
Women And Empowerment : Conceptual Enquiry

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Abstract

Women's sense of self-worth was positioned as the primary anchor of empowerment. The study of self-worth in the context of empowerment resembled the opening of a Pandora's box in terms of issues about both the theoretical parameters of the concept as well as its empirical assessment. Several questions came to the fore repeatedly, what is self-worth for Indian women, how is it operationalized, and is there a concept of self prevalent at all in the Indian psyche especially in Indian women's psyche? In the Indian context, one can focus on the empowerment of women without involving their families.

Keywords- Indian women's, Women And Empowerment, Conceptual Enquiry.

Introduction

One significant emerging perspective is that the self evolves differently in different cultures and is constructed around the cultural bones of independence and interdependence. Both cross-cultural and feminist scholars emphasize that persons in many non-Western cultures especially women are predominantly oriented towards an interdependent rational pathway of self-development.

Empowerment is a term with a leaf of a clear conceptual definition that focuses on development programs involving women. In the same vein, Dandekar 1956 has described empowerment as a multifaceted process which involves four parallel aspects these are:

- The women's economic resource base
- The public political arena allowed to her by society.
- The family structure and the strengths and limitations it imposes.

Perhaps most important is the psychological ideological sense of women in her society which in turn shapes are own perception of self and the options she allows herself to consider.

Women empowerment can be viewed as a continuum of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components including awareness-building capacity skill development control and decision-making power and action towards gender equality (Karl 1995). The process of empowerment begins with the woman's belief about herself and her rights and potential her image her recognition of strength knowledge skills and from belief that she has an innate right to justice and dignity.

Empowerment is the ongoing dynamic process involving changes in the nested system and family community and the layered society. Improving the conditions of women's lives is a significant goal however it cannot be an end in itself. The ultimate aspiration should be to argue their position. The sewa self-employed women's association experience in Ahmedabad towards women's empowerment the women have learned *sewa* and in their commitment to change. They have evinced courage and overcome normal obstacles in their moment from invisible sisters mothers and wives to outspoken proponents for economic change. (Rose 1992 page 275). The Mahila Samakhya program launched in 1986 under the banner of education for women's equality by the Ministry of Human Resource Development is a government initiative implemented to build a positive self-image develop critical

thinking build group solidarity and collective decision-making and action for social change. Yet yet another note-worthy experiment is one at SARTI11 an NGO based in the tribal area of Panch Mahal in Gujarat a community-based women-centred model of health the program has enabled women to define their problems and their strategies and organise to solve them collectively.

In the Hindu culture, the category of women is considered a primary cultural construct from which secondary constructs such as *Suhagan* and *Vidhva* are derived each of these constructs cannot have specific principles which define the role of the Hindu women she has illustrated how the symbols in force and essentially unequal relationship underplay the significance of women's contribution to biological reproduction and legitimise men's rights over a woman s sexuality and reproduction capacity as well as property and productive resources. The symbolic and material are the interlink girls are constantly short-changed concerning receiving resources shares and implicit or explicit justification is given for the same for example girls need less food than boys because boys work harder. The differential entitlements to resource share also shift the responsibility of care and nurturance on women. Moreover, their relationship is linked to notions of self-sacrifice thereby creating a culture of female sacrifice. The entire process elicits ambiguous or negative feelings regarding one self self-worth. women appear to get entranced at the social threshold comprising perspective roles of daughter, daughter-in-law, wife and mother. Often the goals of others become so significant that women tend to forgo their personal goals or achievements. This reflects the primacy of family and relationship with a significant source of worth and identity. It is necessary to accept that the process of empowering women will in a way empower men in terms of the traditional domain of power.

Gender-based violence can be seen in every society and also in different forms, it is our moral duty to stop all forms of violence against women and girls at the time of war or natural disaster the risk of gender-based violence increases so easily early in response to the needs of women and girls. Gender-based violence is a harmful act of abuse done against one wall and rooted in a system of unequal power distribution between women and men. Many harmful practices like child marriages and polygamy increase because of poverty Young girls have to leave school due to marriage or help with domestic tasks or to bring income at home. unemployment and economic distress in the household increase the problem.

Women find themselves without social support and a protection system. They travel great distances in search of food water or fuel they can be easy prey for violence. During war when there is no rule of law, conflict-related sexual violence increases. Armed forces may use rape as a weapon of war, other forms of conflict-related sexual violence may include sexual slavery forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, forced marriages and other forms of sexual violence. Women living in refugee camps or displaced locations can have safety issues that put them at greater risk. In these camps may be no locks on bathroom doors, joint male and female facilities and improper lighting. Husband or members of their family is the most common form of violence when families experience an inability to meet their basic needs. Women may be less likely to report crimes against them due to fear of retribution or because they do not believe they will be taken seriously. Rape and sexual cruelty can result in unwanted pregnancy, complications during pregnancy and birth and sexually transmitted infections including HIV. The problem can be tackled by empowering women and girls by making women financially independent and offering them safe spaces. Acid attacks against women are also on the search it is imperative that we as individuals and government come up with some potential

solutions that could help the issue more effectively. Female infanticide is yet another example the judicial system needs to be more active and effective in bringing justice to the sufferer and victims.

