

# Collective Empowerment: A Way to Poverty Alleviation (With Special Reference to Women Victim of Trafficking)



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## Abstract

In the present perspective, the notion of poverty has been understood as the situation of a person in which there is not much earning in the family that could fulfil the basic needs for social survival. It entails that what is earned by the person must be sufficient to meet the personal and dependant's 'minimum needs to maintain in society as a social being, or else the person and the family is poor. The poverty pushes people in the unethical network of human trafficking. This social condition is generated due to drastic changes on the global economy and its impact on the social and economic structures resulted into the economic crises for poor. The situation becomes more severe when women & children come under the grip of such scandal. Simultaneously, increases women's trafficking that has resulted due to socio-structural deformities & limitations, patriarchal domination & the wide gender gap, and spatial segregation & social fragmentation in the society. To combat the state, the influential tool becomes '**collective empowerment**' of women victims of trafficking that need to be brought under development. While interpreting the process of empowerment in the context of the women trafficking, calls for an unconventional, critical, neo-liberal approach. This is because human trafficking is the condition of crucial social oppression. Thus women victim of trafficking need to suppressed the social oppression through developing social solidarity among them & i.e. collective empowerment.

**Keywords:** Poverty, Human Trafficking, Women Trafficking, Collective Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation.

## Introduction

Poverty is a state of power which is constituted by four clusters; Income poverty, Material lack/want, Capability deprivation and a fourth cluster takes a yet more broadly multi-dimensional view of deprivation, with material lack or want as only one of several mutually reinforcing dimensions. These clusters designs the powerful web of poverty's disadvantages, from the factors; Material poverties, Physical illbeing, Insecurities, Place of the poor, Seasonal dimensions, Poverty of time, Institution & access, Lack of education capabilities, Lack of information, Lack of political clout, Ascribed & legal inferiority, Social relations. These twelve factors, potentially impacting on each others, and vice versa, thus are emphasising the interdependency among the factors of poverty.

## Aim of The Study

1. To understand factors of poverty causing human trafficking.
2. To comprehend the process of women trafficking.
3. To establish linkages for poverty alleviation initiatives by the elements of collective empowerment of women victims of trafficking.

## Review of Literature

In 2013, the organisation WETATI (Women Empowered to Achieve the Impossible) came up with one of the most popular book name "Collective Empowerment: Short Stories". The principle aim of this book is to encourage and empower women in day to day life. The book emphasises that we are all unique as individuals as a person and on the other hand every one of us can relate to each other's experiences because that is something that we can all share and learn out of it to built power among us. The collective power will gain developmental momentum in our own life. Collective empowerment helps even if as an individual we don't

have a vision; we will be inspired to develop one. We will begin to notice what has been defined as impossible by us as individual in our life; we collectively find a way to conquer that thing. The organisation's purpose is to help women discover that we all share a powerful gift to overcome our greatest obstacles victoriously through developing collective empowerment. The book shares how to overcome adversity and define our 'impossible' to map out our journey of successful life to turn our adversities into testimony. The book promotes us to take every day as a challenge to rise to higher heights and learn more and more about ourselves so to take right decision in our life. The book is infused with powerful statements, thought-provoking ideas and life-altering testimony.

The authors Cecilia Luttrell, Sitna Quiroz, Claire Scrutton and Kate Bird of book "Understanding and Operationalising Empowerment", have well described the varied dimensions of empowerment; like an overview of the different definitions of and conceptual approaches to empowerment. The history of empowerment and empowerment as a process or outcome, question was dealt nicely. Understanding power the three continuum of power: Power cube, Empowerment and Implications on partnership was also emphasised in one of the chapter well. Another important element of Empowerment: A multidimensional approach to poverty reduction is highlighted feature of this book. Well said over here that the empowerment is commonly partial to activities associated with 'economic', 'social' and 'political' powers. Transforming power relations among members does require intervention in these different dimensions and levels, this book specifically focused beyond such sectoral approaches too that identify a number of conceptual issues that have practical implications for the operationalisation of collective empowerment. Recently the concept of collective empowerment has brought wide concern but the focus has not brought about any fundamental changes collectively in development practice.

