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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Saurav Suman
Editor-in-Chief
[Bihar Education]
[Department]

Dear Readers, Authors & Colleagues,

It is with immense pride and deep sense of responsibility that I welcome you to the inaugural issue of Academic Score —is a premier, peer-reviewed print journal (Volume 1, Issue 2, 2026). This milestone marks not just the launch of a new academic publication, but the beginning of a scholarly community committed to excellence, integrity, and global knowledge sharing.

Academic Score was conceived with a singular vision: to provide researchers, academicians, and practitioners from diverse disciplines a rigorous, peer-reviewed platform where ideas are challenged, innovations are celebrated, and knowledge transcends boundaries.

In this first issue, we present a collection of carefully reviewed research articles spanning multiple domains. Each submission has undergone our double-blind peer review process, ensuring the highest standards of academic quality. I am grateful to our distinguished reviewers, editorial board members, and authors whose dedication has made this possible.

We invite researchers from all disciplines — sciences, humanities, social sciences, engineering, medicine, law, and beyond — to submit their original work. Academic Score is committed to a rapid, transparent, and fair review process, with a focus on constructive feedback for all contributors.

As we embark on this journey, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to making Academic Score a reality — our founding editorial board, our technical team, and our supportive academic community. I look forward to growing this platform into a globally recognized journal that upholds the highest standards of scholarly publishing.

With warm regards and scholarly best wishes,

Saurav Suman
Editor-in-Chief, Academic Score
peer-reviewed print journal
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ACADEMIC SCORE | Vol. 1, Issue 2, July -September 2026| Paper 1

"The Governance Gap: How Bureaucratic Resistance and Systemic Inertia Undermine the Reach and Impact of Flagship Welfare Initiatives""

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Abstract
To this day, the gulf between the intent and impact of welfare policies remains huge in developing democracies. This paper examines the post-industrial nature of welfare implementation, which is delayed, distorted or buried in the sands of bureaucratic inertia, and its trajectory, in the context of flagship programmes in India and similar developing economies. The paper rests on institutional theory and the literature on the "street-level bureaucracy" and the empirical case studies of the implementation of MGNREGS, PMAY and PDS, to support the argument that implementation gaps stem not from chance but from structural features of organizational cultures, incentive misalignment and accountability deficits. The paper concludes with some policy-relevant suggestions for administrative reform – ones that consider not only institutional design, but human behaviour as well. The terms used are Bureaucratic inertia, welfare schemes, policy implementation, street level bureaucracy, administrative reform, India.
Keywords: Bureaucratic, Policy, Ground, System, Goal, Power.

1. Introduction

Speaking of the very frustrating experience of reading the text of a well-designed welfare scheme and then visiting the village to which the scheme has been designed. The policy paper is clear in all aspects such as timeline, who will benefit from the policy, how money will be released and how complaints will be dealt with. But on the ground, delays in payment, no job card, dry ration shops, and beneficiaries residing just outside the official coverage area of the scheme are observed. A gap between policy promises and delivery is often observed. One such disparity between the promise and performance of a policy is one of the most important and least candid concerns of public administration. The gap created by bureaucratic inertia this paper is concerned with. More specifically, it will go into the causes and consequences of this gap. Bureaucratic inertia is a phenomenon which causes administrative systems to resist change, slow things down, and default to routine even when urgency and adaptation is required. Not necessarily corruption or evil. It is often a result of an organizational culture where process is the main concern rather than the outcome, incentive systems that discourage risk taking and reward compliance, and information gaps which prevent upper-level decision makers from knowing the impact of their inaction on beneficiaries, as well as a lack of trust of beneficiaries themselves within the institution. The case of India will be a special example that will be taken into consideration in this analysis, which is particularly rich and sobering. The welfare architecture in India is one of the biggest in the world. Examples include the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Poverty Line Ambulance (PMAY), PDS, Ayushman Bharat, and ICDS. These demonstrate the ambitions and ongoing constraints of developmental welfare policy. In addition, there is the delivery machine which often fails to deliver on policy promises. These are far from small programs! Over 150 million registered workers and more than annual expenditure of ₹70,000 crore is MGNREGS alone. Significant evidence of delayed wage payments, ghost beneficiaries, exclusion errors and unrealized funds is still being identified.

2.1The Challenge of Implementation in Public Administration.

Implementations started to be considered as legitimate field of study after Pressman & Wildavsky's 1973 work. It demonstrated how a programme may be unsuccessful despite its budget and political backing due to administrative difficulties. The key takeaway is unchanged: implementation is not just a technical matter, but one that is political. The complexity of joint action is the number of agents, approvals, and jurisdictions involved in the program's delivery chain, and the potential for delays, distortions, or failure at each of these points (Pressman & Wildavski 1973: 87-124). Lipsky's (1980) theory of "street level bureaucracy" was further developed.Street level bureaucracy theory extended by Lipsky

(1980). The real policy was not the one established by the laws but what teachers, social workers, policemen and ration shop dealers practice on their daily interactions with citizens, Lipsky argued. Street-level bureaucrats have lots of discretionary power which they exercise in ways influenced by their own workload pressures, organizational incentives, and personal biases. Such discretion is often accompanied by patterns of rationing, stereotyping and exclusion – the very ones that are observed in welfare delivery failures (Lipsky 1980: 13-25), and the very ones which we would like to avoid. Institutional theory and organizational resistance came next.This was followed by institutional theory and organizational resistance.

From an institutional point of view, can be perceived as "path dependence". Organizations act as they always have done because it is too expensive to change their established routines, norms and role expectations. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) provide a valuable framework for understanding the reasons why public agencies might imitate some of the processes of other agencies even if they know others' processes to be inefficient. It is because mimicking lessens uncertainty, and fulfills external legitimacy requirements even at the expense of internal effectiveness. (pp. Inertia is perhaps the least recognized obstacle to public sector reform (Peters, 2001). He identifies two forms of institutional inertia. Structural inertia is due to the formal rules, hierarchies, and procedures by which an organization is run. Cultural inertia is the result of informal norms, assumptions and unwritten codes of behaviour which are observed by the actual operating rules of bureaucracy. Scott Peters (2001, pp. As 78–93 points out, reform efforts should seek to tackle both kinds of resistance, but cultural resistance is the more formidable as it is invisible, diffuse and deeply embedded.

A central-externality issue and accountability gaps exist in the system.

The third theoretical perspective is that of the Principal-agent theory. The principals (senior bureaucrats or politicians) who are responsible for delivery of welfare services assign agents (field officials or frontline workers) to carry out policies. The issue is the agents' own interest, plus the significant information asymmetries between the agents and their principals, and the lack of monitoring. When responsibility is spread throughout various institutions and which levels of government, no one feels accountable for the result, and everyone can plausibly blame someone else when things go awry. (Grindle, 1997, pp. 481-500) This shirking of responsibility is far from accidental. Structurally produced multitier welfare programs. That is, the scheme is designed by the Central Government and adapted by the States, and then implemented by the districts and delivered by the panchayat level officials. Interference, lag and dampening may occur at every step of transition from one level to another.

3. Evidence from flagship schemes and their delivery gaps.

3.1 Persistent Disappointment Despite Hope.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is a leading rural employment scheme globally as it takes a lot. The legal architecture is quite impressive – a right to 100 days of wage employment, a demand-driven design, mandatory social audits, and a computerized payment system to cut corruption. Even after decades of its launch, its implementation failure is being documented systematically. Research conducted by Dutta et al (2012) shows that in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, an overwhelming majority of registered workers get to work for less than 30 days in a year, which is way below the entitlement of 100 days. In the workplace, workers often waited 60 to 90 days for wages that employers were required to pay within 15 days. The social audit mechanism, one of the scheme's genuinely innovative features, worked well in Andhra Pradesh but was largely cosmetic in other states and became ineffective because of the very officials whose conduct was being audited (Dutta et al., 2012, pp. 32–47).

The administrative roots of these failures are enlightening. Block-level Program Officers were generally overworked, poorly trained and were not held to meaningful performance accountability for approving work orders and making payments. They aimed to preventing mistakes by the administration in chits and not assuring that worker's entitlement actually get paid. In other words, the scheme was designed around the right of the worker but was administered around the convenience of the bureaucrat.

3.2 Agent's Federal Award Approval : Issues of Waste, Exclusion and Ghost Beneficiaries

India's first and biggest infrastructure for food security is the Public Distribution System. The National Food Security Act of 2013, Aadhaar linked biometric authentication, and the digitization of ration cards have certainly resulted in substantial reforms. However, the food subsidy system still suffers from inclusion errors and exclusion errors. According to Khera (2011), in some states, 40 to 57 per cent of the subsidized grain meant for the Below Poverty Line households is getting diverted at the supply chain before it is reaching the beneficiaries. At the same time, the stringent requirements of Aadhaar authentication were resulting in exclusion errors among the elderly, migrant workers and individuals with weak biometric data. This was a problem that the administrative system had a structural slowness to acknowledge or correct (Khera, 2011,

pp. 17-29). The introduction of technology widely celebrated as a fix on bureaucracy brought about new kinds of inertia. Previously, field officials exercised informal flexibility. Now they hid behind the rigidity of the system. The computer says no became the de facto response to genuine cases of exclusion. Even the existence of manual override mechanisms did not help. It's a pattern that can be noted: digitization does not necessarily reduce bureaucracy, it merely transfers it to another register.

3.3 PMAY aaloky : Housing for Everyone and the Last Mile Gap

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana has aimed at providing housing to all homeless and incompletely housed families by 2022. However, the record of the scheme has revealed some mixed results. While the central fund releases have taken place quite timely, state-level absorption has not been the same. Moreover, there have been delays in implementation at the district level as well. This delay can be attributed to identification of beneficiaries, incomplete construction, as well as diversion of funds. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG, 2017) study found that in most states sanctioned funds for house construction lay unspent for long periods of time while genuine beneficiaries waited. According to local administrative officials, various documents such as land ownership proofs, caste certificates, and bank account linkages were bottlenecks. However, underneath this excuse related to documentation was a deeper issue – no official was being personally held accountable for the pace of delivery, and since the political dividend from the announcement of the scheme had already been taken, implementation happened at bureaucratic pace (CAG, 2017, pp. 22–56).

3.4 Ayushman Bharat seeks to tackle the healthcare access gap

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is the world's largest and most ambitious government-funded health insurance scheme covering around 500 million people. Even with impressive numbers of enrollees, there is a large gap in effective access, studies find. According to Berman and Ahuja (2008), health services delivery in India has a history of absenteeism among public health workers, supply chain failure with respect to drug availability, and informal payments that are not eliminated by officially cashless schemes. The process of empanelment of private hospitals under Ayushman Bharat, meant to enhance accessibility, has created new administrative complexities. Hospitals located in far-off districts found the claims processing system slow and opaque and some unofficially dissuaded Ayushman Bharat patients. Receiving units are often not conscious of their entitlements and have no liaison with the system, so they end up paying out of pocket or go without care. The designers designed the policy. The reforms were not carried out by the bureaucracy.

4. Inertia's Structural and Cultural Foundations.

4.1 Incentive Misalignment Problem : Reinforcing conformity and punishing initiative.

According to comparative public administration literature, government bureaucracies tend to reward risk-averse behaviour and punish initiative, and this finding is very consistent. The performance evaluation systems have largely focused more on following procedures and avoiding audit objections rather than achieving outcomes in IAS and other allied services in India. A district collector that ensures that no fund gets released without due paperwork is administratively safe. The one who bends the rules for speeding up delivery to a genuine beneficiary, however, risks CAG audit objection (Mathur, 2013, pp. 45–67). At the level of the individual, this incentive structure is rational. When combined with many officials, that yields a system that protects itself from risk by protecting itself from action. The outcome may be characterised as defence operation that implies administration of processes and not restriction of outcomes.

