



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: IMPACT, IMPORTANCE AND FUTURE

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Abstract

Equality for women is a hotly contested topic. In the past, they were finally gaining parity with males. However, during the post-Vedic and epic eras, they did encounter some challenges. They were frequently subjected to slave conditions. Their legal standings began shifting progressively towards the turn of the century. We might bring up Britain and the British here. Following India's independence, the country's leaders and constitutional drafters made a concerted effort to ensure that women have the same legal and social rights as males. Women have now reached and occupied all areas of respectable society. Some forms of prejudice and harassment persist in the society, though. Women have just recently begun to realize their full potential. As a result, we should all take care to elevate women's roles in society. The primary objective of this research is to show how gender equality affects society and how crucial it is to India's future.

Key Terms: Empowerment, Women, India, Society, Respect.

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Introduction

Women constitute almost 50% of the world's population but India has shown disproportionate sex ratio whereby female's population has been comparatively lower than males. As far as their social status is concerned, they are not treated as equal to men in all the places. In the Western societies, the women have got equal right and status with men in all walks of life. But gender disabilities and discriminations are found in India even today. The paradoxical situation has such that she was sometimes concerned as Goddess and at other times merely as slave.

Women in India Now the women in India enjoy a unique status of equality with the men as per constitutional and legal provision. But the Indian women have come a long way to achieve the present positions. First, gender inequality in India can be traced back to the historic days of Mahabharata when Draupadi

was put on the dice by her husband 200 Dhruba Hazarika as a commodity. History is a witness that women was made to dance both in private and public places to please the man. Secondly, in Indian society, a female was always dependent on male members of the family even last few years ago. Thirdly, a female was not allowed to speak with loud voice in the presence of elder members of her in-laws. In the family, every fault had gone to her and responsible. Forth, as a widow her dependence on a male member of the family still more increase. In many social activities she is not permitted to mix with other members of the family. Other hand, she has very little share in political, social and economic life of the society. The early twenty century, it was rise of the National Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi who was in Favor of removing all the disabilities of women. At the same time, Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and various other social reformers laid stress on women's



education, prevention of child marriage, withdrawals of evil practice of sati, removal of polygamy etc. The National Movement and various reform movements paved the way for their liberations from the social evils and religious taboos. In this context, we may write about the Act of Sati (abolish) 1829, Hindu Widow Remarriage Act' 1856, the Child Restriction Act, 1929, Women Property Right Act, 1937 etc. After independence of India, the constitution makers and the national leaders recognized the equal social position of women with men. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has determined the age for marriage, provided for monogamy and guardianship of the mother and permitted the dissolution of marriage under specific circumstances. Under the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956, an unmarried women, widow or divorce of sound mind can also take child in adoption. Similarly, the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 says that any person who gives, takes, or abets the giving or taking of dowry shall be punished with imprisonment, which may extend to six months or fine up to Rs.5000/ or with both. The Constitution of India guarantees equality of sexes and in fact grants special Favors to women. These can be found in three articles of the constitution. Article 14 says that the government shall not deny to any person equality before law or equal protection of the law. Article 15 declares that government shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of sex. Article 15 (3) makes a special provision enabling the state to make affirmative discriminations in Favor of women. Article 42 directs the state to make provision for ensuring just and human conditions of work and maternity relief. Above all, the constitution regards a fundamental duty on every citizen through Articles 15 (A), (E) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Methodology

This research paper is completely based on secondary data. The data for this article was collected from books, research papers, news articles and Government websites.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the importance on Women empowerment.

2. To analyze the impact of women empowerment and the future of India.

Empowerment of women in India

The concept of empowerment flows from the power. It is vesting where it does not exist or exist inadequately. Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant, have positive esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and they should be able to participate in development activities. The empowered women should be able to participate in the process of decision making. In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD1985) and the National Commission for Women (NCW) have been worked to Women Empowerment in India: A Brief Discussion 201 safeguard the rights and legal entitlement of women. The 73rd &74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided some special powers to women that for reservation of seats (33%), whereas the report HRD as March2002, shows that the legislatures with the highest percentage of women are, Sweden 42.7%, Denmark 38%, Finland 36% and Iceland 34.9%. In India "The New Panchayati Raj " is the part of the effort to empower women at least at the village level. The government of India has ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights to women. These are CEDAW (1993), the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (!985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the platform for Action (1995) and other such instruments. The year of 2001 was observed as the year of women's empowerment. During the year, a landmark document has been adopted, 'the National Policy for the empowerment of women.' For the beneficiaries of the women, the government has been adopted different schemes and programs i.e., the National Credit Fund for Women (1993), Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), Information and Mass Education (IMF) etc. The most positive development last few years has been the growing involvement of women in the Panchayati Raj institutions. There are many

