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## Women in South Asia: Indo-China's Co-relative Actions of Upliftment

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**Abstract:** This paper attempts to analyse the status of women empowerment in South Asia by using various indicators based on data from secondary sources. The study reveals that South Asia a region of beauty and prosperity on the one side populated, and recognised patriarch belt, on the other side. Many states are weak and suffering from lots of difficulties and problems. Women empowerment is also one of those problems. India and China as big player of this region, one is performing the role of big brother and other is good neighbour. Both the state takes lot of steps and initiatives for upliftments and empowerment of women. The study concludes by an observation that access to education, employment and imperatives of India and china are most enabling factors to empowerment.

**Keyword:** women empowerment, importance and Indo-china's imperatives

### 1. INTRODUCTION

South Asia includes the nations of India, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Nepal. One-third of the approximately 1.5 billion people who live in the region are considered to be impoverished. Poverty reduction is a challenge for the entire region. Numerous challenges exist with regard to health, education and other fields, too. Furthermore, gender disparity is still a serious problem. Consequently, many South Asian countries may be unable to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In emerging countries with rapidly growing economies, there is an urgent need for transportation, electric power, water and sewerage, and other infrastructure projects to attract the domestic and foreign investments needed to sustain growth. In countries affected by conflicts, peace building and reconstruction assistance are needed. Countries vulnerable to cyclones, flooding, earthquakes and other natural disasters require disaster prevention measures. Women empowerment is current issue, like others region of world it is also debateable in south Asian region. Mostly the states of this region are weak and the participation of women in job, politics, and education literacy is not good in these nations. For the developments of these nations and empowerment of women is necessary and to take strong steps by the its nation and other countries of region like India and China.

### 2. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women empowerment refers to the ability for women to enjoy their rights to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, as well as the ability to manage risk and improve the status and wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> While often interchangeable used, the more comprehensive concept of gender empowerment refers to people of any gender, stressing the distinction between biological sex and gender as a role.

### 3. IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN

1 Under-employed and unemployed; women population constitutes around 50% of the world population. A large number of women around the world are unemployed. The world economy suffers a lot of because of the unequal opportunity for women at work places.

2 Equal competent and intelligent: women are equal competent, nowadays, women are even ahead of men in many socio-economic activities.

3 Talented women are as talented Men. Previously women were not allowed in higher education like men hence their talents were wasted. But nowadays, they are allowed to go for higher studies and it encourages women to show their talents which will not only benefit her individually but to the whole world at large.

4 Over all development of society: the main advantage of women empowerment is that there will be over development of society. The money that comes earn does not help them and their family, but it is also help to develop the society.

5 Reduce poverty: women empowerment also reduce poverty sometimes, the money earned by the male member of the family is not sufficient to meet the demands of the family. The added earning of women helps the family to come out poverty trap.

6 National Development; Women are making the nation proud by their outstanding performances almost every sphere including medical science, social science, engineering etc<sup>2</sup>.

#### **4. STATUS OF WOMEN IN SOUTH ASIA**

A woman's individual identity is often questioned and compromised in South Asia. Family law in this region which ought to encompass areas of women's rights also accommodates gender discrimination. The centre of society is the family unit, yet woman, the main character, is often ignored in getting acknowledgement socially as well as legally. Family law here has provided ground for debate for feminists in search of laws with respect to gender<sup>3</sup>. In South Asia, complex personal laws that cater to marriage, inheritance, divorce and custody are in practice and are influenced by cultural and religious traditions. On the other side religious cultural experiences and Secular laws also exist that try to homogenize rights on the basis of citizens rather than religion or community. However, in the South Asian context, since community and family have always been a priority, existence of secular and religion-based laws has negatively affected women's development and their legal protection. The predominant religions are as follows: Nepal and India; Hinduism, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Afghanistan are Islamic countries; Srilanka and Bhutan are Buddhist countries<sup>4</sup>.

#### **5. INDO-CHINA'S INITIATIVE**

On the Indian subcontinent, as in no other part of the world, women have risen to the pinnacle of politics. Indira Gandhi of India, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan and Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar are all famous names. Less well known is that Sri Lanka was the first country ever to elect a woman prime minister, or that it has also had a female president. For 22 of the past 25 years Bangladesh, a largely Muslim country with more people than France and Germany combined, has been led by a woman. And the chief ministers of numerous country-sized Indian states, from West Bengal in the east to Tamil Nadu in the south, have also been women. India's democracy is not pretty; these are the winners of bare-knuckle contests. Yet for all such headline-grabbing successes, the fine print tells a different story. Although there has been steady progress in such things as stamping out female infanticide and spreading women's education, statistics continue to reveal a stark sex divide<sup>5</sup>.

