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ABOUT US

WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provide dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

THE ROLE OF NGOs IN THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is an urgent need. It enables sustainable rural and urban development, improves the economic, social and political status of women in India. The empowerment of women in these areas is necessary to transform an inactive society into an independent society. Women empowerment can be achieved by providing adequate educational facilities, political support, effective legislative system and job creation for women. NGOs and self-help groups play a vital role in women's empowerment by providing basic education, vocational training, self-employment training, legal aid, women's protection and awareness programs. Thus, they are mainly interested in improving the status of women in society. This article examines the process by which women's empowerment is achieved and the status of women is improved with the help of NGOs in the Indian scenario. This article discusses the empowerment of rural women through NGOs and the benefits of entrepreneurship among rural women. This article aims to explore some measures that should be adopted to position rural women as equal actors in entrepreneurship and economic development.

Key Words: Women Empowerment, Self Help Groups, Economic Development, entrepreneurship, vocational training, self-employment training.



INTRODUCTION:

Organizations that are not under the direct control of government agencies or other autonomous bodies and that are dedicated to providing financial and non-financial assistance to those deprived of certain rights in the society are known as non-governmental organizations. They generally have no intention of making a profit. The concept of NGO developed in India only after independence. NGOs have played a vital role in the development of rural India since the 1970s, developers, government and foreign donors have often felt that small-scale, flexible, innovative and participatory NGOs are more successful to reach the poor and reduce poverty. This thinking has led to a rapid growth of NGOs dealing with the creation and implementation of rural development programs. Initially, NGOs did not have a particular field of expertise or did not choose a particular field of expertise and only had the common goal of helping individuals. Later, NGOs emerged with their own areas of expertise. This has been useful because NGOs with a specific area of expertise know exactly the options and choices available to solve problems in their area. An example of such NGOs are the NGOs that strive to empower women. This research paper attempts to examine the active role that NGOs can play in promoting women's empowerment and self-employment and to recognize the effectiveness of NGOs in improving the lives of women in view of their empowerment. It also analyzes the role and nature of NGOs and examines their importance in society for the betterment of women's lives.

OBJECTIVES:

Discuss the characteristics that NGOs need to be effective in their functions
Identification of strategies followed by NGOs for the empowerment of women
Identify the objectives of NGOs focused on the empowerment of women.

METHODOLOGY:

The article reveals the functional role of NGOs working in India. To fully understand the article, qualitative research methodology was used in conjunction with rich secondary sources, including carefully selected academic articles, to assess the role of NGOs in women's empowerment through decision-making

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NGO:

NGOs mainly focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of the people they work with.

Below are the important characteristics that an NGO must have to be effective:

- **Voluntarism:** NGOs are voluntary organizations and are formed by some interested individuals who have their own interest in the development of society. They are not formed under the compulsion of anyone. If they are trained like this, they will not be effective in their duties.
- **Legal Status:** NGOs are registered with the government under the Companies Act, Trust Act, Companies Act, etc. They are also registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. This FCRA registration is required to be able to receive funds from abroad.
- **Independent:** NGOs must be independent in planning and implementing their programs. Any other type of external interference cannot allow the NGO to function at its maximum capacity.
- **Flexible:** NGOs must be flexible in terms of interventions. They are not bound by bureaucracy and other bureaucratic obstacles.
- **Faster decision-making:** NGOs make quick decisions in response to society's needs. The sooner decisions are made, the sooner services reach the poor.
- **Strong motivation:** Members and staff are endowed with strong motivation and inspiration to work for the cause of people. They strive tirelessly to achieve their goal for the benefit of the target groups.
- **Freedom of work:** NGO workers should enjoy freedom in their work in the field, in community organization and in the implementation of development programs.
- **Catalytic:** NGOs strengthen and inspire communities for social action, but are not weakened or distorted in the intervention process.
- **The center of the people:** NGOs encourage people's participation. They plan things for people and implement them through people. They make decisions by discussing with volunteers and implement the most effective decision to help people develop.

- Non-profit orientation: NGOs are not run for profit. Surpluses and income from economic projects, if any, are not distributed among members or interested parties. They are reused for other development purposes.

ROLE OF NGOs TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

Women's empowerment has been the main goal of the government and most NGOs. Voluntary actions promoted by NGOs engaged in development play an important role in rural development, which depends on the active participation of volunteers through non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The various roles of NGOs in the empowerment of women are described below:-

- Education of rural women.
- Complement the efforts of the government.
- Organize the efforts of rural women.
- Develop different models and experiments.
- Ensuring the participation of women in their empowerment.
- Optimal mobilization of resources.
- The promotion of rural leadership.
- They represent rural women.
- The promotion of technology in rural areas.
- Provide effective and efficient training for rural women.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Impact assessment.