elected women representatives at the village council level. At present all over India, there are total 20, 56, 882 laces Gaon panchayat members, out of this women member is 8, 38, 244 (40.48%), while total Anchali panchayat members is 1, 09, 324, out of this women member is 47, 455, (40.41%) and total Zila parishad members is 11, 708, out of this women member is 4, 923 (42.05%). At the central and state levels too, women are progressively making a difference. Today we have seen women chief ministers, women president, different political parties' leader, well establish businessmen etc. The most notable amongst these are Mrs.protiva Devi Singh Patil, Shilla Dixit, Mayawati, Sonia Gandhi, Binda karat, Nazma Heptulla, Indira Nuye (Pepsi-co), BJP leader Sushma Suraj, railway minister Mamta Banarje, 'Narmada Basso' leader Medhapatekar, Indian Iron Woman, EX-prime minister Indra Gandhi etc. Women are also involving in human development issues of child rearing, education, health, and gender parity. Many of them have gone into the making and marketing of a range of cottage products-pickles, tailoring, embroidery etc. The economic empowerment of women is being regarded these days as a sine-quo-none of progress for a country; hence, the issue of economic empowerment of women is of paramount importance to political thinkers, social thinkers and reformers.

Reasons for the empowerment of women

Today we have noticed different Acts and Schemes of the central government as well as state government to empower the women of India. But in India women are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education, and also reproductive healthcare. Women are found to be economically very poor all over the India. A few women are engaged in services and other activities. So, they need economic power to stand on their own legs on par with men. Other hand, it has been 202 Dhruva Hazarika observed that women are found to be less literate than men. According to 2001 census, rate of literacy among men in India is found to

be 76% whereas it is only 54% among women. Thus, increasing education among women is of very important in empowering them. It has also noticed that some of women are too weak to work. They consume less food but work more. Therefore, from the health point of view, women folk who are to be weaker are to be made stronger. Another problem is that workplace harassment of women. There are so many cases of rape, kidnapping of girl, dowry harassment, and so on. For these reasons, they require empowerment of all kinds in order to protect themselves and to secure their purity and dignity. To sum up, women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come with and help to self-empower themselves. There is a need to formulate reducing feminized poverty, promoting education of women, and prevention and elimination of violence against women.

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Importance of women Empowerment

Women empowerment is of paramount importance in India, as it has the potential to bring about significant positive changes in various aspects of society, the economy, and the nation as a whole. Here are some key reasons why women empowerment is crucial in India:

Gender Equality: Empowering women is essential for achieving gender equality. India has a long history of gender disparities, and empowering women helps bridge this gap. When women have equal rights and opportunities, it fosters a more equitable society.

Economic Growth: Women form a substantial part of the population, and their participation in the workforce is crucial for economic development. Empowering women economically through education and employment opportunities can contribute significantly to the country's GDP.

Education: Educating women is a powerful tool for social progress. An educated woman is more likely to make informed decisions about her life, family, and health. It also leads to

better family planning and child-rearing practices.

Health and Family Welfare: Empowered women tend to have better access to healthcare and family planning resources. This can lead to lower maternal and infant mortality rates and healthier families overall.

Political Participation: Women's representation in politics is essential for a functioning democracy. Women's voices and perspectives are critical in policymaking and ensuring that government decisions reflect the interests of the entire population.

Reducing Gender-Based Violence: Empowering women can help reduce gender-based violence. When women are economically independent and aware of their rights, they are more likely to report instances of abuse and seek help.

Social Change: Empowered women can challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes, paving the way for broader societal changes. This can lead to a more inclusive and progressive society.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Women entrepreneurs can drive innovation and create jobs. Encouraging women to start and run businesses can stimulate economic growth and foster innovation.

Global Competitiveness: In an increasingly globalized world, countries that harness the full potential of their female population are better positioned to compete on the global stage.

Human Rights: Women's rights are human rights. Empowering women is not just a matter of economic or social development; it is a fundamental principle of justice and equality.

However, it's important to note that women empowerment is a multifaceted issue and requires comprehensive efforts from governments, NGOs, and society at large. This includes policies and programs aimed at improving women's access to education,

healthcare, economic opportunities, and legal rights, as well as challenging and changing societal attitudes and norms that perpetuate gender inequality. Ultimately, empowering women in India is not just a goal; it's a prerequisite for the nation's sustainable and inclusive development.

Women Empowerment in India, and its impacts

Women empowerment has numerous positive impacts on individuals, families, communities, and societies as a whole. Here are some of the significant positive outcomes of women's empowerment:

Economic Growth: Empowered women contribute to economic growth by participating in the workforce, starting businesses, and investing in their communities. This increased economic activity can boost a nation's GDP.

Poverty Reduction: When women have access to education and economic opportunities, they are better equipped to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Empowered women often invest their income in their children's education and healthcare.

