

GENDER SENSITIVITY ISSUES AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract

In this paper, we have examined gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) as reflected in the millennium development goals (MDGs) as well as the conceptualization and localization of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The paper adopts Amartya Sen's women agency conceptual framework to advance the thesis of this article that while there is general consensus on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, the MDGs adopted in 2001 fell far short of fulfilling this consensus and that the incoming SDGs must respond to fundamental issues of GEWE from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. This paper addresses the issues of conceptualization, context, and design of MDGs and how lessons learnt in its implementation inform SDGs. The question is, will GEWE maintain any pride of place? Analysis in the paper reveals that qualitative indicators such as human rights, equity, and capabilities were silent in the MDG design, constructs, and implementation. The paper suggests that the understanding and putting in place of mechanisms for continuous assessment of the human-centered indicators, such as quality of life, as part of the SDGs' localization efforts portend increasing effectiveness of SDGs toward addressing gender-sensitive issues of social exclusion, inequality, and resource distribution, which have a great bearing on sustainable development. Keywords: GEWE MDG SDG Women Empowerment Woman Agency

Introduction:

As per Rigveda, the wife and husband being the equal halves of one substance are equal in every respect. Therefore both should join and take equal parts in all works religious and secular. Upanishads also clearly declare that we individual souls are neither male nor female. Later Vedic age gender inequality started creeping into the society child marriage, sati etc. are social evils against women. The Indian renaissance began during the time of British period with the help of leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chander Vidya

Sagar and after exposure to western education which talked about equality. This led to a series of legislation: abolition of Sati, increasing age of marriage, widow marriage etc. According to Gandhi women were best placed to participate in the non-violent struggle for India independence. Women like Sarojini Naidu, Kalpana Dutt, Sucheta Kriplani, Usha Mehta etc. became an integral part of Gandhi independence movement.

Research Methodology and Objectives

Present paper is based on the secondary data collected through books, journals, articles, reports & websites etc. The prime objective of the paper is to find out the women's role in agriculture sector as a business person.

Problems faced by working Women in Society

- Issues of sexual harassment
- Salary & promotions matter
- Problems of Security
- Travel
- Facilities of workplace

Feminization of Agriculture

Reflects the shift in the gender roles in agriculture. Where earlier the image of agricultural or an agriculture farmer was associated deeply with men. Women have broadened and deepened their involvement in agricultural production over the last few decades as they increasingly shoulder the responsibility for household survival and respond to economic opportunities in commercial agriculture. This trend has been called the feminization of Agriculture in Rural Area of India, the percentage of women who depend on agriculture for their livelihood is as high as 81%. They make up about 33% of cultivators and 47% of agricultural laborers. In today India, the image has been feminized due to increasing number of female workers in the agriculture sector.

Men are not assuming reproductive and domestic tasks even as Women are increasing their participation in on farm and off farm productive activities. UN Women and UN Environment have joined forces under global programmes to promote women's in business for sustainable energy.

October 15 is celebrated as National Women's Farmers Day by recognizing the multidimensional role of women at every stage in agriculture. As per Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Women's contribution to Indian agriculture is about 32% some states such as Himachal Pradesh, Utrakhand contribution of women to agriculture and rural economy is more than men it is amazing thing.

- According to census 2011 out of total female main workers 55% were agriculture laborers and 24% were cultivators.
- As per Indian Council of Agriculture Research Shows that the Participation of women is 75% in the production of major crops, 79% in Horticulture and 51% in Post- harvest work.

Key Role of Women

1. Women can prepare the country towards second Green Revolution and they can change the landscape of development if society avail opportunities and facilities.
2. Food and Agriculture organization predicated that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase Yields on their farms by 20% to 30%.
3. Women are more likely than men to hold low wage, part time seasonal employment and they tend to be paid less even when their qualifications are higher than men's. Introduce new jobs in high value, export-oriented agro-industries offer much better hopes for women.
4. International Research shows that women with access to secure land, formal credit and access to market have greater propensity in making investments in improving harvest, increasing productivity and improving household food security and nutrition.

Multi-Dimensional Role of Women:

Agricultural Activities: Sowing, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertilizer application, plant protection, harvesting, winnowing, storing etc.

Domestic Activities: Cooking, child rearing, water collection, fuel, wood gathering, household maintenance etc.

Allied Activities: Cattle management, fodder collection, milking etc.

Reason Behind feminization of Agriculture:

1. *Migration of Male*

There has been a need for to find better avenues for income for the sustenance of their family. Cities have been as providing lucrative job opportunities for men from Rural areas migrate to cities seeking a means for regular income leaving behind the agriculture chores to women.

2. *Lock of Skill*

The women in turn face various hardships while operating agriculture chores such as low levels of agriculture skills, lack knowledge to improve productivity there by entering into a vicious cycle of poverty.

3. *Lack of Property Rights*

Women do not generally enjoy equal property rights as their male counter parts.

4. *Lack of Bargaining Power to Women*

Due to lack of property rights women generally not given the land rights in their name women haven't bargaining power in the family as against the property holding male member. Due to low level of skill, they work much longer hours than men and are paid lesser than their counter part.

5. *Farmer Suicides*

The increasing numbers of suicides among male farmers forces women to take up farming as they cannot manage their families with the compensation that they may get.

Present Scenario of Women as a Business Person

Issue of land ownership: As per census 2011 only 12.8% of the operational holding were owned by women which reflect the gender disparity in ownership of land holding in agriculture. Lack of Ownership of women does not allow women farmers to approach banks. Mostly women are responsible for 60%-80% of food and 90% of dairy production. But the work by women farmers in crop cultivation, livestock management or at home of in goes unnoticed. Women farmers are largely excluded from modern contract farming arrangements women did not secure control over land, family labor, and other resources required to guarantee delivery of a reliable flow of produce.

New method in Agriculture: New technology is introduced to automate specific manual labor. They may lose their jobs because they are often responsible for manual duties.

Gender discrimination: Almost 78% women farmers in India face Gender discrimination.

Remedies for Women's share in Business

1. At least 30% of the budget allocation for women beneficiaries in all going schemes programme.
2. Preference to women in organic farming, self-employment scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna etc.
3. Provisions of issuing Kisan Credit Card to women and creating livelihood opportunities through livestock practices, agricultural processing is mentioned.
4. Focusing on women self-help groups to connect them to Micro Credit.
5. Training and skill imparted to women as has been done by some help groups and co-operative based dairy activities.
6. Provision of credit without collateral under the Micro finance initiative of NABARD should be encouraged. Better access to credit technology and provision of business abilities with further boost women's confidence and help them gain recognition as farmers.
7. Declining size of land holding may act as a deterrent due to lower net returns earned and technology adoption. The possibility of collective farming can be encouraged to make women self-reliant.

Conclusion

While we may have walked miles towards women empowerment, the road is a long one. Empowering Women is key to our tomorrow, our future.

Finally Women must be at the forefront for demanding their own empowerment. There is no better tool of empowerment than women themselves.

Women play an important role in Society as per Manusmriti. Women are honored divinity blossoms there and where even Women are dishonored all action to matter how noble it may be remains unfruitful.

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