Chapter 6

Women’s Problems and Suggestions

6.1 Introduction

The importance of women cannot be denied in any sphere of life. Women play a vital role in every field without which we cannot think of socio-economic development of the country. The only problem is that we are not capable of estimating the power and potential hidden in them and are unable to guide and utilize their potential in the area as that are beneficial for the country. They have neither a control over resources around them whether it is physical resources, human resources, intellectual resources nor on their self-ideology. A detailed examination of the status of women in society shows that gender inequality prevails in one form or other throughout the world. Therefore to establish gender equality, there is need for the empowerment of women in society. Empowerment is a new term in the area of women’s development and various approaches and strategic measures for the empowerment of women are being carried out in India. The indicators of development are socio-economic evidence, sex-ratio, life expectancy, literacy, politics, legal status and security. Analysis of women status reveals that women in the present age are suffering from many disabilities (Created by society) and discriminations and they do not enjoy equal status with men. Moreover, poverty overlaid with longstanding pattern of discrimination creates living conditions for women almost too harsh through the restrictions of their access to basic services. They live on the edge of subsistence. They are economically dependent and vulnerable, politically and legally powerless. Power itself can be simply defined as control over resources and control of ideology and it is exercised through a series of orders or decision making capacity. The concept
of empowerment refers to a range of activities from individual self-realization and self-assertion to participation or involvement in projects in a functional sense to the control over decision regarding all aspects of one’s life and livelihood. Since 1990, women’s subordinate position has been recognized and the need to improve their status beyond the traditional spheres became a significant step forward in the rhetoric of international development. As a result, in India three major approaches were adopted one after the other by the government towards the development of women; the welfare approach, the anti-poverty approach and the equity approach. Some of the empowerment mechanisms in India are literacy and higher education, better healthcare, greater work participation, opportunities for higher position of power, knowledge of rights and self-reliance, self-respect and dignity of being a woman.

From the discussion in the previous chapters, we have found out the problems faced by the women in Patna region. In this chapter, we have described women related problems and have provided suggestions to solve them.

6.2. Deprivation of Education

Education is important for an individual because the accumulated knowledge of one’s culture is principally transmitted through its educational institution. Discrimination in the extent and quality of any group’s education which may affect the cultural adjustment, social status and personal enjoyment of its members. Education equips and trains a person to perform their roles adequately. It develops her mental skill and makes her more tolerant and adaptable in life. Education broadens a person’s outlook, making her more liberal and democratic. Education endows her with inner resources of culture that facilitates the continuous process of adaption in her life. A person’s education reveals her ability or lack of it in day-to-day activities, like the wise or foolish use of money, division of time between work and other activities, neatness of dress and personal habits, and numerous other traits of character. Lack of education results in lack of adjustment and the individual is unable to avoid the narrow, selfish, and uninteresting family patterns which create familial strains. Education
of women is of paramount importance for the development of individuality. It is also an instrument for strengthening socially useful skills, habits and attitudes amongst common citizenship.

In the present study area Patna women education status is not conducive. Although some of them are literate, but their education is not in the proper way. They unable to take advantage of opportunities that could benefit them and their families, preparing women for the labor force and helping them understand their legal and reproductive rights. The people of this society have opinion that women education is not beneficial for family. They presume that girls will be married and then shall be sent off to another family. Investing in girls is like watering the neighbor’s plants, so they have not proper attention to educate women. Girls are supposed to fulfill domestic duties and education becomes secondary for them, whereas it is considered to be important for boys. In chapter 3, tables: 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 & 3.8 show the status of women education, which indicates that more than half of the respondents are non-Graduates. Most of the respondents belonged to 40-50 and above 50 years of age and they studied only up till high schools. The data of Zone wise education status of women reveals that most of the educated respondents belong to western and central zones in comparison to eastern and southern zones, which is due to development and economic status are better in those zones. In India women’s education never got its due share of attention.

In the study area, eastern and southern zone are not developed in comparison to western and central zones. Most of the areas are related to peri urban where women status are not equal to male members due to patriarchy, lack of education, unawareness etc. Following are some suggestion to improve of women education in the dwelling areas:

• Education for women should always be directed towards their holistic development. Education enhances a women’s sense of her own health needs and perspectives, and her power to make any health and family planning decisions.
Schooling facilities should be provided to the girls nearer to their place of residence within a walking distance.

Free education should be introduced for girls up to senior secondary class.

Separate institutions for girls should be established wherever it is needed.

