

## **Women Empowerment Through Micro Enterprise Development in Urban Areas—Need For Support Mechanisms and Government Action**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The concept of empowerment of women is of recent origin. The word empowerment has been given currently by UN agencies during recent years. Empower means to make one powerful or equip one with the power to face it challenges of life to overcome the disabilities handicaps and inequalities. Empowerment is an active, multi dimensional process which should enable women to realize their full identify and powers in all spheres of life. It would consist in providing greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making, greater ability to plan their lives, greater control over it circumstances that influence their lives and freedom from to shackles imposed on them by custom, beliefs and practice. Broadly, empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. Women empowerment is a process by which women gain greater control over materials and intellectual resources which will assist them to increase their self reliance, and enhance them to assert their independent right, are challenge to ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women.

### **II. SOCIAL COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF GENDER ROLE DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTIONING**

Cognitive-developmental and schema theories posited knowledge of gender identity or constancy as the intra psychic auto motivator of gender-linked conduct. That is, attainment of gender self-knowledge leads one to emulate and do "girls things" or "boy things". The behavioral non predictiveness of gender self-knowledge alone calls into question the regulatory tenets of the theory as well. Clearly, other motivational and regulatory mechanisms govern gender-linked conduct. Differentiation of gender roles is a socio structural phenomenon, rather than merely an intrapsychic one. Human development and functioning operate within a broad network of social influences rather than within a socially insulated cognitivism. If doing "girl things" and "boy things" had no differential social effects gender labeling would lose its significance. Gender typing remains highly salient because it makes a big difference in one's life experiences. The constellation of gender attributes and roles people adopt are socially propagated matter not just an intrapsychic one. Socio structural theories and psychological theories are often viewed as rival conceptions of human behavior or as representing different levels of causation. Human functioning cannot be fully understood solely in terms of socio structural factors or psychological factors. A full understanding requires an integrated perspective in which social influences operate through psychological mechanisms to produce behavioral effects. When analyzed within a unified causal structure, sociostructural influences produce behavioral effects largely through self processes rather than directly (Baldwin, Baldwin, Sameroff, Seifer, 1989; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996a; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1999; Elder & Ardel, 1992). The effects of sociostructural influences on the functioning of social systems are also in large part mediated through the collective agency of the operators of the systems (Bandura, 1997).

- [1] **Various Dimensions of Women Empowerment discussed by**  
Golipour.A., 2009. Women Empowerment has mainly five important dimensions such as economic, political, social/cultural, personal and familial.
- [2] Economic Empowerment: A woman is said to be economically empowered when she gains power as a result of increased access to economic resources. The means of achieving economic empowerment are:

- increase in income, access to finance, ability to make decisions regarding the utilization of money/credit etc.
- [3] ii. Political Empowerment: A woman is said to be politically empowered when she has the awareness and power to act in accordance with the rights and rightful role of women in society and polity. The means of achieving political empowerment are: political awareness, participation in political activity, membership in political parties, position of power etc.
- [4] iii. Social/Cultural Empowerment: A woman is said to be socially/culturally empowered when has the power to participate in collective/cultural activities in the society. The means of achieving social/cultural empowerment are: social status, mingling with others, access to various organisations, social involvement, participation in cultural activities/seminars/competition etc.
- [5] iv. Personal Empowerment: A woman is said to be personally empowered, when she has the power to increase her own self-reliance and self-strength. The means of achieving personal empowerment are economic freedom, freedom of action, ability and involvement in decision-making, self-esteem, gender equality, improvement in health and knowledge etc.
- v. Familial Empowerment: A woman is said to have familial empowerment when she has the power to increase her own family welfare. The means of achieving familial empowerment are improvement in family income, support from the spouse, improvement in family relationship, education to children, medical care to family members, improvement in basic facilities and amenities etc.

### **Process of Women Empowerment**

*Empowerment as an individual and collective process is based on the following five principles:*

- self-reliance,
  - self-awareness,
  - collective mobilization and organisations,
  - capacity building, and
  - external exposure and interaction.
- [1] Empowerment is the process which enables individuals/Groups to fully access personal or collective power, authority or influence.
- [2] Majority of women in developing countries lack economic power resulting in minimal access to basic health care and decreased standard of living of families and communities.
- [3] Empowerment is the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalized people. Still development, improved work efficiencies improved production and more income generation is done through economic empowerment. Economic Empowerment mobilizes the self-help efforts of poor rather than providing with social welfare.
- [4] Entrepreneurship among women improves the wealth of the Nation in general and of family in particular. Women are considered as an important human resource of the Nation. The emergence of women micro entrepreneurs and their contribution to the National Economy is quite visible in India.
- [5] The role of micro-credit is to improve the socio economic status of women in household and communities. The micro entrepreneurship is strengthening the women sustainable development and removes the gender in equalities.
- [6] Now a days Urban Women are achieving sustainable development by associating with the technical know-how and are able to cope up with the changing scenario of the production field. By acquiring new skill they are able to setting their own enterprises for their sustainable development and also they are able to develop other Urban women especially from middle class.
- [7] Women micro entrepreneurship through micro enterprises should be developed by improving technical and managerial skills and proper marketing strategies.
- [8] Now a days most of the urban middle class women are getting educated but are not able to provide economic support to family due to lack of higher education and technical skill to pursue job in the organized sector. In urban areas, almost 70-8-% of women are opting to contribute to family income by involving in work force because of high cost of living due to increased expenses on health, education and maintenance. Because of more family responsibilities due to nuclear family structure more women are opting for self employment rather than full time jobs in offices, schools and hospitals. In this context, micro enterprise development emerged in urban areas. Group Entrepreneurship among women in urban areas through self help groups (SHGS) is not developing in Urban areas unlike rural areas because of frequent migration of families, less properties or lands for women, less possibility for formation of self help groups most of the existed SHGS becoming non functional. So women in Urban areas should be

empowered to start micro enterprises individually with family support. Women should be given trained on technical skills upgrading and managerial skills to run at micro enterprises.

**STRATEGIES:**

- [1] Women should be trained on technical skills management.
- [2] Awareness of bank loans.
- [3] Strengthening of existing SHGs in Urban areas.
- [4] Vocational training
- [5] Counseling by Psychologist, Managerial Experts and technical personnel.
- [6] Still development through training cum production linkages.
- [7] District level agencies should orient women oriented schemes and programs for urban middle class women.

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