

Women and Empowerment

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From time immemorial women have been confined to the home and hearth. I like this cozy and warm atmosphere of the home and will say there can be no better quest for a woman than one that involves self-discovery. And this self-discovery can only be achieved in the atmosphere of a home and family. Individuality is the inner voice that commands you to be different. It is the strength that can make any mountain, respect its power, recognizes its potential. United force of women will change the shape of India.

In India through centuries together women have been playing second fiddle to the whims and fancies of man. In short, I am agreeing that gender discrimination exists even today i.e. in the 21st century.

But at the same time I will say that men are not entirely selfish. Because one political leader alone who are men have brought about significant changes and amendments for empowering women.

In the year 2001 Govt. of India started women's empowerment year under the able leadership of ex-P.M of India, Mr. Atal Vihari Vajpayee. Likewise our beloved Chief Minister Mr. Naveen Patnaik started Mission Shakti on March 8th. People started laughing telling that why women should be empowered. But if we think in depth they are already empowered since inception. Women are the finance minister of the

house or Goddess Laxmi. She manages the economy of the house properly though she does not possess an M.Com. degree, M.F.C.A or C.A. She is the 1st teacher of her child. She is the tutor or minister of education-Goddess Saraswati. To quote Mahatma Gandhi who said that "if you teach a man you teach somebody, if you teach a woman you teach a nation."

According to the words of Napoleon, "Give me a good mother, I will give you a good nation."

Women is also the defence minister acting like Goddess Durga at the time of indiscipline of household. Not only that she is the health minister of the house by taking care of the ailing persons of her house, taking the role of Goddess Kali.

Poverty and unemployment are the major problems of undeveloped countries like India. The role of women in the development of nation is very important. So, women should be respected both in the home and the nation. Women are engaged in different activities at various time of the year for their survival.

The strategy for strengthening woman's economic status is to add the twin objectives of increasing income and solidarity of women. Moreover to increase the status of women, they must be empowered socially, economically and politically. Women are one wheel of a cart or one

side of a coin. If we look to ancient India starting from Vedic period upto present-women have played vital role in all spheres of life.

In every walk of life woman are much ahead. If we look to the results of class 10th, +2, +3, Engineering and Medical examination they are proving their excellence by securing top positions. It will not be wrong to mention here the two mythological epics were written because of tear of 2 women. One is Ramayana for Sita and Mahabharat for Draupadi. In the present scenario Late Indira Gandhi was the lady Prime Minister of India, Late Nandini Satapathy was the 1st lady Chief Minister of Odisha, Late Giribala Mohanty was the 1st lady Pilot from Odisha. Justice Amiyabala Padhi, 1st lady Justice of Odisha, Kalpana Das 1st Everest Climber and so on and so forth.

Late Rajiv Gandhi ex-Prime Minister of India thought for empowerment of women and tried his best but could not pass the 73rd amendment in the Parliament since India is a male dominated country. Late P.V.Narasimha Rao ex-Prime Minister of India passed the 73rd amendment which became a landmark in the political history of India.

Biju Patnaik the legendary man of India started the Panchayati Raj Movement by giving 33 % reservation to women. Now PRI's are doing commendable work by electing women as the member of Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Zilla Parishad, NAC, Municipality and Municipal Corporation. They are taking leadership in the local bodies for its all-round development.

Empowerment of women through SHGs would lead to benefit not only to the individual woman but also the family and community as a whole. Empowering of women is not just for meeting their economic needs, but also for more holistic social development. The SHGs provide credit and empower women both socially and economically. They encourage women to

participate in the decision-making in the household, in community, local democratic section and prepare women to take up leadership position. Now 3 lakhs SHGs are formed in the State networking with a networking of 30 lakhs women. Now they have been assigned with the Mid-day meal programme and with the collection of electric bills by CESU.

For social development lot of programmes are being started by the UPA Govt. - such as Sarba Sikshya Abhijan, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification work. Girls are being given free education up to Matric standard. 30 % reservation are being made for them at the time of admission to the technical college. School uniforms are being supplied to the girl students by Govt. of Orissa. To attract more girls to higher education cycles are being provided by the SC/ST Department of Govt. of Odisha. Not only that Govt. of India enacted new laws like Domestic Violence Act; set up Sexual Harassment Committee in each Office and district headquarter. To reduce female foeticide Govt. of India, have facilitated scholarship through UGC to a single girl of a family up to PG level. Orissa Govt. set up Women and Child Desk in the Police Stations for giving justice to women.

Let us dream for a future India where women will be respected equally at home and outside in practice like other developed countries. There is a saying that behind every successful man, there is a woman. A woman's emotional strength is a true measure of her beauty and power. Women is God's most beautiful creation on earth and she can uphold that beauty and grace of God by internally empowering herself by building up a strong character.

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