



Roles And Responsibilities Of Ngos In Women Empowerment

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Abstract: *In India, as a society, has made progress in various socioeconomic and political fronts since independence. The economic growth of the nation during the past few decades has been phenomenal. In spite of all such achievements, the country is far behind in a certain core area of human dignity and social justice. Among them, gender injustice and caste system are the most serious. These injustices have, played unabated roles throughout in the history of India with serious results of the rights of women in various aspects of social life. Gender discrimination and women's rights abuse have been systemic and deep-rooted problems with various dimensions (social, culture, religion and economic, etc.) across the country. For women empowerment NGOs are a natural fit in responding to the overall issue of gender injustice that threatens to undermine the society at large.*

Key Words: . Injustice, gender discrimination, abuse, women empowerment.

The citizens of a every country play a great role in the implementation of law and development of society. The Government and its organisations have to take care of various aspects, follow various norms and have various restrictions. In a democratic system it is the citizens and their organisation commonly known as NGO (Non-Government Organisation) has to do the real work, as they are the ones which gives a guideline to the government as the citizens elect their representative who form the Government and who make law by which the country is governed.

The recent highlighted cases of rapes and torture of women, including in the national capital region and other part of the country, clearly shows that injustice against women still exists in the society. These recent and other cases of rapes and abuse of women in both urban and rural India are extremely disturbing to human conscience. Unfortunately these are not just random incidents of atrocities against women but outcomes of male domination that systematically oppresses women's status in the society.

Women are almost half of the India's population. Yet gender inequality in pay, positions, promotional opportunities are non-existent. Serious

salary gaps between men and women working on same or similar jobs, lack of career advancement opportunities of women workers, and the overall mentality of keeping women away from decision-making authority are all too common in private sector organisations, it seems to that either govt. failed to protect women's rights or has been very slow in responding to the issues of violations against women's rights, fortunately the non-governmental organisations (NGO) sector has made several inroads in promoting women's rights and women empowerment through a variety of strategies and development platforms.

Women Empowerment

Women empowerment, in concept and practice, is complex due to various dimensions involved in it. There are myriad explanations and interpretations on what constitute the process of women empowerment. However, it is commonly accepted that women empowerment incorporates a few key elements including awareness, autonomy, self-reliance, rights, engagement in decision-making process, capacity building, and certain level of power[1].

Violence and other problems regarding



women's are mostly begins with the lack of access to wealth, income generation opportunities, and managing household finances. Since the mid-1970s several NGOs have emerged to address this and promote economic self-sufficiency for women through micro-loans and other schemes. Off shoots of these schemes are women self-help groups that take over the financing schemes and become NGOs themselves. They continue to impact the lives of millions of women, both in rural and urban areas by providing income generation opportunities and other one core focus of NGOs for women empowerment was through education. They increased awareness on the importance of knowledge as a way to achieve professional careers and participate in political process. Another form of women empowerment emerged from the feminist movement which began to shun all social, cultural or religious barriers to the advancement of women.

NGOs and other women's group have achieved tremendous successes in various fronts. Currently, reports and information released by medium and large size women development NGOs through their websites and other printed material indicate the impacts of their projects on their overall women empowerment agendas. In addition to these self-reported measures and indicators on varying levels of advancements, studies done by researchers on local and regional level NGOs have proved that women achieve considerable level of knowledge, economic and political empowerment by being members or beneficiaries of them.[2,-4]

Roles of NGOs for Women Empowerment

NGO's are the Non-Government organisations which work for the benefits of needy women, women who faces the barriers, when they want to fight against the evils, and nobody steps forward to help them. Then these NGO's becomes the support and helping hand of the women, the weaker section of our society. Women in India finds no place for help when she behaves different against the male members of their family. She is thrown out if she demands for her right, even on her

maternal side she is black listed. She is blamed that she is failed to cope up with her family. When she is harassed from all sides then the NGO's help her. NGO's works on all types of cases of domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, abuse all forms of violence committed against women. They protect the women from all problems which she faces. From the beginning, they listen her and advise her to move with rights with such manner that they should be implemented.[5]

By way of counselling NGO's make themselves easy with victim. They make themselves friendly with victimiser so that she should cope up with them, and describe in detail each fact of the case. NGO's give them power to fight with culprits. By helping the woman by counselling the woman feel that they are not alone in this worryful world. If the problem is not grave than sometimes counselling helps in reconciling. But if the matter is grave then NGO's describes them, that how all the procedure of case should move.[6]

When women is thrown out from her family, or when she leaves her home. She has nothing as financial support with her for her living for day to day food, then how could she seek the legal aid. As the fees of the lawyers is not low if she is willing and desires for legal aid then also she feels herself disabled of money. So NGO's by seeing the condition and trauma through which women passes they provide legal aid to women. So that the effective steps should be taken by her to get relief to violence.