Vishakha Guidelines : The Case of Bhanwari Devi

The Bhanwari Devi case is a key landmark case in India that played an important part in bringing to light concerns of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and women's rights.

Bhanwari Devi is a social worker from Rajasthan, India, who worked as a saathin (village-level worker) in a government programme focused on empowering women and developing rural areas. She was interested in a variety of social causes and initiatives, including efforts to end child marriage and encourage women's education. In 1992, Bhanwari Devi attempted to prevent a local child marriage. Her action enraged some powerful community members who were involved in the marriage. Bhanwari Devi was sexually abused as a form of punishment and to terrify her into silence as a result of her activities. To seek justice for the sexual attack she underwent, Bhanwari Devi chose to file a complaint against her assailants. Her case, however, encountered various challenges, including societal pressure, intimidation, and threats. Despite her bravery in coming out and testifying against her attackers, the court acquitted the accused males in the case. The acquittal was largely due to the accused's social and political connections, as well as a lack of specific proof. The acquittal of the accused in the Bhanwari Devi case sparked tremendous indignation and protests across India. It generated a national conversation on sexual harassment, gender violence, and the need for legal reform. The Bhanwari Devi case had a significant impact on Indian society. It emphasised the critical importance of establishing legal tools to combat sexual harassment and violence against women, particularly in the workplace. As a result of this case and the public outcry it sparked, the Supreme Court of India established the Vishakha Rules in 1997, laying the groundwork for legal protections against workplace sexual harassment. The Bhanwari Devi case was crucial in establishing India's legal landscape around women's rights and workplace sexual harassment. It resulted in the passage of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act of 2013, which establishes a comprehensive framework for addressing and combating sexual harassment at work.

Bhanwari Devi's brave stand, as well as the resulting advocacy and legal reforms, have had a long-lasting impact on the battle against gender-based violence and the advancement of women's rights in India.

Some Light Is Thrown On Empowered Women From Ancient Times Abroad

In Greek mythology, the Amazon is portrayed in several ancient Epic poems and legends such as the Labour of Heracles, and the Iliad. They were a group of female warriors who were as skilled and courageous as men in physical agility, the art of combat etc They did not allow men on social networks only raised their daughters and returned their sons to their fathers. They regularly undertook military expeditions from Scythia to Thrace, Asia Minor and the Aegean islands. They also laid the foundations for many temples and cities.

Hypatia (350 to 415 A.D.) lived in Alexandria and taught philosophy and astronomy was the first female mathematician whose life is reasonably well recorded She belonged to the school of Neo-Platonism. She was murdered by a mob of Christians The Empire was shocked by her murder and transformed her into a martyr of philosophy. Zheng Yi Sao (1775 to 1844) was a Chinese pirate leader

active in the South China Sea from 1801 to 1810. she was also a gambling house owner. As the unofficial commander of the pirate confederation, her fleet had 400 junks and 40000 to 60000 pirates. She strongly opposed several powers like the East India Company, the Portuguese Empire and Qing China. She was the most successful pirate of her time.

Ida B. Wells (1861 to 1931) was an American investigative journalist educator and early leader in the civil rights movement she was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of coloured people. She dedicated her career to combating prejudice and violence and advocating for African American equality especially that of women. In 2020 she was awarded Posthumously with a Pulitzer Prize special citation. Noor Inayat Khan (1914 to 1944) was a British resistance agent in France in World War II. She was the special operations executive who conducted espionage, sabotages etc. in German-occupied countries. As an agent with the code name of Madeleine she was the first female wireless operator to help France during World War II. She was betrayed and executed at the Dachau concentration camp. She was awarded the George Cross the highest civilian award for gallantry in the United Kingdom.

One of the most brutal cases about gender based violence is that of Mirabal sisters. Patria, Minerva and Maria Teresa opposed the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo and were assassinated on 25th November 1960. The assassination turned the Mirabal sisters into symbols of both political and feminist resistance. In their honour the United Nations General Assembly declared 25th November as International Day For The Elimination Of Violence Against Women. This day is recognised globally to raise awareness about and take action against one of the most pervasive violations of human rights. This day encourages governments and citizens to take concrete actions to combat violence against women. This includes implementing and strengthening laws and policies, supporting victims, and promoting gender equality. The day also serves as an opportunity for people to show solidarity with victims of gender based violence and to remember those who have lost their lives due to such violence.

Efforts to eliminate violence against women extend far beyond this single day, as gender-based violence remains a deeply rooted problem that requires ongoing commitment and action from governments, communities and people to eradicate. Violence against women is a serious violation of women human rights and is direct concern to public health sector because of the significant contribution that public health workers could do if properly trained as they are placed close to the victims and possibly well acquainted with the community its inhabitants. To openly debate this subject is a way to reduce society tolerance towards violence against women.

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