



**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
RIGHTS: THE THREE PILLARS FOR WOMEN
EMPOWERMENT**

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Abstract-

The world has always glorified its praise for women in its literature, religious and historical description. In India, women is worshipped in almost all forms from “Durga” to “Saraswati” since ancient times. In modern India, they have been given some rights but even then, the gender discrimination remains in one form or another. Innovations can be helpful to the women in the form of health benefits, raising their nutritional level to income, increasing their life span and eventually they lead to women empowerment. Sciences can build confidence among women and reshape the women’s role for the far-sighted basis. Sciences and technological development have the power to transform the lives of women for life. Ideology is the other concern and barrier also in women empowerment. The ideological shift can happen with the introduction of technology and the shift in the life style of the people. Rural areas can be transformed and their cultural ethos can be merged with the developed cities where women have been enjoying the freedom more freely than rural areas and without preaching, the shift can be effected. The role of technology here plays the silent yet effective part to transform the lives of women for the better. People can’t change right away by preaching. But, if their own thinking can change if they themselves decide to. This patriarchal mindset can be changed effectively if the mindset changes with changing requirements of society and this can be brought by the intellectual property rights secured as the incentive to the person who does some Science. Innovation is the key to survive in the competing world. Through securing intellectual property rights for the inventor, the world makes it easy for the inventor to create innovations which are helpful to women. From birth control pills to Sciences in various cooking vessels and utility tools for kitchen, the innovation has always helped women by making their lives easy and accommodating. Yet, the participation

of women in Sciences and intellectual property holders is they key factor that could bring the change in society. For women to become truly empowered, it has to be realized that the role of women is not only as a beneficiary but also an active role of participation in Sciences also. The convergence of these ideas if implemented for benefit of women will be true way to empower women.

Keywords: Science, barrier, Models, Intellectual, ethos

Science: Innovation and the Empowerment of Women are seldom deliberated within the same arena but each has the significant importance for the progress of mankind. There is a major evidence that successful progress on reducing poverty and human development are co-related with the advancement in innovation capabilities of human being as well as Gender Equality. Both Gender Equality and Innovation underpin all of the Millennium Development Goals. Both innovation as well as Women Empowerment demand the “Out of the Box” attitude and implementing things which are beyond existing, prearranged parameters and traditional interventions and innovations. To be specific, they both require breaking the existing norms. Harnessing the idea of using the abilities of innovation to change the lives of women in the developing world is an idea whose time has come. The globe has never experienced such dynamic and rapid change in the technologies, economic values and societies as it has today. Innovation through new ideas, products and practices are increasingly seen as a force for the ideological change in the mindset of the society. In a same context, there is an increasing consensus that through empowerment of millions of women who live in poor conditions is required for vast benefits for global development as well as for intrinsic human rights.

An increasingly wide range of business institutions, civil society and government have committed resources, rhetoric and political capital to promote women empowerment. While it was difficult to change the mindset and ideology of patriarchal society in the past, the current upward trend in technological upshift provides an unprecedented opportunity to forge new alliances and unleash innovation to achieve women empowerment and gender equality goal which are difficult to realize. Innovation is an indirect approach to bring women empowerment by utilizing their skills, bringing new avenues for their work,

creating products which benefit women only and inventing techniques and models where the participation of women in the manufacturing and inventing can be utilized effectively will bring women at the forefront not only as a receiver of the innovation but also as a participant in the innovation. That will bring the real change and one should strive to achieve the balance with such ideology.

Conformity of Science and Women Empowerment

How do we bring accord with the power of Science with women empowerment and promote Gender equality? Perhaps by the following ways. It is very essential to realize the core principles for conforming the innovation whether it is really empowering woman in a positive way and talks about Gender Equality not advocating Gender Discrimination.

- Acknowledging a well-designed path that connects innovation to women empowerment
- Using the road map to assess these powerful innovations which change the lives of women in technology use, social norm change and economic resilience and
- Identifying the core levels which are required for innovation to empower women and transform Gender Relations

Where Science and Empowerment Converge

Innovative expansive efforts are required to address the fundamental challenges to achieve women empowerment and Gender Equality in Developing countries.

- Innovation: Identifying the innovations which create positive impact on the Women Empowerment goals.
- Timing and Context: Recognizing the timing and conduciveness of the innovation and the social, economic and political conditions of the current regime and whether they are proper for the innovation to bring it forefront.
- Women Empowerment and Gender Equality: Realizing how catalytic and powerful the innovative ideas and Sciences are to achieve the goal of Gender Equality and enforcing woman empowerment is crucial.

- Circulation of Sciences: Making sure to circulate the ideas and adoption process for Sciences and innovations by the society so that the idea doesn't die the child death.
- Innovation in favor of Women Empowerment and not discriminating other Gender: For the society to accept an idea, the innovation or Science to be accepted both socially as well as economically, the idea has to be advocating Gender Equality in true sense not discriminating against the male section of the society at large because that will have a negative impact on the society itself and will ultimately result in opposition of the innovation and idea.

Models, ideology and Women Empowerment in India

The concept of women empowerment has undergone a sea change from welfare oriented approach to equity approach. The process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. Empowerment particularly includes control over resources and ideology. It leads to a growing intrinsic capability and greater self-confidence and an inner transformation of one's consciousness which enables one to overcome external barrier. Our Models can change the true image of women if we truly wish them to be our role models.

