

Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Women Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment of women signifies harnessing women power by promoting their tremendous potential and encouraging them to work towards attaining a dignified and satisfying way of life through confidence and competence. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. Thus an attempt has been made to study the status of women in India and highlights the problems and Challenges of women. The study is based on purely secondary sources. The results of the study revealed that unequal status of women of still prevailing and women are leading a lower status in society. Women are exploited and victimized now and then from the corners of their home to work place outside. Even though there are many policies for women empowerment at national, state, local levels and also by CSR of multinational companies in many sectors including health, education, economic opportunities, gender based violence and political participation still significant gap between policy advancements and actual practice is observed at the community level.

Key Words : Women empowerment, Crimes against women, Govt. schemes, CSR

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. Women empowerment involves the building up of a society, a political environment, wherein women can breathe without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination and the general feeling of persecution which goes with being a woman in a traditionally male dominated structure.

Women constitute almost 50% of the world's population but India has shown disproportionate sex ratio whereby female's population has been comparatively lower than males. As far as their social status is concerned, they are not treated as equal to men in all the places. In the Western societies, the women have got equal right and status with men in all walks of life. But

gender disabilities and discriminations are found in India even today. The paradoxical situation has such that she was sometimes concerned as Goddess and at other times merely as slaves.

Objectives of study:

1. To analyze the present status of women in India.
2. To discuss about obstacles in women empowerment
3. To find out crime against women.
4. To study about Govt. schemes implemented for women empowerment.
5. To find out the Corporate Interventions towards women empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been taken to analyze the empowerment of women in India. The data used in it

is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study. The necessary information about the women Empowerment Schemes in India and its various components are collected from various books, journals, internet source of related topics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The information collected from various sources regarding “Role of CSR in Women Empowerment” is compiled and discussed below.

Present status of women:

Population:

- As per Census 2011, India’s population was 121.06 Cr and the females constituted 48.5% of it.
- The gap in sex ratio in rural and urban India is decreasing over the decades.
- The States like Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu have better sex ratio while the Daman & Diu has sex ratio less than 700.
- There are 918 females to 1000 males in the age-group 0-6 years, the disparity is high in sex ratio of rural & urban area existing in Daman & Diu and Gujarat, these state/UT are having less females as compared to males in urban Area

Literacy and education:

- As per Census 2011, the literacy rate at all India level was 72.98% and the literacy rate for females and males are 64.63% and 80.9% respectively.
- Gender Gap in literacy rate has declined from 21.6 in 2001 to 16.3 in 2011. The gender gap in literacy rate has declined by 24.7% in 2011 in respect of 2001.
- During 2014-15, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at Primary level for females and males are 101.4 and 98.9 respectively; at middle class level the corresponding figures are 95.3 and 87.7; at higher secondary level, the status was at 65.8 and 63.8 respectively.

Participation in economy:

In 2011, the Workforce Participation Rate at all India level was 25.51% for female and 53.26% for males. While there was no rural – urban gap for males (53%), there was considerable rural – urban gap for females (rural - 30%, urban - 15.4 %)

Political participation:

- As of 2018, the percentage of women in Central Council is 12.2%, the percentage has been the same since 2016. There are 6 women in cabinet and 3 women are Minister of State.

- The number of women members in Rajya Sabha has decreased from 31 in 2014 to 27 in 2016.

- The highest number of judges are 12 in Madras High Court. There are 3 women judge in Supreme Court of India.

The women participation in Panchayati Raj institution is highest in Jharkhand at 59% followed by Rajasthan and Uttarakhand at 58% each. In terms of elected women, the highest female representation is found in UP at 297235 and MP at 198409.

Obstacle in women empowerment:

- Majority of cases under crimes against women out of total IPC crimes against women were registered under ‘Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives’ (31.9%) followed by ‘Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty’ (27.6%), ‘Kidnapping & Abduction of Women’ (22.5%) and ‘Rape’ (10.3%). The crime rate per lakh women population is 58.8 in 2018 in comparison with 57.9 in 2017.

