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PATTAMUNDAI COLLEGE

NAAC ACCREDITED B+ GRADE

PATTAMUNDAI, KENDRAPARA, ODISHA-754215

Ref No.:1240.....

Date: 05-12-17

To

Prof. Dr. P.K Dash
Reader, Department of Sociology
Marshaghai College, Marshaghai
Kendrapara.

Sir,

The Department of Sociology of this college is going to host a seminar dated on the 6th December 2017, at 11.30 am on its premises.

Hence, you are requested to grace the occasion as a Resource Person. Your kind consent is highly solicited.

Thanking You

Principal
Pattamundai College

*I am given my
consent to participate.*

[Signature]
05/12/17

REPORT

An Extramural seminar was organised by the Department of Sociology, Pattamundai College, Pattamundai on Dt.06.12.2017 on the topic "**Socio-Economic Constraints of Women Empowerment**". The resource person of the seminar was Dr. Prasanta Kumar Dash, Reader in Sociology, Marshaghai College, Marshaghai, Dist-Kendrapara. Prof. R.C Sahoo, Principal of the college chaired the seminar. Dr. S.S Dwibedy, HOD English and Co-Ordinator NAAC shared his views. Lt. Manoj Parida, Head of the Department gave a key note address on the topic and welcomed the guests on the dais and the participants. Most of the students of Sociology Honours were present in the seminar. The meeting was ended with a vote of thanks by Miss. Manasi Jena, a 3rd year student of the Department.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Prasanta Kumar Dash,
Reader in sociology,
Marshaghai College,
Kendrapara.

India being a very large country, with diverse geographical and ecological conditions and varied socio-cultural background, the women population needs scientific approaches, studies and innovations to achieve socio-economic and political development which includes women empowerment. Empowerment means giving power and authority to the women. The process of empowerment requires transformation of structure of subordination, control over material and intellectual recourses, gaining decisions making authority and reduction of gender inequality.

Empowerment is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systematic forces, which marginalize women and other disadvantaged sections in a given context. It implies a fundamental redistribution of power within and between families /societies and an externally induced process or mechanism of change towards women's equality and development. Here power is used not as domination, but the right to choose and the ability to influence social and political process. The term empowerment is rooted on the idea of power. Power must be understood as working at different levels, including the institutional, the household and the individual. For some theorists, power is zero sums. One group's increase in power implies another's loss of power. Therefore, the idea of distribution of power is seen necessarily involving conflict.

Mayoux's (2000) definition of empowerment relates more directly with power, as "a multidimensional and interlinked process of change in power relations". It consists of 'Power within', enabling women to articulate their own aspirations and strategies for change.' Power to', enabling women to develop the necessary skills and access the necessary resources to achieve their aspirations;' Power with', enabling women to examine and articulate their collective interests, to organize, to achieve them and to link with other women and men's organizations for change; and 'Power over', changing the underlying inequalities in power and resources that constrain women's aspirations and their ability to achieve them. These power relations operate in different spheres of life (e.g., economic, social, political) and at different levels (e.g., individual, household, community, market, institutional).

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable the individuals or groups of individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making and enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives and free from the shackles imposed on them by custom, belief and practice. Empowerment includes higher literacy level and education for women, better health care for women and children, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in economic and commercial sectors, improved standards of living and acquiring self reliance, self esteem and self confidence.

Women empowerment refers to increasing political, social, educational, or economic strength of communities of women. Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on different variables that include geographical location, educational status, social status and age. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of the traditionally underprivileged women in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. Women empowerment involves the building up of a society, a political environment, wherein women can breathe without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination and the general feeling of persecution which goes with being a woman in a traditionally male dominated structure.

In the simplest words, empowering the women means creating such an environment in which they can take independent decisions for their personal development and the development of society in general. Empowerment is the process by which the women achieve increased control and participation in decision making which in turn helps to achieve equal basis with men in various spheres – political, economical, social, cultural and civil.

Empowerment is a subjective jacket assuming different shapes, shades and sizes with respect to the community, group or individual doing it. Women Empowerment includes higher literacy level and education, better health care, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in economic and commercial sectors, improved standards of living and acquiring self reliance, self esteem and self confidence.

