



# Political Right And Empowering Participation Of Women In Rural Development

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## Abstract:

The prosperity and growth of a nation depends on the status and developments of its women as they, not only constitute nearly half of its population, but also influence the growth of the remaining half. Bringing women out of the house and enabling them to join the mainstream of national life is certainly an important step. At present political right and participation of women in rural development become very much prominent in the growth of Indian economy. There is close relationship exist between empowerment of women and their active participation in political, economic and decision making process. In India the participation of rural women in political fields can be effective only after launching Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgaris Yojana which is a unified poverty allegation programmes covering all aspects of self-employment. Rural women are also an important component in the complex subject of rural development and there is a growing realization that the participation of women is essential for any planned and rapid progress of the nations. The rural women, who work with men in doing various field operations. As equal partners they contribute significantly to agriculture, animal husbandry and allied process of production.

## Introduction:

The term 'women's right' refers to the freedom inherently possessed by woman and girls of all ages, which may be institutionalized, ignored on suppressed by low, custom and behaviour in a particular society. But economic empowerment of women means to ensure income generation activities for women, provision of training with the ultimate objective of making all women economically independent and self reliant. The importance of women in rural development lies in the fact that since India is a agricultural country and now agriculture is increasingly become a women activities. They perform the role of farmer like they plant, weed and harvest food crops and tend livestock. Despite many responsibilities women have significantly less access to resources and services they need to increase their productivity and their income and over burden of household duties. With the changing scenario due

to commercialization, globalization. Climate change, new technology and migration pattern, it is important to recognize the role played by women in the process of rural development. Hence, the development of rural areas is the prime importance and it is the vital issue of the developing countries like India.

### Objectives:

The objectives of this paper is to-

1. To analyze the role of women in rural development.
2. To analyze the nature of women in political fields.
3. To analyze the Problem faced by women in rural development process and recommended some suggestions how to overcome.

### Methodology:

So far methodology is concerned this paper is primarily based on secondary method. For the preparation of this paper data are collected from the secondary sources which includes books, magazines, articles, newspapers and a little bit of internet sources.

### Political right of women:

Women's rights are the rights and entitlements claimed by women and girls in many societies worldwide. In some countries, these rights are institutionalized or supported by law, local customs and behaviour, whereas in others, they are ignored and suppressed. They differ from broader notions of human rights through claims of an inherent historical and traditional bias against the exercise of rights by women and girls, in favor of men and boys. Women's right can be marginalized in the following ways-

1. The right to vote and participate in the political processes: Women's right to vote and participate in politics first started gaining traction around the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as this was when many countries began passing laws that would explicitly grant freedom of expression and human rights to women. Women are now able to share their opinions on topics that affect their lives, including healthcare, education and welfare. Furthermore, women are able to advocate for change and make a difference both within their own countries or even internationally.
2. Equal access to education and job opportunities: women face more barriers than men when it comes to accessing and participating in educational and professional settings due to social stigmas or a lack of confidence in their abilities and potential. Equal access to education and job opportunities must extend beyond just the legal framework but also tap into social change initiatives geared toward creating better access for those frequently ignored. Now, the women should know their ability to reach their highest potential regardless of traditional opinions or preconceptions about them.
3. Freedom from sexual harassment, assault, and discrimination: Women should have the assurance that they can pursue their goals without the worry of being harassed or assaulted by someone in a superior position to them. Women must lead the way down the path to full gender equality, and this begins with protection from any form of sexual misconduct.
4. Access to affordable healthcare: Accessing affordable healthcare should be made more accessible so that all women and their families can benefit from these resources. This can be done by providing more grants and subsidies for medical services as well as creating initiatives that will ensure healthcare providers are trained and certified in offering quality services.

