

Self Help Groups: The Best Strategy Against Women Violence

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Introduction

The problem of Violence against women is as old as history of mankind. Humiliation, torture, exploitation etc., have pushed them to pitiable condition. Ideologies, institutional practices and existing norms in society have caused much harassment to women. Some of these behavior practices prevalent even today. Number of women still continues to be victims of violence. They are beaten, kidnapped, raped, burnt, murdered, sold and sexually abused. Domenach rightly said that "It is an act of a person which encroaches upon the freedom another".

In India where social customs and practices have been deeply rooted, the common man brings about the discrimination between men and women, though there are no religious sanctions about it. Women is adored and worshiped as Shakti Lord Shiva has given a part of his body to her. The man who worships Lord Shiva and Shakti "Parvati" does not realize this. Indian women have richly contributed in every way to the growth and development of our country. She imparted knowledge in every field including science, arts, astronomy, philosophy, political activity etc.,

Historically Rani Kittur Channamma, Belavadi Mallamm, Rani Abakka and others fought against the British. Many women have made a name and left their mark of personality nationally and internationally in various fields. For example great personalities like our former Prime Minister Smt.Indira Gandhi, Smt. Vijaylaxmi Pandit, Smt. Lata Mangeshakar, Sister Nivedita and Mother Theresa contributed in a big way to the country. There are many talented women who worked quietly for the up-liftment of the society. But still there is a strong tendency to discriminate against women.

Women's participation in incoming generating activities seems to enhance their status and decision making power. Women organizations

such as Stree Shakti Yojanaa, Self Help Groups, Swarna Jayanti Town, Rojagar Yojan are helping the women strengthen their voice collectively. So self Help Groups are peoples scheme. A silent economic revolution has been taken place slowly and steadily in Karnataka.

Stree Shakti Yojana:

Many women's cooperative organizations are being worked successfully to help the women socially, the poor and downtrodden to improve the socio-economic conditions. The government of Karnataka influences by such organizations and launched the similar schemes of self help group. So, the Stree Shakti Yojana has been working under the guild lines of the women and child welfare department. This Yojana motivates the women to have some objectives.

The objectives are as follows:

1. To create self-reliance and self dependency among the poor women.
2. To involve the women in productive activities.
3. To create developmental programs by Governments different department shall be given to such members.
4. To mobilize and control locally available resources for proper utilization.
5. To uplift the rural people economically and politically.

Each group consists of 15 to 20 members on an average who equally interested in such groups. About 20 lakhs women have become the member of this Yojana in the first 2 years all over the Karnataka. Their small societies have become 100 cores in a short period. The government of Karnataka contributed 72 cores to the same Stree-Shakti Yojana provides a platform for women to organize themselves, articulate their priorities and take collective action.

Self-Help Group:

In Stree-Shakti Yojana, maximum importance is given to the creation of Self-Help Groups. The women who reside in invariable rural areas have to become the members of Self-Help Groups. Each group is consisting 15 to 20 women, who have faith in mutual trust and common interest. So, it is a self-conscious group. All the members meet often to discuss their problems and find out the solutions and measures on their own.

Self-Help Groups give priority to the women of landless agricultural labourers, widows, divorcees, physically handicapped, wife or daughter of alcoholic or drug addict, S.C. and S.T. etc., the women who have to become a member must be between the age of 18 to 60 years.

Self-Help Groups is a saving and investment group. The little saving of the members of their group makes them free from the clutches of money-lenders. The members have to deposit their savings with the banks. Today, the banks via with one another to credit loan of facilities to Self-Help Groups to carry out their economic activities. The members of Self-Help Groups become the small entrepreneurs, producers and ultimately distributors and sellers of the products. The profits they make are ploughed back into their trade. Self-Help Groups are going to create a sound platform for the rural women to solve their socio-economic problems on their own with her and abuse. In-law forces the daughter-in-law to bring more dowries either in the forms of money or kind. Sometimes they put the pressure over the son and daughter to humiliate the daughter-in-law. The widows have been given utmost lower position and treated her as unpaid labourer. So, she has to always bear the torture by her husband's relatives.

The problems like humiliation, torture, exploitation etc., against women are due to lack of earning capacity. Only 28.68% of females are in the total workforce. This shows that the economic empowerment helps them to have a better status in the society and at home.

Jawaharlal Nehru repeatedly quoted that 'When women move forward the family moves'. We can understand these words the woman's participation in workforce is an important for the achievement of economic status. Political participation and social upliftment would be

meaningless and almost impossible, if their economic independence is not achieved.

The governmental and non-governmental institutions in India began to play an important role in mobilizing women's folk both in rural and urban areas to uplift their economic conditions by providing income generating programs, training and employment. The women should take benefits of such programs and seek the jobs and keep themselves busy. But everyone should understand that women is also a human being. She can't consume more than what she can chew. When a woman attends to work other than domestic, there is a definite need of greater understanding amongst the members of family. Everyone should cooperative with her irrespective of her position whether big or small.

In 21st century violence is increasing with the faster rate, in spite of the constitutional protection given to the women. Mere enforcement of social legislations on public is insufficient to prevent the violence. Social legislations have no social support by society are meaningless. For instance the **Dowry Prohibition Act 1961** has banned the practice of dowry but in reality the rate of dowry is being increasing day by day. So this act is turned to be a paper tiger.

Women have lesser protection due to absence of sympathy. Even Indian culture accepts violence against women. So she is kept mum. The laws enacted for the protection of women are often reflected male centric attitude. Section **498 A of IPC** has a limited scope. The supreme court give a verdict in a recent judgment of Monica that husband or any relative of husband could not be prosecuted against kicking, sexual abuse, or insulting her. Such judicial understanding of cruelty will be license for domestic violence. It may also encourage the wife beaters. Sudha Sundaraman, former general secretary of All India Dalit Women's Association said that 'One would have assumed that even the constitutional framework; things would change in favour of women. That has not happen'. She said that the economic reforms currently under way had created the conditions for the eradication of violence against women and if anything, had happened it guaranteed more violence against woman.

Women always face the violence both within and outside home. The enemy of woman is woman themselves. The discrimination between boy and girl start from home. The mother gives more importance to son rather than daughter. The mother suppresses the opinions of daughter in education, finance, food, dress, opinion etc. Mother curbs the interest of girl child. The young girl when reaches the house of parents-in-law, they would not treat her as a daughter. They always find the faults and remove the poverty. This helps them to compete with one another to improve their self image.

The Self-Help Groups play an important role in providing opportunities for women to gain knowledge, confidence and skills to find better employment and economic support.

Conclusion

Self-Help Groups often call the meeting to create awareness among the poor about health problems, child marriage, dowry problems, aids, illiteracy, wife battering and harassment by employer and general community issues. They also take the oath in the form of prayers they would not make gender discrimination at home; the child marriage will not be practiced on any condition; the education of daughter will not be stopped in the middle.

The Self-Help Groups have given to women not only a new sense of dignity and confidence to tackle their problems. These are helping them to improve their living conditions.

Reference books and magazines

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2. Indianrural development. G L Badiger
3. Yojana monthly magazine
4. Indian today magazine