4.2 Feedback vacuum and information asymmetry

In general, senior officials and the policymakers in Delhi and state capitals get to know about the failures in implementation through official reports designed by the very system that is to be evaluated. Information from beneficiaries, frontline workers and civil society organizations rarely reaches decision-makers in forms that elicit institutional response. The intention to ignore is not always there, but a lot of times the result of reporting systems that aggregate upwards in ways that systematically exclude bad news. The lack of real-time, independent feedback systems creates a situation where implementation failures can go unnoticed for years at the policy level. Usually by that time they have been institutionalized – that is, built into the day-to-day working of how the scheme is actually administered, regardless of how it was designed.

4.3 The culture of non-accountability

The cultural dimension exists outside the structure of formal incentives. For decades, practices in the Indian administrative system have created such cultures which would lead to upward accountability. That is, to superiors and audit systems and not to citizens. Beneficiaries are not seen as rights-holders with legitimate claims on the performance of the administration. Due to the social structures of caste and class, frontline officials genuinely find it difficult to internalize a service ethic that is oriented towards the poorest citizen they are meant to serve (Banik, 2001, pp. 73–99). I do not mean to compare people.

Many frontline workers are personally committed but overworked and underpaid. The issue lies in the organization culture that has never been taken seriously and redesigned to make it accountable to the citizens instead of the superiors.

5. Taking Action to Overcome the Stalemate

5.1 result-oriented accountability

The most basic reform needed is to move from input and process monitoring to accountability for outcomes. It implies setting clear, publicly measurable targets for welfare delivery. These targets should be based on actual receipt of entitlements and not just fund release or beneficiary enrolment. Furthermore, it necessitates linking evaluation of administrative performance to these outcomes. The performance management reforms implemented in the health and nutrition sectors in Tamil Nadu Achieved Results through the application of Performance management systems (Santhya and Jejeebhoy 2003, pp. 31-44)

5.2 Independent review and social Audit.

The social audit model under MGNREGS, where community members check programme records against actual on ground delivery, is one of the most promising accountability innovations of Indian public administration. The difficulty is that social audits have worked best where state governments have actually backed them, and least effective where they have been captured or side-lined by the very administrative machine they are meant to examine. Setting up independent audit institutions with sealed budgets, which report directly to committees of the legislature, would improve this mechanism significantly (Afridi & Iversen, 2014, pp. 523–545).

5.3 Grievance Redressal Prescribes Right to Complain

Efficient grievance redress systems are much more than just resolving complaints. If designed right, these are feedbacks that can unearth systemic implementation failures that become entrenched. Many states in India have adopted the Right to Public Services Acts and this is a step taken in this direction. Enforcement is not solid; moreover, the poorest beneficiaries are not aware. The cost of complaining by those with the weakest administrative voice can be greatly reduced with a serious investment in accessible, time-bound grievance mechanisms digital, telephonic, community–based (Paul, 2002, pp. 15–38).

5.4 Support and Empowerment of Frontline Workers

Street-level bureaucrats should be treated as policymakers, not as the lowest level of a hierarchical delivery chain. To properly staff and empower frontline workers will mean adequate training, realistic workload norms, genuine discretion to resolve beneficiary problems, protection from harassment when they act in beneficiaries' interests, and recognition when they perform well. BRAC in Bangladesh, nutrition in Tamil Nadu, and health in Kerala has got very far without a high degree of formalization. These successful operations have been able to invest heavily in the capacities and morale of their frontline workers (Pritchett et al., 2013, pp. 1–30).

6. Conclusion

The cause of bureaucratic inertia is known. It has clear causes, known effects, and valid solutions. Most fundamentally, what it lacks is political will and administrative courage to face it honestly. It is simpler to come up with a new plan than to rebuild the delivery system to effect it. It is said to be easier to announce a program than to hold someone accountable. The political vision behind flagship welfare schemes discussed in this paper is not a failure. In a lot of cases they do represent real policy ambition and real money. The causes for their failures are of an administrative nature: they possess organizational cultures that reward process more than outcome, have incentive structures that insulate officials from being answerable to citizens, and have information systems that shield decision-makers from lived impacts of implementation failure.

It is challenging to fix this. It is not just a matter of administrative reform, but a cultural re-negotiation around what public service means, which is the movement away from the management of paper to the management of welfare. This entails that beneficiaries not be seen as passive recipients of state largesse but as rights-holders with legitimate enforceable claims on the administrative system. In a nutshell, it necessitates humanizing the bureaucracy. Not by making it softer but by making it real accountable to the people it exists to serve. There is nothing fated about the gap separating a policy document and a village that never heard of it. It is a choice that can be unmade structurally, culturally and politically it is so.

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Human Rights and Gender Concerned Challenges and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Human rights are rights claimed against the State and society by virtue of being a human being. There is a strong commitment to equality between women and men in international human rights law. However, the human rights of most people have been continuously violated all around the world. Since all civilizations have been patriarchal, regardless of the overall human rights conditions maintained in a society, women have been subject to more human rights violations than men. Women constitute the poorest and the least powerful segments of their communities. They are denied equal access to education, job training, employment, leisure time, income, property, health care, public office, decision-making power and freedoms, as well as control over their own body and life. Cultural norms, laws and philosophies, including those that are considered progressive and emancipatory, have usually discriminated against women. Attaining equality between women and men and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women are fundamental human rights. Women around the world nevertheless regularly suffer violations of their human rights throughout their lives, and realizing women's human rights has not always been a priority. Achieving equality between women and men requires a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which women experience discrimination and are denied equality so as to develop appropriate strategies to eliminate such discrimination. Because of human rights, everyone is entitled to equal dignity, regardless of their age, sex, race, beliefs or religion.`

Keywords: Right, Civic Engagement, Semi-Urban India, human, Digital Divide, Citizen Participation.

1. Introduction

Since women constitute half the world's population and are entitled to all human rights on an equal basis with men, the focus is on: public and political life, sexual and reproductive health and rights, the right to an adequate standard of living, violence against women, migration, conflict and crisis, and access to justice. Across all of these, education and the family context are particularly pertinent. The right to education is recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 13), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 28), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 10) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 24). Besides calling for non-discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to education and free universal primary education, human rights law also requires States to address the particular obstacles that girls and women
face in accessing education, such as early marriages, pregnancies, child labour and violence. The needs of girls suffering from multiple forms of discrimination - e.g., with disabilities, from poor or rural areas and belonging to minority communities—should also be considered. The right to equality between men and women in marriage and family life is also recognized in various human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, and the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for **Marriage and Registration of Marriages.**

Women nevertheless lag behind men in the enjoyment of rights related to the private sphere. In many countries, women are forced to enter marriage, they do not enjoy the same rights with regard to guardianship and adoption, they are not allowed to transfer their nationality to their children and husbands, and they do not have equal legal capacity. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women requires State parties to take "all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations" (art. 16). This

includes ensuring the same right to enter into marriage with free and full consent and to freely choose a spouse, the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and its dissolution and with respect to their children, and the same personal rights as husband and wife, such as the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation.

Rights related to access to property and sexual and reproductive health are also covered by this provision. In its general recommendation No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called on States to resolutely discourage any notions of inequality of women and men in the private sphere which are affirmed by law, religion or custom.

The Committee also noted that States should prohibit polygamous marriages as they contravene a woman's right to equality with men and can have serious emotional and financial consequences for her and her dependants.

Women's Rights as Human Rights

Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights and United Nations values. A fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter adopted by world leaders in 1945 is "equal rights of men and women", and protecting and promoting women's human rights, is the responsibility of all States. Yet millions of women around the world continue to experience discrimination:

- Laws and policies prohibit women from equal access to land, property, and housing
- Economic and social discrimination results in fewer and poorer life choices for women, rendering them vulnerable to trafficking
- Gender-based violence affects at least 30% of women globally
- Women are denied their sexual and reproductive health rights
- Women human rights defenders are ostracized by their communities and seen as a threat to religion, honour or culture
- Women's crucial role in peace and security is often overlooked, as are the particular risks they face in conflict situations
- Moreover, some groups of women face compounded forms of discrimination - due to factors such as their age, ethnicity, disability, or socio-economic status - in addition to their gender.

Effectively ensuring women's human rights requires, firstly, a comprehensive understanding of the social structures and power relations that frame not only laws and politics but also the economy, social dynamics and family and community life.

Harmful gender stereotypes must be dismantled, so that women are no longer viewed in the light of what women "should" do and are instead seen for who they are: unique individuals, with their own needs and desires.

The International Framework

Discrimination based on sex is prohibited under almost every human rights treaty - including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which under their common article 3 provide for the rights to equality between men and women in the enjoyment of all rights.

In addition, there are treaties and expert bodies specifically dedicated to the realization of women's human rights:

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Considered the international bill of rights for women, the Convention defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. It was adopted by the United Nations in 1979 and came into force on 3 September 1981.

The CEDAW Committee

Oversight of the Convention is the task of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a group of 23 independent experts on women's rights from different States that have ratified the Convention. Countries that are parties to the Convention must submit reports detailing their compliance with its provisions every four years. The Committee (the treaty body) reviews those reports and may also hear claims of violations and inquire into situations of grave or systemic contraventions of women's rights.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women

In 1994 the United Nations resolved to appoint a Special Rapporteur - an independent expert - on the causes and consequences of violence against women. The Special Rapporteur investigates and monitors violence against women, and recommends and promotes solutions for its elimination.

The Working Group

In 2010 the Human Rights Council established a Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice to promote the elimination of laws that discriminate against women and/or have a discriminatory impact on them.

Gender Inequality : A Global Issue Today

Widespread gender inequality still exists globally despite of substantial national and international measures that have been taken towards gender equality. Only four out of over 135 nations have achieved gender equality including Costa Rica, Cuba, Sweden, and Norway. Yemen was scored the lowest across all dimensions. Measures of gender equality include access to basic education, health and life expectancy, equality of economic opportunity, and political empowerment. Although there have been evident progresses, many alarming issues regarding gender discrimination still prevail today; therefore, total gender equality must be made a global priority as a fundamental step in both human development and economic progress.

The degree and causes of gender inequality vary throughout the world. Noticeable crimes against women consist of violence, femicide (murder of women), and rape (war rape). Honour killing, one such offense, is when a female member of a family is killed for the perception of having brought dishonour to the family. It has become a massive issue in countries such as Pakistan and the Muslim Middle East, and is on the rise. Approximately 5,000 women in India suffer from bride burning each year due to insufficient dowry payment - money given to the husband by bride's family. These actions are not only unlawful violence against women, but also towards the whole of humanity.

Sex-selective abortion is yet another major disaster of gender inequality as it fuels human trafficking, demographic imbalance, and sexual exploitation. India and China, the two most populated nations on Earth, both informally maintain this practice of preference for male child birth over female. Undoubtedly, sex-selection is a violation of the right to life and has distorted the natural sex ratios of 50/50 in countries in which it is practiced.

National and international measures are at work but they are not sufficient to minimize and eliminate gender inequality. In India, the Prevention of Immoral Traffic, the Dowry Prevention Act and the Sati Act aim to prevent widow burning. Indeed, China and India are both fighting feticide and infanticide.

From an economic viewpoint, gender discrimination is also a major impediment to growth as it prevents countries from reaching their maximum productivity potential. Although women constitute 40% of the global work force, there are still many who are unpaid family workers in the informal sector. Those who do work are generally paid much below that of male workers, despite being equally capable and skilled. Due to these obvious restrictions, many countries experience loss of productivity that amounts to 25% due to gender discrimination. According to one study, Japan's GDP will gain by 15% if employment gender discrimination is adjusted. Gender discrimination is costly to nations across the globe and forces women to suffer the severe emotional and economic repercussions.

