

THE ROLE OF NGOS WORKING FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT & RIGHTS IN INDIA: PRINCIPLES, ROLE & CHALLENGES

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Abstract

The place and importance of women in India is a topic of great significance, as it encompasses their multifaceted roles, contributions, and challenges faced in various aspects of society. From the past, women have been celebrated for their wisdom, strength, and resilience. The journey of women in India has not been without its challenges. The deeply ingrained patriarchal mindset has often relegated women to subordinate roles, limiting their opportunities for growth and development. Practices such as dowry, child marriage, and female infanticide have long persisted in various parts of the country, causing immense suffering and injustice to countless women. Many Non-Governmental Organisation has working for them by conducting different empowerment related activities. This paper tries to understand the Role of the NGOs for women empowerment and rights by decision making. In order to fully understand the paper, qualitative research methodology has been utilised in conjunction with rich secondary sources, including carefully chosen academic papers, to assess the role of NGOs in empowering women and rights by decision making.

Keywords: Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), Role of NGOs, Women's Empowerment, Women's Rights, Women's Rights Principles, Challenges and Decision making.

INTRODUCTION

An NGOs for women can make great positive changes with regard to issues that women in India face. India is a country that, as many other countries do, have a myriad of challenges faced by its women. From sexual violence and domestic abuse to economic inequality and limited access to education, the hurdles seem overwhelming. An NGO for women can play a pivotal role in addressing and combating these challenges. In this blog, we will explore how an NGO for women in India can make a difference by focusing on issues such as sexual violence, domestic abuse, forced prostitution, widow abandonment, education accessibility, support for women with disabilities, economic empowerment and childcare for children with disabilities and other issues.

“Women’s empowerment and rights” refers to the process of enhancing women’s access to control over the strategic life decisions that affect them as well as access to the opportunities that allow them to fully realise their potential. It is based on the assumptions that women and men differ from one another in their social positions and that these differences consist of asymmetric, unequal power relations between the sexes. In order to improve women’s quality of life, the process of women’s empowerment as an economic, political, and sociocultural process challenges the system of sexual stratification that has led to women’s subjugation and marginalisation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Minisha Gupta (2021)** aims to identify the role of non-government organisations (NGOs) 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. Thus, NGOs play a major role in training and empowering women to attain immediate livelihood.

2. **Diriba Ayele, Sori Tefera (2020)** emphasizes to investigate the effects of NGOs on socio-economic empowerment of women by conceptualizing and developing five basic dimensions of women empowerment including income, saving, decision-making ability, expenditure level, and assets ownership rights of women based on empirical evidence from some NGOs operating in Ethiopia.

3.

4. **Devaraj Dutta (2020)** study is an attempt to evaluate the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in protection and promotion of child rights. The study was carried out in North Lakhimpur Sub-Division of Lakhimpur District of Assam State. The study is based on both theoretical and empirical data.

5. **Sharda jai haryani, bharati motwani (2020)** The study identified a positive impact of NGO initiatives on the empowerment of rural women. Thus we can conclude that NGOs in India are effectively working towards upliftment of socio-economic status of the poor women in the rural areas thereby attaining the goal of rural management.

5. **Dr. Kunhi Sikha Bhuyan (2020)** states about women empowerment through education; the problems, the historical background of women education, constitutional provision and also forwarded some suggestions. Hope that our paper will help about to understanding the women educational scenario and importance of education in her development and empowerment.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To study of the NGOs working in women empowerment.
2. To understand the Principles Guiding NGOs in India.
3. To know the Challenges for Empowerment of Women.
4. To identify the Role of of NGO's for women's Empowerment and Rights.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is analytical research in nature. The qualitative research methodology has been used as a research methodology to analyse the role of NGOs in empowering women and women's rights. The study is based on the secondary data which has been gathered from the research papers, newspapers, magazines, books, journals, annual reports of Government of India, and authorized websites.