In 2017, Marloes A. Huis, Nina Hansen and their team in the article "A Three-Dimensional Model of Women's Empowerment: Implications in the Field of Microfinance and Future Directions" basically emphasised that for worldwide social development, women's empowerment is must and important goal to achieve in. Linking women with microfinance activities is an important step towards empowerment. Though, in practical the approach gave half way results. Authors reviewed various researches and projected the impact of microfinance activities on many dimensions of women's empowerment. They came up with a Three-Dimensional Model of Women's Empowerment to assimilate earlier findings and to gain a deeper understanding of women's empowerment in microfinance activities. Here researchers proposes in their model that women's empowerment could be under taken on three distinct dimensions: (1) the micro-level: for an individuals' personal beliefs as well as actions, where personal empowerment can be observed (2) the meso-level: focussing towards beliefs as well as actions in relation to others, so here relational empowerment can be

seen and (3) the macro-level: for the broader, societal context where societal empowerment is visible. Further researchers promoted that for empowerment process time and culture are important factors that influence a lot. They suggested that the time aspect between an intervention and its assessment may influence the process of empowerment and its effects on various dimensions, with that the type of intervention influences the sequence in which the three dimensions can be observed. The researchers also tried to bring to the notice that difference in cultures women's position in society may influence the development of women's empowerment process. They emphasized that this Three-Dimensional Model of Women's Empowerment will provide future direction in program designing, implementing and evaluating the interventions. To conclude there can be two main practical implications: First, based on the model it suggest that future researches need to be distinguished between the three dimensions of women's empowerment to develop comprehensive understanding of women's empowerment and to make possible the comparisons of results across studies and cultures. Second it suggests that program designers should specify the interventional factors for different dimensions' of women's empowerment.

#### **Poverty Leading to Human Trafficking**

Precisely to say that poverty and unemployment are two paramount problems of any developing country. To antithesis poverty manifested by unemployment or vice-versa, the approach of planned economic development achieved some successes as industrialisation, green revolution etc., yet the hideous faces of poverty and unemployment are still noticed in the vast underdeveloped areas of the country. In reality there is no dearth of planning, discussions, programmes and no marked scarcity of money for removal of poverty; but still very unfortunate to see that about one third of our people are below the poverty line and another sizable population are just above the poverty line, both are most vulnerable and be the potential section for human trafficking in society till date. The rationale is, conditions are no better for both the section of people due to poverty. But vulnerability even augments for the just above poverty line population as these 'hand to mouth' people remain out of the purview of Government's major poverty alleviation programmes or welfare schemes. But it should not be forgotten that these 'people might not get two square meals a day after rendering back-breaking labour. They remain half-starved and undernourished too. Many of them even do not have any or insufficient source of income and hence push themselves for trafficking. They are asset-less, futureless and helpless. So the problems of the victim of trafficking should not get less importance in our poverty based policy-making process. Appropriate policies should be taken so that they may not fall back to poverty trap.

#### **Out Bust of Poverty: Women Trafficking**

Trafficking in women and girls has been rightly referred to a modern form of poor slavery undertaken due to occupational crises as well as poverty that creates one of the most corrosive

forms of the violation of human rights. It results in gradual and total destruction of a woman's personal identity and her right to live as a free dignified human being in a civilized society. Victim of women trafficking are subjected to violence, humiliation and violation of personal integrity, which in many cases leaves them with the lifelong effects of mental and physical trauma. The victims of such devastating violence

may also end up with life threatening HIV/AIDS, STD, drug addiction or personality disintegration. It is a denial of the right to liberty and security of the women, the right to freedom, torture, violence, cruelty or degrading treatment of the right to home & family, to education & employment, the right to health care and everything that makes for a life with dignity.

#### Factors of Poverty Causing Women Trafficking



#### Process of Women Trafficking Caused due to Poverty

The root cause of trafficking in women, girls and children is mostly the poverty that capitalism has produced and the exploitation due to globalization. It demands cheap labour and the replication of it is in the form of growth of commercial sex industry. Trafficking has two-dimension supply and demand. On the supply side factor that sender person especially develops a process of marketing by trafficking poor women and girls. The demand side is any type of employment necessity for innocent poor victims. The strategies are false promise of employment and education for victims. Most of these victims are affected by poverty, displacement, as a result of natural and man-made catastrophes'. Trafficking often occurs within the context of migration for occupation.

