

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Richa Smriti

PhD, English Literature, LNMU Darbhanga
Director, Navodaya Mission Trust

Abstract

Women empower is ongoing process of entitlement of greater freedom and choice filling the gap between man and women. Gender inequality is age old phenomena which has been routed in the human psyche either man or women. But it exists in varied degrees across the geography, culture, traditions etc. Amid the darkness and hindrances, there is now wider acceptance of need of women empowerment at local or international levels. The idea of women empowerment has pervaded all walk of life. Corporations are also exclusively allocating funds for women oriented programs and also promotes local NGOs to undertake activities for women empowerment. The role of Local NGO Navodaya Mission Trust in Singrauli and Sonebhadra is exemplary for empowering underprivileged and tribal girls. Now a hidden social structure is being strengthened based on the idea of gender equity.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Traditions, Wage Employment, Girl Empowerment Mission, Navodaya Mission Trust

1. Introduction

The echo of women empowerment across the world has led the presence of many women leaders who have achieved great space in the men's land and now they are heading many reputed organization in all walks of lives such as politics, military, science, space etc. It is now proven fact that women empowerment plays significant role in reducing poverty and boost national growth as they account for the well being half of the population. Gender equality which is the prerequisite of human well-being could be achieved by implementing tenets of women empowerment in letter and spirit (Mason & Smith, 2003). Even, the third Millennium Development Goal was to achieve gender equality and women empowerment (Kabeer, 2005).

Women empowerment encompasses many dimensions and demands development in all the fronts for achieving gender equality. Millennium Development Goal emphasized education to women, wage employment in the non-agricultural sector for women and significant presence of women in national parliaments (Kabeer, 2005).

Corporate social responsibility could play a greater role for changing the existing social equations and empower women by implementing women centric programs and activities. NTPC Ltd. has always kept women empowerment in its program and focused on creating self help groups in villages, skill development like organizing training programs on tailoring, beauty parlour etc and also keep distributing sewing machines etc. enabling women to earn their livelihood on their own. The recent innovative program of Girl Empowerment Mission is one of the unique program which will go a long mile in the arena of women empowerment.

2. Literature Survey

Concept

The fundamental meaning of empower implies the extension of choice and strengthening of voice. For this, the existing power relations in the society are modified for giving space to the weaker sections to take decisions for their own well-being. In this way they also contribute in the development of society and country at large by honing their inherent capabilities. In the context of women, earlier social structure has mandated men to control women. Of course the degree of control was heterogeneous and varies with time, space and class. In the gender stratification system, women are taken as a class. (Mason & Smith, 2003, Bill and Melinda Foundation) Women empowerment transforms society sometimes gradually or sometime suddenly enabling women to take decisions and control their lives and futures and contribute in the development of society and country (Bill and Melinda Foundation, Mason & Smith, 2003). Girls' voice strengthened in different spheres of life like being capable of speaking up and being heard in discussions and decisions, their representation in political and economic decision-making and collective organization. Moreover, in household a women or girl gain greater influence and control over key decisions that affect her life and the lives of those around her. (Bill and Melinda Foundation)

2.1 Historical Context of women empowerment movement:

The idea of empowerment emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s from the field of social work. Particularly, Paolo Freire's advocacy of popular education enabled oppressed groups to develop critical consciousness (Kabeer, 2005).

Feminists in the US and elsewhere developed the concept of women empowerment in terms of nature and causes of women's oppression. They emphasized that 'the personal is political' and their collective action could challenge patriarchal structure. (Kabeer, 2005)

Development scholars led by Friedmann advocated for endogenous grassroots approaches to development (as stated Kabeer, 2005).

In 1980s, Southern Feminist Movements stressed that women empowerment should address the fundamental the subordination and exclusion of women on the basis of sex and other characteristics in the society. The formation of women's grassroots organisations and their public education and mobilisation activities could bring structural transformation of unjust power relations existing in the contemporary society. (Kabeer, 2005)

By late 1990s, the idea about empowerment had entered mainstream development thinking. Moreover, the 1995 Platform of Action mainstreamed gender equality and women's empowerment. The World Development Report 2000/2001 considered empowerment, besides opportunity and security in tackling poverty (Kabeer, 2005). Because of development in thinking and acceptance of the idea of women empowerment, now women's civic and political organisations started getting donor funding and technical assistance consistently (as stated in Kabeer, 2005).

