment with the corresponding levels of discrimination and effectiveness of decision-making by women in different rural enterprises and concluded that the female headed households were effective in taking decision in respect of work mobility, schooling, health care, asset creation, employment generation and social

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participation in low social status households. Jyothi (1998) reported in her study on employment pattern and empowerment of rural women in Kolar district that the distribution of women according to the level of empowerment showed that most of the women had medium level of empowerment, while few women belonged to high level of empowerment, remaining 54 women had low level of empowerment. Seema Srivastava (2015) written down their paper on "Corporate social Responsibility Reporting in India". In the Research has study on evaluate annual reports of two Indian company namely as Hindustan Unilever Ltd. And Infosys Ltd. Dr. Manish Sood (2015) written down their paper on "Corporate Social Responsibility and the Role of SME's in India" In this article researcher has found that small and medium enterprises play a pivotal role in ensuring overall development of a country but when it comes to the question of shouldering CSR only a handful of Small firm are seen Successful.

**WHAT IS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT?:** Empowering women is allowing them to make their own decision in Every Walk of their life. This is important for women because they are being suppressed by people around them and it is high time they come out of waste suppression. Most of the women these days are employed in service sectors. Women want to be treated as equals so much so that if a woman rises to the top of her field it should be a commonplace occurrence that draws nothing more than a raised eyebrow at the gender.

**HISTORY OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:** Equal rights for men and women are enshrined under Articles 14 to 16 in the Indian. Constitution, which came into effect on 26 January 1950. Discrimination based on gender is strictly prohibited. Indian women received universal suffrage during India's independence in 1947, long before several Western countries granted women the right to vote. India was the second country in modern history to have a female leader, Indira Gandhi, in 1966 after another South Asian state, Sri Lanka, elected Sirimavo Bandaranaike in 1960<sup>1</sup>. New Delhi has also taken a concerted effort to ratify key international conventions to end discrimination against women. It is a founding member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and has ratified 47 conventions and one protocol<sup>2</sup>. It signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)<sup>3</sup> in 1980 and ratified it in 1993 with some reservations. It has yet to ratify the Optional Protocol of the CEDAW and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Within the country, the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 have been enacted to criminalise instances of dowry and domestic violence. The government also increased maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks under the Maternity Benefit Act in 2017 for the private sector<sup>4</sup>. The Women's Reservation Bill gives 33 per cent reservation for women seats in all levels of Indian politics. This is an attempt to increase female political participation.

<sup>1</sup>Constitution of India, India.gov.in. <https://www.india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india>. Accessed on 11 June 2020.

<sup>2</sup> 'India & ILO', Government of India, Ministry of Labour & Employment. <https://labour.gov.in/lcandilas/division/india-ilo>. Accessed on 10 June 2020.

<sup>3</sup> The CEDAW was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. It is commonly known as the international bill of rights for women

<sup>4</sup>M Venkaiah Naidu, "There's no progress if women lag behind", *The Hindu*, 13 January 2018. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/theres-no-progress-if-women-lag-behind/article9575999>. ece. Accessed on 12 June 2020

The bill was first introduced on 12 September 1996 by the Deve Gowda government. Successive governments tried to push for the bill but it took 14 years to get it passed in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament).<sup>5</sup> The bill has yet to be passed in the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) and in all state legislative assemblies. The introduction of the bill was a historic attempt to alter gender demographics in the Indian polity. Proponents of the quota system argue that it is a necessary step to increase women's effective and meaningful participation in the political system. It could help to expedite a process that usually takes generations by incorporating women's voices in governance.

## EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA

Women empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location, educational status, social status caste and class and age. Policies on women empowerment exist at national, state and local levels in many sectors including health, education, economic opportunities, gender based violence and political participation.

**The following schemes at present are aiming to women empowerment and gender equality in India:**

- ) Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (1975)
- ) Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (1993).
- ) The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers.
- ) Ujjawala (2007)
- ) Dhanalakshmi (2008)
- ) Short Stay Homes
- ) Swadhar
- ) Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) (2010)
- ) National Mission for Empowerment of Women.

## SPECIAL INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

**National Commission For Women Empowerment (January 1992):** The Government set-up this statutory body with a specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women review the existing legislation to suggest amendments wherever necessary.

**Reservation For Women Empowerment In Local Self-Government:** The 73rd constitutional amendment acts passed in 1992 by parliament ensure one-third of the total seats for women in all elected offices in local bodies whether in rural areas or urban areas.

