RESEARCH ARTICLE

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

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Empowerment is then the process of obtaining these basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be difficult to start and to implement effectively. Empowerment includes control over resources physical, human, intellectual and financial) and over ideology (beliefs, valuesand attitudes) It is not merely a feel of greater extrinsic control, but also grows intrinsic capacity, greater self-confidence and an internal transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers to accessing resources or changing traditional ideology.

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Introduction:-

The term covers a vast landscape of meanings, interpretations, definitions and disciplines ranging from psychology and philosophy to the highly commercialized self-help industry and motivational sciences. Sociological empowerment often addresses members of groups that social discrimination processes have excluded from decision-making processes through - for example -discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender.

Marginalized people who lack self-sufficiency become, at a minimum, dependent on charity, or welfare. They lose their self-confidence because they cannot be fully self-supporting. The opportunities denied them also deprive them of the pride of accomplishment which others, who have those opportunities, can develop for themselves. This in turn can lead to psychological, social and even mental health problems.

Empowerment - Meaning

Empowerment is then the process of obtaining these basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. It also includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be difficult to start and to implement effectively.

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One empowerment strategy is to assist marginalized people to create their own non-profit organization, using the rationale that only the marginalized people, themselves, can know what their own people need most, and that control of the organization by outsiders can actually help to further entrench marginalization. Charitable organizations lead from outside of the community, for example, can disempower the community by entrenching a dependence charity or welfare.

A non-profit organization can target strategies that cause structural changes, reducing the need for ongoing dependence. Red Cross for example, can focus on improving the health of indigenous people, but does not have authority in its charter to install water-delivery and purification systems, even though the lack of such a system profoundly, directly and negatively impacts health. A non-profit composed of the-indigenous people, however, could ensure their own organization does have such authority and could set their own agendas, make their own plans, seek the needed resources, do as much of the work as they can, and take responsibility - and credit - for the success of their projects (or the consequences, should they fail).

Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individual to think, take action and control work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the Circumstances of one's lives. Empowerment includes control over resources (physical, human, intellectual and financial) and over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). It is not merely a feel of greater extrinsic control, but also grows intrinsic capacity, greater self- confidence and an internal transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers to accessing resources or changing traditional ideology.

The economic survey conducted for the year 2020 — 21 depicts that working population, literacy rate and life expectancy of women, has increased in recent years. Being the half part of the society, the women population should be encouraged by all means. Here comes the necessity for women empowerment.

Ways And Means Of Achieving Women Empowerment
The Internet as a Tool of Empowerment
The growing access of the web in the late 20ᵗʰ century, has allowed women to empower themselves by using various tools on the Internet. With the introduction of the World Wide Web women have begun to use social networking sites like Face book and Twitter to start online activism. Through online activism, women are able to empower themselves by organizing campaigns and voicing their opinions for equality rights without feeling oppressed by members of society for example, on May 29, 2013, an online campaign started by 100 female advocates forced the leading social networking website, in recent years, blogging has also become a powerful tool for the educational empowerment of women. According to a study done by the University of California, Los Angeles, medical patients who read and write about their disease are often in a much happier mood and more knowledgeable than those who do not. By reading others' experiences, patients can better educate themselves and apply strategies that their fellow bloggers suggest.

With the easy accessibility and affordability of e-learning (electronic learning), women can now study from the comfort of their home anywhere, anytime. By empowering themselves educationally through new technologies like e-learning, womanis also learning new stalls that will come in handy in today's advancing globalize world.

Most women across the globe rely on the informal work sector for an income. If women were empowered to do more and be more the possibility for economic growth becomes apparent. Empowering women in developing countries is essential to reduce global poverty since women represent most of the world's poor population. Eliminating a significant part of a nation's work force on the sole basis of gender can have. detrimental effects on the economy of that nation. In addition, female participation in counsels, groups, and businesses is seen to increase efficiency. For a general idea on how an empowered women can impact a situation monetarily, a study found that of fortune 500 companies, "those with more women board directors had significantly higher financial returns, including 53 percent higher returns on equity, 24 percent higher returns on sales and 67 percent higher returns on invested capital (OECD, 2018). This study shows the impact women can have on the overall economic benefits of a company. If implemented on a global scale, the inclusion of women in the formal workforce (like a fortune 500 company) can increase the economic output

of a nation. Therefore, women can also help businesses grow and economies prosper if they have, and if they are able to use, the right knowledge and skills in their employment.

