

ROLE OF NGOS IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA

Murugesh Devendran

Lala Lajpatrai College of Commerce and Economics
Mahalaxmi, Mumbai -400034

Abstract

Empowerment means equal importance to both men and women in the society. The knowledgeable Indian women have to go a long way to achieve equal rights and position because customs are deeply rooted in Indian society where the socially setup has been a male dominated one. Women play a very important role in the family as well as in the society. Women empowerment is very important for the growth and development of the nation and also to the society. Empowerment of women can be achieved by providing adequate education facilities, government supports, and employment generation for women. Here NGOs play a very significant role in women empowerment through providing basic education, vocational training, and training for self-employment, legal aid, and protection for women and self-awareness programmes. Hence most of the NGOs are mainly concerned with the upliftment of women in the society. This paper looks studies about the various role played by NGOs in Mumbai for women empowerment and various government schemes for women empowerment in Maharashtra.

Keywords: NGOs, Women Empowerment, Government Schemes, upliftment, self –employment

INTRODUCTION

“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.”

-Swami Vivekananda

Women’s empowerment emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a radical approach to transforming power relations favouring women’s rights and greater equality between women and men (Batiwala, 1993, 2007). Women empowerment empowers women to control their lives and make their own choices. When women are empowered, they are more likely to be educated, healthy, and have a higher income. They are also more likely to participate in decision-making and have a more significant say in their lives.

Empowerment of women means making women economically independent, self-reliant, confident and positive in attitude. It helps women to face any situation and to participate in the development activities of the nation.

The term, "Non-Governmental Organization" or NGO, came into currency in 1945 because of the need for the UN to differentiate in its Charter between participation rights for intergovernmental specialized agencies and those for international private organizations. At the UN, virtually all types of private bodies can be recognized as NGOs. They only have to be independent from government control, not seeking to challenge governments either as a political party or by a narrow focus on human rights, non-profit-making and non-criminal.

The World Bank defines NGOs as "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services or undertake community development".

OBJECTIVE

- To know the brief concept of women empowerment and non-government organization.
- To study the importance of women empowerment.
- To study the role and functions of NGOs
- To know the Schemes and Programmes for the Women Empowerment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of this research is descriptive and the study depends on information gathered from secondary sources. The main sources are magazines, newspaper, books, journals and concerned websites.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature has been reviewed for the present study to examine the role of NGO's on women empowerment.

- Minisha Gupta (2021) aims to identify the role of NGO's in promoting women empowerment through immediate livelihood facilities. Women are creative enough to start their own venture, but they are not able to explore the available opportunities because of male dominance, lack of education and proper government support. Hence, NGO's play a major role in training and empowering women to attain immediate livelihood.
- Panda (2000) conducted a study on the Role of NGOs in the process of Women Empowerment. In the study, the researcher examines women empowerment in terms of decision-making power, autonomy, self-awareness, participation in various activities etc. From the study it was revealed that NGOs have a significant role in creating awareness among women as well as in society. It creates opportunities to develop abilities in various fields like power, self-reliance, participation, and awareness which lead women's empowerment.
- Margaret (2012) examined the impact of NGO interventions on the empowerment of women in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Chennai (India)". The findings of the study revealed high empowerment of beneficiary women could take place in the economic, cultural, social and psychological walk of life. There was a significant difference in the level of empowerment before and after NGOs intervention, it was quite positive. Active participation of NGOs is necessary for bringing women empowerment in rural areas.

Role and Importance of Women empowerment: Women's empowerment is important for various reasons, including

Gender Equality: Women's empowerment is necessary for achieving gender equality, which is a fundamental human right. Gender equality means that women and men have equal rights, opportunities, and resources, and can participate equally in all aspects of life.

Economic Growth: Women's empowerment is also important for economic growth and development. When women have equal importance to get education, employment, and other opportunities, they are better able to contribute to the economy and society as a whole.

Social Justice: Women's empowerment is also essential for achieving social justice. Women and girls are often subject to discrimination, violence, and other forms of oppression simply because of their gender. Empowering women helps to create a more just and equitable society for everyone.

Health and Well-being: Women's empowerment is also important for promoting health and well-being. When women have access to education and healthcare, they can better take care of themselves and their families.