The Ten Principles Guiding for Working NGOs in India:

In the diverse tapestry of India, where traditions and modernity interweave, the fight for women's rights has been an ongoing struggle. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have emerged as crucial players in this narrative, championing the cause of gender equality, empowerment, and justice. Before unraveling the dynamic role of NGOs in advocating for women's rights, let's understand the foundational principles that steer their efforts:

1. **Inclusivity:** NGOs strive to be inclusive, ensuring that their initiatives consider the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and circumstances of the women they aim to serve.
2. **Empowerment:** Central to their mission is the empowerment of women, not only economically but also socially and emotionally, fostering a sense of independence and self-worth.
3. **Non-Discrimination:** NGOs vehemently oppose any form of discrimination, advocating for equal opportunities regardless of gender, caste, religion, or socio-economic status.
4. **Human Rights:** Women's rights are viewed as fundamental human rights, and NGOs work to safeguard and promote these rights, aligning with international human rights conventions.
5. **Community Engagement:** NGOs actively involve communities in their efforts, believing that sustainable change requires the participation and understanding of the society in which women live.
6. **Legal Advocacy:** NGOs engage in legal advocacy, working to ensure that laws protecting women are not only comprehensive but also effectively implemented.
7. **Awareness and Education:** Promoting awareness and education about women's rights is a cornerstone. NGOs aim to inform both women and society at large about the importance of gender equality.
8. **Health and Well-being:** Recognizing the interconnectedness of health and rights, NGOs address women's health issues, emphasizing reproductive health, mental well-being, and access to healthcare.

9. Economic Sustainability: Beyond immediate interventions, NGOs focus on initiatives that contribute to women's economic sustainability, lifting them out of poverty and providing financial independence.

10. Collaboration: Recognizing the complexity of the issues at hand, NGOs actively collaborate with other organizations, government bodies, and international agencies to amplify their impact and drive systemic change.

The Role of NGOs in Women Empowerment & Rights:

Participation of women in NGOs gave them an opportunity to foray into the social and political spheres which were not easily granted by the for-profit and public sectors. Many NGOs that work to alleviate poverty among women also focuses on advocating the women's rights. These have brought important changes in the lives of women. NGOs play a major role in enforcing rights provided by legislation in India. Promotion of self-employment NGOs also play a significant and meaningful role towards promoting self-employment of women by the following ways:

Training & Skill Development: NGOs train poor women and provide them opportunities of self-employment to improve their social and economic status. They also cultivate the habit of thrift and credit among the poor women to improve their quality of life.

Legal Awareness and Property Rights: NGOs are working with women to generate awareness regarding their legal rights. They also provide loan facilities to buy land in groups.

Fair Trade: Fair trade is a relative term and is about giving poor people power. NGOs help to cut down on the middlemen and ensure producers get a fair price for their work. They act as facilitators in this process.

Credit / Micro Credit / Self-help groups: Provision of credit paves way for social justice and empowerment. NGOs target and help women by providing credits as they have a history of being better re-payers of loan.

Capacity Building: Keeping in view of the present state of economic liberalization, NGOs are also involved in equipping self-employed women with information, knowledge, technology, training and managerial techniques.

NGOs and Women Empowerment: Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been recognized as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women in rural as well as urban areas as they bring together women from all walks of life to fight for their cause. SHGs work on a variety of issues like health, nutrition, agriculture, forestry, income generation activities, seeking micro credit and so on.

Since the overall empowerment of women is vitally dependent on economic empowerment, NGOs are involved in the following activities to empower women:

Educating and creating awareness among women especially the rural women; Supplements efforts of government in women empowerment; Promotes the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for empowering women; Instils leadership qualities among women and ensures their participation in their empowerment. Represents the problems faced by rural women to the concerned authorities and carries out impact assessment of the policy decisions affecting women. Mobilizes optimum resources and plans and implements the projects that have bearing upon women empowerment.

Empowering Women in India: The role of An NGO for Women in Addressing Challenges:

Making great progress towards solving issues women in India face through support to their fundraisers.

Sexual Violence: One of the most pervasive issues faced by women in India is sexual violence. An NGO for women can play a critical role in providing support, counseling and legal assistance to survivors. They actively engage in awareness campaigns to challenge societal norms that perpetuate such violence and work towards changing attitudes through education. Furthermore, an NGO for women can often collaborate with law enforcement agencies to ensure that justice is served and that survivors feel supported throughout the legal process.