STRATEGIC AREAS on which NGOs focus to increase women's empowerment. NGOs can play an important role in self-employment and empowerment of women in the following ways:

Training and skill development: The labor force participation of women in India is 22.27 %, of which 16.03% for main workers and 6.24% for marginal workers. . Women constitute 90% of the total marginal workers in the country. There are regional variations in labor participation rates in the country, ranging from 4 to 34 percent. Women often find work as casual labor in agriculture and the growing informal sector. The NGO's efforts focus on the empowerment of poor women. Its purpose is to train them and provide employment opportunities to improve their social and economic status.

Legal awareness and property rights: In rural India, only 13% of women enjoy the right to inherit land. In villages, girls usually get married and leave the village, so there is no right of inheritance. Government programs also allocate land to male heads of households. An adult child receives compensation for inheritance. NGOs work for the legal empowerment of women to make them aware of their legal rights and help them buy land by providing credit facilities.

Fair trade: Fair trade is the ideology of reducing the number of intermediaries, so that the product, when it reaches the buyer, is always desired, in terms of price. Fair trade is about empowering the poor. This is a business concept in full development. This means paying producers a fair price for their work, helping them acquire the skills and knowledge they need to grow their businesses, and challenging business methods that keep people poor. NGOs often play the role of facilitators in this process, especially when women are willing to engage in this process, NGOs that fight for women's empowerment support them financially.

Self Help Groups: Self Help groups are basically small groups formed, mainly by women at the village level. The basic aim of everyone in SHG is to invest in a small business and make small profits. Women-centered NGOs usually finance these people with advance loans at minimal interest rates for the initial investment, which these women can pay back after reaping profits.

Vocational training: The small-scale craft sector accounts for more than 10% of agricultural and rural production in India. Government programs focus on skill improvement, job creation, technology transfer, rural industrialization and promotion of population self-sufficiency. NGOs help in procurement of raw materials, vocational training, marketing, coordination and inter-

agency linkages and advise the government on policies related to the small sector. •

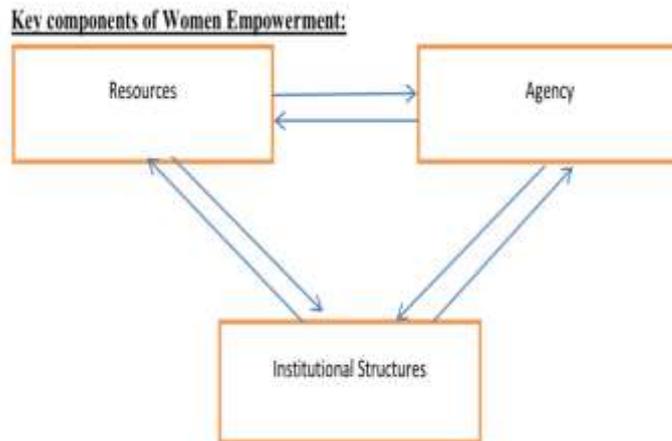
Capacity development: The technical skills of those responsible for providing support services to cooperatives must be strengthened and adapted to the specific needs of cooperative societies. Given the current state of economic liberalization, immediate necessary steps should be taken by government institutions, the cooperative sector, the private sector, NGOs, national and international agencies to adequately equip self-reliant women with technical skills, information, knowledge, technology, training and management.



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

Women's empowerment refers to the process of enabling women to have control over their lives, make their own decisions, and have equal opportunities in various areas, including education, employment, health care and participation in social and political activities. It is about dismantling gender discrimination, challenging patriarchal norms and guaranteeing gender equality. The concept of women's empowerment recognizes the historical and current marginalization, discrimination and oppression of women in societies around the world. It underlines the importance of addressing these issues in order to create a fairer and more just society. Her genuine effort to transform women “from victims to survivors... The transition to active citizenship is a success. According to Kabeer (1999), women's empowerment is a method by which people acquire the ability to achieve a strategic life that was previously denied to them. To successfully improve their lives and secure their livelihood, women engage in a process that challenges cultural conventions that promote women's empowerment (Swain, 2006).

KEY COMPONENTS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:



1. Agency: Agency is at the heart of our model of empowerment; it refers to the capacity of women to take purposeful action and pursue goals, free from the threat of violence or retribution. The three core expressions of agency are decision-making, leadership, and collective action. These are not simply ingredients for agency; rather, they are ways that women can exercise agency in their lives.
2. Institutional structures: They are the social arrangements, including both formal and informal rules and practices, that shape and influence women ability to express agency and assert control over resources. Institutional structures can be found in the spheres of the family, community, market, and state. They comprise formal laws and policies as well as norms that shape relations among individuals and groups.
3. Resources: They are tangible and intangible capital and sources of power that women and girls have, own, or use individually or collectively in exercising agency. The key resources highlighted in our model include women and girls' bodily integrity (health, safety, and security), critical consciousness, and assets (financial and productive assets, knowledge and skills, time, and social capital).

Each of these elements and their dimensions are interrelated and can be mutually reinforcing, offering entry points for interventions when addressed explicitly and intentionally.