Adequate arrangement should be made for free transport of girls to school if it is situated more than the walking distance.

Encourage women teachers by providing intensive training and regular educational support.

Introduce facilities for bridge programs on enable the dropouts.

6.3. Violence Against Women

In a male dominated society like India including Patna city where violence against women is unfortunately increasing at an alarming rate. Such violence can be grouped into two types:

(A) Violence against Women within the Family or Domestic Violence:

Women are often subject to violence within the family, a place which is expected to protect their dignity and assure their safety. This type of violence includes dowry related harassments including death, wife-battering, marital rape, sexual abuse, deprivation of food to female members, committing incestuous offences, inducing female members of the family to resort to sex-trade, female genital mutilation, abusing female servants of the family, and so on.

(B) Violence against Women outside the Family or Social Violence:

Kidnapping, raping and murdering women are very serious offences. The society at large itself is to be blamed for many types of violence’s that are committed against women especially outside the family. Such violence’s include compelling women for abortion and to undergo tubectomy operation, eve-teasing,
kidnapping girls of pre-matured age and forcing them to marry, sexual harassment of women employees at work place, immoral trafficking of women and girls, forced prostitution, kidnapping and mutilating the organs [such as hands, legs, ears, nose, etc.] of female children to use them for the purpose of begging, resorting to forcible religious conversion of young women, blackmailing, throwing acid at the faces of girls who refuse to marry, sexual abuse of female prisoners by the police and the jail personnel, the police, armed forces and the border security forces committing sex crimes against the female citizens in the border areas and so on.

In the study, we have summarized such violence’s in Chapter- 3 and it indicates that out of 500 respondents, 370 are affected by such violence’s and among them, 61.4% are sometimes affected, 9.4% are often affected and 3.0% are always affected. The respondents those are below 30 years and 30-40 years of age group are mostly affected by violence and that too specifically because of dowry issues and family related matters and social problems. In education wise illiterate and lower educated women have faced more violence in comparison to literate, because they do not know their own rights. Table.3.18, 3.19, 3.20 & 3.21 list the different types of violence faced by the women and most of the respondents are affected by verbal 44.6%, followed by physical 28.9%, and sexual (2.7%). 23.8% respondents have faced all of these violence. In religion wise, Hindu women mostly affected by verbal violence and Muslim faced physical violence at home. In zone wise we have seen most of the respondents have faced violence due to our society. They have not been given equal status as male

In the study area women from all the zones are facing the problem of violence and the reason behind this are patriarchy, male dominance, lower status of women in the family as well as society, in equal treatment between male and female and so on. Therefore in order to minimize the level of violence against the women they should be empowered through enhancing self-esteem and self-reliance for all women at the ground level. It is also well known that any changes in the society must be initiated from the home at the family level so that from the
childhood girls and boys are equally treated and get equal education and health care facilities. The gender discrimination against women would be minimize by providing them proper education and equal opportunities at the family, society, national and international level. The following are the suggestions regarding reducing violence against women in the study area.

- There should be an explicit prohibition of ultrasound tests through self-referrals or on a walk in basis by Radiologists or Laboratories.
- Strict regulations for films showing physical assault, murder, rape etc., and this should be restricted as far as possible.
- Amendments should be made in the (Medical Termination Pregnancy) MTP Act and PC&PNDT (Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic) Act for preventing the sex selective abortions.
- The exception of Marital Rape should be deleted from IPC, thereby making it fall within the purview of rape.
- Amendments should be made in the Dowry Prohibition Act to make it more effective including decriminalizing the act of giving of dowry.
- NGO’s like women organizations which work in partnership with government must be promoted because they provide education and awareness programs.

