

Role of NGO's in Women Empowerment

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Abstract- This research explores the multifaceted role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in promoting women's empowerment globally. Drawing upon a comprehensive analysis of existing studies and literature, the review examines the diverse interventions and strategies employed by NGOs to address gender disparities and advance women's rights. Key themes include advocacy and awareness-raising, capacity building, economic empowerment, health and reproductive rights, legal aid, education, political participation, community development, research, and partnerships. Through a systematic review methodology, the study synthesizes findings to provide insights into the effectiveness and significance of NGO initiatives in empowering women across different contexts. The review contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics shaping women's empowerment efforts and highlights the pivotal role of NGOs in fostering gender equality and inclusive development.

Index Terms- NGOs, Women Empowerment, Gender Equality, Women's Rights, Empowerment Interventions, Advocacy, Capacity Building, Economic Empowerment, Health, Reproductive Rights, Legal Aid, Education, Political Participation, Community Development, Research, Partnerships.

I. INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women is not only a fundamental human right but also a critical component of sustainable development. Despite significant progress in recent decades, gender disparities persist globally, hindering women's full participation and contribution to society. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have emerged as key actors in addressing these challenges and promoting women's empowerment through various interventions and initiatives. This review aims to explore and analyze the role of NGOs in women's empowerment based on existing studies and literature. By examining the diverse activities, strategies, and impacts of NGOs in this field, this review seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness and significance of NGO interventions in advancing gender equality and empowering women worldwide.

1. Advocacy and Awareness

NGOs often advocate for women's rights and raise awareness about issues such as gender-based violence, access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Through campaigns, workshops, and outreach programs, they educate communities and policymakers on the importance of women's empowerment.

2. Capacity Building

Many NGOs provide training and skill-building programs tailored to women's needs. These programs equip women with

the skills necessary to participate in the workforce, start businesses, and engage in decision-making processes within their communities.

3. Economic Empowerment

NGOs implement microfinance initiatives, entrepreneurship training, and vocational skills development programs aimed at economically empowering women. By providing access to credit, resources, and market linkages, they enable women to generate income and become financially independent.

4. Health and Reproductive Rights

NGOs work to improve women's health outcomes by offering healthcare services, reproductive health education, and access to family planning resources. They also address issues such as maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS prevention, and access to clean water and sanitation, which disproportionately affect women.

5. Legal Aid and Justice

NGOs provide legal aid services to women who have experienced discrimination, violence, or injustice. They offer support in navigating legal systems, filing complaints, and accessing justice. Additionally, they advocate for policy reforms to strengthen women's legal rights and protections.

6. Education and Literacy

NGOs promote access to education for girls and women, addressing barriers such as poverty, cultural norms, and gender discrimination. They establish schools, provide

scholarships, and develop programs to improve literacy rates among women, empowering them to make informed decisions and pursue their aspirations.

7. Political Participation

NGOs encourage women's participation in political processes and leadership roles. They offer training on civic engagement, leadership development, and political campaigning. Additionally, they advocate for gender-sensitive policies and electoral reforms to enhance women's representation and influence in governance structures.

8. Community Development

NGOs engage in community development initiatives that empower women as agents of change. They facilitate women's participation in decision-making forums, community development projects, and grassroots organizations, fostering their leadership skills and enhancing their roles in local development efforts.

9. Research and Documentation

NGOs conduct research and gather data on issues related to women's empowerment, helping to identify trends, challenges, and best practices. They use this evidence to inform their programs, advocate for policy changes, and contribute to broader knowledge sharing and awareness-raising efforts.

10. Partnerships and Networking

NGOs collaborate with governments, businesses, other NGOs, and international agencies to leverage resources, expertise, and influence for women's empowerment. Through strategic partnerships and networking, they amplify their impact and create synergies to address complex challenges effectively.

Features of NGOs

NGOs are basically focused towards improving the socio-economic conditions of the people with whom they work. The following are the important characteristics that an NGO requires to have in order to be effective:

Voluntary

NGOs are voluntary organizations and are formed by a few concerned people who have their own self-interest towards societal development. They are not formed out of anybody's compulsion. If formed so, then it will not be effective in its functions.