Improved Health and Nutrition: Empowered women are more likely to seek healthcare for themselves and their children, leading to better overall health and nutrition outcomes. They also tend to adopt healthier family practices.

Enhanced Education: Women's empowerment often results in higher rates of female education. Educated women are more likely to send their children, including daughters, to school, thereby improving overall educational attainment.

Resilience and Sustainability: Empowered women are better prepared to cope with and adapt to environmental and social changes, contributing to the resilience and sustainability of communities.

Personal Fulfilment: Women's empowerment allows individuals to pursue their dreams and

aspirations, leading to greater personal fulfilment and happiness.

Overall, women's empowerment is a catalyst for positive change, leading to more equitable, prosperous, and just societies. It benefits not only women but also their families, communities, and nations as a whole.

Women Empowerment: Fostering Revolution, Building Progress

Women empowerment is an issue of profound significance and enduring relevance in our world today. It transcends geographic boundaries, cultural contexts, and socioeconomic disparities, representing a fundamental pillar of social progress and human rights. At its core, women empowerment is about granting women the agency, opportunities, and rights they deserve as equal members of society. This empowerment, in turn, propels nations towards more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous futures.

One of the key facets of women empowerment lies in economic participation. When women are economically empowered, societies thrive. India, a country characterized by its rich cultural diversity and a vast population, exemplifies the transformative potential of economically empowered women. Over the years, India has witnessed a remarkable rise in the number of women entering the workforce. This shift has not only contributed to the country's economic growth but has also initiated a seismic cultural change, challenging traditional gender roles and norms.

Education stands as a cornerstone of women's empowerment. It is through education that women gain the knowledge and skills to take control of their lives and contribute to their communities. In India, as in many parts of the world, access to quality education has been a powerful tool for levelling the playing field. When girls have equal access to education, they are more likely to make informed decisions about their lives, including health, family planning, and career aspirations. Thus, education becomes a catalyst for change, with ripple effects that span generations.

Healthcare is another critical dimension of women empowerment. Access to comprehensive healthcare services, including reproductive health, is essential for women's well-being. In India, various initiatives have been launched to improve maternal health and family planning services. These initiatives aim not only to reduce maternal mortality but also to empower women to make choices about their reproductive health, thereby granting them greater control over their lives. Political participation is a powerful means to amplify women's voices and influence. As half of any nation's population, women must be represented in legislative bodies and decision-making processes. India's experience with women in politics showcases the transformative potential of female leadership. Women leaders have championed policies addressing gender-based violence, workplace discrimination, and women's health issues. Their presence in politics not only reflects the diversity of voices within a society but also paves the way for more inclusive governance. Legal reforms have played a pivotal role in advancing women's empowerment in India. Laws such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act have been enacted to protect women's rights and safety. These legal frameworks are crucial for holding perpetrators accountable and fostering a safer environment for women to pursue their aspirations.

However, women empowerment is not solely a matter of enacting laws and policies; it is deeply intertwined with changing societal norms and attitudes. Traditional gender roles and norms often constrain women's freedom and opportunities. To truly empower women, societies must challenge these ingrained norms through education and awareness campaigns. The transformational power of such efforts is evident in the changing dynamics of gender roles in modern India. Entrepreneurship and leadership represent realms where women's empowerment can catalyze innovation and progress. Encouraging women to become entrepreneurs and leaders in various fields unlocks a wealth of untapped potential. Women bring fresh perspectives,

creativity, and resilience to address societal and economic challenges. India's burgeoning tech industry, for example, has seen a rise in female entrepreneurs who are pushing boundaries and reshaping the business landscape.

The digital age, technology and digital inclusion have emerged as critical components of women's empowerment. Access to the internet and technology opens up a world of opportunities for women, from online education and remote work to networking and entrepreneurial ventures. Bridging the digital gender divide is imperative to ensure that women can fully participate in the digital revolution that is reshaping economies and societies.

Marginalized women, often hailing from low-income backgrounds, rural areas, or marginalized castes, deserve special attention in the quest for women's empowerment. Their empowerment holds the potential to reduce overall inequality within society. Tailored initiatives and support systems can uplift these women, enabling them to break free from the cycle of poverty and discrimination.

Central to any discussion of women empowerment is the imperative of ensuring women's safety. Addressing issues of violence against women, harassment, and discrimination is paramount. Creating a safe environment where women can live, work, and pursue their dreams without fear is a non-negotiable step towards empowerment. Women empowerment is not merely a desirable goal but an essential prerequisite for building a brighter future, not only in India but across the globe. When women are empowered economically, educated, and given access to healthcare and political participation, societies prosper. Legal reforms, changing social norms, entrepreneurship, technology, and the inclusion of marginalized women all play crucial roles in this endeavor. Women's empowerment is not a zero-sum game; it benefits everyone by fostering a more equitable, just, and prosperous world. It is a journey marked by progress, challenges, and immense potential—a journey that holds the promise of a future where women stand

on equal footing with men, contributing their talents, ideas, and leadership to shape a better world for all.