NGO's provide shelter to the woman who have no place to go. They provide short stay home and women hostels and inexpensive residence for victimised women and for their livinghood to make her independent, they provide employment. So that she should spend her life, independent and tension free of finance.[7]

Although the typology and scopes of NGOs with overall missions of women empowerment vary, four types of them have high impacts and are more visible than the others. They are: grassroots women



self-help NGOs, women's rights advocacy NGOs, women's economic development NGOs, and international women empowerment NGOs. Grassroots Women's Self-Help NGOs grow from within communities, initiated by women leaders or groups to promote the welfare and economic opportunities of women who are community residents. They focus on shortterm income generation projects, such as cottage industries for women in communities, so that long term empowerment can be achieved. Grassroots women's self-help group NGOs need little or no intervention from outsiders, although information and technical advice from other established women NGOs can help them greatly in their efforts and impacts. During the past few years, there is a tremendous growth of this type of grassroots NGOs around the country both in urban and rural areas.

Women Economic Development NGOs strive to promote financial selfsufficiency of women through economic development. They provide direct social service, with missions to address specific needs of women such as education, health care, and income generation within the broad development framework. Based on the needs, they design and implement projects that benefit women from underserved or unserved communities. Access to micro loans and other opportunities offered by development NGOs have truly transformed the status of women in communities across the nation, especially in rural areas where women have long been excluded in income generation and family financial management. They have also been instrumental in the impressive growth of women in the national workforce. International Women Empowerment NGOs operate in a variety of areas that address various global-level gender injustice issues, especially such issues faced by women in developing nations. They often develop collaborative partnerships with local and national NGOs to address specific issues that affect women in societies. They also bring technical and financial resources to address issues of gender inequality.

Responsibilities of for NGOs Women

Empowerment: In order to make gender equality and equity a reality, women empowerment NGOs must continue their constant and unwavering fights to secure women's rights in all walks of life (social, educational, economic, household, etc.). Gender equality and equity need to come from various fronts such as the religious, communal, political, economic and household fronts. Unless positive changes in all these fronts are achieved in a balanced manner, holistic women empowerment will be elusive. NGOs have the capacity to be the conduit for changes in all these fronts.

Women empowerment can only be achieved through a continuous process that promotes women's knowledge base through education, economic self-sufficiency through income generating opportunities, engagement in the policy-making process through political participation and leadership, and ability to take the reins of household decision-making. NGOs need to work on these and other areas of advancement. They need to network in order to pool resources and for higher impacts. Non-government Organisations' responses to the recent violence against women are for the most part reactive. They need to be proactive in galvanising the tides of emotional outpours in Indian psyche after such incidents and push for stronger reforms so that such incidents will never happen again.

Women's rights groups have been instrumental in various Parliamentary Acts that protect and promote women's constitutional and legal rights. Major Acts that protect women's rights are: The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971, The Bonded Labour System Abolition Act of 1976, The Family Courts Act of 1984, The Indecent Representation of Women Prohibition Act of 1986, and The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005. NGOs continue to play vital roles in increasing awareness about these Acts and their provisions. They also initiate legal proceedings



based on these and other Acts to address women victims.

Among the most significant policy development that women rights NGOs were able to achieve include: (i) the establishment of National Commission on Women as the central government agency to: safeguard constitutional and legal rights of women, initiate remedial legislative measures to promote women's rights, and facilitate grievance processes, (ii) The 1994 Constitutional Amendment Act that increased women representation in the political (and thus policy) decision-making process through the introduction of 33 per cent reservation for women in local and village-level elections, all policy, legal and enforcement frameworks regarding women's rights are not of any use if they are not implemented properly. Often time, rules and regulations to protect women are not followed or ignored all together. NGOs play a vital role in making sure they are implemented.

Conclusion: Every nation can't achieve real growth without support of half population of the country. Development of every country lies not just on its GDP growth, but through a series of progressive reforms that resolve and eradicate social injustices faced by various sub-population of the nation. The growing list of government initiated reformative acts, legal framework, regulatory mechanisms, and judicial attitude are not only solutions to the major issues of gender injustice by themselves. Unless they change the mindsets and behaviours of people in society, especially among men, none of them is worth anything. NGOs have provide the way for awareness, advocacy, education and outright demands for gender justice. They need to continue to push the boundaries of social justice, laws, and judiciary in pursuit of women's rights, equality.

In addition to their programmes and projects, in order to stay true to their missions, women empowerment NGOs need to have organizational capacity to operate effectively and efficiently for complete the projects. They need to

have good governance that promotes transparency and accountability. They should have active strategic planning processes that will expand their scope on empowering women. They also need to mobilize steady revenues from diversified sources in order to continue their work.

Problem about Indian society's inability to rid itself of several social evils, India is at crossroads in so many ways. Its youth population is nearly 50 per cent of the total population, the highest such proportion the nation ever had. The younger generation has the opportunity to play a role for become a developed nation but it may be achieve easily if men and women play equal role with gender justice.

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