2.2 Aspects of women's empowerment

They are multidimensional and the interrelations among them depend on social context. (Mason & Smith, 2003)

2.2a Occupational and situational dimensions:

In the domestic sphere, women empowerment implies their freedom from control by other family members and their ability to effect desired outcomes within the household which encompasses women's economic decision-making power, their say for family size, their physical freedom of movement, their husband's control of them via intimidation and force, are they afraid to disagree with the husband for fear he will become angry with them and does he ever hit or beat them. (Mason & Smith, 2003)

2.2b Role of Tradition:

In the northern part of South Asia, traditions prescribe the seclusion of women (purdah) and idealize the multigenerational, patrilineal extended family household. (Mason & Smith, 2003) In north India, family traditions also prescribe that brides come from villages distant from those into which they marry so that new bride becomes stranger in their new household while cross cousin marriage in South India, absence of Purdah empowered women. (Mason & Smith, 2003) In Pakistan, although cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriage are common, the prevalence of feudalism and strong Islamic ideology of female seclusion put women at a serious disadvantage when it comes to their domestic

empowerment. (Mason & Smith, 2003) In Philippines and Thailand, wives obey their husbands and submit to their wishes especially in sexual relations, women are also playing important roles in the family economy by working outside house and managing the family finances. (Mason & Smith, 2003) Religion and ethnicity are often important for women's empowerment. (Mason & Smith, 2003)

2.2c Structural Reasons:

Social structures are the rules and conventions that people make and remake through their everyday interactions. They include formal rules, such as statutory laws, and also unwritten rules and beliefs, such as social conventions and cognitive schemes. (Kabeer, 2005) Gender Hierarchies and the patriarchal socio-cultural norms that underpin them are an important structural cause of women's lack of power and meaningful choice. (Kabeer, 2005)

Patriarchy and gendered institutions affect all women but in different ways. Age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religions, class or ideological preferences are important factors for these varied experiences and women from marginalised ethnic or religious groups usually have the least power. (as stated in Kabeer, 2005)

The political settlement i.e. elite bargain about the rules of political, social and economic exchange that both reflects and frames the balance and distribution of power and resources in any given society also influences women's opportunities to redefine power relations and to advance gender equity. (Kabeer, 2005)

Power within the household, one measure dimension of women empowerment is strongly influenced by social context at both level national as well as community because it is strongly determined by social institutions rather than by individual characteristics. (Mason & Smith, 2003)

2.2d Access to paid work:

Even paid work carried out in the house has the potential to shift the balance of power within the family. (Kabeer, 2005) Women engaged in Industrial housework in Mexico city noted that in households where women's economic contribution was critical to household survival, women had been able to negotiate a greater degree of respect (1987, Kabeer, 2005).

Access to credit: Positive changes in women's own perceptions of themselves and their role in household decision making. Reduction in domestic violence. Increase in women's assets, higher level of political participation, improved access to government programmes and practical skills, knowledge of wider society, self confidence in dealing with public officials, the likelihood of participating in protests and campaigns. (Kabeer, 2005) NREGA works has the transformative potential in enhancing economic and social security. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) It has provided income-earning opportunities to women where hardly any existed before. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) Women are primary providers of care roles for the sick and the elderly and they may have some opportunities for paid agricultural work. The combination of a labour surplus economy and sharp gender divisions of labour, imply that these opportunities tend to be seasonal in nature. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) The women who reported wage work other than NREGA were performing agricultural labour in their own village or in other villages, working in the construction industry in towns and cities, working at stone quarries and collecting and selling forest produce such as tendu leaves, mohua flowers, grass and wood. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) There are numerous problems associated with above works. The earnings from them were limited or seasonal or insecure. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) Much of this work is irregular and consequently women find themselves in vulnerable position. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) Migration for work in the construction industry exposes workers to a range of vulnerabilities (e.g. exploitation, illness) to add to which gender biases are consistently faced in the availability of work. (Khera & Nayak, 2009)

2.2e Sustainable Development

Women are an important part of the formula to address sustainable development in part because they are much closer to the problem and are also closer to the solution. (World Economic Forum, 2013) Women are good steward of resources. They carry on average 53% of the total work burden in developing countries and 51% in Industrial countries. (World Economic Forum, 2013) The situation of women becomes worse by fuel scarcity and negative health and safety impacts such as indoor air pollution which kills an estimated 1.5 million women and children in the developing world each year. (World Economic Forum, 2013) Unequal gender power relations characterize patriarchal society which is a social system in which men hold primary power in political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property and other resources. (Bill and Melinda Foundation)

