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**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

Empowerment is the process that creates power in individuals over their own lives, society and gives them a voice in their communities. People have been said to be empowered when they have access to the opportunities available to them without restrictions or limitations of any form. This makes it possible for empowered people to make decisions that serve their interest and aspirations with regards to different aspects of life such as, education, career, and lifestyle.

Women Empowerment is the process of equipping women to be powerful and capable of making life determining decision in the society. Women Empowerment is also seen through gender roles that allow them to acquire the ability to choose between known alternatives which otherwise they would have been restricted from. The concept of empowerment comes from self respect. To be empowered one must acquire empowerment herself rather than have it given to her by a third party. Throughout history, there have been instances of women standing up for themselves and fighting injustices. However, Women Empowerment is a recent phenomenon that is now gaining popularity in the 21st Century World. There are several forms of Women Empowerment which can be grouped into different categories such as Economic Empowerment, Political Empowerment.

Political Empowerment: In the Western World, the struggle for the women empowerment can be traced back to the WOMEN SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT which began in 1848. Women Suffrage is the right of women to vote in elections. In addition to working for broad based economic and political equality and social reforms, women sought to change voting laws to allow them to vote. As a result of this movement International and National organizations came together to achieve this goal as well as equal civil rights for women. In the pre colonial Africa, women held notable positions in the society, some held chieftaincies in their own rights and some tribe had traditions to pass dynastic rights to exclusively male titles of royal descendants through matrilineal line. However with the advent of colonialism these practices and traditions were replaced by rising patriarchy. Gender discrimination was thus solidified across the continent during the colonial era. Political empowerment supports creating policies that would best support gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private spheres. Some popular methods that have been useful in women’s political empowerment include creating affirmative action policies to have a quota for the number of women in policy making and parliament positions. Other methods include voicing opinions and the chance to run for office.

Economic Empowerment: This is the ability to make and action decisions that involve the control over and allocation of financial resources. It is an important priority to reduce poverty among women. Women Economic Empowerment is an entry into other forms of empowerment and it allow them to bring values into the construction of alternatives to the current structure. Women make a lot of contributions to economies either in businesses, farms, as entrepreneurs. Investing in the empowerment of women economically creates a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication, and economic growth. Economic empowerment of women is the ability to participate equally in existing markets, access to decent work, control over their own time, and participation in economic decision making at all times. It also relates to the enhancement of women’s capacity for strategic choices and agency in the sphere of the economy and other possibilities open for change in other aspect of their lives. Economic empowerment of women is very critical and essential for human development. It also matters for poverty reduction among women economically and economic growth financially. Women can participate in economic growth and get benefits such as building women’s human capital and capabilities, mainstreaming women into the financial system.

The women empowerment movement has been functional in some parts of the world, and is also helping to bring out the freedom of women. This movement has allowed women to know their rights and use them judiciously. The women who have been able to enjoy women empowerment should endeavor to help those who have not been part of the women empowerment to discover their rights. Women should be given equal opportunity in every field and voice for themselves. We need to empower women to speak up for themselves and never be a victim of injustices.