Beyond the economic costs, gender inequality also has severe individual and societal losses for a nation. While the female sex constitutes slightly more than 50% of the population, only 14 of the total 200 governments, or 7%, are headed by women. An adjustment of this inequitable representation will go a long way to correct global gender inequality.

The evidence of gender discrimination is rooted in history, tradition and culture. Gender inequality is a highly debilitating stigma and leads to detriments of women's psychology of their worth and dignity to themselves and to society.

Gender Discrimination in India: A closer look

Attaining gender justice is not an easy task in India. From time immemorial, a girl child has been considered as an unwanted entity and a burden who the parents would not mind doing away with. Discrimination against women begins even before her birth. The gruesome evils of female feticide and infanticide prove how brutal the world could be to women. Though the Indian constitution provides equal rights and privileges for men and women and makes equal provision to improve the status of women in society, majority of women are still unable to enjoy the rights and opportunities guaranteed to them. Traditional value system, low level of literacy, house hold responsibilities, lack of awareness, non-availability of proper guidance, low mobility, lack of self confidence family discouragement and advanced science and technology are some of the factors responsible to create gender disparity in our society. The most important causes of gender disparity are discussed here.

1. Poverty: In India of the total 30 percent people who are below poverty line, 70 percent are women. Women's poverty in India is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources including credit, land ownership and inheritance, lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision making process.

2. Lack of literacy: Despite the notable efforts by the countries around the globe that have expanded for the basic education, there are approximately 960 million illiterate adults of whom two thirds are women. Educational backwardness of the girls has been the resultant cause of gender discrimination. The progress towards education by girls is very slow and gender disparities persist at primary, upper primary and secondary stage of education. More over girl's participation in education is still below 50%.
3. Economic Dependence: Women are not able to resolve the conflict between new economic and old domestic roles. In both rural and urban India, women spend a large proportion of time on unpaid home sustaining work. Women are not able to respond to new opportunities and shift to new occupations because their mobility tends to be low due to intra-house hold allocation of responsibilities. Time spent in bearing and rearing of children often results in de-skilling, termination of long term labour contacts.
4. Social Norms: Women are not free from social customs, beliefs and practices. Men are perceived as the major providers and protectors of a family while women are perceived as playing only a supportive role, attending to the hearth. The anti female social bias is the main cause of gender disparity in our society. The typical orthodox mentality is present even in this modern era leading to sex determination tests and abortion in an illegal way.
5. Social Outlook: Though many social activists and reformers carried their crusade against all social odds to restore honour and dignity to women, attitudinal disparities still hunt our rural masses. Despite pronounced social development and technological advancement, women in our society still continue to be victims of exploitation, superstition, illiteracy and social atrocities. The social stigma that women are housekeepers and should be confined to the four walls of the house is perhaps a viable cause of gender disparity.
6. Ignorance: Most of the women are unaware of their basic rights and capabilities. They even do not have the understanding as to how the socio-economic and political forces affect them. They accept all types of discriminatory practices that persist in our family and society largely due to their ignorance and unawareness.

Implications for The Society

We believe that the equality of women and men is a facet of human reality and not just a condition to be achieved for the common good. That which makes human beings human - their inherent dignity and nobility - is neither male nor female. The search for meaning, for purpose, for community; the capacity to love, to create, to persevere, has no gender. This has profound implications for the organization of every aspect of human society.

To proclaim equality is not to deny that differences in function between women and men exist but rather to affirm the complementary roles men and women fulfil in the home and society at large. The acquisition of knowledge serves as "a ladder for human ascent" and identical education for women and men should be provided. The education of girls is particularly important because, although both parents have responsibilities for the rearing of children, it is through educated mothers that the benefits of knowledge can be most effectively diffused throughout society.

Reverence for, and protection of, motherhood have often been used as justification for keeping women socially and economically disadvantaged. It is this discriminatory and injurious result that must change. The great challenge facing society is to make social and economic provisions for the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of life while simultaneously reinforcing the critical functions of motherhood.

Only when women become full participants in all domains of life and enter the important arenas of decision-making will humanity be prepared to embark on the next stage of its collective development.

Women Empowerment :A solution to all gender related issues

To "empower women" means to authorize power or increase the overall position, status and condition of women in every spheres of life.

Empowerment of Women would result in better and more developed society. When women contribute equally along with men for the benefit of society, the world would surely become a better place to live.

The nature of our society has been patriarchal through centuries. The improvements in women's position in the past decades naturally will bring resistance from such a male dominated society. The few areas of concern like violence, independent decision making and long term financial security will also be addressed with time. For that to happen, today's woman should continue to continue to confide in herself, assert herself boldly and use education, employment and the resulting financial independence in her pursuit for happiness.

There are several ways to empower women; some of them are discussed below:

1. Safe workplaces: Women can be empowered through the creation of safe working environment. The workplaces should be safe for the female members of the society. People will like to send their daughters and wives to work if they are assured of safe environment at workplaces.
2. Women education: By educating women, economy of the country increases. It has been seen from the last few decades that involvement of educated women in various activities, help the country to move towards economic and social development.

- Female education contributes towards health and well-being of the family.
- By getting education, women also contribute to the national income of the country.
- The can afford to offer quality nutrition to their children.
- Educated women are considered active in politics as well.
- They know their rights and are able to defend themselves better.

3. Raising voice where needed: Women can be empowered by decreasing the gender inequalities or disparities in all sectors of the society especially in education sectors. Knowledge about rules and regulations, policies, their rights; next level scientific approach to do their tasks, must be provided. Financial aid should be available to them to start their business/ higher education/ job etc.
4. Vocational training: Proper training should be provided to women for better results.
5. More job opportunities: There should be greater number of part-time job opportunities. In India, mostly women are housewives so they do not get any opportunity for full-time work. Hence, more part-time and flexible jobs should be created so that more and more women get engaged into commercial activities

Article15 of the Indian Constitution states that the state shall not discriminate any citizen on the grounds of only sex. The irony is that there still is widespread discrimination which is a form of injustice to women. Hence at the onset of the new millennium let this generation be a historic example by putting an end to the gender – based discriminations by unfurling the flag of gender justice in all our action and dealings.

If women get equal opportunities like men, they can work in every field like men. Today if she lags behind a little, it is not her fault but the fault of traditions which have suppressed them for centuries , owing to this, her own thoughts like also hang around only familial life and her nearest environment also does not provide favourable conditions.

To further promote gender equality, there need be increased education for women, improvements in public health, more child care facilities, and availing women equal voice in cultural, social, economic and political spheres of public life. Without equal representation of women's voice in policy-making and institutions, decisions are often more advantageous for men and therefore inefficient to the nation as a whole.

The remedy would have to emanate from the cultural tradition of citizenry; accordingly, the collaboration of local communities, institutions, national authorities and international bodies is essential to influencing change and promoting the value of women. They all must act in concert with respect to communication, education, leadership, and cultural norms and traditional values in order to shift the attitude and mindset of the population in favour of gender equality - respecting mothers, daughters, sisters who are equal partners in this global scenario.

Promoting the entry of greater numbers of women into positions of prominence and authority is a necessary but not sufficient step in creating a just social order. Without fundamental changes in the attitudes and values of individuals and in the underlying ethos of social institutions, full equality between women and men cannot be achieved. A community based on partnership, a community in which aggression and the use of force are supplanted by cooperation and consultation, requires the transformation of the human heart.

Conclusion

Women's rights are human rights. They cover every aspect of life - health, education, political participation, economic well-being and freedom from violence, among many others. Women are entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of all of their human rights and to be free from all forms of discrimination - this is fundamental to achieve human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development.

Yet serious gaps and violations remain in every region of the world today and progress has been unacceptably slow, particularly for the most marginalized women and girls. Discrimination in the law persists in many countries. Women do not participate on an equal footing with men in politics. They face blatant discrimination in labour markets and access to economic assets. The many forms of violence directed explicitly towards women and girls deny them their rights and all too often their lives. Unacceptably high levels of maternal mortality continue in some regions. Unpaid care workloads continue to limit women's enjoyment of their rights.

Protecting women's rights must be embedded in national law and policy firmly anchored in the international human rights standards. Equally important is that laws are implemented, such as through ready access to courts and an expectation of a fair hearing. Women need to know their rights and have the power to claim them. Social attitudes and stereotypes undercutting gender equality must be challenged and changed.

Through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 189 UN Member States agreed to take action across these areas. The Declaration makes strong commitments to uphold women's equal rights and end discrimination. The Platform includes women's human rights as one of 12 critical areas of concern. It specifies steps to fully implement all human rights instruments, especially CEDAW, to ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice, and to achieve legal literacy. The realization of women's human rights is critical to achieving progress in all areas of concern of the Platform for Action.

Women's human rights are more widely understood and championed today, but that needs to be the reality for every woman and every girl. No discrimination, No violations, No exceptions!

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"Tribes in India: Issues and challenges"

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ABSTRACT

The Tribal people in India have a long history even before the arrival of the colonial government. The Tribal societies that existed prior to the colonial intervention had their own rights and duties within their autonomous sovereign framework. Apart from the encounter of the Tribal's with the various civilizations, there was also the influence of the foreign missionaries in the past and of the dominant society through the fundamentalist forces in the recent past. India has the second largest tribal concentration in the World. With such a large population, the uprisings are not very uncommon. From the pre-independence period to the post-independence, and to the contemporary era, tribal movements have been making their presence as their right to life has been, somehow, violated. However, with the change of time, nature of objectives of tribal movement has been changed to a great extent. This write-up tries to throw light on the changing nature of these movements and on the issue and challenges involves in it.

Keywords: Coalition Politics, Policy Paralysis, Indian Federalism, Governance Deficit, Common Minimum Programme, Multi-Party Democracy.

Who are tribes?

The Constitution of India defines scheduled tribes as 'such tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities are deemed under Article 340 to the schedules tribes for the purpose of the Constitution.' The procedure to be followed for specification of a scheduled tribe is prescribed under article 342. However, it does not contain the criterion for the specification of any community as scheduled tribes. An often-used criterion is based on attributes such as:

• Geographical Isolation- Tribes live in cloistered, exclusive, remote and inhospitable areas such as hills and forests.
• Backwardness- their livelihood is based on primitive agriculture, a low-value close economy with a low level of technology that leads to their property. They have low levels of literacy and health.
• Distinctive culture, language and religion- Communities have developed their own distinctive culture, language and religion.
• Shyness of contact- They have a marginal degree of contact with other culture and people.

Magnitude and Geographical spread

A substantial list of scheduled tribes in India is recognised as tribal under the constitution of India. Tribal people constitute 8.6 per cent of the country's total population. One concentration lives in a belt along the Himalayas stretching through Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand in the west to Assam,

Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland in Northeast. In the north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, more than 90 per cent of population is tribal. However in the remaining north-east states of Assam, Manipur, Sikkim and Tripura, tribal people form between 20 to 30 per cent of the population. Other tribal people including the Santhals live in Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Central Indian states have the country's largest tribes and taken as a whole, roughly 75 per cent of the total tribal population live there, although the tribal population there accounts for only around 10 per cent of the region's total population.