Need of continuing effort for Women Empowerment:

Worldwide 15 million girls under age 18 are married each year. At least one in three women experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes. In some countries girls are less likely to complete secondary school than boys. They are also 14% less likely to own a cell phone than men and 1.1 billion women remain outside the formal financial system. (Bill and Melinda Foundation) During conflicts a majority of displaced person during and after wars are women and children. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

For at least 25 years, women have been entering the professional and managerial ranks of many corporations at about the same rate as men, yet they remain dramatically under represented at senior levels. 3.6 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs are women and 15% of Fortune 500 board seats and corporate executives positions are held by women as per data of 2012. In India 11% of large company's chief executives are women. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

2.3 Hurdles of Women Empowerment:

Attempts to change gender norms are contested and tend to be protracted, precisely because they are about the distribution of power and resources and hence create losers as well as winners. In the UK, for example, women's struggle for the right to vote took over 60 years and provoked vigorous, sometimes violent, condemnation. Some women also opposed it, publicly and privately, either because they believed their intellect and judgement were inferior to men's or because they did not want to bear the short-term costs, such as scorn, humiliation or domestic conflict, of challenging the status quo. (as stated in Kabeer, 2005)

Early Marriage and parental responsibility: Having children too early in life particularly before age 18 deprives young women of the opportunity to pursue other activities, such as, schooling and employment. (World Economic Forum, 2013) In large parts of the country, there are no childcare arrangements (e.g. functional Anganwadis) for working women. (Khera & Nayak, 2009)

Male Migration Syndrome: The increase in female headed rural households due to male out-migration augments agricultural and domestic work for adolescent girls, creating pressure to dropout of school and marry early leading to intergenerational cycle of poverty and hunger. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

Problems related to developing countries: In developing countries women operate smaller farms, keep fewer live stocks, typically of smaller breeds and can earn less from the livestock they own. They have greater workload like fetching water and wood. (World Economic Forum, 2013) They have less access to innovation and productive assets and services, fertilizers, seeds, mechanical equipments etc. They have weaker property rights and tenure security. (World Economic Forum, 2013) Moreover they are poorly represented in the leadership of rural organizations and given lower wages. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

Stereotype Rules: Such things are happening because of stereotypes rule when evaluating others and making gender biased discrimination in hiring promotion and job assignments in difficult to overcome. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

Invisible social constraints: When women have other employment opportunities they often face "invisible" social constraints: some women might have considered working only on the fields owned by farmers from their own community or at a place where other persons from their community are working. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) Similar constraints and limitations prevail when migrating for work to cities. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) The harsh work conditions in the private labour market may also deter women from participating in it. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) Employment opportunities for women in the private labour market are limited, irregular, poorly paid and can be hazardous. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) It often involves migration, invisible "social barriers", very demanding and exploitative working conditions. (Khera & Nayak, 2009)

Less access than men to the credit, extension, land and training: Women have less access than men to the credit, extension, land and training necessary to impart energy access and support their livelihoods and income generation from microenterprises. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

Tenacious social norms: social norms against women working outside the home, women are unable to register as workers under NREGA, were told that this programme was not for them, hostility to female participation from gram Panchayat functionaries and male relatives, name of adult women are excluded from job card, they are stated that women cannot work on worksites, that they are too weak, that it is socially unacceptable for them to undertake this work. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) Men and women earn the same wage has created resistance to the participation of women by men who want to maintain privileged access to this work. (Khera & Nayak, 2009)

Illegal Presence of Contractors: The continued illegal presence of contractors in a significant negative factor affecting the availability of work and its benefits for women. On worksites where contractors were involved, 35% of women workers said they were harassed, as compared to only 8% on contractor free worksites. The condition of worksites run by contractors tend to be more exploitative. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) It is quite likely that the complete absence of contractors is one of the factors that contributes to the high participation of women in Rajasthan. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) In Rajpur block (badwani district, Madhya Pradesh), contractors would go to the village and ask for names of able-bodied men to work on the sites and women were ignored. In Udaipur block (Sarguja district, Chattisgarh), women and girls were subjected to verbal abuse by the contractor and women workers are often told they do not work fast enough. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) Lack of childcare facilities, delayed payments are other hurdles. (Khera & Nayak, 2009)

2.4 Measurement: Women's empowerment can be measured in terms of years of schooling, employment experience and age at marriage. (Mason & Smith, 2003)

2.5 Means to achieve Women Empowerment

Empowerment is achieved through agency, resources and achievements. Agency refers to the processes by which choices are made and put into effect, resources is the median through which agency is exercised and outcome of the agency refers to achievements. (Kabeer, 2005) Effectiveness of agency refers to women's greater efficiency in carrying out their given roles and responsibilities while transformative agency relates to their ability to act on the restrictive aspects of these roles and responsibilities in order to challenge them (Kabeer, 2005).