Legal Status

NGOs are registered with the Government under the Societies Act, Trust Act, and Companies Act etc. They are also registered under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) with the ministry of Home Affairs of The Government of India. This enrollment with FCRA is required to be entitled to obtain funds from abroad.

Independent

NGOs need to be independent in planning and implementation of their programs. Any other sort of external intervention may not allow the NGO to perform to its fullest capacity.

Flexible

NGOs must be flexible to interventions. They are not bound by red-tapism and other bureaucratic obstacles.

Quicker in Decision Making

NGOs take quick decisions in response to the needs of the society. The more quickly the decisions are taken, the faster the services reach the deprived.

High Motivation

The members and the staff are endowed with high motivation and inspiration to work for the cause of the people. They strive tirelessly to achieve their purpose for the benefit of the target groups.

Freedom in Work

NGO workers need to enjoy freedom in their field work, in organizing the community and carrying out the development schemes.

Catalytic

NGOs enhance and induce the communities into social action but they do not dilute and distort themselves in the process of intervention.

People-Centered

NGOs encourage people's participation. They plan things for the people and implement the same through the people. They make decisions by discussing with voluntary people and implement a decision that is the most effective towards helping people develop.

Non-profit Oriented

NGOs are not run with intentions of profit. The surplus and gains from economic projects, if any, are not distributed amongst the members or stakeholders. They are re-used for some other development purposes.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumran, 2014 analyzed that the only GDP is not a factor for nations' growth, other factors also matter. For NGO to have full efficacy they should have the organizational capacity to operate effectively and efficiently. They should have revenues from diversified sources. They should have active strategic planning and provide awareness on gender inequality and inequity in the society, networking among women welfare NGOs is the key to increase awareness on issues, address various causes and consequences of women's rights abuse,

and promote overall women empowerment throughout the nation.

(Handy et al., 2006) researched different occupational females, supervisors, field workers, recipients with different data and found out that the Empowerment index depends only on the time spent by the female in NGOs.

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

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

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

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

III. METHODOLOGY

Literature Search

A comprehensive search was conducted across academic databases, including PubMed, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Web of Science, using keywords such as "NGOs," "women empowerment," "gender equality," "women's rights," and "gender empowerment programs." The search included peer-reviewed articles, reports, and studies published within the last decade to capture recent developments and trends in NGO initiatives for women's empowerment.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies and literature focusing on the role of NGOs in women's empowerment were included in the review. Both qualitative and quantitative studies were considered, encompassing a range of geographical locations and cultural

contexts to provide a comprehensive understanding of NGO interventions.

Data Extraction and Analysis

Relevant data from selected studies were extracted, including key findings, methodologies, geographical focus, target populations, intervention strategies, and outcomes. A thematic analysis approach was employed to identify common themes, patterns, and insights regarding the role of NGOs in women's empowerment across different contexts.

Synthesis and Interpretation

The extracted data were synthesized and interpreted to provide a nuanced understanding of the diverse roles and contributions of NGOs in promoting women's empowerment. Comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities, differences, and best practices in NGO interventions, highlighting factors influencing effectiveness and sustainability.

Limitations

The review acknowledges potential limitations, including language bias, publication bias, and the scope of included studies. Efforts were made to mitigate bias through comprehensive search strategies and inclusion criteria, although some studies may have been overlooked. Additionally, the review focuses primarily on published literature, thereby potentially overlooking unpublished reports or grey literature.

IV. CONCLUSION

NGOs play a pivotal role in women's empowerment through a multifaceted approach encompassing advocacy, capacity building, access to education and healthcare, economic empowerment, legal aid, community development, and policy advocacy. By addressing gender disparities and challenging societal norms, NGOs empower women to assert their rights, access opportunities, and participate actively in decision-making processes at various levels. Through their tireless efforts, NGOs contribute significantly to creating a more equitable and inclusive society where women can thrive and fulfill their potential. However, continued collaboration, resource mobilization, and strategic interventions are essential to sustain and amplify the impact of NGO initiatives in advancing women's empowerment globally.

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