Sustainable Development: Women's empowerment is critical for achieving sustainable development. When women are empowered, they are better able to contribute to efforts to address environmental challenges, reduce poverty, and promote social justice.

In short, women's empowerment is crucial for achieving a just, equitable, and sustainable world.

NGOs in Mumbai working for Women Welfare and Empowerment

Akshara Centre: it is a non-profit organization based in Mumbai that works towards women and girls through education, health care and advocacy. Akshara Centre believes in transforming society through empowering women and girls. Over the past two decades, this NGO has worked with poor young women to achieve economic and social empowerment. Approximately 5000 young women have received educational scholarships and jobs, and also intensive life skills and legal rights instruction. It offers educational scholarships, life and technical skill training, and job placement to socially and economically backward young women between the ages of 14 and 20.

Myna Mahila Foundation was founded by Suhani Jalota in 2015 to empower women by encouraging discussion of taboo subjects such as menstruation, and by setting up workshops to produce low-cost sanitary products for enabling girls to stay in school in the Mumbai suburban & rural regions. Apart from empowering women, the Mumbai-based local foundation is providing stable employment to women in slums by encouraging them to join their workforce and manufacture low-cost sanitary napkins. This Mumbai-based non-profit organization has successfully educated thousands of women across India making their life better. Through a collaborative approach, Myna Mahila Foundation has been catering to uplift the life of unprivileged school girls and household women. They have transformed the lives 6, 00,000 plus women.

Srujna Charitable Trust was started in 2011 by Jyotika and Vaishali as a project and got registered in 2012 as a Charitable Trust. Srujna is active with a vision to provide employment to the unprivileged women of Mumbai. Srujna was started as a project to train unprivileged women in making artificial jewelry, and now it is selling products to dealers under the brand name "Beads and You", priced between RS30 to RS1000. Apart from empowering women, this Mumbai-based local NGO is providing stable employment to women in slums by encouraging them to join their workforce 70 percent women are earning a sustainable income to support their children education and 90 percent of women are earning stable income .this NGO has impacted nearby 55, 000 lives .

Abhilasha Foundation is a Mumbai based NGO for Women & Child Empowerment. Since its inception in 2014, the Boriwali located non-profit organisation is continuously working for the upliftment of the underprivileged. Neglected children, ill-treated women, and migrants are some vulnerable groups for which Abhilasha Foundation, Mumbai has worked consistently in the past decade.

Debabrata-Auro Foundation (DAF) works with main focus to make fundamental changes in the lives of women and provide them with a dignified living. DAF recognizes the multiple layers of issues associated with the subject of women's empowerment, hence its technique and tactics have been developed to handle the issues in a methodical manner. Additionally, their goal is to give women economic freedom and education so that they can have a legitimate place in society. This NGO's varied projects include education campaigns, viable ways of money generating, and help for victims of domestic violence, among others. Today, this NGO in Mumbai gives training, income possibilities, knowledge on many topics, and educational counselling to women all throughout India, acting as a bridge between these women and the external market, allowing them to generate their own independent income.

SNEHA (Society for Nutrition, Education, and Health Action) this NGO was started with the thought that in order to make a significant difference in the health of the most vulnerable populations, preventative techniques that include health and nutrition education were required. Additionally, SNEHA works in communities with women, children, and families, as well as with public health and safety institutions. The creative work in vulnerable settlements aims to reduce maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity, child malnutrition, adolescent anaemia, and gender-based violence, all of which are important determinants of health equality for the family and the society as a whole

Stree Mukti Sanghatana [Women's Liberation Organization] has been fighting for women's empowerment for more than four decades now. Their play 'Mulgi Zali Ho' (Girl is Born) allowed women to communicate with them and express their difficulties. Stree Mukti Sanghatana Family began operations like counselling clinics, an in-house monthly magazine called "Prerak Lalkari," programmes for teenagers, day care facilities, garbage picker programmes, and solid waste management to help women earn a living. Additionally, Stree Mukti Sanghatana works to establish a gender-just world by improving the lives of women through education, awareness, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Furthermore, their objective is to eliminate poverty and violence while also creating an environment favorable to equality.