Change in one dimension can lead to changes in others. Achievements in one sphere of life can form the basis on which women seek improvement in other spheres in the future (Kabeer, 2005). Institutional transformation requires movement along a number of fronts from individual to collective agency, from private negotiations to public action and from the informal sphere to the formal arenas of struggle where power is legitimately exercised (Kabeer, 2005). Transformation of power relations occur when women and girls exercise agency and take action through expanded access to and control over resources and changes to the institutional structures that ultimately shape their lives and future. (Bill and Melinda Foundation)

Women and men are cultural transmitters of patriarchy and gendered institutions, breaking these down requires changing shared meanings of both femininity and masculinity. This is because patriarchy is often hegemonic and therefore invisible, leading women to internalise and accept their subordinate status to men as the natural order of things and vice versa. (Kabeer, 2005) The tension between women's short-term and long-term interests is one reason why there is no straightforward link between women's access to new knowledge and information and their taking strategic action. (Kabeer, 2005)

Wage employment: NREGA has the potential to have a wider impact on gender relations. NREGA employment can enhance women's economic independence by providing them access to cash earnings which brings sense of equality fostered by earning for the first time, the same wage as men. Gender division of labour is also effected as women are seen to be contributing "actively" (in the conventional sense) to the economy and their contribution to economic activities are directly visible. The NREGA guidelines have provisions for female participation in vigilance committees to take advantage of such provisions, making their own space in public and social life. (Khera & Nayak, 2009)

Through collective actions, women and men can alter the eschewed social structures that lead to women's subordination and exclusion. (Kabeer, 2005) In the social and economic programme on which most development assistance is focused, such as education, health, social protection and microcredit programmes, empowerment has tended to be interpreted in a more individualistic and instrumental fashion. (Kabeer, 2005) The emphasis has often been on improving access to asset and opportunities for individual women and men to enable them to make informed choices about their own needs and interests and to improve their personal circumstances. (Kabeer, 2005) One of the proven ways to improve women empowerment in rural India has been the SHG approach and credit and other support for microenterprise development (as cited Abraham, 4)

Social innovation emphasizes social justice as an important element along with progress and social change. (Malhotra, Schuffle, Patel & Petesch 2009) Social innovation as “novel solutions to a social problem that is more effective, efficient and sustainable, or just that existing solutions and for which the value accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals. (Malhotra, Schuffle, Patel & Petesch 2009) Social innovations balances the need for value accruing directly to women for their greater well-being and empowerment with an understanding that smart investments in women as development actors also can support the flow of benefits to households, communities and wider development processes. (Malhotra, Schuffle, Patel & Petesch 2009)

Family planning is a cost-effective means of improving the lives of women and children, especially in poor countries. (World Economic Forum, 2013) To reduce child bearing at young age multi pronged strategy like providing young people with the information and the tools they need to make responsible choices regarding their sexual lives, ensuring access of information and services to get contraceptives and preventing early marriage. (World Economic Forum, 2013) The son preference is to be addressed to check sex imbalances and excess mortality among girls. (9) Laws to prohibit the determination and disclosure of the sex of a foetus are to be enforced. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

Constitutional Measures: Political Representation- In 1993, constitution of India was amended to institute gender quotas for village leaders. (World Economic Forum, 2013) As mentioned Estur Duflo, Rohini Pande and collaborators found that continue exposure to leadership eliminated statistical discrimination by male villagers impacting future generations leadership aspirations including teenage girls educational outcomes and women’s electoral gains. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