Besides, tribal people are found in Odisha in Eastern India: Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in Southern India: in Western India in Gujarat and Rajasthan: and in the union territories of Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Constitutional Safeguards

There is a little doubt that Tribal communities continue to be the most marginalized group in India. Social indicators of developments tell that Tribal people have life expectancies that are decades shorter than the non-tribal are. So after the independence the government of India decided to provide them special safeguards through Indian Constitution. Constitutional provisions or safeguards for scheduled tribes can be divided into two parts- protective and developmental.

a. Article 15(4) and Article 16(4) provides special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or STs and protective discrimination respectively.

b. Article 17 abolishes untouchability. To give effect to this article, Parliament enacted Untouchability (Offences) Act of 1955. The Act was amended in 1976 and was renamed as the Protection of Civil Rights Act. Parliament passed another important act in 1989 to take measures to prevent the atrocities. This act is known as the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes (prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 followed by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules 1995.

c. Article 23 prohibits human trafficking and beggar, and other similar forms of forced labour. Since the majority of bonded labourers belong to scheduled tribes, this article has a special significance.

d. Article 330 and Article 332 provides for reservation of seats for scheduled tribes in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies respectively.

e. Article 338 provides for national commission for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes entrusted with the power to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided to SCs or STs and to report to the President on the working of these safeguards.

f. Scheduled 5th of the Constitution deals with the administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes. It restricts the entry and ownership of land and immovable resources in tribal areas by non-tribes and outsiders.

g. Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006-

The Act recognises the following tribal rights-

- Tenurial security of land providing relief against the physical and psychological alienation of forest dwelling tribes.
- Livelihood in terms of ownership of minor forest produces including rights to collect, trade and process the same.
- Traditional and customary rights.

The enactment of the act is a historic step to remove from the forest dwelling the threat of eviction or removal from the forest land under their occupation.

Tribal Movements in India: Nature and Characteristics

Tribal uprising have been taking place since the British Rule in India. Those tribal movements contributed directly or indirectly to the independence movement of India. The important tribes involved in revolts during the period were Mizos, Kols, Mundas, Daflas, santhals, Nagas etc.

Some scholars like Desai and ram Chandra Guha have treated tribal movements after independence as peasant movement but K.S. Singh has criticised such approach because of the nature of tribal's social and political organisation, their relative social isolation from the mainstream, their leadership pattern and the modus operandi of their political mobilisation.

Tribal movements were not only agrarian but also forest-based. Some revolts were ethnic in nature as these were directed against who were not like aliens for such tribes. Factors like land alienation, usurpation, minimum wages, forced labour and land grabbing compelled various tribes like Munda, Santhal, Kol etc in many regions to revolt.

The management of forests also led some tribes to revolt as forests in some regions are the main source of their livelihood. The British rule introduced various legislations permitting merchants and contractors to cut the forests. These rules deprived the tribes of several forest products and made them victims of harassment by forest officials as well. This led tribes to launch movements during the period of pre-independence.

The tribal movements before independence can be divided into three phases: the first phase between 1795 and 1860, the second from 1861 to 1920, and the third between 1921 and 1947. The first phase coincided with the establishment of the British Empire, the second with intensive colonialism during which merchant capital penetrated into tribal economy,

and the third with participation in the nationalist movement and also launching of agrarian as well as some separatist movements.

Numerous scholars classify the tribal movements into different groups. Mahapatra has classified tribal movements in three groups: reactionary, conservative and revolutionary. Surjit Sinha has classified movements into five groups whereas S.M. Dubey, into four categories. However in general, post-independence tribal movements may be classified into three groups:

i. Movements due to exploitation by outsiders e.g. movements of santhals and Mundas.

ii. Movements due to economic deprivation e.g. movements led by Gonds in Madhya Pradesh and those of Mahar in Andhra Pradesh.

iii. Movements due to separatist tendencies e.g. movements of Nags and Mizos.

Further on the basis of their orientation, the tribal movements may also be classified roughly into four types:

i. Movements seeking political autonomy and formation off a state such as those of Nagas, Mizos and of Jharkhand.

ii. Agrarian movements.

iii. Forest-based movements, and

iv. Socio-religious or socio-cultural movements e.g. the Bhagat movement among Bhils of Rajasthan and Madhya, movement among tribes of south Gujarat or Raghunath's Murmu movement among the Santhals.

The leaders revolted against the British and exhorted their followers to drive out outsiders. After independence, the tribal movements were launched either for maintaining their cultural identity or for demanding a separate state.

Major tribal Movements

• Naga Revolution- It started in 1948 and continued to 1972 when the new elected government came to power and the Naga insurgency was controlled.

• Mizo Movement- it was a kind of guerrilla warfare which ended with the formation of the state of Meghalaya in April 1970, created out of Assam and Mizoram in 1972.

• Gond Raj Movement- It was a movement led by the Gonds in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. It started in 1941 demanding a separate state and reached its peak in 1962-1963.

• Naxalite Movement- It was led by the tribes of West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Assam.

Taking into consideration of all the tribal movements, it can be said that the tribal unrest and the resultant movements were mainly movement launched for liberation from oppression, discrimination, neglect and backwardness and a government which was callous to the tribal's plight of poverty, hunger, unemployment and exploitation.

L.K. Mahapatra in his study of tribal movements based on a time sequence and the nature of stimulus in their existence noted certain general tendencies:

• Most reformists' tribal movements, although initiated by charismatic leaders, gradually led to rationalisation and institutionalisation, affecting structure but not always affecting basic changes.

• Tribal movements irrespective of their goal orientation invariably appeared among the numeric ally strong, usually settled agriculturists and economically well-off tribes.

• Primitive and small tribes directly look at large-scale conversion and separatist tendencies are marked amongst them.

• Given the geographical distribution, a pan-Indian tribal movement is unlikely to emerge.

• Democratic politics among tribes is fragmentary which in turn blocks the emergence of civil collectivism.

If we take consideration of various tribal movements, it is found that the tribes adopted two paths of achieving goals:

1. Non-violent path of bargaining and negotiating with the government and using a variety of pressure tactics without resorting to violence or revolts; and

2. Militant path of revolts or mass struggle based on developing the fighting power of the exploited tribal strata.

Conclusion

After so many years of independence, even in the era of inclusive growth, tribal movements are still occurring to and fro. It indicates that the government have not been able to take their interests into consideration while preparing developmental plans for the entire country. The government could not get success in fulfilling their demands; and in dragging them to the mainstream of the country.

Further it displays that the paths adopted by the movement- one oriented to reforms whereas the other towards structural transformation of the community- have not proved a complete success yet. The fact that tribes continue to be faced with problems and also continue to feel discontented and deprived, brings to the fore the conclusion that both the paths have not helped them to achieve their goals.

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Women Empowerment in India : Past, Present and Future

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ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what it is that they can be, do, and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied. Alternatively, it is the process for women to redefine gender roles that allows for them to acquire the ability to choose between known alternatives that have otherwise been restricted from such ability. Women population constitutes around 50 per cent of the World Population. For the balanced inclusive growth, empowerment of women is the need of the time. 'Women empowerment' and 'women equality with men' are the universal issues. The present paper attempts to explore the concerns of women from the earlier days to the contemporary era.

Keywords: Social Media Algorithms, Political Opinion Formation, Indian Youth, Filter Bubbles, Digital Democracy, Political Communication.

What the term 'Women Empowerment' stands for?

Women empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women to ensure equal right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights such as:

- Freely live their life with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity;
- Have complete control of their life, both within and outside of their home and workplace;
- To make their own choices and decision;
- Have equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities;
- Have equal social status in the society;
- Have equal rights for social and economic justice;
- Determine financial and economic choices;
- Get equal opportunity for education;
- Get equal employment opportunity without any gender bias;
- Get safe and comfortable working environment.

Women not only in India but all over the world have been treated as occupying secondary position to men. We often come across experiences where women are not only treated as subordinate to men but are also subject to discriminations, humiliations, exploitations, oppressions, control and violence.

Even the mainstream political theorists have often ignored the issue of gender differences. Political theory is full of examples of women being dismissed- from Aristotle's exclusion of all women from political activity, Rousseau's arguments for women to be educated differently from men and excluded from citizenship to Nietzsche's claim that equal rights for women are evidence of a society in decline.

Women in India: Pre-independence era

Ancient period

The relationship between both sexes during the ancient period was characterised by a reciprocity in which the rights and obligations of each were nearly equivalence. Neither the Rig-Veda nor other Sutras enjoyed any kind of binding obedience of the wife to her husband. She was free to participate in all religious practices and sacrifices and was entitled to all the samskaras or religious sacraments like men; not only were religious prayers and sacrifices jointly offered by the husband

and the wife, but the wife alone could offer them in absence of her husband. They had equal legal rights- unmarried women got a share of patrimony with the other sons whereas married women retained the rights over her wealth or property.

However, in the later phase, this balance underwent change, and the status of women started declining.

Medieval Period

The declining trend of later phase of ancient period further deepened after the Muslim conquest of India. It introduced the purdah system and further pushed women deep into domesticity. Sati system also became prevalent in this era along with religious ban on the widow remarriage. In general, the Indian society was patriarchal overt rules prohibiting women from specific activities and denying certain rights. The salvation and happiness of women revolve around their virtue and chastity as daughters, wives and widows.

The British Colonial Period

Partly coming into contact with the English education and partly as a reaction to British rule, there sprang up many reformist movements in India. Brahmo Samaj, Prarthna Samaj, Arya Samaj and many other movements took up the cause of injustice against women. Raja Ram Mohun Roy denounced child marriage and sati system and worked for the emancipation of women. The nineteenth century also saw for the first time the enactment of social legislation by the government which included abolition of sati(1829), widow remarriage act(1856), civil marriage act(1872) etc.

Mahatma Gandhi called on women to give up purdah and to participate in politics. That is why the women of that era actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement and in the Quit India Movement too. However in general, there was not much change in the social attitudes towards women, particularly in rural areas. At the time of independence, they were outside from the mainstream of socio-economical process and in actual, did not have a rightful place in society. Even after many years after independence, they are a minority at the decision-making level.

Women in India: Post-independence

After independence numerous steps have been undertaken to provide constitutional safeguards and institutional framework for women welfare. The development of women has been one of the central focuses in developmental planning since independence. There have been various shifts in policy approaches from the concept of 'welfare' in the 70s to 'development' in the 80s and now to 'empowerment' after the 90s. Now the emphasis is on the inclusive empowerment- from raising social status to the inclusion of women in decision-making and their participation at the policy-formulation levels.

Why is Women Empowerment important?

Equal opportunity, equal rights and equal status to the women is the need of the hour, to ensure a healthy inclusive development of the society.

1. Economic reason- A large number of women around the World are unemployed. The World economy suffers a lot because of unequal opportunity for women at workplaces.
2. Equally competent and intelligent- Women are equally competent and preventing them by diminishing opportunities means the deprivation of the society from getting benefits from the side of half of the population. Nowadays, women are even ahead of men in many socio-economic activities.
3. Talent and education- Women are as talented as men. Earlier women were not allowed higher education like men and hence their talents were wasted. But now they are allowed to go for higher studies and it encourages women to show their talents which will not only benefit her individually but o the whole world at large.
4. Overall development of society- The main advantage of women empowerment is that there will be an overall development of the society. As the women constitute almost fifty per cent of the population, their growth would lead to the growth of the society as well.
5. Economic benefits- Women empowerment also leads to more economic benefits not only to the society as well. It helps women to become independent and also to earn for their family which ultimately contributed towards the National economy.
6. Reduction in domestic violence- Women empowerment leads to lesser dependency on the male counterpart of the family, and thus leads to reduction in the magnitude of domestic violence. Uneducated and economically depended women are at higher risk for domestic violence than an educated woman.
7. Reduction in corruption- An educated woman knows her rights and duties and hence can contribute in reducing corruption.
8. Reduction in poverty- Women empowerment leads to the social and economic benefits to the society. Thus the added earnings of women help the family to come out of poverty trap.

9. National development- Last but not the least, women are increasingly participating in the national development process. They are making the nation proud by their outstanding performances almost in every sphere including medical science, social science etc.

