

Woman empowerment



Introduction “ It is the women who creates the world, she who preserves & destroys, with a wink of her wonder eyes, she holds the universe in her womb” Women's empowerment is not a Northern concept. Women all over the world, including countries in the South, have been challenging and changing gender inequalities since the beginnings of history. These struggles have also been supported by many men who have been outraged at injustices against women and the consequences for society.

It would be yet another instance of imperialism to say all these women and men did not have minds of their own! The word empowerment, although it gained widespread usage in the context of the US Civil Rights and Women's Movements is an extension of earlier concepts of equality, justice and freedom which were expressed in many anti-imperialist and political struggles. These are also enshrined in international agreements and also underlie the precepts of many religious traditions, including Islam.

Empowerment is now increasingly seen as a process by which the one's without power gain greater control over their lives. This means control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology. It involves power to, power with and power within. Some define empowerment as a process of awareness and conscientization, of capacity building leading to greater participation, effective decision-making power and control leading to transformative action.

This involves ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns. With reference to women the power relation that has to be involved includes their lives at multiple levels, family, community, market and the state. Importantly it involves at the psychological level women's

ability to assert themselves and this is constructed by the 'gender roles' assigned to her specially in a cultural which resists change like India. The questions surrounding women's empowerment the...