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THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S WITH DISABILITIES EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

More than half of the world's population is made up of women with disabilities and girls, who frequently experience the effects of poverty, climate change, food insecurity, a lack of access to healthcare, and other global economic and environmental issues more severely than men or boys. Increasing women's political participation is another essential step in the empowerment of women with disabilities. In terms of the ecology and development, women are essential. So, it is crucial that they participate fully if we are to attain the objectives of sustainable development. Finding a solution depends on their efforts and leadership.

Keywords: Empowerment, Women with disabilities, Leadership, Development

INTRODUCTION

The process of giving women more autonomy and the capacity to make their own decisions is known as "empowerment of women." This can involve giving women the freedom to fully participate in politics and the economy as well as the freedom to decide for themselves what is best for their own health and well-being. Because it can result in a variety of favourable results, including higher economic growth and development, enhanced health and well-being, and more gender equality, women's empowerment is crucial. Women's empowerment has always been a significant topic in India. Although substantial progress in recent decades, gender equality for women in India still presents significant difficulties. These difficulties include gender-based violence, discrimination, and limited access to education and work.

SOME DIFFICULTIES THAT INDIAN WOMEN FACE INCLUDE:

Discrimination: Women in India frequently experience discrimination in a variety of settings, including the job and the family. This may limit their ability to take advantage of educational and job possibilities, as well as result in unfair treatment and poorer compensation.

Lack of access to employment and education: Women in India encounter major obstacles to employment and education. For instance, according to data from the World Bank, only around 50% of women in India are employed, compared to almost 80% of men. This is caused in part by societal and cultural restrictions that keep women from working, as well as a lack of access to education and training.

Gender-based violence: In India, gender-based violence is a serious issue. In India, there were approximately 428,278 documented incidences of violence against women in 2021, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. This includes instances of dowry-related violence, physical and sexual assault, and female infanticide. With 31,677 reported rapes against women in 2021 alone, the data are worrying.

Poverty: India has a large number of poor women, especially in rural areas. In addition to creating barriers to education and work for women, poverty can also have a negative impact on their health and nutrition.

Differences between urban and rural areas: In India, rural women frequently confront more obstacles to empowerment. They might be more socially isolated and more susceptible to gender-based violence, for instance, and they might have fewer accesses to health care and education.

HOW MAY THE LIVES OF INDIAN WOMEN BE ALTERED BY EMPOWERING WOMEN?

Women's empowerment can improve a variety of aspects of their lives, including their access to better jobs, their level of control over their own lives, their political participation, and gender equality. Women can acquire better paying jobs by being given the freedom to participate fully in the economy, which can help them and their families escape poverty. Women who are empowered have more influence over their lives and can make decisions that affect their own health, happiness, and future. This can boost their self-confidence and self-esteem and improve their mental and physical health.

The political process can be more inclusive and representative when women are given the opportunity to participate, which will result in policies and programmes that better serve the needs of women and girls. Women who are empowered to participate in politics can have a greater say in the decisions that affect their lives and their communities. Women's empowerment can also contribute to increased gender equality and the reduction of gender inequality, which will result in more equitable interactions between men and women and improve the health, happiness, and general quality of life of women.

UNITED NATIONS WOMEN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- **End Discrimination against Women and Girls**

Due to discriminatory laws and practises, women and girls continue to face serious disadvantages worldwide. No nation in the world has achieved equality, and promises to get rid of discriminatory laws have not been kept. The mandate was put in place to step up efforts to end all prejudice against women and girls worldwide.

- **End All Violence Against and Exploitation of Women and Girls**

One in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual abuse at the hands of intimate relationships, in addition to being a violation of their human rights, violence against women and girls can have fatal immediate and long-term bodily, sexual, and emotional effects, including death. Women who encounter violence have detrimental impacts on their general well-being and are less able to engage fully in society. It has an impact on their neighbourhoods, families, and the country as a whole. It comes at a high price, including lower production, more strain on the healthcare system, and legal fees.

- **Eliminate Forced Marriages and Genital Mutilation**

The long-term physical, psychological, and social effects of female genital mutilation make this work all the more important. It infringes on women's rights to physical integrity, sexual and reproductive health, non-discrimination, and freedom from cruel or inhumane treatment. Additionally, it is unethical because female genital mutilation is never safe, regardless of who performs it or how hygienic the setting is. We cannot treat female genital mutilation in isolation from other types of violence against women and girls or other detrimental practises like early and forced marriages since it is a form of gender-based violence. We must address the underlying causes of gender inequality and work towards the social and economic empowerment of women if we are to put an end to female genital mutilation.

- **Value Unpaid Care and Promote Shared Domestic Responsibilities**

By providing governmental services, infrastructure, and social safety programmes, as well as through fostering shared responsibility within the home and family as is culturally and legally permissible, we can acknowledge and reward unpaid care and household labour. Worldwide, women provide three times as much unpaid care as men do.

- **Ensure Full Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making**

Everyone has the right to participate in the government of their country, according to Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A crucial precondition for the proper operation of democracy is equal access for men and women to positions of authority, decision-making, and leadership at all levels. Governments that have an equal representation of men and women in political matters are more accountable, transparent, and ensure that the needs of women are taken into consideration when making decisions. But historically, women have been kept out of positions of authority and decision-making.

- **Universal Access to Reproductive Health and Rights**

Everyone has access to sexual and reproductive health care and reproductive rights, as agreed upon in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the conclusions of their review conferences.

- **Equal Rights to Economic Resources, Property Ownership and Financial Services**

To ensure that women have equal access to economic resources, such as land ownership and control, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, reforms must be made in accordance with national legislation. Achieve equitable access to economic resources, land and other forms of property ownership, inheritance, natural resources, suitable new technology, and financial services, including microfinance, for all men and women by the year 2030, with a focus on the poor and most vulnerable.

- **Promote Empowerment of Women through Technology**

Technology helped women's resources and capacities increase in a number of ways. The findings demonstrated that ICT interventions were being used in a number of broad fields, such as outreach (such as health promotion), education (such as opportunities for health literacy), lifestyle (such as peer coaching and planning), prevention (such as screening opportunities), health challenges (such as apps for intimate partner violence), and perceptions of barriers (i.e., uptake, utilisation and ubiquity to ICTs for women). Notwithstanding the practical ways in which technology has benefited women in their daily lives, there is still controversy over the definition and application of the term empowerment. Due to the inconsistent and poor measurement of empowerment in diverse studies, it was difficult to determine whether the notion had been realised.

- **Adopt and Strengthen Policies and Enforceable Legislation for Gender Equality**

The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels require the development and strengthening of sound policies and enforced legislation.

CONCLUSION

The indicators of women's empowerment are constantly in need of updating and improvement. The two indicators with the most pronounced variations among women are their level of education and their allegiance with a particular religion. In addition, women's high levels of freedom of movement, high levels of family autonomy, and favourable attitudes towards gender equality are all strongly correlated with education level. The chances ratios of all four indices improve noticeably as education level rises. Yet, age proves to be a more significant predictor of household autonomy and mobility than education.

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