Measures

Constitutional Provisions

In the Fundamental Right Resolution of the Indian National Congress adopted in 1931, it was postulated that 'freedom, justice, dignity and equality for women was essential for nation-building.' The framers of the constitution of India therefore tried to give proper place to the women in the social structure of the country. In the preamble of the constitution, the solemn resolve of the founding fathers contain two specific objectives which have a direct bearing on the status of women:

1. Justice- social, economic and political for all;
2. Equality- of status and opportunity for all.

Part 3 and part 4 of the constitution dealing with Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles elaborate these declarations in concrete forms-

- Article 14 of Fundamental Rights envisages that the state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of law.
- Article 15 specifically prohibits discrimination on the grounds such as caste, religion and sex.
- Article 16 provides for the equality of opportunity in matters relating to public emplo0yment. The constitution at the same time, gives power to the state to make special provisions for women and children. The inclusion of this provision makes it possible for the state to enact legislature for the welfare of the women even if that violates fundamental rights in general.

Further the Directive Principles of State Policy provides women-specific directives:

- Article 39(a)- men and women equally has the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
- Article 39(d)- equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- Article 42 – make provisions for just and human conditions of work and provisions of maternity relief.
- Reservation in Panchayati Raj.

Besides, the constitution also imposes a Fundamental duty on all citizens 'to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.' The constitution of India has also granted universal franchise, thus women have equality both in right to vote and contest elections.

Statutory Provisions

Since the very beginning of independence, India initiated legislation with a view to remove disparities regarding women. Thus various acts like Special Marriage Act 1954, the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act 1956, the Hindu Adoption and maintenance Act 1956, Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women Act 1961 etc were enacted.

In January 1992, the National Commission for Women was established under the provisions of the Indian constitution as defined in the National Commission for Women Act of 1990. It was established to represent the rights of women in India and to provide a voice for their issues and concerns.

Welfare and Development Programmes

From the very beginning, efforts have been made by the Government for inclusion of women's development in the plans and programmes of India. The approach to women's development in the first five-year plan was included in the 'community Welfare Programme.' The third and fourth five-year plans accorded a high priority to education and welfare of women. The fifth plan shifted the approach from 'welfare' of women to 'development' of women. In the sixth five-year plan, there was a major thrust on health, education and employment of women. Thus the concerns of women have been getting attention in the mainstream planning system of India.

World conferences on women

India has been one of the participants in programmes for women's development undertaken at international level and has also signed various covenant and declarations at these fora. In 1946, the Commission on the status of women was established and now a part of Economic and social Council (ECOSOC). This commission drafted declarations and conventions; monitors and highlights issue on a spectrum of issues and serves as secretariat for major conferences on women issue.

In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development for the first time recognised that gender equality and the empowerment of women by the means of education: health and education were linked to traditional population issues such as family planning.

These conferences created an international forum for women's rights, but also illustrated division between women of different cultures and the difficulties of attempting to apply principles universally.

Initiatives and Prospects

Firstly the move to reserve one-third seats in the parliament for women could probably be the boldest and biggest step taken by Indian Government in the area of women empowerment. The bill, if passed would result in more than 180 seats in the lower house occupied by women compared to less than 50 occupied currently. This might also produce a 'trickle down effect' where even the state governments would pass a similar bill to reserve 1/3 seats for women in the state legislature.

Secondly, to provide integrated social empowerment of women, the government initiated a scheme called as 'Swayamsidha' 2001 which helps them in establishing self-reliant women's self-help groups. The objective is to achieve all-round empowerment of women by ensuring direct access and control over resources.

Another initiative is a program called as STEP (support to training and Employment Program for women). The objective of this programme is to empower women by providing sustainable employment opportunities.

Challenges

Various programmes together have already made significant impact in the lives of a number of women in the lives of a number of women in the traditional sectors. However, are these programmes sufficient? Although it has been making a significant contribution towards Gender Sensitization and women empowerment, there is still a far way to go.

- The maternity mortality rate in India is the second highest in the world. India accounts for more than 25% of all maternal deaths in the world.
- In a survey conducted by the WHO, more than 80 per cent of pregnant Indian women are found to be anaemic. This results in exceptionally high rates of child malnutrition. Malnourished women give birth to malnourished children, perpetuating the cycle.
- Only 39 per cent of Indian women attend primary schools. Most families pull them out of school, either to help out at home or from fear of sexual or mental violence.
- While women are guaranteed equality under the constitution off India, legal protection has little effect in the face of prevailing patriarchal traditions. Women lack power to decide whom they will marry, and are often married off before they reach the age of eighteen.

Concluding remarks

As we progress from a developing nation towards a developed nation, every care must be taken to compositely develop and empower women along the way to stand true to what J.L. Nehru said' " You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women." It can be conclusively stated that there has been a radical change in the movement for empowerment of women. Women are making significant gains in the political sphere where increased participation is rapidly empowering women, boosting their confidence, and empowering their status and position in society. However, women continue to remain invisible and marginalised in decision-making bodies, leading to lack of a feminist perspective in political decision-making. The problems of women, which are primarily on account of social prejudice and conventional and traditional approach inherent in the system, can be solved only by changing the system and creating right public opinion.

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"महिला सहभागीता का बढ़ता कदम"

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सारांश :

भारत में महिला सहभागीता का विषय आज के समय में अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण बन गया है। स्वतंत्रता के बाद से लेकर अब तक महिलाओं ने समाज के हर क्षेत्र में अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज कराई है। शिक्षा, राजनीति, अर्थव्यवस्था, विज्ञान और खेल जैसे क्षेत्रों में महिलाओं का योगदान निरंतर बढ़ता जा रहा है। भारतीय संविधान ने अनुच्छेद 14, 15 और 16 के माध्यम से महिलाओं को पुरुषों के समान अधिकार प्रदान किए हैं। इन संवैधानिक प्रावधानों ने महिला सशक्तिकरण की नींव रखी। पंचायती राज संस्थाओं में महिलाओं को 33 प्रतिशत आरक्षण देकर उन्हें राजनीतिक निर्णय प्रक्रिया में सीधे जोड़ा गया। कई राज्यों ने इसे बढ़ाकर 50 प्रतिशत तक कर दिया है।सरकार ने बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ, महिला शक्ति केंद्र, उज्ज्वला योजना, मातृत्व वंदना योजना जैसी अनेक कल्याणकारी योजनाएं चलाई हैं। इन योजनाओं ने ग्रामीण और शहरी दोनों क्षेत्रों में महिलाओं की स्थिति में सुधार लाया है। शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में लड़कियों का नामांकन अनुपात तेजी से बढ़ा है और साक्षरता दर में उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि हुई है। आर्थिक क्षेत्र में स्वयं सहायता समूहों के माध्यम से लाखों महिलाएं आत्मनिर्भर बन रही हैं। मुद्रा योजना के तहत महिला उद्यमियों को ऋण प्रदान किया जा रहा है। कार्यक्षेत्र में महिलाओं की भागीदारी बढ़ी है और वे आईटी, चिकित्सा, सेना तथा न्यायपालिका जैसे क्षेत्रों में उत्कृष्ट प्रदर्शन कर रही हैं। हालांकि लैंगिक भेदभाव, घरेलू हिंसा, कम वेतन और सामाजिक रूढ़िवादिता जैसी चुनौतियाँ अभी भी विद्यमान हैं। महिला सहभागीता को वास्तविक और सार्थक बनाने के लिए सामाजिक मानसिकता में बदलाव अत्यंत आवश्यक है। जब समाज महिलाओं को समान अवसर और सम्मान देगा, तभी देश का सर्वांगीण विकास संभव होगा।

Keywords: उत्तरदायित्व, पारदर्शिता, सूचना, नागरिक, कार्यप्रणाली, डीजिटल।

प्रस्तावना

लोकतांत्रिक शासन व्यवस्था के ढाँचे के अंतर्गत कानूनो, विकास संबंधी, योजनाओं और कार्यक्रमों में विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में महिलाओं की उन्नति का उद्देश्य बनाया गया है। हाल के वर्षो में महिलाओं की स्थिति को अभिनिश्चित करने में महिला सशक्तीकरण को प्रमुख मुद्दे के रूप में माना गया है। भारत में पंचवर्षीय योजना ''1974–78'' में महिलाओं से जुड़े मुद्दों के प्रति कल्याण की बजाय विकास का दृष्टिकोण अपनाया जा रहा है। महिलाओं के अधिकारों एवं कानूनी हक की रक्षा के लिए वर्ष 1990 में संसद के एक अधिनयिम के द्वारा महिला आयोग की स्थापना की गई। भारतीय संविधान में 73 और 74 संविधान संशोधन के द्वारा महिलाओ को प्रत्यक्ष या अप्रत्यक्ष पद के लिए आरक्षण की व्यवस्था की गई। इस प्रक्रिया के द्वारा महिलाओं को निर्ण की प्रक्रिया में स्पस्ट रूप से भागीदारी प्रदान हो पायी। तथापि , एक ओर संविधान, विधानों, नीतियों, योजनाओं, कार्यक्रमों और सम्बद्व तंत्रों में प्रतिपादित लक्ष्यों तथा दूसरी ओर भारत में महिलाओं की स्थिति के संबंध में परिस्थितजन्य वास्तविकता के बीच अभी भी बहुत बड़ा अंतर है।

भारत में अपितू कई नीति का अनुसरण समय–समय के अंतराल अपनाया जा रहा है। तथापि हम यह महसूस कर सकते है, अभी भी महिलाओं की भागीदारी नगण्य है। हम संवैधानिक सुरक्षा कई गुणा बढ़ा दे लेकिन जबतक महिलाओं की प्रशासनिक नीति में

भागीदारी सुनिश्यित नहीं कर पायेगें, तब–तक महिलाओं की समानता, सशक्तिकरण की बात करनी बेईमानी शाबित होगी। सकारात्मक आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक नीतियों के माध्यम से महिलाओं के पूर्ण विकास के लिए वातावरण बनाना ताकि वे अपनी पूरी क्षमता को प्राप्त करनें में समर्थ हो सकें। प्रशसनिक नीति निर्माता के रूप में महिलाओं को राष्ट्र के सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक जीवन में भागीदारी करने और निर्णय लेने में महिलाओं की समान पहुंच।

प्रशासनिक भागीदारी के परिणामस्वरूप उत्प्रेरक, भागीदारी और प्रापतकर्ता के रूप में विकास की सभी प्रक्रियाओं में महिलाओ के परिप्रेक्ष्यों का समावेशन को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए नीतियां, कार्यक्रम और प्रणालिंया बनाई जाई जिसमें इनकी सहभागिता