5. Protection against domestic violence: Domestic violence is a major human rights violation that affects women all over the world. It is often seen as a private issue, but it is a matter that needs to be brought into the public sphere to address the root causes of this problem. Women should not have to suffer in silence, they have right to live free from fear and abuse. Governments, communities and individuals must take responsibility for creating an environment that protects victims of domestic violence and empowers them to seek help.
6. The right to fair and equal wage: It implies that women should be provided with the same rights and opportunities as their male counterparts when it comes to employment, including access to higher-paying jobs and upward mobility. It is a right that needs to be protected and fought for so that all individuals receive equal compensation for their lab our.
7. The right to own and inherit property: This can be achieved through reforming laws that prevent women from having equal rights over land or other assets, as well as increasing access to credit and financial services for women owned businesses.
8. The right to be free from forced or early marriage: This can be possible by making laws that protect minors from being forced into marriage, as well as creating initiatives that provides education and awareness on the issue.
9. The right to pursue leadership roles in all sectors of society: Women should be just as encouraged and empowered to pursue leadership roles in all areas of society. And it can be done by implementing policies that ensure equal representation at all levels of the organization, as well as providing training and development opportunities for women.
10. The right to equality before the law: Women must have equal rights and protection under the law. This implies that the women should not discriminate against or have their rights overlooked due to gender, and they should also be provided with access to justice and legal services when needed.
11. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion: Women should have the right to choose and practice their religious or spiritual beliefs without fear of discrimination or prosecution. They must be allowed to think freely, express their opinions and make decisions based on their conscience without pressure from society or the government.

Thus, from the above analyses it can be said that now a day's women have the right to a standard of living that meets their basic needs and allows them to live with dignity. This includes access to food, clothing and housing that is safe, secure and of adequate quality. At present empowerment has become a fashionable word. Empowerment, particularly women's empowerment has been defined as the process whereby poor women has taken capacities to challenge the traditional society where they lived, gained control over the material and knowledgeable resources, taken strong steps against gender discrimination and subordination which justify unequal distribution etc. Swain has defined women's empowerment as the process in which women became enabling to change their existing old traditional norms and culture and lived peacefully in the absence to any kind of discrimination. For him, women became empowered fully when they take independent decisions in household matters, provide special facilities to their children, and became conscious about their own political rights and duties, when active part in Government decision-making process as well as directly or indirectly linked with formal structure. Thus, the goal of women's empowerment has two folds-1. To challenge subordination and subjection 2. To transform all structure, system and institutions which, in any way may cause on support gender discrimination and inequality.



Active participation of rural women in the political and economic process has been considered to be an important mechanism. There is a close relationship exist between empowerment of women and their active participation in political. Economic and decision making process. But the participation of rural women in political fields can be effective only after launching Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana which is a unified poverty alleviation programmes covering all aspects of Self-Employment. SHGs have the focal point of development scheme under SGSY programme. It laid emphasis on the involvement of rural poor women into SHGs which is a great landmark towards their active participation in the political fields. And it also helps to establish their position in their family as well as society.

Women and rural development are the most significant priority in every country across the world, particularly in a predominantly agrarian country like India, where more than three-fourth of its total population lives in rural areas and where more than 80% of rural population entirely depends upon on agriculture and allied activities for livelihood. Women constitute about 50 percent of world's population and one third of its total labour force. But the over whelming majority of rural women have been suffering from various problems like poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment, illiteracy, malnutrition and insanitary living condition. Despite of the fact rural women shares a greater responsibilities in running the family , maintaining and household activities, attending to firm operation, tending domestic animals and engaging in rural artisan and handicrafts activities. The importance of women in rural development lies in the fact that since India is a agriculture country and now agriculture is increasingly become a women activities. They perform the role of farmer like they plant, weed and harvest food crops and tend livestock. Many women earn extra income by working as wages laborers, producing and selling vegetables or engaging in small scale trading and enterprises. Despitess many responsibilities women have significantly less access to resources and services they need to increase their productivity and their income and less their burden of household duties. With the changing scenario due to commercialization, globalization, climate change, new technology and migration pattern, it is important to recognize the role played by women in the process of rural development.

### **Meaning of Rural Development:**

From the perspective of developed countries, rural development refers the preservation of ecological integrity, efficient and appropriate use of land, healthy lining condition, effective social , economic and Government institutions, improved human welfare in terms of a minimal economic and social level of existence, physical structure and landscape of pleasing design, comprehensiveness that is an entire range of physical, biological and human factors in rural region. In the context of third world countries, a more comprehensive concept of rural development has been put forwarded by World Bank (1975), defining rural development as strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of people in rural settlement and in particular it focuses on the rural poor, comprising the small farmer, tenants and the landless. From the Indian perspective, rural development denotes the maximizing production in agriculture and allied activities in the rural areas including development of rural industries with emphasis on village and cottage industries, generating maximum possible employment opportunities in rural areas are especially for the weaker sections of the community. It enable them to improve their standard of living and providing certain basic amenities like drinking water, electricity, especially for productive purposes etc.

