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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A THEORITICAL ANALYSIS¹



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Abstract. This Paper is an attempt to fill the informational gap that exists when it comes to myths and misconceptions related to Women Empowerment Scenario. Women exist as the most vulnerable subsection of the developing world. The whole narrative of Women Empowerment is now questionable as Covid-19 pandemic has made women especially the underprivileged ones more vulnerable to exploitation. The Paper introduces the concept of Pseudo Empowerment of Women. The Present Paper tries to present an argument in favor of uniform civil code in India to enhance the status of women empowerment. We critically examine in this paper the emerging Neo Domestic Violence as a tool used by the neo patriarchal Society to oppress and exploit its women on one hand and to maintain their power and hegemony on the other. Finally, we conclude by suggesting various solutions to reduce the inhumane and derogatory treatment to which Women are subject to.

Keywords: women empowerment; uniform civil code; domestic violence; marital rape; patriarchy.

JEL codes: B54; J12; J16.

Introduction

Women Empowerment [1] is a mythical concept all-round the globe, it only creates an illusionary image whereas in reality the Nation keeps suffering from 'Pseudo Empowerment'. Women

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Empowerment can be termed as ‘Pseudo’ in any given State [2] where there are numerous efforts being made by the government in the given State but the negative elements that exist in socio-economic structure like for instance, Domestic violence [3], Marital rapes [4] and women exploitation [5] overpowers the State’s effort. Most of the contemporary developing world suffers from this syndrome of ‘Pseudo Empowerment’ [6] where women empowerment exists only on papers whereas the reality is far more away from Empowerment.

The Indian Constitution specifically has provision to protect and empower its women. Article 21 of the constitution says that every person has a right to live with dignity. Article 44 that is the Directive principle of state policy strives to secure uniform civil code throughout the country but no action has been taken so far. Uniform civil code is the most vital aspect for women empowerment [7]. Without there being no uniform set of laws to govern its people the oppression and exploitation of women rises multiple times in the name of fuzzy customary and religious practices. Uniform civil code debate in India is often derailed by the diverse religious groups but no attention is paid to the sufferings of women [8] that are faced by all the women in India irrespective of their religion. If implemented this holds huge potential in bringing to its women equality and justice.

Women specific crime data is not reliable anywhere in the global scenario because most of the women keep their sufferings in private. Women especially belonging to developing world are taught to keep their sufferings in private since childhood, where crimes like marital rapes or domestic violence never comes out of the given household’s premises and remains hidden in dark. This paper therefore makes an attempt to do only theoretical evaluation of women empowerment.

When we talk about women’ empowerment we in general as far as the global community is concerned it gives more importance to her education, health but ignores her right to determine her own bodily rights [9]. For any woman to achieve her full efficient self the most important aspect is to live a life free of violence. If women in any country are subject to any type of violence, then its women cannot be termed as Empowered such Women can be termed as *Pseudo Empowered Women*.

1. Emergence of Neo Domestic Violence in India

In fact, Indian society is slowly moving towards a stage of ‘Neo Domestic Violence’ where Domestic violence is changing its form from the conventional physical, mental and sexual abuse to *Digital, Economic, Social, Intellectual abuse*.

Where Digital abuse is on the rise after the Information Technological boom, it is an abuse done by the husband where he keeps breaching his wife's privacy by regularly tracking her mails, calls,

messages and keeps a track of whom she meets [10]. On the other hand, Economic abuse is more historical than contemporary in Indian society especially when it comes to women belonging to the elite classes in India where the elitist women in spite of being educationally forward are restricted to choose their livelihood, life partner and property rights. If one look at the emerging social abuse, women are restricted by their husbands to even meet their own family and friends, and are abused in front of other relatives. And finally, the Intellectual abuse is where the husbands or male partner consider their wives as inferior to take any decision especially related to her own finances.

As far as Domestic Violence or Neo Domestic Violence is concerned it is extremely difficult to control because it is both temporal and spatial in nature. It cuts across all the castes, class and cultures. It keeps changing its form for instance, sexual, physical, mental, digital, social, intellectual, economic domestic violence. And such violence against women remains hidden due to entrenched patriarchal norms. The western theories that deal with women empowerment are not capable enough to deal with the Neo Domestic violence that we are currently facing. The implication of domestic violence is on the overall wellbeing of women, its cost to the society can never be measured. In fact domestic violence emergence has historical, orthodox and patriarchal roots where women keep accepting violence as accepted behavior within the households, neither reporting nor protection can be ensured in such scenario.

If one glances through the official government of India data then according to the National Crime Report Bureau 2018, a crime is recorded against women in India every 1.7 minutes and a woman is subject to domestic violence every 4.4 minutes. The National Family Health Survey 2015 states that 30 percent of women in the reproductive age group 15 to 49 age have experienced physical violence and within this 83 per cent women experienced physical violence at the ends of their husbands followed by the husband's mother and father [11].

2. Marital Rapes: An Ignored Sin

When we talk about marital rapes it is the form of sexual domestic violence [22]. Marital rape is a demonist weapon used by the husband to control, intimidate and subordinate the women. It is an unfortunate reality that Rapes in marriages are not recognized in India which makes women reproductive and bodily rights redundant [13]. It is a historic problem as marital alliances are generally considered as sacrosanct which means that we give more precedence to establishment of sexual relations between married couples rather than the women choice or right to self-determine her own body.

Suggestions and Conclusion

Domestic violence be it physical or sexual like marital rape it not only deteriorates the physical and mental health of women it also reduces her self-esteem whose cost is difficult to measure. To eradicate such menace from society one needs to understand that any Public Policy and legislation on paper are necessary but not sufficient. Real answer lies in long run measures like creating awareness, sensitization, Legal literacy camps and mobile courts should be introduced as effective quick remedies for bringing justice. Women also need to be made aware about their own reproductive rights, laws, and the importance of uniform civil code in their lives. As most of their exploitation and oppression which takes place is due to 'information lacuna'. Until then we will continue to just exist as an ignored set of '*Pseudo Empowered Women*'.

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РАСШИРЕНИЕ ПРАВ И ВОЗМОЖНОСТЕЙ ЖЕНЩИН: ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ

Сингх Приянка

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Аннотация. Эта статья представляет собой попытку заполнить информационный пробел, который существует, когда речь заходит о мифах и заблуждениях, связанных со Сценарием расширения прав и возможностей женщин. Женщины являются наиболее уязвимой частью развивающегося мира. Весь рассказ о расширении прав и возможностей женщин в настоящее время вызывает сомнения, поскольку пандемия Covid-19 сделала женщин, особенно обездоленных, более уязвимыми для эксплуатации. В статье вводится концепция Псевдо расширения прав и возможностей женщин. В настоящей статье предпринята попытка представить аргумент в пользу единообразного гражданского кодекса в Индии для повышения статуса расширения прав и возможностей женщин. Мы критически рассматриваем возникающее Нео-домашнее насилие как инструмент, используемый нео-патриархальным обществом для угнетения и эксплуатации своих женщин, с одной стороны, и для поддержания своей власти и гегемонии, с другой. Наконец, в заключении мы предлагаем различные решения для уменьшения бесчеловечного и унижительного обращения, которому подвергаются женщины.

Ключевые слова: расширение прав и возможностей женщин; единый гражданский кодекс; насилие в семье; изнасилование в браке; патриархат.

JEL коды: B54; J12; J16.

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