के हर संभव प्रयास और मौके को सुनिश्यत की जाएं। प्रशासनिक सहभागिता के फलस्वरूप सशक्तिकरण के लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने के लिए सभी स्तरों पर राजनीतिक प्रक्रिया में निर्णय लेना सहित, सत्ता की साझेदारी और निर्णय लेने में महिलाओं की बराबर की भागीदारी सुनिश्चित की जाएगी। विधायी, शासकीय, न्यायिक, कोपोरेट, संवैधानिक निकायों, तथा सलाहकार आयोग, समितियों, बोर्डो, न्यासों आदि सहित प्रत्येक स्तर पर नीति निर्धारक वाले निकायों में महिलाओं की समान पहुंच एवं पूर्ण सहभागिता की गारंटी के लिए भी सभी उपाय किए जाए। इन तमाम प्रावधानों के अनुरूप महिलाओं की भागीदारी पूर्ण रूप से बढ़ती जायेगी। भारत की महिलाओं ने अपनी प्रशासनिक भागीदारी से हाल के वर्षो में सभी क्षेत्रों में उल्लेखनीय योगदान दिया है। महिलाओं की दूरदिर्शिता का परिणाम हैं आज वे अत्यंत दुर्लभ क्षेत्रों में भी अपने आप को सहज और मानकपूर्ण बनाकर अपने प्रशासनिक उत्तरदायित्व को पूर्ण कर लेते है। महिलाओं के प्रशासनिक भागीदारी के दूरगामी परिणाम यह उभर कर आया कि इनकी सहभागिता के बाद आम–जन लोगों को इन्होंने काफी करीब से जोड़ा, जिसके फलस्वरूप समाज का हर वर्ग महिला अधिकारी के समक्ष अपने आप को ज्यादा सहज और सरल पाते है। आज समाज का हर वर्ग एक महिला अधिकारी को अपना विचार या समस्या को बहुत ही सरलता पूर्वक रख पाते है। महिलाओं की भागीदारी आजादी के बाद प्रशासनिक क्षेत्र में काफी कम रही है, इसके पीछे समाज की वह मानसिकता एक बड़ी वजह थी। हमारा भारतीय समाज यह मानकर बैठा था, कि एक महिला अच्छा प्रशासनिक अधिकारी नहीं हो सकती हैं, वह एक अच्छी नीति निर्माता नहीं हो सकती है। महिलाओं को पूर्ण अवसर भी प्रदान नहीं किया जा रहा था। उनके लिए ऐसे अवसर या वातावरण उपलब्ध नहीं हो पा रहे थें, जिसमें एक महिला अपने अन्दर प्रशासनिक अधिकारी को जन्म दें।

आजादी के बाद आईस और आईपीएस के लिए पहली बार परीक्षा का आयोजन वर्ष 1948 में किया गया था। अगर हम पुरूष की बात करें पुरूषों का एकाधिकार वर्ष 1950 तक था, केवल 1951 में पहली महिला आईपीएस शामिल हो पाई। हालाकि भारतीय संविधान यह सुनिश्यत करता हैं, कि धर्म, जाति, लिंग और भाषा इत्यादि के आधार पर कोई भेदभाव नहीं किया जाऐगा तथापि उनके साथ 1954 का प्रशासनिक सेवा उनके लिए भेदभाव पूर्ण था। कोई भी विवाहित महिला सेवा के लिए आवेदन नहीं कर सकती थी। 1972 के सेवा अधिनियम यह प्रावधान तथापि हटा लिया गया, इसके फलस्वरूप अब कोई भी विवाहित महिला भी आवेदन दे सकती थी। इस सेवा अधिनियम में महिलाओं के लिए मातृत्व अवकाश और महिलाओं के लिए लिए सुअवसर और अच्छे वातावरण की बात कहीं गई। भर्ती–नियम और कार्मिक सूची का अवलोकन करने के बाद यह लगता हैं कि अभी महिलाओं की भागदारी गनण्य है। अगर हम कुल भारतीय प्रशासनिक सेवा में महिलाओं की चयन की बात करें तो मात्र 10 प्रतिशत महिला ही भारतीय प्रशासनिक सेवा का प्रतिनिधितत्व कर रहीं है। इससे यह स्पस्ट हो जाता है, कि महिलाओं की सहभागिता अभी काफी कम है। क्या यह उचित प्रतिनिधत्व का रही हैं। यह एक बड़ा सवाल आज भी हमारे सामने उभर कर आ रही है। नीचे दिये गये ग्राफ में यह स्पस्ट कर दिया हैं। कि महिलाओं की सहभागिता कीतनी प्रतिशत सेवा–वार है।

किसी भी प्रणाली के निर्धारण में कार्यप्रणाली की गुणवत्ता को प्राप्त करने में महिलाओं की प्रशासनिक भागीदारी सुनिश्चत करनी होगी। भारतीय महिला अपने राष्ट्री चरित्र के साथ एक मजबूत बंधन बल दिया जिसके परिणाम स्वरूप आज राष्ट्र विकास की ओर अग्रसर हो रहा है। उच्च मानकों एवं गुणवत्ता पूर्ण सलाह के लिए किसी भी परिस्थितियों में महिलाओं की भागदारी और सर्वप्रथम हो जाता है। अगर भारत को एक गतिशील अर्थव्यवस्था का संचालन और उनके जैसे परिस्थिति या वातावरण तैयार करना है, इसमें

महिला प्रशासक अग्रमी भूमिका निर्वाहन कर सकती है। इनकी भूमिका के बगैर हम ओ वातावरण और माहौल नहीं दें पायेंगे जिसमें निवेशक अपने आप को सुरक्षित और सहज महसूस कर सके। इस कार्य में महिला प्रशासनिक उत्तरदायित्व सहज पूर्वक निर्वहन कर लेती है। भारत को वैश्विक स्तर पर लाने के लिए व्यापक सुधार की जरूरत है, अगर हम यह कार्य महिला प्रशासनिक अधिकारी को सौंपते हैं वे पूर्व की तरह इसमें पूर्ण सक्षम और परिणाम उन्नमूख कार्य कर के हमें देंगे। महिला प्रशासनिक अधिकारी वास्तविक परिस्थिति के साथ तालमेल बैठाने का भी सहज कार्य कर लेती है। इस आर्थिक करण युग और उदारीकरण परिपेक्ष में खुद को तैयार रखती है। सेवा के इष्टम उपयोग की जिम्मेवारियाँ भी एक महिला प्रशासनिक अधिकारी सहज करती आ रही है। बदलते परिवेश में जिस तरह राजनीतिक, सामाजि, और सांस्कृतिक परिवेश का जो एक वातावरण इनके अनुरूप नहीं रहती हैं उन वातावरण में महिला अधिकारी खुद को सदैव तैयार रखती है। मानव विकास के साथ उनकी संप्रभुता और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देती हुई एक स्वपन्न शील भारत को संजीवता प्रदान कर रही है। प्रशासनिक संसाधन का अधिकतम प्रयोग न्यूनतम प्रयोग पर बल देते हुए भारत को सशक्त आधार प्रदान करने के लिए सलाह और निती निर्माण करती है। महिला प्रशासनिक अधिकारी बदलती परिस्थिति में खुद को बदलने के तत्पर रहती है। सरकार के निती और निर्माण में अपनी जिम्मेवारी को कुशलता से निर्वहन करती है।

प्रशासनिक दृष्टि से समय–समय के उपरांत कई आयोग ने महिलाओं के लिए कई सुझाव प्रदान किये है। प्रशासनिक सुधार और लोक शिकायत विभाग ने महिलाओं के लिए अनुकूलता को ध्यान में रखते हुए उनके अनुकूल परिस्थिति निर्माण में सहायता प्रदान की है। द्वितीय प्रशासनिक सुधार आयोग ने भी यह सुझाव दिया है कि प्रशासनिक भागीदारी में महिलाओं की सहभागिता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए हर संभव प्रयास होना चाहिए। बीएन युगांधर समिति, होता समिति ने भी कहा है कि महिला अधिकारी समावेशी विकास और विकास के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए इनकी सहभागिता आवश्यक है। अगर हम इन समिति के रिपोर्टो का अवलोकन करते हैं तो यह स्पस्ट हो जाता हैं कि इन्होंने महिलाओं को प्रशासिन क्षेत्र में सहभागिता को अहम माना है। भारत की आज भूमिका बदल रही है, अपितू पूरा विश्व आज भारत की हर कदम पर अपनी पैनी नजर बनाये रखता है। आज भारत राष्ट्रीय स्तर से नहीं बल्कि अंतराष्ट्रय स्तर पर अपनी छवी ला चुका हैं। इस बदलती परिस्थिती में भी अगर हम महिलाओं को पूर्ण सहभागिता देते हैं तो भारत एक सशक्त देश बनकर उभरेगा। भारत के शीर्ष नेतृत्व की सलाहकार और निर्ती निर्माण में हाल के वर्षो में जिस तरह से महिला प्रशासिन अधिकारियों ने अपनी सहभागिता को सुनिश्चित किया है। जिसका परिणाम है आज भारत को विश्व–मंच पर वह पहचान मिल चुकी हैं जो विगत दशकों से नहीं मिली थी। इसमें महिलाओं के नीति–निर्माण की भूमिका रही है। भारत को आज समाज की हर वर्ग की सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक और सांस्कृतिक जरूरत के साथ ऐसे सामाजिक सेवा भी प्रदान करनी होती है, जिनकां संबंध उनकी दिनचर्या से होती है। अगर सामाजिक सेवा और समाज के लोगों की सहभागिता की बात करें तो इसमें महिला प्रशासनिक अधिकारी काफी सहज और पूर्ण होती है।

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"जाति भेद उन्मूलन का विमर्श और डॉ. अंबेडकर का योगदान"

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सारांश

भारतीय समाज में जाति व्यवस्था सदियों से एक गहरी सामाजिक बुराई के रूप में विद्यमान रही है। इस व्यवस्था ने समाज के एक बड़े वर्ग को शोषणए अपमान और असमानता की जंजीरों में जकड़े रखा। ऐसे में डॉण भीमराव अंबेडकर का जीवन और विचार जाति भेद उन्मूलन के सबसे प्रभावशाली और वैज्ञानिक विमर्श के रूप में उभरा। डॉण अंबेडकर स्वयं दलित समाज से थे और उन्होंने जातिगत भेदभाव को बचपन से ही झेला था। इसी पीड़ा ने उन्हें जाति व्यवस्था के विरुद्ध संघर्ष की प्रेरणा दी। उन्होंने जाति को केवल एक सामाजिक समस्या नहीं बल्कि एक संस्थागत और संरचनात्मक अन्याय के रूप में देखा। उनकी प्रसिद्ध पुस्तक एनीहिलेशन ऑफ कास्ट में उन्होंने जाति व्यवस्था की जड़ों पर गहरा प्रहार किया और तर्क दिया कि जाति का उन्मूलन बिना हिंदू धर्मग्रंथों की आलोचना के संभव नहीं है।

अंबेडकर ने शिक्षा को दलित मुक्ति का सबसे बड़ा हथियार माना। उन्होंने कहा कि शिक्षित बनोए संगठित रहो और संघर्ष करो। उन्होंने बहिष्कृत हितकारिणी सभा और समता सैनिक दल जैसे संगठन बनाए। महाड़ सत्याग्रह और नासिक सत्याग्रह के माध्यम से उन्होंने सार्वजनिक स्थलों पर दलितों के अधिकार की लड़ाई लड़ी।

संविधान निर्माण में अंबेडकर की भूमिका ऐतिहासिक रही। उन्होंने संविधान में अनुच्छेद 17 के माध्यम से अस्पृश्यता को पूर्णतः समाप्त किया। अनुसूचित जातियों और जनजातियों के लिए आरक्षण का प्रावधान किया जिससे वंचित वर्गों को मुख्यधारा में आने का अवसर मिला।

1956 में उन्होंने लाखों अनुयायियों के साथ बौद्ध धर्म ग्रहण कर जाति व्यवस्था को सांस्कृतिक चुनौती दी। आज उनका विमर्श केवल भारत में नहीं बल्कि वैश्विक स्तर पर सामाजिक न्याय आंदोलनों को प्रेरित कर रहा है।