### **Role of women in rural development in following ways as-**

1. Women in home and agricultural activities with regards to rural development: Women perform the multi dimensional role in agricultural sectors. They performed the agricultural activities like field works, managing, harvesting, food processing, and animal husbandry, cutting of crops, seed storage, winning and sugarcane production along with the men folk. Women also perform non-farm activities such as commercial weaving, salt collection, handicrafts, domestic services and home industry. In traditional village community the women played a significant role in the process of earning a livelihood by participating in both production and marketing of a agricultural and allied productions. They not only bear for the smooth running of their family for economic survival by performing the activities as a farmers, traders and entrepreneurs in their own right but also share greater responsibility for the regional development.
2. Women in decision making with regards to rural development: Making of decision in the process of rural development always plays an important role for the actual implementation of rural development programmed. In most of the rural society women plays the supportive role in most of the agricultural decision. The rural women play a minor role in financial and agricultural decision making but they are found to be playing an important role in household decision making as well as decisions related to money. It is observed that family size, income and tradition seem to restrict or encourage the women's participation in farm decisions. In nuclear families involvement of women in all decision is found to be more intensive.

In India, women become the integral part of agricultural activities. In some societies women performed more field work than man. The majority of women contributed substantially towards the labor-forces required in the farm and agricultural fields throughout the year but unfortunately their performances are not recognized. Now a day with the advancement of science and technology the women are increasing practicing in modern agriculture for reducing costs. Education, family income and social status of women are the vital factors of actual participation of women in work force. In spite of equal participation of women with men in agricultural production, they are seldom recognized as participants in external development programmes. The performances of agricultural activities of women is largely ignored because it is difficult to qualify women's participation as their products are used for home consumption and their production are most often not marketed. Agriculture is still a family endeavor, but the pattern of women's participation varies according to regional and cultural norms.

### **Problems faced by women in rural development process:**

Although women performs major role in rural development process, they are being victimized from various circumstances. The problem faced by women in performing their developmental activities can be illustrated as under-

1. The rural women are made busy from early morning to late in the evening by engaging them both in farm and home for productive as well as non-productive activities but their contributions are not given due recognized.
2. Due to gender based division of labor and discrimination prevailing in the society women labor are not treated with due respect. They are not paid equal wages for equal work.
3. Now in the process of modernization which requires new skills and capacity. As a result rural women have been affected adversely and loss the traditional economic opportunities because they are not well-equipped with knowledge, skills and capabilities.

4. Due to male domination nature of Indian society women have left out from the various training and rural development programmes which usually involve only the men-folk, women are involved only in programmed related to child, cooking and nutrition etc.
5. One of the most important obstacles to the integration of women into development is the social, political and economic invisibility of the female.

### **Suggestion:**

1. Recognition of the role played by women in agricultural, farm and household activities is the essential for planning and implementing rural development plans successfully.
2. To attain rural development with greater equity it requires integration of women not only as contributor to work but also beneficiaries and as active participants in development efforts.
3. Majority of rural women are involved in their own farms and household chores. Therefore, these unpaid family workers must be included in legally defined labor forces so that they are involve in the future development schemes and are benefited from the services provided to farmers.
4. The need is to recognized and the strengthen women's existing contribution with improved skills and resources, which is essential to extend their role in the rural development.
5. In National Development Plans rural women should be regarded as a target group as an economically active work force within their specific socio-economic and cultural setting.
6. For equal access of women to knowledge and technology related to agriculture allied activities, personnel providing services and training also need to be educated about the role of women in agriculture.

### **Conclusion:**

In the conclusion it can be said that country like India where 80 percent population lives in rural areas, so to make India developed in the real sense the emphasized has to be given on rural development. The full benefit of development can only be realized with full participation and the role of women cannot be isolated from the total framework of development as they constituted half of the population. There is a need to strengthen activities which provides women with an independent source of income. Any attempt to integrate women into development must mean their productive employment so that they can contribute towards increased production and derive benefits in the form of earned income for their own effort. But they have been left out from the various training and rural development programmes which usually involved only the men-folk while women are involved only in programmed related to child health, cooking and nutrition etc. This is all because of non-recognition of contribution and potential of women planners and administrators which is in turn is due to the lack of any scientific knowledge about the condition of women-folk in rural areas. Therefore, the first exercise to improve women's role in rural development should be to destroy the invisibility barriers and to look what they do and define their functions properly and precisely to see what his might mean for rural development.

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