Women Empowerment and the Future of India

Women empowerment is a multifaceted concept that transcends mere gender equality. It embodies the idea of providing women with the necessary tools, opportunities, and rights to lead a life of dignity and choice. In India, a nation marked by its rich cultural diversity and historical significance, the empowerment of women is not just a social imperative but a key determinant of its future trajectory.

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India, like many countries, has grappled with gender disparities for centuries. Deep-rooted patriarchal norms have often restricted women's participation in various spheres of life. However, in recent decades, significant strides have been made towards women's empowerment, offering a glimpse into a brighter future for the country.

One of the cornerstones of women empowerment in India has been education. Educated women are more likely to make informed choices, pursue careers, and participate actively in the socio-economic development of the nation. The government and various non-governmental organizations have worked tirelessly to increase female literacy rates, leading to a significant rise in the number of educated women in India. This shift has not only empowered women individually but has also contributed to the country's overall development.

Economic empowerment is another vital aspect of women's empowerment. Over the years, women have proven their mettle in various professional fields, breaking traditional stereotypes. They are increasingly joining the workforce, becoming entrepreneurs, and contributing substantially to the nation's economy. The rise of women-led startups and businesses has not only created jobs but also fostered innovation and diversity in the corporate world.

Political empowerment has also been a crucial driver of change in India. Women's

participation in politics has steadily increased, with more women holding key positions in government and local bodies. The presence of women in decision-making roles is essential for addressing gender-specific issues, advocating for women's rights, and promoting inclusive policies.

In addition to education, economic, and political empowerment, social and cultural changes are also shaping the future of women in India. There is a growing recognition of the importance of gender equality, and campaigns against gender-based violence and discrimination have gained momentum. The #MeToo movement in India, for example, shed light on the prevalence of harassment and the need for societal change. Furthermore, technology is playing a pivotal role in women's empowerment. Access to the internet and smartphones has opened up new avenues for women to acquire knowledge, access financial services, and connect with opportunities globally. The digital revolution has enabled women to break free from geographical constraints and traditional barriers.

The future of India is intrinsically tied to the empowerment of its women. A nation can only progress when it harnesses the full potential of all its citizens, regardless of gender. Empowered women contribute not only to economic growth but also to social stability and harmony.

A future India where women are empowered holds the promise of reduced gender-based violence, improved healthcare outcomes, and enhanced social cohesion. It is a future where women have equal access to resources and opportunities, enabling them to pursue their dreams and aspirations. This, in turn, will lead to a more prosperous and equitable society.

However, the path to women's empowerment in India is not without its challenges. Deep-seated gender biases, cultural norms, and economic disparities persist. Addressing these issues requires concerted efforts from all segments of society – government, civil society, businesses, and individuals.

women empowerment in India is not just a goal but a necessity for the nation's future growth and progress. It encompasses education, economic independence, political

representation, and cultural transformation. As India continues its journey towards a more equitable society, the empowerment of its women will be a beacon of hope, guiding the country toward a brighter and more inclusive future. It is a future where every woman has the opportunity to realize her full potential and contribute meaningfully to the nation's development, thereby ensuring a more prosperous and harmonious India for generations to come.

Conclusion

women empowerment in India is an ongoing journey that holds immense promise for the nation's future. It is a path marked by progress, resilience, and transformative change. While India has made significant strides in advancing women's rights and opportunities, there is still much work to be done.

The empowerment of women is not merely a matter of social justice; it is a strategic imperative for the nation's development. Educated, economically independent, and politically engaged women are powerful catalysts for positive change in society. Their contributions extend beyond individual success to the betterment of families, communities, and the entire nation.

India's future hinges on its ability to harness the full potential of its female population. It is a future where women are free from discrimination, violence, and bias, and where they can thrive in all spheres of life. Achieving this vision requires a concerted effort from policymakers, civil society, businesses, and individuals alike. It demands the dismantling of deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, the promotion of gender-sensitive policies, and the creation of safe and inclusive spaces for women.

The journey toward women empowerment in India is not without its challenges, but it is a journey that India cannot afford to abandon. With continued commitment, perseverance, and collective action, the nation can build a future where every Indian woman is empowered to shape her destiny, contribute to the country's progress, and be a source of inspiration for generations to come.

In this future India, the empowerment of women is not an option but a necessity, an integral part of the nation's identity and its path toward becoming a truly inclusive, equitable, and prosperous society. It is a future where the aspirations and potential of every Indian woman are realized, and where the nation flourishes in unity, strength, and diversity. Women empowerment is not just a goal; it is the cornerstone of India's future success and the key to unlocking its full potential on the global stage.

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