Domestic Violence: An NGO for women in India is at the forefront of combating domestic violence by offering safe spaces, counseling services and legal aid to victims. These organizations work towards raising awareness about domestic abuse, challenging stereotypes and advocating for stronger legal frameworks to protect women

within their homes. Additionally, an NGO for women can provide training programs for law enforcement and judicial bodies to ensure a more effective response to cases of domestic violence.

Forced Prostitution: An NGO for women often combats forced prostitution by rescuing victims, providing rehabilitation services and advocating for stricter laws against human trafficking. These NGOs collaborate with law enforcement agencies, social workers and community leaders to create a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of forced prostitution and prevent its occurrence.

Widow Abandonment: Widow abandonment remains a deeply rooted issue in India. An NGO for women can work towards destigmatizing widowhood, providing support to widows and empowering them economically through skill development programs. By challenging cultural norms and advocating for widows' rights, these organizations aim to create a society that embraces and supports widowed women.

Access to Education: Ensuring equal access to education for girls is a key focus for many women-centric NGOs in India. An NGO for women and girls can create awareness about the importance of education, establish and support schools in underserved areas and provide scholarships to girls from marginalized communities. By addressing barriers such as societal expectations and financial constraints, an NGO for women can contribute to breaking the cycle of gender-based educational disparities.

Access for Homeless Women with Disabilities: Women with disabilities face unique challenges, including limited access to education, employment and healthcare. An NGO for women can work towards creating an inclusive society by advocating for accessible infrastructure, offering skill development programs and ensuring that policies are in place to protect the rights of women with disabilities. Such NGOs can also provide support to women who are homeless and therefore at risk of exploitation by criminals and traffickers.

Economic Equality: Economic empowerment is a key component of gender equality. An NGO for women can implement various initiatives, such as vocational training, entrepreneurship programs and microfinance projects, to enable women to become economically independent. By fostering financial literacy and creating opportunities for sustainable income generation, these organizations contribute to reducing the economic disparities between men and women.

Caring for Children in Need: Mothers of children with disabilities, for example, often face increased challenges. An NGO for women and children can address this by providing support networks, counseling services and educational resources. These NGOs work towards creating inclusive environments where children with disabilities can access education and healthcare. By supporting mothers, NGOs contribute to the overall well-being and development of children with disabilities. This community-centric approach ensures that the efforts to combat gender-based issues are sustainable and ingrained in the social fabric.

The NGOs An Action Plan for Women's Empowerment and Rights:

Despite NGOs' best efforts, the situation for many women is still not encouraging because they lack the independence or authority to make their own judgments or spend their own money anyway they like. On this front, there is still much work to be done. The government must make a considerable contribution in this regard. NGOs can only support the efforts of the government. The government has to place more of an emphasis on empowering underprivileged and vulnerable women, particularly in rural regions.

Additionally, in order to foster the creation of NGOs, persons engaged in social work and volunteering should have access to publicly accessible resources including mentorship services and training programmes. The creation of more NGOs will aid in the successful eradication of the problems that women encounter. In general, women empowerment NGOs appear to have a key influence in bringing about radical changes in women's lifestyles. They are highly successful in influencing women to develop their independence, drive, and ability to make their own judgments. Additionally, they have improved the health and literacy of women. NGOs should continue to advance women's rights in all spheres of life, including social, educational, economic, and home, in order to make gender equality a reality. Wholesome women's empowerment will continue to elude us unless significant reforms are made on these fronts. NGOs possess the skills required to be the change agent on various fronts.

CONCLUSION

Feminist philosophy and the desire to uplift other oppressed women are shared by empowered women. These empowered women will be able to fulfil their views by partnering with an NGO whose objective is directly aligned to their ideology, which provides them a great degree of satisfaction and success. The main goal of these NGOs working for women's rights in India must be to increase women's income and independence. The education and empowerment of underprivileged and vulnerable women in rural areas should receive more

attention, even though many people from various social groups in India are helped to rise to positions of social and financial status by existing progressive affirmative action programmes by granting access to elite professions and the political sphere.

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