The women empowerment is an idea where the power to achieve desired goals is not a power over others. The idea of empowerment is more applicable to those who are powerless whether they are male or female, or a group of individuals, class or caste. Though the concept of empowerment is not specific to women, yet they are unique in that and cuts across all types of class and caste and also within families and households.

As far as India is concerned, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution and finds a place in the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the States to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Historically the status of Indian women has been influenced by their past.

There is evidence to show that women in the Vedic age got most honoured positions

in

the society (Seth, 2001). They had the right to education and were free to remain unmarried and devote their whole life to the pursuit of knowledge and self-realization. The married women performed all the works and sacrifices equally with their husbands. They were educated in various disciplines of knowledge such as astrology, geography, veterinary sciences and even in martial arts. There were instances of women taking part in wars and fights. They were highly respected within and outside home. Gradually due to several socio-political changes, especially during the middle age, the glorious status of women declined. The urge for equality on the part of Indian women started getting momentum during the colonial times. Noted social reformers and national leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Annie Besant, Sorojini Naidu and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar made selfless efforts to create awareness among women about their status and were quite successful in removing various social evils such as sati pratha, child marriage, and polygamy. They also encouraged widow remarriage and women education. The reformers were successful in creating a base for development of women and their strive for equality. In course of time Indian society got transformed from traditional to a modern one. Consequently women became more liberal and aware of various ways of life. Since they are quite capable of breaking the traditional barriers imposed by the society are now challenging the patriarchal system. Since independence, the Government of India has been making various efforts to empower women. But, the public participation and moral change is required to bring the real empowerment. The introduction of a recent bill to the Prohibition of child Marriage Act, 2006 is a welcome step after the recent Supreme Court Judgment on consent of minors and its judicial restraint.¹ The amendment bill has also been brought after looking into the side effects like malnutrition among mother and infants, child mortality and death among young mothers highlighted by National Family Health Survey-4 during 2015 to 2016. A child bride is doubly prone to health problems than a grown up

¹Independent Thought v/s Union of India Writ Petition (Civil) No. (382) of 2013.

woman.² The new bill is raising the age of women qualified to get married from 18 years to 21 years and it is also including all personal laws prevalent in India to remove inconsistency.³ The Government of India itself has recognized the high rate of child marriages prevalent in country and the fact that child marriages violates the basic rights of health, development and protection of child.⁴ Preventing early marriages will eventually lead to protection of women as well as children which are the future of the world and India is leading with example through its legislative efforts to curb the menace of child marriage and empowering women at the same time.

Intellectual Property and Women Empowerment

The word intellectual property means the creation of human mind. The intellectual creation of human mind can bring Sciences and innovations which are helpful to mankind and humanity. The role of intellectual property through various ways like patent, copyright, trademark, design, traditional knowledge etc. can be evaluated for the purpose of women empowerment.

Since we have lived in patriarchal society since thousands of years, our literature has been predominantly male dominated literature. The History is also in the hands of women. The gendered nature of male dominated literature brings the women as the other gender. The world and its views since years were shaped by masculine construction of knowledge through the prism of patriarchal mindsets. The intellectual property regime has till now benefitted men mostly. If women seek to engage themselves in the cultural production, the dualism inherent in sexes requires them to do so on masculine terms. Through the literature also, one can transform the lifestyle of women. The social change can be brought through literature. But men has almost taken control of the literature through its own war rhetoric and the history is always singing on the tunes of

² World Health Organisation Report on “Early Marriages, Adolescent and Young Pregnancies”, Sixty- Fifth World Health Assembly dated 16th March, 2012.

³ Prohibition of child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

⁴The National Plan of Action for Children, 2016.

winners. Literature too gets affected by the administrative and authoritarian regimes of particular cultures and the women has remained the indirect partner and not an active participant.

The intellectual property can benefit women in terms of Sciences also. The oral birth control pill has been discovered in United States of America and then it changed the whole spectrum with which the role of women was looked up. It brought positive change in women empowerment in terms of their freedom to choose in their reproductive choice, to retain their bodily integrity, to retain their freedom of education, to regain their health and nutritional levels and so on. One single birth control pill could transform the lives of women in such positive way and provided vast scope for women empowerment itself is an example how innovation could be used as women empowerment. The law in India can be amended to bring the women representation by giving them certain reservation in the posts like Intellectual Property Appellate Board as well as Copyright Board.

Conclusion

The government policies, participation of people and implementation of law together bring the social change. The role of intellectual property is vital in the process of transforming lives of women. In fact, through new Sciences which are helpful to the lives of women, one can indirectly benefit the movement of women empowerment. It is not easy being woman who handles both work as well as home. Through innovative ideas and technologies, the world at large has been able to transform the lives of women by making their life more comfortable in the kitchen and home so that they can focus more on work. Strong incentives should be given to Sciences which may bring positive change in the empowerment of women. But, the ideology at the workplace should also bring change like the incorporating of women leaders as innovators, encouraging feminist writers, understanding the need of women will also be required to positively implement the process of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in true sense. Ultimately, it's the convergence of Sciences, ideas and incentives through intellectual property rights which will lead to women empowerment in true sense.

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