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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA THROUGH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: POLICIES & CHALLENGES: A CASE STUDY OF NTPC LTD.

DR. AJAY AGRAWAL
PROFESSOR OF COMMERCE
OSD DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
BHOPAL

DR. AMITABH PANDE
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
GOVERNMENT AUTONOMOUS P. G. COLLEGE
CHHINDWARA

POORVA PANDE SHARMA
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
BARKATULLAH UNIVERSITY
BHOPAL

ABSTRACT

Women plays vital role in the development of the society. Women empowerment is a way to make women life better, by making them socially, financially and economically independent. Government and corporates with the help of NGO's work for women empowerment through corporate social responsibility policies. The key initiatives taken by corporate under corporate social responsibility are women and girl education, vocational training, self-helped groups, wage employment, health and sanitation. There are few challenges faced by the corporate in implementation of these policies. The women in rural area are not educated; they don't have knowledge about corporate social responsibility policies. This paper is deals with the policies of corporate social responsibility for women empowerment and the challenges faced by the corporate in its implementation.

KEYWORDS

women empowerment, corporate social responsibility, corporate, NGO.

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment means giving power to somebody. Women empowerment means to give power to women to make their lives better by becoming financially independent. Through women empowerment initiatives they increase the capacity of women to make their own choices and to transform these choices into desired actions and results. In India after 1990's various models are adopted to empower the women. The Government and corporates with the help of NGO's work for empowerment of women through both economic and social ways. The main aim of women empowerment is to enhance the capability of women in the local community and to make them self-reliant. The Government of India also takes various initiatives for women empowerment; one of its initiatives was to declare year 2001 as the year of women empowerment (Swashakti) and launched the national policy for empowerment of women as progressive public policy.

With globalisation, Corporate Social responsibility is also growing. Now a days it is not only for a tool to build brand image and to provide better transparency and accountability but to increase the involvement of major stakeholder in the organisations for doing the betterment of the society. Corporate Social responsibility activities are critically examined by the and analysed that the funds were utilised for the purposes it is granted and its benefits were received to the stakeholders and beneficiaries.

In India the term corporate social responsibility might be new but the concept is not. This concept was there from the earliest times when the religious scriptures prescribe for donating a part of one's earning for the benefit of poor and the development of the society. After the new companies act 2012 public sector units and private companies that have a turnover of over 10 billion rupees or have a net worth of 5 billion rupees or recorded net profit of 50 million rupees and above are expected to spend 2 per cent of their average net profits in the preceding three financial years towards corporate social responsibility. The main motive of government for this is to provide advantage to socially and economically disadvantaged sector of the society.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To study the policies of women empowerment through corporate social responsibility.
2. To study the major challenges in women empowerment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology used for the study is descriptive in nature. The data and information is obtained from secondary source. The secondary data are collected from various reports, publications and bulletin, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, books, magazines, newspapers, research articles, research journals, e-journals and internet etc.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gro Harlem Brundtland in the World Conference on Women, Beijing, 2006 said 'There isn't single country in the world-not one-where men and women enjoy completely equal opportunity that is why we must change attitudes and policies. The aim must be to give each and every human being greater freedom to make choices about their own lives'.

Keller and Mbewe defines "empowerment is a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own, self reliance to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assists in challenges and eliminating their own subordination

According to Carroll, "Corporate social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations at a given point in time. Corporate Social Responsibility can be defined as the good citizen activities perform by the organisation that has a significant impact on the society.

According to Bowen, "Corporate Social Responsibility refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions or to follow those lines of relations which are desirable in term of the objectives and values of our society.

Bebbington (2008) use the term corporate social responsibility reporting, which highlights the link between the reporting and function and the organizational functions and operations that are concerned with, and impacted by, activities associated with corporate social responsibility.

Council for Sustainable Development defined Corporate Social Responsibility as the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to the economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.

H. Subrahmanyam (2011) compares women education in India at present and past. He explained that there has a good progress in overall enrolment of girl students in schools. The term empowers means to give lawful power or authority to act. It is the process of acquiring some activities of women.

M. Bhavani Sankara Rao (2011) has highlighted that health of women members of SHG have certainly taken a turn to better. It clearly shows that health of women members discuss among themselves about health related problems of other members and their children and make them aware of various Government provisions specially meant for them.