- A total of 67,134 children (19,784 male, 47,191 female and 159 transgender) were reported missing in 2018. During the year 2018, a total of 71,176 children (22,239 male, 48,787 female and 150 transgender) were recovered/traced.

- During 2016, the highest percentage of rape victims were reported for the age group 18-30 years at 42%. The second highest percentage of rape victims belonged to the age group of 16-18 years with 22% of victims

- As per the trend of suicides, incidence for male is higher for females. During 2015, the percentage of suicide was highest for house wives at 53% while 10% of female students committed suicide.

- According to Census 2011, 2.4% of the total male population was disabled while the same among the female population was 2.01%. As per 2011 Census, in females the highest percentage of disability is found to be seeing at 22.6%.

Crime against women:

The crime head-wise details of cases reported under crimes against women during the year 2011 to year 2015 along with percentage variation are presented in Table

1. The cases of crimes against women during the year 2015 have decreased by 3.1% over the year 2014 and increased by 43.2% over the year 2011. The IPC component of crimes against women has accounted for 96.1% of total crimes and the remaining 3.9% were SLL crimes against women (Source : Women and Men in India-2018).

There are some numbers of govt. and non-govt. programmes and policies have implemented to prevent the crime, violation, exploitation, discrimination against women. This can be achieved only by empowerment of women.

Government schemes for women empowerment:

Government of India implemented various poverty alleviation and rural development programmes. These programmes have special components for women empowerment. At present, the Government of India has over 25 schemes for women operated by different department and ministries. The implementation of these programmes/schemes is monitored specially with reference to coverage of women. Some of these are as follows:-

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

2. Mahila Samakhya being implemented in about 9000 villages.

3. Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)

4. Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan)

5. NGO's Credit Schemes.

6. Creches/ Day care centre for the children of working and ailing mother.

7. National Mission for Empowerment of Women.

8. Rastria Mahila Kosh (RMK)

9. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls

10. Support to training and Empoerment Programme for Women (STEP)

11. Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)

12. Swadhar

13. National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development's Schemes

14. Ujjawala

15. Working Women's Forum

16. Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY)

17. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

18. Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for

Table 1 : Crime Head-wise Cases Registered under Crime against Women during 2011 - 2015 and Percentage Variation in 2015 over 2014

Sr. No.	Crime head	Year					Percentage variation in 2015 over 2014
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
1	Rape	24,206	24,923	33,707	36,735	34,651	-5.7
2	Attempt to Commit Rape	-	-	-	4,232	4,434	4.8
3	Kidnapping and Abduction of Women	35,565	38,262	51,881	57,311	59,277	3.4
4	Dowry Deaths	8,618	8,233	8,083	8,455	7,634	-9.7
5	Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her/their Modesty	42,968	45,351	70,739	82,235	82,422	0.2
6	Insult to the Modesty of Women	8,570	9,173	12,589	9,735	8,685	-10.8
7	Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives	99,135	1,06,527	1,18,866	1,22,877	1,13,403	-7.7
8	Importation of Girl from Foreign Country	80	59	31	13	6	-53.8
9	Abetment of Suicide of Women	-	-	-	3,734	4,060	8.7
A.	Total IPC Crime against Women	2,19,142	2,32,528	2,95,896	3,25,327	3,14,575	-3.3
10	Commission of Sati Prevention Act	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Indecent Representation of Women (P) Act	453	141	362	47	40	-14.9
12	The Dowry Prohibition Act	6,619	9,038	10,709	10,050	9,894	-1.5
13	Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act	-	-	-	426	461	8.2
14	Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act	2,436	2,563	2,579	2,070#	2,424	17.1
B.	Total SLL Crime against Women	9,508	11,742	13,650	12,593	12,819	1.8
	Total (A+B)	2,28,650	2,44,270	3,09,546	3,37,922	3,27,394	-3.1

Source: Crime in India-2015

Children of working Mothers.