In short, empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, greater decision making power and control and transformative action. Therefore, empowerment is a process of both individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilization to challenge basic power relations.

Women are beautiful creations of God. As human beings and citizens of this country, they have human and legal rights to live with human dignity. The framers of the constitution of India had recognized their rights for equality, personal liberty and fundamental freedom and incorporated several provisions to promote the same. In spite of several feminist movement, constitutional safeguards and plans and programmes for their economic, educational, social and political development, Women are still lagging behind their counterpart due to various obstacles they face in India. Obstacles mean something that control one's movement and keep him or her apart from progress. Obstacles to women empowerment refer to impediments which are responsible for making difficulties in the way of women empowerment. There are several constraints that check the process of women empowerment in India.

Social

Social norms and family structure in developing countries like India, manifests and perpetuate the subordinate status of women. One of the 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 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. Women often internalize the traditional concept of their role as natural thus inflicting an injustice upon them. It is the factor that poses challenge in realizing women's empowerment.

Education

A major constraint to female take up and follow through of educational opportunities is universal fundamental cultural bias in favour of males. The widespread operation of patriarchal systems of social organization, customary early marriage, the incidence of early pregnancy, heavier domestic and subsistence duties of females, lower regard for the value of female life, problems of seclusion and security in some areas all combined adversely affect the participation of girls and women in formal education. Parents are very reluctant indeed to send daughters to school if there is no female teacher.

Health and Safety

In general the effect of poverty and malnutrition on the health of school age children falls harder on girls than boys. Boys may get preferential feeding, while girls are more likely to be undernourished. Health problems associated with pregnancy have a negative effect in the younger generations. The health and safety concerns of women are paramount for the

wellbeing of a country. However there are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned. While there are several programs that have been set into motion by the Government and several NGOs in the country, there is still a wide gap that exists between those under protection and those not. Poverty and illiteracy add to these complications with local quacks giving ineffective and downright harmful remedies to problems that women have. The empowerment of women begins with a guarantee of their health and safety. Due to gender bias in health and nutrition there is unusually high mortality rate in women reducing their population.

Economic

The economic factor especially in terms of grinding poverty and hunger is probably the most influential in adversely affecting female participation in education. In such harsh economic circumstances, sending daughters to school are perceived by parents to be prohibitive in terms of the provision of books, paper and uniforms as well as the loss of vital help at home and on the land. Because of the patriarchal and patrilocal predominance, investment in a girl's schooling is wasteful since it benefits the family into which a girl marries rather than her own. This inequality is practiced in employments and promotions. Women face countless handicaps in male customized and dominated environment in Government Offices and Private enterprises. In most cases the contribution of females is unpaid and they may have little or no experience of the handling of money which further reduces their status and power.

Religious

The religious factor is often fundamental socio-cultural bias in favors of males. Most of the religious practitioners and leaders are male and make a powerful image in favors of male. In Islamic areas the situation is generally not so supportive for female. The religious significance of sons in the Hindu family is still operative.

Legal /Political

Most countries have now legislated for equal status in respect of sex, but this is usually a recent innovation and traditional sanctions often still operate unchallenged. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to strive and adopt measures of positive discrimination in favors of women. We have various laws, policies, plans and programmes aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. However, there exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in these various forms of development measures and related mechanisms

on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in, on the other. Women around the world share a common condition; they are not full and equal participants in public policy choices that affect their lives. Nowhere is the gap between de jure and de facto equality among men and women greater than in the area of decision making. The top decision making position remain largely male dominated spheres where women have little influence. The lack of women's participation in political decision making has important consequences. It deprives women of important rights and responsibilities as citizens, and excludes their perspectives and interests from policy making and decision making. Their voices are missing from key decisions on national budgets and setting of government priorities.

We have many schemes, many programs for the purpose of women empowerment at every stage of administration. We need is a good system and agencies for the implementation of these policies and programs. If we can build up that system and implement these programs, then the goal of women empowerment can be achieved very easily through these programs.

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