**The National Plan Of Action For The Girl Child (1991-2000):** The plan of action is to ensure survival, protection and

<sup>5</sup> "Women's Reservation Bill: All you need to know about the bill which will bring 33 percent reservation for women in Lok Sabha", *India Today*, 7 March 2020. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/women-s-reservation-bill-all-you-need-to-know-about-the-bill-which-is-yet-to-be-passed-in-lok-sabha-1653451-2020-03-07>. Also see 'Women's Reservation Bill [The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008]', PRS Legislative Research, 6 May 2008. <https://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/womens-reservation-bill-the-constitution-108th-amendment-bill-2008-45>. Accessed on 13 June 2020

development of the girl child in order to safeguard the bright future of the girl child.

**National Policy For The Women Empowerment (2001):** The Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development have prepared a "National Policy for the Women Empowerment" in the year 2001.

**EMPOWERMENT AND ITS RELATIVITY TO WOMEN**  
Women in the Indian society still looks towards the society to grant them power or empower them in various ways. Women empowerment talks much about empowering women in various ways<sup>6</sup>. 21st century women have now become vital part & parcel of society. Situation of women changed completely from the last 30 years. The year 1970 marked the year of development of women. Women made up more than half the world's population, produced 80 percent of its food, laboured for two thirds of its working hours, were paid 10 per cent of its income and owned one percent of its property..Such as:

**The loss of their control over resources**

- ) The unequal rating of paid and unpaid work.
- ) Unjust division of burden of families.
- ) The economic exploitation of women.

Women are making their presence felt in every field. However, discrimination against woman manifests in itself in most traditional as well as modern societies as a structural feature. One of such norms is the continuing preference for a son over the birth of a girl child, which is present in almost all societies and communities. The hold of this preference has strengthened rather than weakened and its most glaring evidence is in the falling sex ratio<sup>7</sup>. The society is more biased in favor of male child in respect of education, nutrition and other opportunities. The root cause of this type of attitude lies in the belief that male child inherits the clan in India with an exception in Meghalaya. Women often internalize the traditional concept of their role as natural, thus inflicting an injustice upon them. Poverty is the reality of life for the vast majority of women in India. Lack of awareness about legal and constitutional provisions and failure in realizing it, is another factor that hinders the process of empowerment. Most of the women are not aware of their legal rights. Even women who are aware lack the courage to take the legal step. The legislation which affects women most is their situation in marriage and inheritance.

**ELECTED WOMEN MEMBERS:** Many factors are responsible and decisive in the election of women candidates such as literacy, financial position, liberal family background, support of other members of the family, strong personality etc. Since most of the women lack access to these, few women get tickets and even fewer get elected from this handful of women candidates. India are disempowered relative to men in respect of decision making power, freedom of movement, education, employment, exposure to media, political participation etc and face domestic violence to a considerable degree and occupy the subordinate status both at home and in the society even in the 21st century.

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:** In conventional analysis it means activities related to electoral politics like voting, campaigning, holding party office and contesting election. But in broader sense it encompasses all voluntary actions intended to influence the making of public policies, the administration of public affairs and the choice of political leaders at all levels of government. Political interventions by women of India today range from movement for peace and good governance to protest against dowry, rape, domestic violence, food adulteration, price rise etc. the voting percentage of men and women in the first twelve elections of independent India. In the very first election the percentage of women voter was significantly low (37%). Many women were left out as their names were not properly registered.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:** It is observed that extent of violence is not lessened by age. In the age group of 15-19 years, 53.5 per cent women experienced physical or sexual violence in India as compared to 42 per cent in the age group 40-49 years. Both types of violence are higher for ever married women than for never married women. Almost 60 per cent ever married women experienced physical or sexual violence as against 54.9 per cent never married women.

**EXPOSURE TO MEDIA:** Women's exposure to media reveals that percentage of women not exposed to media is more than double that of men. About 89% of women are exposed to media as compared to 88 per cent in case of men. 32% of women do not have access to media regularly. Since it is an important source of empowerment, greater proportion of women without having access to media reflects the relatively disadvantageous position of women in relation to men with regards to empowerment.

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AT WORKPLACE:** In today's business world, leaders know the importance of empowering women at work. The power of women in the workplace is now clear. The benefits are well documented and include driving innovation and boosting the corporation's profits. Increasingly, companies are studying their policies regarding women empowerment to strengthen female leadership and direct the conversation. Whether it's to set clear goals for diversity or implement initiatives by successful female leaders, the idea of being "indispensable" in the workplace has never been more important.

**FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT:** Free mobility of women is another indicator of women empowerment. The data reveals that about half of women are allowed to go to the market or to the health facility alone. Only 64 per cent are allowed to travel alone to places outside the village or community. While not all women are allowed to go to these places alone, only a minority are not allowed to go at all. Compared to urban women, rural women have less mobility. Women's mobility is also affected by their background characteristics like age, education, marital status, type of family etc.

**CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR WOMEN:** The Constitution of India granted equality to women and empowered the State to take special measures of positive discrimination by eliminating the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by the women. People of India used to say this country as "Bharat-Mata" however never realised the true meaning of it. Bharat-Mata means a mother of every Indian whom we have to save and

<sup>6</sup>(financial, social, cultural, legal & political)

<sup>7</sup>(Seth, 2001)

care always. The Fundamental Rights ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law and prohibit any kind of discrimination against women irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of specific importance.

**CASE: In case of C.B. Muthamma v. Union of India (1979)**

**4 SCC 260)44:** In this case a writ petition was filed by Ms Muthamma, a senior member of the Indian Foreign Service, complaining that she had been denied promotion to Grade I illegally and unconstitutionally. She pointed out that several rules of the civil service were discriminatory against women.

At the very threshold she was advised by the Chairman of the UPSC against joining the Foreign Service. At the time of joining she was required to give an undertaking that if she married she would resign from service. Under Rule 18 of the Indian Foreign Service (Recruitment, Cadre, Seniority and Promotion) Rules, 1961, it was provided that no married woman shall be entitled as of right to be appointed to the service. Under Rule 8(2) of the Indian Foreign Service (Conduct and Discipline) Rules, 1961, a woman member of the service was required to obtain permission of the Government in writing before her marriage was solemnised. At any time after the marriage she could be required to resign if the Government was confirmed that her family and domestic commitments were likely to come in the way of the due and efficient discharge of her duties as a member of the service. On numerous occasions the petitioner had to face the consequences of being a woman and thus suffered discrimination, though the Constitution specifically under Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and Article 4 provides the principle of equality before law.

**THE INDIAN PENAL CODE (IPC) AND THE WOMEN**

**PROTECTION:** Rape (Sec. 376 IPC), Kidnapping and Abduction for different purposes ( Sec. 363-373), Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec.302/304-B IPC), Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC), Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC), Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC) Importation of girls up to 21 years of age. The Crimes identified under the Special Laws. Although all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women significantly have been reviewed periodically and amendments carried out to keep pace with the emerging requirements.

**IMPORTANT ACTS TO SAFEGUARD WOMEN:** The human rights which explicitly recognizes that women's rights are human rights. In response to this expanded definition of human rights, in March 1994, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights agreed to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women and to integrate the rights of women into the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations.

- ) The Employees State Insurance Act 1948
- ) The Plantation Labour Act 1951
- ) The Family Courts Act 1954
- ) The Special Marriage Act 1954
- ) The Hindu Marriage Act 1955
- ) The Hindu Succession Act 1956 with amendment in 2005
- ) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956
- ) The Maternity Benefit Act 1961 (Amended in 1995)

- ) Dowry Prohibition Act 1961
- ) The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971
- ) The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1976
- ) The Equal Remuneration Act 1976
- ) The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006
- ) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1983
- ) The Factories (Amendment) Act 1986
- ) Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986
- ) Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987
- ) The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005

**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:** The Government of India has declared 2001 as Women's Empowerment year. The national policy of empowerment of women has set certain clear-cut goals and objectives. The following are the specific objectives of National Policies particularly of rural folk on Empowerment of women in India.

- ) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- ) Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social political and economic life of the nation.
- ) Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public life etc.,
- ) Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- ) Ministering a gender perspective in the development process.
- ) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- ) Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

**SUGGESTIONS**

The need of women empowerment arose because of the gender discrimination and male domination in the Indian society since ancient time. Women are being suppressed by their family members and society for many reasons. They have been targeted for many types of violence and discriminatory practices by the male members in the family and society in India and other countries as well. Wrong and old practices for the women in the society from ancient time have taken the form of well-developed customs and traditions. There is a tradition of worshipping many female goddesses in India including giving honour to the women forms in the society like mother, sister, daughter, wife and other female relatives or friends. But, it does not mean that only respecting or honouring women can fulfil the need of development in the country. It needs the empowerment of the rest half population of the country in every walk of life. Gender inequality is the main social issue in India in which women are getting back in the male dominated country. Women empowerment needs to take a high speed in this country to equalize the value of both genders. Uplifting of women in all means should be the utmost priority of the nation.

A woman is considered to be responsible for everything in the family so she can better solve all the problems from her own end. Empowerment of the women would automatically bring empowerment of everyone.

## CONCLUSION

It needs the contribution of dedicated personnel's, committed people, generous funding agencies and strong political will. Therefore in order to draw the attention of these people and agencies, some empirical evidences and linkages between different factors related to women empowerment need to be established. Multinational enterprises are not part of the problem of women rights, but part of the solution. Indian companies work for women rights in many ways for ethical and economic reasons. Finally, multinationals play a significant role to improve the women empowerment in India. Women are being pushed into less productive sectors. Increased pressure on rural resources accelerated migration to urban areas in search of livelihood. People from backward regions, tribal communities, disadvantaged castes and the displaced communities were being pushed against the wall. Women in such countries shouldered the brunt and this phenomenon was labelled feminisation of poverty.

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