19. Women’s Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS)

20. Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY)

21. Dhanalakshmi

22. Women Entrepreneur Development Programme

23. Mahila Samiti Yojana

24. Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)

25. Beti padhao or beti bachao yojana

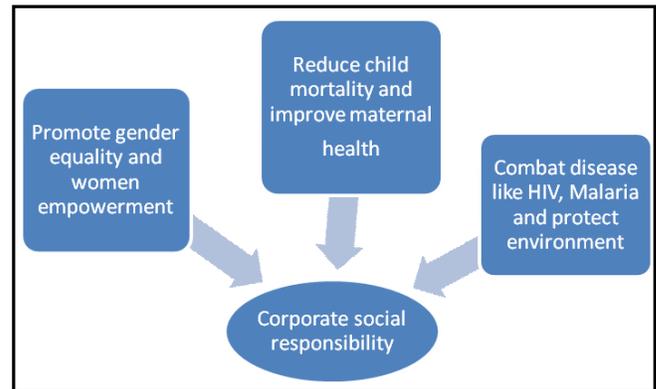
The efforts of government and its different agencies are ably supplemented by nongovernmental organizations that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. Despite concerted efforts of governments and NGOs there are certain gaps. Of course we have come a long way in empowering women yet the future journey is difficult and demanding.

What is CSR:

Except the government schemes, Multinational companies are taking initiatives for women empowerment through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities have started since 1990s now has become a medium for most of Indian corporate to contribute to inclusive growth of Indian society. Now the companies are participating actively in CSR initiatives by spending 2-5 per cent of their net profits. The new Companies Bill also made it

compulsory to spend 2 per cent of net profit of the company towards CSR activities. Banks have the primary responsibility to promote women empowerment through CSR activities. Besides the private sector, the government is also ensuring that the public sector companies participate actively in CSR initiatives. Corporate social responsibility has gone through many phases in India. The ability to make a significant difference in the society and improve the overall quality of life of women.

Broad areas of CSR activities:



It can be observed that there is an emphasis on women and their overall well being and also a mention about gender equality and empowerment of women. It

Table 2 : Corporate Interventions towards Women Empowerment

Name	Model of Empowerment	Approx. number of women involved	Impact
Hindustan Unilever	Rural women became distributors of HUL. Popularly known as ‘Shakti Ammas’	About 43,000 women all over India	Has economically empowered rural women with entrepreneurial spirit. Plan to use the network for creation of more SHGs.
ITC	Poor rural women assisted to form microcredit SHGs to build small savings and finance self employment and micro-enterprises	About 40,000 women	Sustainable economic opportunities through microenterprises
Jindal Steel	Formation and capacity building of Women SHGs	About 3000 women	Trained women have begun activities like leaf plate making which has augmented income
Tata Steel	Tata Steel Rural Development Society	About 45000 women	Annually create at least 200 SHGs who are encouraged to enter enterprise activity
Vedanta	Provide for Skill development, credit linkage, training, market development	About 30000 women	About 2100 SHG developed by group companies Vedanta Zinc, BALCO, Sterilite, Vedanta Aluminium and VAL Lanjigarh
Hindalco	Training for skill development through two institutes, located in UP and Maharashtra	More than 11000 women	Works towards improving the capacity building of women and men who are encouraged to take up enterprise activities

has been proved that extra income in the hands of women leads to significant and positive changes in human development since it is largely spent on children's education, health and nutrition, and is a catalyst for gendering development. Many corporate houses, working towards improving income and employment for women in rural India have used the Self Help Group (SHG)2 approach towards creating and enhancing 'income earning' or 'decent livelihood' opportunities (Table 2).

Women empowerment initiatives of companies as a part of CSR:

HUL's SHAKTI: SHAKTI means 'Strength'. Project SHAKTI is HUL's initiative to upliftment of standard of living in rural India by creating income-generating capabilities for under-privileged rural women by providing a small-scale enterprise opportunity, and to improving rural lives through health and Hygiene awareness. Project SHAKTI is taken up in rural areas only whereby women are the Distributors for HUL products and are called "Shakti Ammas". This identity is ushering prosperity in their lives and most importantly self-respect.