Women's India Trust (WIT) was started with the motive to make women financially independent and began with teaching less fortunate and untrained Mumbai women how to sew sari petticoats. And, since then, they have been assisting many women in developing skills and earning a consistent income, which has altered their lives and the lives of their families. WIT runs with the purpose to assist women help themselves by providing unskilled and underprivileged women with a platform for progress and empowerment.

The Akanksha Foundation: The Akanksha Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Mumbai, Maharashtra that works towards providing education and skill-building opportunities to underprivileged girls. The organization operates several schools and centers that provide quality education and vocational training to girls.

Apne Aap Women's Collective (AAWC): AAWC is a non-profit organization based in Mumbai, Maharashtra that works towards the rehabilitation and empowerment of women and girls affected by human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. The organization provides shelter, education, and healthcare services to vulnerable women and children. As of 31st march 2022, AAWC has served nearby 3000 individuals.

Various Government Schemes in Maharashtra

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing various schemes/ programmes to bring women into the mainstream of all the sectors in the country to empower them

Shubh Mangal Samuhik Vivah scheme: this scheme provides grant in aid per marrying couple is provided to the daughters of widow and destitute women who have completed 18years are applicable for this scheme.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme :

● With the main objective of this scheme is to increase the child sex ratio in the state the women and child development department has implemented Beti Bachao and Beti Paadhao central government scheme in 10 districts i.e. Aurangabad, Beed, Jalgaon, Buldhana, Ahmednagar, Washim, Kolhapur, Osmanabad, Sangli and Jalna. The main objective of this initiative are Prevention of gender biased sex selective elimination, Ensuring survival & protection of the girl child and Ensuring education and participation of the girl child.

● On 15th June 2016, the state added six more districts i.e Hingoli, Pune, Nalsik, Latur Parbhani were also added into the scheme. Maharashtra is the only state in the country where its two district were felicitated with Special Award by Hon^{ble} minister WCD, GOI, on National Girl Child Day, 24th January 2017, This Districts were recognized for contribution “ effective community engagement, enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act and enabling girl child education”

Manjhi Kanya Bhagyashree Scheme: The WCD Dept of Government of Maharashtra has implemented “ Manjhi Kanya Bhagyashree. Under this scheme government shall provide financial assistance of Rs 50,000 for a one girl child for a period 18 years and RS 25,000 for two girl children of the families whose annual income is upto 7.5 lakh.

Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) is the State Women’s Development Corporation of Government of Maharashtra, established on the 24th February, 1975 on the occasion of International Women’s year. The mission of the corporation are “ To bring about gender justice and equality for women , investing human capital and the capacity building of women, thus making them economically and socially empowered and enabling them to access sustainable livelihoods”

Lek Ladki Yojana The Maharashtra cabinet has approved the Lek Ladki Yojana (Dear Daughter Scheme), which guarantees financial support to the girl child whose family holds an orange or a yellow low-income ration card. The scheme offers over Rs 1 lakh to such children and their families over a period of 18 years from birth, with payouts dependent on the girl child's ongoing education.

Mahasamruddhi Mahila Sashaktikaran Scheme: The Maharashtra government has recently launched this scheme to empower the women of the state. In rural areas, women face many issues and government wants to help women to live a healthy life. It was launched on International Women’s day which was on 8 March 2021.

Sukanya Samridhi Yojna : This programme encourages parents to build a fund for future education and marriage expenses for their female child. Parents can start saving early as the minimum amount of investment required is small, and the account is active for 14 years from the date of opening the account.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Shayog Yojna : The main objective of scheme is to provide cash incentive as compensation of wage loss to women during pregnant and lactating period as well as upgrade their health status and get nutritious food. After Enrolment the government provides Rs 6000 in two installment one at the time of child birth (Rs 3000) and after child completes 6 months (Rs 3000) to pregnant women, currently this scheme is applicable in Amaravati and Buldhana District.

CONCLUSION

Overall NGO’s play a very significant role in women empowerment in Mumbai, this paper analyses the importance NGO in women empowerment. These organization working continually for the betterment of women in the society by addressing various problems, injustice and inequality prevails in the society. And these NGO’s provides opportunity for growth and empowerment of women.

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