#### Consequences' of Poverty on Victims of Women Trafficking

1. Severe economic instability.
2. Facing sexual, emotional and physical exploitation.
3. Isolation and inability to visit their parents or families.
4. Lack of legal awareness and rights.
5. Suffer from trauma of violence, lose of self identification, self-determination, self steam etc

6. Suffer from helplessness due to illegal border crossing or prostitution.
7. Forced intercourse and rape.
8. Physical and mental torture, various illnesses like HIV/AIDS, depression, blood pressure, diabetic etc
9. Rejection from families and society.
10. Deprivation of common places, human and fundamental rights.

#### Combat Women Trafficking: Alleviate Poverty

The conventional women empowerment tactic is broadly used to frame & facilitate the struggle for social justice and women's equality through transformation of economic, social and political institution. Today it is often narrowly interpreted as the practice of this version of empowerment has resulted in limited changes in gender relations & gender roles, instead produced overburdened women with more work, connecting productive & reproductive roles within the household economy and at the same time she got isolated socially from playing a role in public life resulted in limited changes in gender relations & gender roles. Years after years studies are going on to identify the factors of poverty alleviation in varied sector of society. It's significant; at once the 'development from poverty' is noteworthy in any time frame. A significant model of Development from Poverty through Collective Empowerment is as follows:



### **Collective Empowerment: Women Victim of Trafficking**

Women victim of trafficking needs to be brought into the process of solidarity development means the 'Collective empowerment' through resistance and in conditions of subjugation. As subjugation, turns into agency resource extends collective support that they are looking for at once. These words can help to understand the situation of women victim and the conditions under which they can be empowered through redefining empowerment to suit the context. So the empowerment in context of conditional oppression, conform to be reformative and instrumentalist approach, called 'Collective empowerment' rather than conventional empowerment i.e. transformative for an individual.

#### **Implicit on 'Collective empowerment' are-**

Collective empowerment is to link individual victim of women trafficking to women collective, for institutionalize & professionalize women's activism, intended for empowerment based on power. The notion of power that is as connected to authority, domination and stands against exploitation, as it is to exercise power in collective action for liberation from the trafficking. This can be realized through three factors: knowledge of victims, has the necessary confidence in achievement & work, and be a member of a collective to realize citizenship.

Collective empowerment is a revolutionary process as a part of social struggle against patriarchy even caused as women trafficking occupation. It is the union form that can mobilize and organize women victims to reach their goals of dignified life. Space & Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are criteria of collective empowerment. It lays on the idea that when there is physical space or place given to women victim of trafficking, they will begin to exchange ideas and plan activities that meet their needs'. This strategic process of helping women victim of trafficking communities to articulates their own needs,

strategize solutions, and implement those solutions, while building leadership and organizational capacity of suppressed group.

Collective empowerment affirms economic empowerment an integral part of political and social empowerment. This can be done by constituting cooperatives of women victims of trafficking, were they work and even get exposure of public life in terms of commercial sector. The experience of women victims working in cooperatives develops solidarity and cooperatives relations among themselves, understand and act towards changing gender dynamics and became involved politically in the community issues and concerns. This comprehensive process of empowerment is part of their resistance and coping with life under occupation, on one hand and with that developing their political, economic and social spaces on the other.

Collective empowerment is framed within coping strategies and steadfastness. Such view would be more authentic and relevant in the conditional oppressed situation faced by women victim of trafficking even in their post-trafficking period, that speak to the everyday struggle for survival, the struggle to assert gender identity and claim women's rights as an integral component of the collective empowerment.

The process of Collective empowerment develops radical citizenship among women victim of trafficking i.e. united to bear national and political responsibility and attain their rights through building a democratic community. So it is a tool and an objective. The empowered woman victims of trafficking can defend her rights and at the same time engage in the struggle for attaining the rights of other women victims. Collective empowerment is a comprehensive process of empowerment that focuses on the community organization, process of social action and engagement in society's resistance for social liberation.

The members of the union of committees constituted by women victim of trafficking, collectively empowered are considered to be main-stream and secular, They are developed with the capacity to take decisions unanimously and execute them freely and in order to do this the members have comprehensive knowledge on all issues and thus seems radical change at all levels of economically, socially and politically empowerment.

#### **Conclusion**

Collective empowerment helps in changing the personality of women victim of trafficking. They are imposed to change by developing the capacity of power to challenge, as they start performing well in managing community meetings, even conduct training on the issues of liberations from suppression & poverty and so on. So victims are empowered through their effort of mutual support & development and at the same time institution becomes supportive. Collective empowerment is a scientific process where empowerment begins in individual victims of trafficking through capacity building and then it integrates with collective in order for change to happen as desired.

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