Access to productive measures: In developing countries, women and girls from small holder agricultural family work as producers, labourers, processors and traders in domestic market. (World Economic Forum, 2013) Women in developing countries spend longer hours working in survival activities including collecting firewood, collecting water, processing food and cooking. Modern and efficient energy resources may improve their work and quality of life both within and outside the home. (World Economic Forum, 2013) The FAO estimated that if women had **the same access to productive resources as men**, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30% raise total agriculture output in developing countries by 2.5-4% and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17%. (World Economic Forum, 2013) According to the FAO, closing the gender gap in agriculture would generate significant gains for the agriculture sector and for society at large. (World Economic Forum, 2013) Promoting women’s rights and influence is a smart investment closing the gender gap in agriculture would place more resources in the hands of women and strengthen their voice within the household and wider society. (World Economic Forum, 2013) This is also a successful strategy for enhancing the food security, nutrition, education and health of children. Equalizing men’s and women’s access to decision making and status in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa would reduce the number of malnourished children by 3.4 million and 1.7 million respectively. Countries with greater gender parity have higher yields. (9)

The **small hold Horticulture Outgrower Promotion (SHOP) Project** supported by USAID and implemented by ACD1/VDCAs in Tanzania illustrates how women farmers who lack basic agriculture production assets can become successful producers by connecting vegetable growers associations with exporters, leasing land from farmers to women and providing technical assistance. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

Locally available wage employment: NREGA works are locally available, being government work there is regularity and predictability of working hours, less chance of work conditions being exploitative and work is considered socially acceptable and dignified. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) It is better paid than other work. (Khera & Nayak, 2009) The hours of work are clearly stated and are limited to eight hours in a day (in the case of daily wage work). (Khera & Nayak, 2009) NREGA employment offers a new sense of independence and women have not to go through a potentially embarrassing and humiliating conversation to ask anyone in the village for work. (Khera & Nayak, 2009)

2.5a Women Empowerment and Education

Fundamentally, cognitive ability is essential requirement for questioning, reflecting and acting upon the given conditions, accessing knowledge, information and new ideas. Education primarily enhances cognitive ability of a person and so development of women can be triggered by providing them education (as mentioned 8, Jejeeboy 1985). To illustrate, in Kenya it was found that a women having four years of school can correctly understand instructions for administering oral rehydration salt and women having secondary education are able to explain the environment causes of diarrhoea (Kabeer, 2005). Educated women are more likely to look after their own well-being along with that of their family. (Kabeer, 2005) They are more likely to access contraceptions and antenatal care. In rural Nigeria, 96% of women with secondary education and higher education, 53% of those with primary education, 47 % with those having little or no education had sought post natal care. (Kabeer, 2005) In Bangladesh, educated women in rural areas participate in a wider range of decisions than uneducated ones. Educated women appear less likely to suffer from

domestic violence. Moreover, education, in general increases women's capacity to deal with the outside world, including government officials and service providers of various kinds. (Kabeer, 2005) The exposure to new ideas can translate into direct collective challenges to make prerogatives e.g. Mahila Samakhya, a literary program for women in India was sparked off by images of collective action against alcoholism in their literary primer. (Kabeer, 2005) Education is essential to unlock women's potential and provide women a voice in the entire development process. (World Economic Forum, 2013) It helps in considering their needs in how they use the natural environment for subsistence and income, acts as tools to replicate sustainable solutions both in their home and in their surrounding community from a "bottom-up" approach. It helps to get position in corporate world which transform women from simple household producers to resource managers, from end consumers to utility maximizers and from community organizers to change agent (World Economic Forum, 2013).

3. Women Empowerment and CSR

The lower house of the Indian parliament passed a new Companies Bill in December 2012. According to it Public Sector Units (PSUs) and private companies that have a turnover of over 10 billion rupees or have a net worth of 5 billion rupees or recorded net profit of 50 million rupees and above are expected to spend 2 per cent of their average net profits in the preceding three financial years towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This means that for 2500 companies in India CSR reporting on the spending (though spending as such is not yet mandatory) to the corporate affairs ministry would become a compulsory annual exercise. Rough estimates by experts have pegged the amount that could be spent annually on CSR activities to be around 100 billion rupees. (Abraham, 1) The ministry of Corporate Affairs has indicated some of the broad areas and activities to be undertaken by corporate CSR which also emphasizes promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. (Abraham, 3)