शब्द कुंजी – सत्याग्रह, समाज, नैतिकता, समानता, प्रभाव, चेतना।

प्रस्तावना

प्रस्तावना

जाति भेद उन्मूलन का प्रश्न भारतीय समाज के बहुत बड़े वर्ग के लिए उन निर्योग्यताओं, बंधनों और मानसिकता से मुक्ति का प्रश्न है जो उन्हें सामाजिक, धार्मिक आधार पर विरासत के रूप में मिले हैं। जातिगत भेद–भाव और असमानता की सामाजिक व्यवस्था ने समाज में शोषित और शोषक वर्ग के रूप में एक गहरा विभाजन पैदा कर दिया है जिनके मध्य का संघर्ष न सिर्फ इन दोनों वर्गों के जीवन बल्कि संपूर्ण सामाजिक ताने बाने को प्रभावित कर रहा है। ऐसी चुनौतिपूर्ण सामाजिक परिस्थिति में डॉ. अंबेडकर के सामाजिक न्याय, समता और बन्धुत्व की स्थापना से प्रेरित विचारों को आत्मसात करने एवं एक श्रेष्ठ संस्कृति के रूप में उनका व्यावहारिक हस्तान्तरण करने के अतिरिक्त अन्य कोई मार्ग नहीं दिखता। अतः प्रस्तुत लेख में सामाजिक संबंधों के उन सद्भाविक स्वरूपों को, जाति भेद उन्मूलन के विकल्प के रूप में वर्णित करने का प्रयास किया गया है जो डॉ. अंबेडकर के विचारों, जीवन संघर्षों और बलिदानों का प्रतिफल है।

विषय विस्तार

भारतीय सामाजिक संरचना में प्रारम्भ से ही वर्ण व्यवस्था, जाति व्यवस्था, जजमानी प्रथा आदि के साथ–साथ अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों की व्यवस्था देखने को मिलती रही है। यह सम्बन्ध जातीय संस्तरण एवं सामाजिक, आर्थिक स्तर पर निर्धारित होते रहें हैं। अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों में जातियों की प्रकृति (स्वच्छ, अस्वच्छ, अपवित्र) सामाजिक सम्बन्ध, सहभोज सम्बन्ध, वैवाहिक सम्बन्ध, व्यावसायिक एवं

आर्थिक सम्बन्ध एवं धार्मिक कृत्यों को शामिल किया जाता है। जाति ही व्यक्ति की पारिवारिक, सामाजिक जीवन प्रणालियों, उनके निवास स्थानों तथा सांस्कृतिक प्रतिमानों को निश्चित करती है। व्यक्ति क्या खायेगा, किसके हाथ का बना खायेगा, किसके साथ खायेगा, किसके हाथ का पानी पीयेगा, किसके यहाँ अन्न–जल ग्रहण करेगा, कौन सा व्यवसाय करेगा एवं समाज में उसके सम्बन्धों का दायरा कहाँ तक होगा आदि का निर्धारण उसके जन्म से पूर्व ही जाति व्यवस्था द्वारा हो जाता है। समाज में व्यक्ति अपनी जाति प्रस्थिति के अनुसार ही अन्य जातियों से जीवन के विविध पक्षों में सम्बन्ध स्थापित करता है। स्पष्ट है कि जाति ही अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों की व्यवस्था में व्यक्ति के व्यवहार प्रतिमान को निश्चित, नियन्त्रित एवं निर्देशित करती है। जाति सोपान क्रम में अपनी निम्न स्थिति के कारण प्रारम्भ से ही अमानवीय सामाजिक स्थिति में जी रहे, सामाजिक आर्थिक परम्पराओं से शोषित, राजनैतिक अधिकार शून्यता, तुच्छ एवं अस्वच्छ कार्यों को करने के लिए विवश, अस्पृश्य समझा जाने वाला दलित वर्ग अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों की व्यवस्था में अपनी जाति प्रस्थिति के अनुसार कार्य करने के लिए बाध्य था। जातीय नियमों के अनुसार उनके सम्बन्धों का दायरा भी संकुचित था। ग्राम पंचायतों की बैठक, सभाओं आदि में वे

अपनी जाति की जातिगत प्रस्थिति के अनुसार ही अपने पूर्व निर्धारित स्थान पर बैठते थे। उच्च जातियों के समक्ष उन्हें कुर्सी, चारपाई आदि ऊँचे स्थानों पर बैठना प्रतिबन्धित था, उच्च जाति के लोग उन्हें आदर सूचक शब्द या आदर से सम्बोधित न करके अपमान जनक एवं उपहासिक शब्दों का प्रयोग करते थे जिनका दलित अपनी निम्न जाति प्रस्थिति, गरीबी एवं उच्च जातियों पर व्यावसायिक एवं आर्थिक निर्भरता के कारण विरोध नहीं कर पाते थे। उन्हें स्वयं से श्रेष्ठ और स्वयं को उनसे निकृष्ट समझते थे और उनसे दूरी बनाते हुए भय एवं श्रद्धापूर्ण व्यवहार करते थे। यहां यह स्पष्टीकरण करना आवश्यक है कि जाति के भेद–भाव पर आधारित मनोभाव तथा व्यवहार प्रतिमान केवल उच्च जातियाँ दलितों के प्रति ही नहीं अपनाती बल्कि निम्न जातियाँ भी जाति के भेदभाव पर आधारित मनोभाव एवं व्यवहार प्रतिमानों का पालन उच्च जातियों के लिए करती हैं। ऐसी मनोसामाजिक स्थिति में अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों में सुधार और जाति व्यवस्था के अन्त की कल्पना भी नहीं की जा सकती। चिन्तन के इस स्तर पर आकर हमें उस पृष्ठभूमि के दर्शन होते हैं जिस पर डॉ. अम्बेडकर ने जाति मुक्ति के अपने विचारों की व्यावहारिकता को संवैधानिक नियमों में समावेशित करने का महान कार्य किया। यह अत्यंत दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि अपनी बहुसंख्यक स्थिति एवं जैविक दृष्टि से समान होने के बावजूद भी दलित वर्ग आजीवन उपेक्षित और बहिष्कृत रहा। दलितों के इस दयनीय जीवन के उत्तरदायी कारणों को ढूंढने की आवश्यकता डॉ. अंबेडकर को नहीं थी क्योंकि वे स्वयं इस समाज का हिस्सा थे। जिन्होंने अपने जीवन के पग–पग पर घोर अपमान, अमानवीय व्यवहार और भारी यन्त्रणा की स्थितियों को भोगा था। एक बार उन्होंने एक पत्रकार से कहा था, "मेरे दुःख, दर्द और मेहनत को तुम नहीं जानते, जब सुनोगे, रो पड़ोगे।" डॉ. अंबेडकर का यह कथन उनके जीवन के विविध क्षेत्रों में उच्च स्तर के लोगों द्वारा अन्याय एवं भेदभावपूर्ण व्यवहारों को बयां करता है। डॉ. अंबेडकर यह जानते थे कि दलितों की समाज में जो स्थिति है उसके लिए स्वयं दलित भी उत्तरदायी हैं। क्योंकि जब तक दलित स्वयं को अयोग्यता के दायरे से निकालने का प्रयास नहीं करेंगे तब तक उनके अन्तर्जातीय संबंधों में सुधार नहीं हो सकता। अतः उन्होंने इस बात पर बल दिया कि अछूतों को अपनी बुरी आदतों और हीनता की भावना का त्याग कर आत्मसम्मानपूर्ण जीवन की ओर प्रवृत्त होना चाहिए। इस प्रकार दलितोद्धार के लिए डॉ. अंबेडकर ने कोरे सैद्धान्तिक दृष्टिकोण नही, वरन यथार्थवादी दृष्टिकोण को अपनाया और अस्पृश्यों तथा दलितों को अपनी परम्परागत दासता और हीनता की भावना त्यागकर समाज के अन्य वर्गों के समान स्वतन्त्रता और मानव–अधिकार हासिल करने का आह्वान किया। उनका विचार था कि अछूतों में स्वतन्त्रता, समानता और स्वाभिमान से जीवन बिताने की इच्छा होनी चाहिये और इसके लिए उन्होंने अछूतों को संगठित होने, शिक्षित होने तथा अत्याचार के विरूद्ध संघर्ष करने का सुझाव दिया। उनका विचार था कि 'धर्म व्यक्ति के लिए है' व्यक्ति धर्म के लिए नही' और जो कोई धर्म मनुष्य–मनुष्य के बीच भेदभाव की स्थिति को बढ़ावा देता है, अपने ही अनुयायियों के एक वर्ग को दूसरे वर्ग के अधीन रहने के लिए प्रेरित और बाध्य करता है, वह धर्म नहीं वरन मानवता का अपमान है। उन्होंने समझा कि हिन्दू समाज का एक वर्ग हिन्दू समाज के दूसरे वर्ग के प्रति जिस प्रकार की अन्याय भावना को अपना रहा है, उसमें हिन्दू धर्म की भी भूमिका है, और इस बात ने उनके मन–मस्तिष्क में हिन्दू धर्म के प्रति तीखी विरोध भावना को जन्म दिया। इस संदर्भ में विचारणीय प्रश्न यह है कि हिन्दू धर्म का विरोध करने के बावजूद उन्होंने 1930 में कालाराम मन्दिर प्रवेश जैसा सत्याग्रह क्यों किया और इससे भी पूर्व सामाजिक अथवा सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र में महद तालाब सत्याग्रह 1927 और गंगा सागर तालाब का पानी पीने के लिए संघर्ष क्यों किया। यदि वे चाहते तो दलितों के लिए पृथक पूजा स्थलों एवं जल स्त्रोतों का निर्माण कर सकते थे लेकिन उन्होंने ऐसा न करके सामाजिक समता और न्याय की अवधारणा पर आधारित मार्ग का चुनाव किया जिसका उद्देश्य दलितों में उनके अधिकारों के प्रति चेतना जागृत करना था। इस प्रकार डॉ. अंबेडकर ने हिन्दुओं के व्यवहार में परिवर्तन लाने पर बल दिया और कहा कि यह सत्याग्रह हिन्दुओं का हृदय परितर्वन करने के लिए है। डॉ. अंबेडकर का दृढ़ विश्वास था कि जिस समाज में सामाजिक चेतना न हो और जो स्वयं को सामाजिक परिवर्तनों के अनुरूप ढ़ालने में समर्थ न हो, वह समाज कभी प्रगति नही कर सकता है। उनका विरोध केवल जाति विशेष के प्रति वैमनस्य अथवा दुर्भावना से प्रेरित न होकर ठोस सामाजिक न्याय के सिद्धान्तों पर आधारित था। अंबेडकर ने सामाजिक न्याय पर आधारित एक ऐसे समतावादी एवं स्वतन्त्र समाज के निर्माण की कल्पना की जिसमें समाज का एक वर्ग दूसरे वर्ग पर शासन न करे और जातियों के आपसी सम्बन्ध पारस्परिक सहयोग और भ्रातृत्व की भावना पर आधारित हों। सामाजिक न्याय को समाज में