Project DRISHTI: Where Whisper helped to restore eyesight to 250 blind girls through corneal transplant operations in which P&G contributed Re 1 for every pack of whisper sold Project open minds to support and educate children across the Australia, ASEAN and the India (AAI) region. For every large size pack of Vicks Vaporub, Whisper, Ariel Power Compact, Head & Shoulders and Pantene purchased by consumers during November 1999 to January 2000.

Avon: Avon Cosmetics' commitment to women runs deeper than the boundaries of business. Women are the heart of Avon's success and Avon continues to support and understand their needs through Avon's Breast Cancer Crusade. The goal of the Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade is to improve access to quality breast health care for under-served, uninsured and low income populations, and to support biomedical research focused on prevention and improved methods of Diagnosis and treatment to Cure and prevent breast cancer.

SCCL- Singareni Seva Samithi has taken up massive literacy campaign for women and illiterate employees through which more than 50000 persons were made literate. The literacy campaign was concentrated on reading, writing, signing etc., but to sustain the literacy levels and also to make improvements it is suggested to

adopt continuing education modules by mass media programmers using the services of community radio/TV channels.

ITC - ITC believes that economic empowerment of women transforms them into powerful agents of social change. ITC has forged an empowering partnership with rural women – the most effective development workers. ITC's intervention leverages micro-credit and skills training to generate alternate employment opportunities. Increased income in the hands of rural women means better nutrition, health care and education for their children. Working with NGOs, ITC has organized village women into micro-credit groups.

SAIL - has initiated Mahila Samaj Performance of community welfare programmes which includes manufacture of products and services for SAIL employees. The Mahila Samiti in SAIL plants has 4000 members and 15 affiliated to national level organization for community development. Tata More than 60% of the women members of Tata Parivar have launched income generation programmes with an objective of making their families economically sustainable. At the moment there are 22 all-women Tata Parivar SHGs. In order to achieve better levels of income, the rehabilitation and resettlement team of Tata Steel is continuously imparting Capacity Building Training in the sectors Soura Painting, Stitching, Poultry and Goat Rearing and Computer based literacy programmes.

The Table 3 gives a clear indication of the organizational initiatives taken up by any organization in all the aspects related to the improvement of the social, economic, political, educational and health aspects of women.

Status of women empowerment:

The status of Women Empowerment cannot be visualized with single dimension rather multidimensional assessment in terms of various components of women's life and their status would bring a clear conception. Table 4 view the overall status of women in terms of gender gap index prepared by World Economic Forum in 2014 and 2015.

India has been ranked 112th among 153 countries in the annual Global Gender Gap Index for 2020, published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) (Table 5).

Challenges of women empowerment:

There are several constraints that check the process

Table 3 : Organizational initiatives for women empowerment

Area Initiatives	Area Initiatives
Gender	– Conducting awareness campaigns for preventing exploitation at Workplace
Discrimination	– Providing equal employment opportunity and fair positions to women at all levels
Education	– Encouraging basic literacy and encouraging school enrolment for girl Child. – Motivate deserving women in sports, defense, education and politics. – Providing training for self-defense – Awareness to human rights, property rights and various related acts, social inequalities and domestic violence
Health	– Health and hygiene campaigns for weaker section of women poor, Illiterate, handicap, etc. – Child development – Maternity care education – Prevention of infant mortality
Financial Assistance	– Provide opportunity for economic independence through small scale – Processing or service enterprises; – Encouraging women's savings and credit groups – Support to Self Help groups

Table 4 : Details of GGGI of India in 2014 and 2015

Year	Overall		Economic participation and opportunity		Educational attainment		Health and Survival		Political Empowerment	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
2014	114	0.6455	134	0.4096	126	0.850	141	0.9366	15	0.3855
2015	108	0.664	139	0.383	125	0.896	143	0.942	9	0.433

Sources: 1. World Economic Forum (2014), *GGGR 2014*.2. World Economic Forum (2015), *GGGR 2015*.**Table 5 : Global Gender Gap Index Rankings 2020**