Barriers To Empowerment Of Women
Many of the barriers to women's empowerment and equity lie ingrained in cultural norms. Many women feel these pressures, while others have become accustomed to being treated inferior to men. Even if men, legislators, NGOs, etc. are aware of the benefits women's empowerment and participation can have, many are scared of disrupting the status quo and continue to let societal norms get in the way of development.

Research shows that the increasing access to the internet can also result in an increased exploitation of women. Releasing personal information on websites has put some women's personal safety at risk. In 2010, Working to Halt Online Abuse stated that 73% of women were victimized through such sites. Types of victimization include cyber stalking, harassment, online pornography and flaming.

Recent studies also show that women face more barriers in the 'workplace than do men. Gender-related barriers involve sexual harassment, unfair hiring practices, career progression, and unequal pay where women are paid less than men are for performing the same job. Such barriers make it difficult for women to advance in their workplace or receive fair compensation for thework they provide.

Women's Empowerment Principles
The Women's Empowerment Principles are a set of principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. They are the result of collaboration between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact.

The Women's Empowerment Principles offer practical guidance to business and the private sector on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. Developed through a partnership between UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact, the Principles are designed to support companies ill reviewing existing policies and practices or establishing new ones to realize women's empowerment.

In brief, the Principles are:
1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work—respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.
8. Empowerment is probably the totality of the following or similar capabilities:
a. Having decision-making power of their own
b. Having access to information and resources for taking proper decision
c. Having a range of options from which you can make choices (not just yes/no, either/or.)
d. Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making
e. Having positive thinking on the ability to make change
f.   Ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power.
g. Ability to change others' perceptions by democratic means.
h. Involving in the growth process and changes that is never ending and self-initiated
i. Increasing one's positiveself-image and overcoming stigma.

Women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercises choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society.

Need For Women Empowerment - Undp Report
Women, although they constitute half of humanity, are socially, economically and politically marginalized. They are seen primarily as wives, mothers and home-makers rather than as workers, because their reproductive role is given prominence over their productive role. This has kept them away from playing a significant role in the public domain in almost every part of the world. The large amount of work they do in looking after the home and family is unpaid, unnoticed and unrecognized. Not only this, but a large amount of income-generating work that they do in and around the house also goes unnoticed and is not computed in national income statistics. When they do step out of their homes to seek work in public spaces, they are discriminated against, exploited and become vulnerable to harassment and violence.

In some society's right from her birth till death, the female receives an unfair deal in comparison to her male counterpart. The situation is worse in the less developed world, where poverty, malnutrition and certain social customs worsen her condition. Women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercises choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society.

As per the United National Development Fund for women (UNIFEM), (UNDP report on women) says Women Empowerment means, acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed.

Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.

Gaining The Ability To Generate Choices Exercise Bargaining Power.
Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multi-level construct referring to individuals, organizations and community. It is an international, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to the control over these resources.

Social And Economic Determinants Of Health Through Women Empowerment: The Sewa Case Study
Self—Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is an organization of poor women who struggle to support themselves and their families through hard labour and with a great deal of resourcefulness. It is unlike a conventional trade union where all members are already in employment, have the same employer, and a fixed workplace and a well-defined employer employee relationship. The members of SEWA often have no definite employer and are frequently in competition with one another for the same work. They may work from home, or may be out in the streets, market places or farms and fields to eke out a living. As self-employed women, they need year-round work, fair wages, training to upgrade their skills, maternity protection and childcare, small loans to purchase raw materials and work tools, and legal help to fight against exploitation in the market. By ensuring these, SEWA has become a movement, which works towards the development of the whole human being and not just the worker. This is in keeping with the Gandhian ideology that it has adopted. The guiding principle behind the running of the organization includes self-reliance, sustainability, social justice and social security. The broader vision is participation, integration and interdependence of the various units of SEWA, as it believes in the relevance of local ownership and knowledge.