प्रभावी होने के लिए लोगों में भाईचारे की भावना का पाया जाना जरूरी है। डॉ. अंबेडकर ने दलितों और सवर्णों को समाज के दो हाथों के समान माना। यदि मनुष्य का एक हाथ क्षतिग्रस्त होता है तो वह पंगु हो जायेगा। इसी प्रकार दलित वर्ग की अनदेखी होने पर समाज की व्यवस्था भी पंगु हो जायेगी। अतः समाज में वर्णभेद नहीं होना चाहिए। सच तो यह कि दलितों और सवर्णों के परस्पर सहयोग से ही देश की प्रगति सम्भव है। कोलम्बिया विश्वविद्यालय का जीवन डॉ. अंबेडकर के लिए दिव्य प्रकाश देने वाला था। वहाँ वे विद्यार्थियों के साथ स्वतन्त्रतापूर्वक घूम सकते थे। भारत की तरह वहाँ सामाजिक प्रतिबन्ध नहीं था और उनकी गतिविधियों पर अछूतपन का अभिशाप नहीं था। वहाँ सबके साथ समानता का व्यवहार किया जाता था। अंबेडकर के लिए यह सब नये संसार की भांति था। इसने उनके मानसिक क्षितिज को विस्तृत कर दिया। उनकी बुद्धि और गहन दृष्टि को विकास के लिए एक उचित वातावरण मिला। ऐसे ही वातावरण का निर्माण डॉ. अंबेडकर भारतीय समाज में भी करना चाहते थे जिसका प्रारम्भ उन्होंने जाति मुक्ति संघर्ष के दौरान बड़े ही तार्किक ढंग से किया। उनकी आक्रोशित घृणा जाति नही बल्कि उस व्यवस्था के प्रति थी जिसने समाज में जातियों के आपसी सम्बन्धों में विष घोल दिया था। इस सन्दर्भ में उन्होंने कहा कि – "मैं घृणा करता हूँ अन्याय से, अत्याचार से, बनावटी गौरव और वैभव से, बकवास से और व्यर्थ के विवाद से और मेरी घृणा की लपेट में वे सभी व्यक्ति आते हैं जो इन सब बातों से ग्रस्त हैं।" "डॉ. अंबेडकर इस बात से भलीभाँति अवगत थे कि यदि जाति प्रथा को समाप्त करना है तो दलितों और उच्च जातियों के मध्य के सम्बन्धों में परिवर्तन लाना आवश्यक है और यह तभी संभव हो सकता है जब दलित अपनी हीनता को त्याग कर समाज का उपयोगी और जरूतरमंद हिस्सा बने। जब तक जातियों के आपसी सम्बन्ध सरल, सहयोगी एवं सामुदायिक भावना पर आधारित नही होंगे तब तक समाज में जातिप्रथा का अन्त नहीं हो सकता। डॉ. अंबेडकर चाहते थे कि समाज के लोग जातीय पूर्वाग्रहों को त्यागकर अछूतों को बराबरी का दर्जा दे और उन्हें विश्वास था कि यह समस्या केवल बहुजन और सवर्ण समाज के हृदय परिवर्तन से ही सुलझ सकती है। अतः उच्च जातियाँ निम्न जातियों के साथ अच्छा बर्ताव कैसे करें? इसक लिए डॉ. अंबेडकर ने संघर्ष करने का सुझाव देने के साथ ही अन्तर्जातीय विवाह का भी सुझाव दिया। उनका मानना था कि खून का मिलना ही अपनेपन की भावना का विकास कर सकता है और जाति प्रथा को खत्म करने का यही एक मार्ग है।

वर्तमान समय में डॉ. अंबेडकर के विचारों की प्रासंगिकता

अंबेडकर के विचारों की प्रासंगिकता वर्तमान समय में इस दृष्टिकोण पर आधारित है कि दलितों के संरक्षण एवं विकास के तमाम संवैधानिक और गैर संवैधानिक प्रयासों के बावजूद दलितों का शोषण और उन पर अत्याचार अक्षुण्ण रूप से जारी है। ऐसी परिस्थितियों में कानून का प्रभावी ढंग से निरन्तर पालन और अन्तर्जातीय संबंधों में बदलाव से ही सुधार की अपेक्षा की जा सकती है और यह तभी सम्भव होगा जब न केवल उच्च जातियाँ अपनी सोच में बदलाव लाये बल्कि दलित भी स्वच्छ, स्वस्थ, शिक्षित और संगठित हो, अपनी निर्योग्यताओं और पिछड़ेपन को समाप्त कर अपने आपको इस योग्य बनाये कि समाज में उन्हें सहज रूप से स्वीकार किया जा सके। औद्योगीकरण, नगरीकरण, शिक्षा की सार्वभौमिक व्यवस्था एवं प्रचार–प्रसार, संवैधानिक प्रावधानों एवं हस्तक्षेपों एवं सरकार की समावेशी नीतियों विशेषकर दलितों के मताधिकार के परिणामस्वरूप जाति व्यवस्था आधारित सामाजिक ढाँचे में परिवर्तन की स्वाभाविक प्रक्रिया प्रारम्भ हो गयी है। इसका सीधा प्रभाव दलितों के जीवन पर पड़ा है और उनके अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्ध सरलीकृत रूप में स्पष्ट होने लगे हैं। लेकिन इसका तात्पर्य यह नहीं है कि जाति सम्बन्धी विचारधारा पूरी तरह से परिवर्तित या समाप्त हो चुकी है। जाति व्यवस्था एवं दलितों के अन्तर्जातीय संबंधों में परिवर्तन कुछ विशिष्ट आधारों पर निर्धारित हैं। संबंध चाहे अन्तर्जातीय हो या अन्तःजातीय वे व्यवहारिक रूप से कुछ आधारों पर निर्धारित हो रहे हैं। वर्तमान समय में अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों में जो बदलाव देखने को मिल रहे हैं वास्तव में उनका आधार आर्थिक एवं राजनैतिक है। अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों के अन्तर्गत दलितों के सामाजिक सम्बन्धों में आज भी उच्च जातियाँ दलितों को आदर सूचक शब्द से सम्बोधित नहीं करती हैं। भोज अवसरों पर जहाँ कुछ उच्च जातियाँ दलितों को सम्मिलित करती हैं, वहीं कुछ जातियाँ आज भी अन्तर्जातीय सहभोज निषेधों का पालन करती हैं। कई मामलों में उच्च जातियाँ दलितों को अपने भोज अवसरों में सम्मिलित तो करती है लेकिन उनके साथ एक ही पंक्ति में साथ बैठकर भोजन करना पसन्द नहीं करतीं और दलितों के लिए अलग बैठने एवं बाद में भोजन करने की व्यवस्था की जाती है। बिल्कुल यही प्रक्रिया (बाद में खिलाने वाली व्यवस्था को छोड़कर) दलितों को अपने भोज अवसरों में भी अपनानी पड़ती है, अन्तर केवल इतना है कि उच्च जातियाँ अपने भोज अवसरों में दलितों के लिए इस प्रकार की व्यवस्था जातीय भावना से प्रेरित होकर छुआछूत और उच्चता–निम्नता के आधार पर करती हैं, वहीं दलित अपने भोज अवसरों में उच्च जातियों के लिए यह व्यवस्था उनके सम्मान और अपनी निकृष्टता के आधार पर करते हैं। घरेलू बर्तनों के उपयोग के सम्बन्ध में भी उच्च जातियाँ दलितों के लिए अलग बर्तनों की व्यवस्था करती हैं। व्यावसायिक सम्बन्धों के अन्तर्गत आज भी कुछ दलित जाति के सदस्य अपने परम्परागत पेशों को अपनाये हुए हैं। विकास कार्यक्रमों के क्रियान्वयन की निरन्तरता एवं उनके सही मूल्यांकन का अभाव, शिक्षा की दोषपूर्ण एवं महंगी व्यवस्था तथा रोजगार के अवसरों के अभाव, के कारण दलित वर्ग आज भी उपेक्षित है और अन्य जातियों पर व्यावसायिक एवं आर्थिक निर्भरता के कारण सामाजिक, आर्थिक, शैक्षिक एवं राजनैतिक दृष्टि से पिछड़ा हुआ है। वैवाहिक सम्बन्धों के सन्दर्भ में अन्तर्जातीय विवाह निषेध का जितना पालन उच्च जातियाँ कर रहीं हैं उतना ही पालन दलित भी कर रहें हैं अर्थात जाति के भेद–भाव आधारित उच्च जातियों के मनोभाव तथा व्यवहार प्रतिमान केवल दलितों के लिए ही नहीं हैं बल्कि दलित अथवा निम्न जातियाँ भी जाति के भेद–भाव आधारित मनोभाव एवं व्यवहार प्रतिमानों का पालन उच्च जातियों के लिए कर रहीं हैं। हालांकि वर्तमान समय में अन्तर्जातीय विवाह

बहुत असामान्य नहीं है फिर भी निम्न हो या उच्च जाति सभी अपनी ही जाति में विवाह करना अधिक पसन्द कर रहें है। वर्तमान समय में जहाँ दलितों की विभिन्न निर्योग्यताओं के साथ–साथ उनकी धार्मिक निर्योग्यतायें भी समाप्त हो रही हैं वहीं आज भी पुरोहित का कार्य केवल ब्राह्मणों को ही वंशागत रूप से प्राप्त है। शायद ही किसी देवालय में कोई दलित पुरोहित का कार्य करता हो और समाज द्वारा उसे स्वीकार किया जाता होगा या जायेगा। जैसा कि पहले ही स्पष्ट किया जा चुका है कि जातीय नियमों का पालन एवं जाति आधारित मनोभावों तथा व्यवहार प्रतिमानों को केवल उच्च जातियाँ ही निम्न जातियों के प्रति नहीं अपनाती बल्कि निम्न जातियाँ भी उच्च जातियों के प्रति जाति के नियमों, मनोभाव तथा व्यवहार प्रतिमानों को अपनाती है। वर्तमान समय में दलितों की दयनीय स्थिति के लिए केवल उच्च जातियों को ही जिम्मेदार या दोषी ठहराने का विचार पूर्वाग्रहपूर्ण एवं सामाजिक न्याय के विरूद्ध होगा क्योंकि सामाजिक परिवर्तन की प्रक्रिया ने अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों को ही प्रभावित नहीं किया है उसका व्यापक प्रभाव अन्तःजाति सम्बन्धों पर भी पड़ा है। संस्कृतिकरण की प्रक्रिया द्वारा निम्न जातियों ने उच्च जातियों के रहन–सहन, खान–पान अथवा सम्पूर्ण जीवन शैली को ही नहीं अपनाया है बल्कि, उन विचारों एवं मनोवृत्तियों को भी अपनाया है जिसके कारण वे परम्परागत रूप से शोषित और बहिष्कृत रहे हैं। प्रजातंत्र की स्थापना ने जहाँ दलितों को जीवन के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में सहभागिता के स्वतंत्र एवं नवीन अवसर प्रदान किये हैं, वहीं उनमें जातिवादी और अत्यधिक व्यक्तिवादी प्रवृत्ति को भी बढ़ाया है। निम्न जातियों में पढ़ा–लिखा व्यक्ति उच्च आर्थिक सामाजिक स्थिति प्राप्त करने के पश्चात केवल अपने ही व्यक्तिगत हितों के बारे में सोचता है। वह अन्तःजातीय सम्बन्धों में अपनी ही जाति के व्यक्ति से विभिन्न आधारों जैसे– सामाजिक, आर्थिक, शैक्षिक एवं रहन–सहन की रीतियों के आधार पर असमानता का व्यवहार करता है। अपनी जाति की अपेक्षा वह उच्च जातियों को अधिक महत्व देता है। दलित जातियों के आपसी भेदभावपूर्ण नीतियों के कारण उनमें एकता का अभाव है। जिसके कारण वे संगठित रूप से अपने अधिकारों हेतु और अपने उपर हो रहे अत्याचारों के विरूद्ध संघर्ष नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। उच्च प्रस्थिति प्राप्त किया हुआ, व्यक्ति उसी शोषणकारी संरचना का हिस्सा बन रहा है जिसमें कभी वह शोषित और प्रताड़ित था। अतः स्पष्ट है कि जाति व्यवस्था में परिवर्तन के साथ निरन्तरता बनी हुई है। यदि जाति व्यवस्था को समाप्त करना है तो इसके लिए न केवल हमें अन्तर्जातीय सम्बन्धों में सुधार करना चाहिए बल्कि अन्तःजातीय सम्बन्धों में भी व्यापक सुधार की आवश्यकता है। जिसमें अंबेडकर के विचार हमारे लिए सबसे बड़े मार्गदर्शक सिद्धांत सिद्ध हो सकते हैं।

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