

Review Article

Women Empowerment in Rural Community

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Abstract

Women's empowerment (or female empowerment) may be defined in several ways, including accepting women's view points or making an effort to seek them, raising the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training. Women empowerment equips and allows women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society. They may have the opportunity to redefine gender roles or other such roles, which in turn may allow them more freedom to pursue desired goals. Rural women make a quarter of the world's population. Rural women are key contributors to agricultural production, food security, climate advocacy, enterprise, and citizenship. Sadly, the active contribution and the effort of rural women are not recognized and their full potentials underutilized.

Keywords: Empowerment; Rural area; Domestic violence; Women; Child labor; Entrepreneur.

Introduction

Women play important roles in the rural economy as farmers, wage earners and entrepreneurs. They also take responsibility for the well being of the members of their families, including food provision and care for children and the elderly. Rural women's unpaid work, particularly in poor households, often includes collecting wood and water. Women from indigenous and grassroots communities are often also custodians of traditional knowledge, which is key for their communities' livelihoods,

resilience and culture. Yet, women in rural areas face constraints in engaging in economic activities because of gender based discrimination and social norms, disproportionate involvement in unpaid work, and unequal access to education, healthcare, property, and financial and other services. They are also disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of environmental disasters and climate change.

Promoting and ensuring gender equality, and empowering rural women through decent work and productive employment, not only contributes

to inclusive and sustainable economic growth, but also enhances the effectiveness of poverty reduction and food security initiatives, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Status of Women in Rural Areas

Rural women are less likely to be wage earners, and when they are, they earn less than men. Rural women are often concentrated in low skilled, low productivity and low or unpaid jobs with long working hours, poor working conditions and limited social protection.

The major challenges faced by women in rural areas are women in labor force, child labor collection of safe drinking water, health risks and fuel collection.

Importance of Women Empowerment in Rural Areas

In India, women empowerment is needed more than ever. India is amongst the countries which are not safe for women. There are various reasons for this.

1. Firstly, women in India are in danger of honor killings. Their family thinks its right to take their lives if they bring shame to the reputation of their legacy. Moreover, the education and freedom scenario is very regressive here. Women are not allowed to pursue higher education, they are married off early. The men are still dominating women in some regions like it's the woman's duty to work for him endlessly. They do not let them go out or have freedom of any kind.
2. In addition, domestic violence is a major problem in India. The men beat up their wife and abuse them as they think women are their property. More so, because women are afraid to speak up. Similarly, the women who do actually work get paid less than their male counterparts. It is downright unfair and sexist to pay someone less for the same work because of their gender.
3. Rural women are less likely to be wage earners, and when they are, they earn less than men. Rural women are often concentrated in low-skilled, low productivity and low or unpaid jobs with long working hours, poor working conditions and limited social protection.
4. Rural women are at high risk of abuse, sexual harassment and other forms of gender based violence. The heightened risks are due to factors such as gender power imbalances,

a lack of oversight, and working alone in relative isolation or in remote locations. They have to go through gender discrimination, harassment, sexual abuse, lack of education, dowry related harassment, gender pay gap and much more.

Ways to uplift rural women

Historically, rural women are powerful, strong and purposeful women who are deprived by the circumstances of abuse, inequality, and lack of opportunities. These challenges have hindered their personal development, economic empowerment, and community leadership.

From my engagement with women, there are five keys areas that will lead to the sustainable development and empowerment of women.

1. **Adult Education and Training:** Investing and building the capacities of rural women will improve their business, social, economic and financial skills. Capacity building and adult training range from providing adult education, life, and social skills training. When women have access to quality holistic personal, emotional and entrepreneurial development training opportunities, they will be empowered to speak for themselves. They become confident and can speak up against every abuse and violence. And will not wait for anyone to speak on their behalf but will rise and become voices of positive change and advocacy for equality, justice, and progress.
2. **Vocational Skills and Businesses:** Rural women are looking for different ways to be empowered through hands-on skills, entrepreneurship, and micro business expansions. We can contribute to help rural women gain direct vocational skills training or business idea expansion opportunities. By providing them with the basic tools to start, operate, build and expand their businesses.
3. **Access to Financial Facilities:** Rural women are consistently looking for different avenues to access microloans, Farming tools, business management and operational tools. A woman who has committed herself to work will do more and multiply her efforts if she has access to basic tools for effectiveness and productivity.
4. **Health:** Women are primarily vulnerable to every form of health issues in different communities. They face all forms of health challenges. They are the bearers of the

epidemics of deadly communicable diseases. There is a high rate of maternal and infant mortality, HIV/Aid and other lethal diseases that are sprouting by the second around the world. Their effects are worse in rural communities, and rural women are major recipients. Individuals, organization, and agencies can design projects that focus on providing affordable health care and training for women on healthy living, getting and taking clean water, keeping the clean and green environment and access to basic monthly menstrual care and maternal care.

5. **Social Groups and Mentorship:** Cooperative learning and social groups contribute to the growth and empowerment of women. When women find themselves in a supportive group of like minds in their community and are encouraged to have the open discussion about the challenges they are facing with a system of accountability and responsibility among members, it leads to personal and group growth.

Positive impact of women empowerment on the society

Empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities and countries. When women are living safe, fulfilled and productive lives, they can reach their full potential. contributing their skills to the workforce and can raise happier and healthier children. Advancing gender equality leads to countless benefits for women, men and gender diverse communities. Here are some of the ways that gender equality creates a better world, for all of us.

1. **Fairness:** Equality and justice are the foundation of human rights. From the early suffragists to the activists of the me too movement, the idea that gender equality is first and foremost the right thing to do has inspired and galvanized advocates around the world.
2. **Economic prosperity:** Gender equality is not only the right thing to do – it's also the smart thing to do. Now more than ever, as we see the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and gender diverse communities, who during this unprecedented time are more likely to experience unemployment and economic hardship, are more susceptible to poverty and food insecurity, and are at an increased risk of experiencing gender based violence. Advancing gender equality will

help create a thriving, prosperous country for everyone, and unlock Canada's economic potential.

3. **Health and happiness:** Equality is the foundation from which everyone can all lead healthy, happy and fulfilling lives. From eliminating discrimination and harmful stereotypes to preventing gender-based violence, advancing gender equality contributes to a higher quality of life for everyone.
4. **Peace and security:** Gender equality has the power to create a more peaceful world. Involving women and gender diverse communities in the decision-making process, from peace operations to responses to climate change, helps achieve long term, sustainable peace.
5. **Limitless possibilities:** Everyone deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential, and gender equality helps create a world without limits. When steps are taken to advance gender equality, barriers are removed to create a world of infinite possibilities.

CONCLUSION

Being a woman means being able to be powerful and assertive, yet kind at the same time. It means being compassionate and vulnerable towards those we love in our lives without feeling weak for doing so. It means striving for our goals even in the face of the adversity we may encounter along the way. The human development, economic and business gains from empowering women are substantial. Greater gender equality means a country is associated with better education and health, higher per capita income, faster and more inclusive economic growth, and greater international competitiveness. We need to empower these women to speak up for themselves and never be a victim of injustice.

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