Rank	Country	Score
1	Iceland	0.877
2	Norway	0.842
3	Finland	0.832
4	Sweden	0.820
5	Nicaragua	0.804
6	New Zealand	0.799
7	Iceland	0.798
8	Spain	0.795
9	Rwanda	0.791
10	Germany	0.787
21	United Kingdom	0.767
50	Bangladesh	0.726
53	United States	0.724
81	Russian Federation	0.706
92	Brazil	0.691
101	Nepal	0.680
102	Sri Lanka	0.680
106	China	0.676
112	India	0.668
121	Japan	0.652
151	Pakistan	0.564
153	Yemen	0.494

of women empowerment in India. Social norms and family structure in developing countries like India, manifests and perpetuate the subordinate status of women. One of the norms is the continuing preference for a son over the birth of a girl child which is present in almost all societies and communities. The society is more biased in favor of male child in respect of education, nutrition and other opportunities. The root cause of this type of attitude lies in the belief that male child inherits the clan in India with an exception of Meghalaya. Women often internalize the traditional concept of their role as natural thus inflicting an injustice upon them. Poverty is the reality of life for the vast majority women in India. It is the another factor that poses challenge in realizing women's empowerment. There are several challenges that are plaguing the issues of women's right in India. Targeting these issues will directly benefit the empowerment of women in India.

Education:

While the country has grown from leaps and bounds since independence where education is concerned. the gap between women and men is severe. While 82.14%

of adult men are educated, only 65.46% of adult women are known to be literate in India. The gender bias is in higher education, specialized professional trainings which hit women very hard in employment and attaining top leadership in any field.

Poverty:

Poverty is considered the greatest threat to peace in the world, and eradication of poverty should be a national goal as important as the eradication of illiteracy. Due to this, women are exploited as domestic helps.

Health and Safety:

The health and safety concerns of women are paramount for the wellbeing of a country and is an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. However there are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned.

Professional Inequality:

This inequality is practiced in employment and promotions. Women face countless handicaps in male customized and dominated environs in Government Offices and Private enterprises.

Morality and Inequality:

Due to gender bias in health and nutrition there is unusually high morality rate in women reducing their population further especially in Asia, Africa and china.

Household Inequality:

Household relations show gender bias in infinitesimally small but significant manners all across the globe, more so, in India e.g. sharing burden of housework, childcare and menial works by so called division of work.

Conclusion:

Globalization, Liberalization and other Socio - Economic forces have given some respite to a large proportion of the population. However, there are still quite a few areas where women empowerment in India is largely lacking. There needs to be a sea – change in the mind set of the people in the country. Not just the women themselves, but the men have to wake up to a world that is moving towards equality and equity. It is better that this is embraced earlier than later for our own good. There are several Government programmes and NGOs in the Country, there is still a wide gap that exists between those

under protection and those not. Poverty and illiteracy add to these complications. Empowerment of Women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women and to make them realize that they have the potential to be strong human beings. In order to create a sustainable world, we must begin to Empower Women.

Suggestion:

- The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grassroots problem. Hence, education for women has to be paid special attention.
- Awareness programmes need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.
- Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. They should be provided with proper wages and work at par with men so that their status can be elevated in the society.
- Strict implementation of Programmes and Acts should be there to curb the mal-practices prevalent in the society.

Suggestion:

- 1 Corporate social responsibility is more than a topic to discuss about it is changing fate and face of society but it should be adopted by all the business houses voluntarily
2. Country like India should specially advocate for corporate social responsibility as it can be possible remedies for many issues like illiteracy, poverty, child labour, unemployment and rural development.
3. Women related issues need important attention from government, society and especially from corporate sector.
4. Corporate can provide finance to overcome some unsolved issues if properly utilized.
5. India is developing in all possible areas but there are certain areas where development is almost stagnant gender discrimination is one of them
6. Corporate can definitely empower women right from encouraging them to get education till getting respectable livelihood to become productive citizens.
7. Women related issues at work like sexual harassment though comes under legal framework but it

can be stopped by corporate if internal control within organization gives due importance to women related rules.

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