#### **6. INDIA'S INITIATIVE OF WOMEN UPLIFTMENT**

India is a complex country. We have, through centuries, developed various types of customs, traditions and practices. These customs and traditions, good as well as bad, have become a part of our society's collective consciousness. We worship female goddesses; we also give great importance to our mothers, daughters, sisters, wives and other female relatives or friends. But at the same time, Indians are also famous for treating their women badly both inside and outside their homes. Indian society consists of people belonging to almost all kinds of religious beliefs. In every religion women are given a special place and every religion teaches us to treat women with respect and dignity. But somehow the society has so developed that various types of ill practices, both physical and mental, against women have become a norm since ages. For instance, sati pratha, practice of dowry, pardapratha, female infanticide, wife burning, sexual violence, sexual harassment at work place, domestic violence and other varied kinds of discriminatory practices; all such acts consists of physical as well as mental element. The reasons for such behaviour against women are many but the most important one are the male superiority complex and patriarchal system of society. Though to eliminate these ill practices and discrimination against women various constitutional and legal rights are there but in reality there are a lot to be done. Several self-help groups and NGOs are working in this direction; also women themselves are breaking the societal barriers and achieving great heights in all dimensions: political, social and economic. Under article 15(3) of Indian constitution allows for positive discrimination in favour of women, article 39(a) of DPSP state that "the state shall in particular, direct with its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood."<sup>6</sup> the Rashtriya MahilaKosh (national credit fund for women) was set up in 1933 to make credit available for lower income women in India. More recent programme initiated by the government of India include the mother

and child tracking system, the Indira Gandhi Matritvasahyog yojana conditional maternity benefit plan (CMB) and the Rajiv Gandhi scheme for empowerment of adolescent girls-sabha. Many other NGOs, family planning, '**Beti bachau beti padhao**, like step are taking by Indian government at national level for the welfare of women.

India in south Asian region always play the role of big brother either it become issue of women empowerment or any else.

Recognizing the need to ameliorate the condition of women in general, the south Asian heads of state and the government of India always lead in various conventions and protocols either that may be

SAARC official level meeting on women in development (8-10) 1986April, New Delhi, India.

FIRST ministerial conference on women in development, Shillong, India (6-8) may 1986. This conference was inaugurated by the former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Second fourth, fifth, tenth and eleventh meeting of SAARC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE on women development held in India.

Except these conferences and meeting India always initiate for women upliftment either it in SAARC Summit Delhi 2005 for elimination of gender – disparity and empowerment of women or in fourteen summit of SAARC new Delhi (2007)<sup>7</sup>.

India for ending women violation against women and promoting women participation also cooperate with UN steps of women's office based in New Delhi covers four countries India Bhutan Maldives, and Srilanka.

## **7. CHINA'S INITIATIVE OF WOMEN UPLIFTMENT**

China is a developing country with the largest population in the world. Of its total population of 1.3 billion, women account for about half. Therefore, the promotion of gender equality and the overall development of women is not only of great significance for China's development, it also has a special influence on the efforts for the advancement of mankind.

It has always been a basic state policy of China to promote equality between men and women. Since New China was founded in 1949, especially since the adoption of the reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970s, and along with the continuous growth of China's economy and the overall progress of its society, women are being given more guarantees of enjoyment of equal rights and opportunities with men and the development of women is being given unprecedented opportunities.

In recent years, the Chinese government has made fairness and justice, with gender equality included, an important part of efforts to build a harmonious socialist society, and has utilized economic, legal, administrative, public opinion and other measures to ensure that women enjoy equal rights with men in terms of politics, economy, culture, and social and family life, and continuously pushes forward women's development in an all-round way.

China's at international level taking active part for the empowerment of women directly or indirectly. on 24 November 2015 news published in UN WOMEN that thirty eight companies from signed the Women's Empowerment principles (WEPs) CEO statement of support. The women's empowerment principles, developed by UN women in collaboration with the UN global compact, outline seven steps for companies to improve women's empowerment at s already officially endorsed the WEPs; including 16 from china.<sup>8</sup> These all data's show that how china is active in women empowerment. Many others NGOs of china like 'All China women's federation (ACWF), Capital women journalist Association of China (CWJA-CHINA) etc, play active role

South Asia is one of the most important regions for china's interest; china is embracing south Asia with renewed trade and investment push, a trend that set to accelerate as the region grapples with prospect of a more protectionist. Aside from courting south Asian nations with proposal for trade pact china always cooperate with south Asian nations their domestic as well as international problems like women empowerment, education, reduction of poverty and terrorism like issues either directly or indirectly through non-governmental organisations (NGO) and self help groups.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

Therefore, we observe from above papers that the concept of women empowerment not only focuses on giving women strength and skills to rise above from their miserable situation but at the same time it also stresses on the need to educate men regarding women issues and inculcating a sense of respect and duty towards women as equals. In the present write-up we will try to describe and understand the concept of Women Empowerment in India in all its dimensions as well as in china while revealing the studies we focused on these two nations more because of two big investor and trader of region along with both are connect with other states of geographically as well as culture except these we realized in the work that how women's are important in the present regime have need to all the nations to empower them that make all round development of society. From the above we come to the conclusion that education, employment; reservations in job, awareness of women to the whole society, government intention on women are the enabling factors for empowering the women.

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