VARIOUS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS IN INDIA:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development implements various programs to integrate women in all sectors of the country to empower them. The details are as follows:

One Stop Center and Universalization of Women Helplines:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development administers two programs of the Nirbhaya Fund, namely One Stop Center and Universalization of Women Helplines. One Stop Centers (OSCs), commonly known as Sakhi Centres, aim to help women affected by violence (including domestic violence) by providing a range of integrated services under one roof, such as police relief, assistance medical, legal assistance and legal advice. , psychosocial counseling, temporary housing, etc. The Women's Helpline (WHL) program provides a 24-hour emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence, both in public and private spaces, connecting them with relevant authorities such as the police, one-stop centers , the hospital, the lawyers. services etc. WHL also supports women in distress with a rescue van and counseling services, besides providing information on women's welfare programs and schemes across the country. Women can call the short code 181 to take advantage of women's help services.

Swadhar Greh Programme: The Swadhar Greh Program is implemented as a Central Government sponsored program for women victims of difficult circumstances who need institutional support for their rehabilitation so that they can lead their lives with dignity.

The Ujjawala Programme: The Ujjawala Program is implemented as a central government sponsored program for the prevention of trafficking and for the rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and repatriation of victims of trafficking for commercial purposes of sexual exploitation.

Working Women's Shelter: The Working Women's Shelter program is implemented by the government to provide working women with safe and convenient housing, with day care for their children, as far as possible, in cities, semi-urban or even rural where there are job opportunities for women.

Life cycle of Beti Bachao. The objectives of the program are to prevent selective elimination based on sex, to ensure the survival and protection of girls, and to ensure the education and participation of girls.

Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK): The Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) program was approved in November 2017 as a Central Government sponsored program to empower rural women through community participation. The goal is to facilitate the cross-sectoral convergence of programs and systems aimed at women. The scheme is implemented by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, with a cost-sharing ratio of 60:40 between the Center and the States, except for the North-Eastern States and special category states, where the funding ratio is 90:10. 100% central funding is provided for the Union Territories.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):

is a conditional cash transfer program sponsored by the central government which will be implemented across the country from 01.01.2017. Maternity allowance under PMMVY is available to all pregnant women and lactating mothers (PW&LM) except PW&LM who are regularly employed by the Central or State Governments or Public Sector Undertakings (PSEs) or those receiving similar benefits in by virtue of any law in force, for the first time a living child of the family. Under this scheme, Rs 5,000 is paid to the eligible beneficiary in three installments during pregnancy and lactation in response to compliance of the person with certain nutritional and health conditions. The eligible beneficiary also gets residual cash incentives as per approved rates for maternity benefits under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) after institutional birth, so on an average a woman gets Rs 6,000. Recently, the ministry launched 'Mission Shakti' (Integrated Program for Women's Empowerment) - a mission-style umbrella program aimed at strengthening interventions for women's safety, security and empowerment.

SUGGESTIONS:

A general tip for all NGOs is that they can function effectively if they have a specific area of focus. This is because an NGO that only focuses on all aspects of society cannot be an expert in any of these aspects. Therefore, NGOs cannot operate at their full capacity. If they only focus on one focused area, they will be able to give their best to solve this problem. Empowering women doesn't just mean empowering adult women. Illiteracy and lack of female empowerment persists in society because these women were not educated when they were young. Therefore, if the full empowerment of women is to be achieved, girls must be educated. Only then will the nation of the future have an autonomous female population. All women-centered NGOs must adopt a strategic approach that will broaden their scope to reach and

empower women. Only a strategic approach leads to faster results.

CONCLUSION:

The present study focuses on NGOs that promote women's empowerment in India. The article highlighted the characteristics and various roles and functions played by NGOs in India. In addition, this study focuses on the key elements of women's empowerment that will be adopted by NGOs to help women achieve empowerment. NGOs and the government share a mutually complementary relationship towards women's empowerment in India. Empowered women have a feminist ideology and want to empower other disadvantaged women. Although existing progressive affirmative action programs help many people from different life histories achieve a social and financial status that allows them to enter elite professions and the political sphere, more attention should be paid to the education and empowerment of underdeveloped and vulnerable women in rural areas. Governments and volunteers can make efforts to ensure that more women, especially those from disadvantaged regions, receive higher education and interpersonal skills training and are recruited as volunteers. In addition, there is a need for public support to allow a wider dissemination of some of the key themes that are part of feminist perspectives, namely the concern for equality and social justice. If more people are exposed to this ideology, more people will be able to act in the form of creating NGOs or supporting the entrepreneurs who run them. Care must be taken to ensure that those involved in education who run NGOs can take advantage of the public resources available to support the creation of the organization. These include training programs and mentoring services to facilitate the creation of NGOs. If such programs can be made available to those who are or are establishing NGOs, they can increase the chances of success of these entrepreneurs. Therefore, the role of NGOs in women empowerment is crucial in the Indian scenario.

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