DEVELOPMENT, GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT: A CRITIQUE ON THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT
The paper tries to critically analyze the development process and the status of women in India. More specifically, the paper takes up the issues of gender equality and empowerment and the way these are perceived and operationalised in the development process followed in independent India. The paper argues that the development policy pursued and implemented failed to bring fundamental changes in the status of women in general, and the marginalized in particular. The women continue to be in perpetual subjugation, marginalization, and unequal socio-economic status; and are struggling for their basic survival, self-respect, and autonomy. It is significant that the Indian State has of late been trying to build hope by taking recourse to globalization, the results of which are already perceivable vis-à-vis women. Although the policies and strategies, aimed at women empowerment followed in India, have caused some improvement in the condition of women, what we see today is only a semblance of women empowerment rather than real empowerment.

KEY WORDS: Development, Empowerment, Gender inequality, Globalization, Marginalized Women.