Doepke M. Tertilt M. (2011) raise the question that the Female Empowerment Promote Economic Development? In her empirical analysis, the study suggesting that money in the hands of mothers benefits children.

POLICIES

Women empowerment was the core activity in Corporate Social Responsibility for many companies. For the holistic empowerment of the women the policies should be in all areas i.e social, economic and political. Women empowerment includes providing education, vocational training, and opportunities of self employment or wage employment and making them capable to earn for their livelihood. The two major areas through which women can be empowered are economic and social. Economic includes monetary help by way of self helped groups or wage employment. Self helped groups are a model to empower women at grassroot level. NGO’s in association with the government formed various self helped groups. Self helped groups is an informal association consist of 10-20 women of same locality with the same economic background who collected funds out of their small saving on regular basis and start up their business. Social includes providing the education and vocational training. Every company have their own interest in the areas of corporate social responsibility. Few companies contribute towards the development of the society; few give emphasis to environment and education. For empowering women the policies are focused on the girl child and women livelihood and equipping them with skills for a secure future.

AREAS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACTIVITY

FIGURE 1.1



NTPC LTD.

NTPC Ltd. was the India’s largest conglomerate incorporate in 1975 to accelerate power development in India. NTPC become a Maharatna company in May 2010. NTPC is not only the foremost power generator; it is also among the great place to work. The company is guided by the “people before the plant load factor” mantra which is template for all its human resource related policies. NTPC believes that the transformation of the country into a world of power house is linked to the employment of our workfolk. NTPC has a bouquet of courses and projects specially designed for ladies. The company focus on empowering women, knowing that when the backbone of the family is strong and economically independent the rest of the family will flourish. The key initiatives taken by the company for empowering women are:-

- Adult education programmes for underprivileged women.
- Distribution of bicycle to school going girls.
- Vocational training programmes
 - Tailoring/ Cutting/ Stitching/ Dress designing/ Embroidery
 - Providing sewing machine
 - Beautician training
 - Handicraft preparation training
 - Food/ Preparation training
 - Computer Education

CHALLENGES

The key challenges facing by the companies in implementation of women empowerment programmes are:-

- **Education:** Education is the most important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. It makes women aware of their rights and responsibilities. Educational achievements of a woman can have ripple effects for the family and across generations. The literacy rate of women in India is low in comparison with the men. While 82.14% of adult men are educated, only 65.46% of adult women are educated. The same condition is in the girl education, the society is more biased in favor of male child in respect of education, nutrition and other opportunities.
- **Lack of knowledge:** Women have little or no knowledge about Corporate Social Responsibility activities within the local communities as no serious efforts have been made to spread awareness about CSR and instil confidence in the local communities about such initiatives. The situation is further aggravated by a lack of communication between the company and the community at the grassroots.
- **Lack of interest and participation:** Most of the women from rural areas does not show enough interest in participation in development programmes. They are not willing to make any contribution from their side.
- **Lack of clear guidelines:** There are specific guidelines or policy directives to give a definitive direction to women empowerment CSR initiatives of companies. It is found that the scale of CSR initiatives of companies should depend upon their business size and profile and the areas of their interest. With the new companies act the amount of CSR spending is fixed but the areas are not specified.
- **Health and Safety:** Women living in rural areas often suffer from reproductive health problems due to a plethora of socio-cultural and biological reasons. Unequal access to resources, lack of awareness, illiteracy and low decision-making authority are just some of the contributing factors health centers, drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities hinders a large section of women, inhibiting their social and economic development
- **Low mobility:** Contrary to common perception, a large percentage of women in India are working but the mobility for employment is very low. Even though women are highly qualified and competent but they have to depend on the family decision to take up any career before marriage as well as after marriage.
- **Gender Discrimination:** In India, discriminatory attitude towards men and women have existed for generations and affect the lives of both genders. Although the constitution of India has granted men and women equal rights, gender disparity still remains.
- **Inadequate trained personnel:** There is lack of qualified and trained personnel who have adequate knowledge and experience in this field.

CONCLUSION

Empowerment of women is all about upliftment of economic, social and political status of women. Government and corporates work together for the betterment of women in the society through corporate social responsibility. Women empowerment is the core of corporate social responsibility activity for many corporate. NTPC Ltd. formed many polices for empowering women e.g. vocational training, women and girl education, supply of study material and bicycles, self-helped grouped and wage employment. In implementation of these policies the corporate faced many challenges which need to be overcome.

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