The business sector should promote the social distribution of contraceptives and develop strategies to reach young people through different activities in schools, at work place, sports events or entertainment programs etc. Community based programmes with multiple components are useful to diversify the channels and means of reaching young people and to sensitive community leaders and parents about the needs of adolescents. (World Economic Forum, 2013) These programmes should be culturally appropriate, sensitive to the expressed needs of adolescents and youths and built upon the strength of local institutions. (World Economic Forum, 2013) A comprehensive educational platform where the business community plays a pivotal role should be adopted in four essential areas: research and development, capacity building and technical expertise, leadership advancement and household and child development. (World Economic Forum, 2013) Energy researchers who leave women out of energy research and analysis will be failing to understand a large part of energy consumption and production. Both policy makers and researchers will play key role by commissioning studies on sustainability and resource alternatives and sharing these findings with companies for better design, produce and market the RETs or sustainable methods. (World Economic Forum, 2013)

NTPC Ltd. has launched Girl Empowerment Mission where rural girls were provided world class residential facility and training for their holistic development for a month and subsequently follow up programs are undertaken for a week to ensure desired impact. Moreover, it also organizes training and workshops for tailoring, beautician courses, agarbatti making etc. and provides infrastructure for self-employment. It also promotes EVOICE for participation employees for local development. Navodaya Mission Trust is active at Singrauli and Sonbhadra districts and have provided quality education to thousands of girls including tribal girls which enabled them to pass competitive examinations and got employments in reputed companies. P&G was committed towards improving the facilities with regard to education through its project 'Shiksha' which had a special emphasis on the education of the girl child. (Abraham, 5) Tata steel, over the last 15 years had supported the formation of more than 500 rural enterprises in agriculture, poultry, livestock and community entrepreneurship. It continued to work untiringly towards furthering empowerment by facilitating the formation of around 200 women SHGs every year, who were encouraged to venture in to income generating activities. Tata Steel also held regular competitions for identifying women leaders who could be role models through its programme 'Tejaswini'. (Abraham, 6) Hindalco undertook intense training activities through the Aditya Birla Rural Technology Park (Muirpur, Uttar Pradesh, India) which had conducted over 70 training programmes. These included diesel / hand pump repair, electrical repair/maintenance, bee-keeping, tailoring, knitting and agriculture-related programmes. All training was carried out with the objective of encouraging self-employment activities. The Yashogami Skills Training Centre at Radhanagari, in Maharashtra trained women in skills such as rexine handicraft, fashion design, tailoring, food processing, pottery, lamination, electronics assembly, zardozi, jewellery design, papier mache, and fabric design. (Abraham, 8)

4. Conclusion

Women empowerment can be realized by multidimensional approach. Because of women movements and continuous effort of women organizations have achieved a great milestones, yet we are still far away from gender equity in real as well as in mindset because of age long discrimination has been routed in human psyche as normal course of life. CSR can be very effective in bringing gender equity. CSR programs should be formulated in such a way so that it would touch all the dimensions which are hampering women empowerment. Education and employment generation has long term impact. Programs like Girl empowerment mission and education provided by employees through Navodaya Mission trust has multiplier effect and holistic development of poor girls. Such programs may be adopted by government agencies as well. If resources streamlined, women empowerment will be achieved in a few years of effort leading self-sustaining activities in future as gender equity centric social structure will emerge and get routed in society which will ensure sustainability of gender equity.

5. Acknowledgement

Shanta Kumar, Chairman of Navodaya Mission Trust motivated to undertake this project and facilitated relevant data and information regarding EVOICE and CSR activities.

6. References:

1. Lejeebhoy, S. (1995) Women's Education, Autonomy, and Reproductive Behaviour: Experience from Developing Countries, Oxford: Clarendon Press
2. Mason, K.O. & Smith, H. L. (2003). Women's Empowerment and social context: Results from five Asian countries. (7)
3. Five Challenges, One Solution: Women. World Economic Forum (2013). Global Agenda Council on Women's Empowerment 2011-12. (9)
4. Kabeer, N. (2005). Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: a critical analysis of the third Millennium Development Goal. Gender and Development, Vol. 13, No. 1 (8)
5. A Conceptual Model of Women and Girls Empowerment. Bill and Melinda Foundation. (92)
6. A. Malhotra, J. Schuffle, P.Patel & P. Petesch (2009).Innovation for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (93)
7. R. Khera & N. Nayak (2009). Women Workers and Perceptions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XLIV No 43.
8. O. Tam, P. Domingo & C. Valters (2014). Progress on Women's Empowerment: From Technical Fixes to Political Action. Development Progress, Working Paper 06.
9. Abraham, D.T. (2013). CSR and Empowerment of women: The Way forward. Center for Women's Development Studies. AIMA Journal of Management & Research, February 2013, Volume 7, Issue 1/4, ISSN 0974-497