Founding of SEWA
SEWA was founded in Ahmedabad, one of the leading industrial cities of India. One of the first trade unions in India, the Textile Labour Association (TLA) was founded here under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and Anasuya Sarabhai. Inspired by the two, ElaBhat joined the TLA as a lawyer in 1955. By 1968 she was head of TLA's Women's wing and had the responsibility of organizing sewing and typing classes for the wives and daughters of textile workers. These women often worked in the informal sector in order to supplement the family income. Elabhat thus came into contact with women who stitched, embroidered, vended vegetables, rolled bidis and agarbatis and did all sorts of petty work to earn money. They had irregular income, no job security, and lower wages than the organized sector and were subject to exploitation by moneylenders, contractors, policemen and municipal authorities. Such issues were not addressed by other trade unions, government legislation and

policies ElaBhat realized that this was the fate of 94 per cent of all women workers in India this was followed by the birth of SEWA in December 1971. The main objective of SEWA is to organize self-employed women for their social and economic uplift. They work for the deliverance of full employment to its members to help them achieve work security, income security, food security and social security. The other important objective is to organize women for self-relianceat both individual and community levels to empower them both economically and in terms of decision-making abilities.

With ElaBhat as Chairwoman, this Commission set up many task forces to study the status of self-employed women in the country. It published a report entitled Shramshakti: Report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector.

The report succeeded in highlighting the plight of women workers in the informal sector at the National level More than 70 % of the membership is from rural areas and is fairlydistributedacross various religious and caste groups (SEWA Annual Report, 2005). Its members areorganized at various levels based on area, city and trade. They are broadly categorized as
1. Home-based workers like weavers, potters, bidi and agarbatti rollers, papad makers, makers of ready-made garments and processors of agricultural products,
2. Hawkers and vendors and small businesswomen,
3. Manual labourers and service providers like agricultural labourers, constructionworkers, handcart pullers, head- loaders, domestic workers and laundry workers,
4. Producers like artisans.

Empowerment Through Housing
Most of SEWA's members are slum dwellers. They have tiny, overcrowded living quarters, which are usually poorly lit and lack proper ventilation. The living space is also used as storage space and working space. The makeshift housing cannot provide protection against natural elements. They also lack in basic facilities like electricity, water supply sanitation. SEWA Bank provides loans to its members for the purchase of new houses and for expansion of existing ones. Loans are also available to members wishing to repair walls, roofs or floors, or to undertake any other maintenance work on their houses. SEWA initially provided loans for purchase and up-gradation of housing through its bank but considering the growing demand for improved housing and infrastructure conditions from members, the SEWA Executive Committee decided in 1992 that the housing related activities of SEWA and SEWA Bank required consolidation and expansion. Thus, the Gujarat Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MET) came into existence in 1994. Its objectives were to improve the overall living environment of SEWA members through improved access to finance and legal and technical assistance for housing purposes. In partnership with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and the community, SEWA launched a programme to provide seven infrastructure facilities in the slums. These facilities are individual water supply, individual sewage, individual toilets, paved roads, streetlights, basic solid waste management and storm water drainage.

MHT also facilitates the formation of community-based associations to interface with AMC to effectively maintain the newly acquired infrastructure. By March 2006, 9775 households in 60 slums had been upgraded. UjalaYojna (slum electrification programme) has also provided electricity to many households and has enhanced their work capacities (for e.g., women engaged in livelihood through sewing), which has resulted in increased incomes. The surplus income isfurther saved in the SEWA bank and used to improve their living conditions. Mahila Health Trust (MHT) has implemented the Sardar Awas Scheme of government of Gujarat for providing pucca (brick) house to rural areas and providing better sanitation facilities. Achievements, health impact and wider implications of the above SEWA entities are described below using social determinants approach.This, combined with the social services offered by SEWA, has helped members in finding regularemployment and earning a higher income.