6.4. Financial Problems

Women are the invisible workforce in India (United Nations, 1997, p. 8). Without equal access to the job market women cannot participate in better paid work so their economic status remains stunted. India has forsaken and untapped human capital resource with high potential. Women’s work participation in Patna Metropolitan City presents various trends due to changing structural features of the economy. Industrial development and modernization have displaced quite a
large number of women working in traditional occupations. In the process of industrial employment women are excluded from productive work and they are concentrated in marginal occupations and are increasingly segregated in terms of employment. The keys reasons for less participation of women in the work force are heavy domestic work load, lack of assured work, irregular and under payment of wages, absence of transport facilities, lack of childcare centers and other supportive services. The spread of education has opened up employment opportunities for women in the tertiary sector. Regarding their services, there has been a marginal increase in the proportion of women in white colored jobs like doctors, nurses, teachers, clerks etc. In the study area, most of the women are engaged in unorganized sector under most oppressive working and living conditions with no legal protections. It is the reservoir of unemployment and is the survival sector of the urban economy. Large scale women’s employment prevails in trade and business and in service activities but are not able to enjoy their economic liberty in real sense. In chapter 4 table: 4.1 we studied 500 respondents and out of that, 55.6% women are not employee and they belong to housewife and student category. The present data show that most of respondents are non-employee due to social stigma, veil system and not work in according to her education lack of technical skill and business. 32.2% respondents work in the unorganized sector because of their lack of mobility and lack of information about the market and pressure of domestic work, and cultural norms.12.2% respondents work in the organized sector as a teacher, office staff, Bank employee and lower income worker such as peon, sweeper, mid wives etc. Table 4.18 gives the list of assets of the respondents and more than 50% respondents do not hold any assets. Some respondents have assets but they are not independent to take decision related to the assets. Table: 4.21 shows the expenditure of the respondents and it indicate that they are not spending more money without asking their relatives. The above data indicate that women’s status is not good, they depend on the men’s income and their economic status is not equal to men. Therefore they cannot take decisions in the economic matters at the family level.
Zone wise, in eastern and southern parts, most of the respondents are working but in low income group because they are laborers, house-maids, vendors, sweepers etc. So there is an urgent need to implement a major step in the direction of expanding and diversifying the education facilities and training opportunities available for women which enhance their income.

There are following suggestions to increase women’s financial status.

- There is an urgent need to implement the banking policy in favour of women.
- There is a need for setting up an exclusive credit body for poor and employed women in view of their socio-economic realities.
- Employment programs for women should be strengthened and designed on the basis of their needs at the micro level.
- In Eastern zone Planning should incorporate measures like child care and child development, use of technology to reduce organization of women and their overall development.
- In southern zone respondents should be provided more support and financial facilities to grassroots organizations which have proved effective in reaching out and mobilizing the poor women.

6.5. Negligence as a Decision Maker

Women’s development would include not only materialistic growth but also and perhaps more realistically and meaningfully, the blossoming of their intellectual, personnel, emotional, psychological, cultural and even spiritual progress. Therefore empowerment of women cannot be a static motion but a dynamic process, its approach is balanced, integrative and holistic, it has common goals and it is participatory in nature. Decision making power of women in households is one of the important indicators of women empowerment. From the Chapter – 5, table: 5.1 and 5.2 show the education and economic independency are related to empowerment of women. Therefore respondent who are illiterate and poorly educated, their decision making power is lower in comparison to highly educated respondents. Same conditions are related to economic
independency of the respondents. Most of the programs, policies, efforts on women's welfare and gender equality especially by the government departments, bilateral agencies and NGOs tend to lean towards women's empowerment. But it has been observed that many of these programs do not reach to women, and even if they reach they do not have much impact on women's overall empowerment in many cases. Various reasons can be attributed for improper implementation of these programs such as, lack of political will to implement these programs societal constraints, corruption, patriarchy, and mind-set, etc.

A woman has great capacity to work but they do not find proper avenues. There is a lack of confidence in her which is mainly an environmental. For uplifting status of women in the study area some concrete issues should be consider and implemented.

- Identity the poorest and most oppressed women and should be given facilities so that they improve their status.
- Train activist’s agents who are gender aware and politically conscious to interact with the women, mobilize them, learn from them and raise their consciousness.
- Facilitate women to collectively question their situation and develop critical thinking amongst themselves and their environment in new ways, develop a positive self- image and their strengths, including existing knowledge and skills and explode sexist myths and misconceptions.
- To put women in the lead primacy should be given to the idea of economic and political strengths through programs of collective activities without ghettoizing women’s issues.
- Enable women to function effectively as a collective mass. For example, in collective decision making actions, critical reflection and accountability.
- Acquire empowering skills viz., vocational, managerial, literacy and numeric, basic data collective skills for conducting surveys etc., which build the autonomy and power of women.
• To create greater awareness among women about their low status in society and the need to improve it, motivational programs along with programs for expanding opportunities for education, health care and employment should be launched.

• Mass media should be used to educate and mobilize public opinion in such a way that the realization about the benefits of women’s full participation in the national development efforts is created among people.

• Priority must be given to monitoring the status, conditions and rights of women. There must be a sustained campaign for women mobilization, regular reporting of monitoring the status, conditions and rights of women, public information and advocacy in this realm.
References