

# Make in India' and Women Empowerment

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## ABSTRACT

**This paper highlights the make in India and women empowerment. Women's empowerment has the potential to transform many aspects of society and the country. We have observed many Acts and Schemes of the Central and State Governments to empower women in India. However, in India, women face discrimination and marginalization at all levels of society, including social involvement, political participation, economic participation, access to education, and reproductive healthcare. Women are observed to be economically impoverished in India. If we want to make our country a developed one, we must first empower women via the efforts of men, government, lows, and women. The need for women's empowerment arose as a result of gender inequality and male dominance in Indian society. Women's empowerment is critical for a successful future in the family, society, and country. Today we have seen the women occupied the respectable positions in all walks of the fields. Yet, they have not absolutely freed some discrimination and harassment of the society. A few women are involved in service and other activities. They require economic power to stand on their own in comparison to men. As a result, everyone should work to improve the standing of women.**

**Keywords: Women Empowerment, Education, gender Discrimination,**

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## INTRODUCTION

Women have an important role in the growth of the economy and society. Women all throughout the world are actively working as leaders and outperforming others in all aspects of life. As a result, women make major contributions to the rising economy. Women's empowerment is fundamentally the process of raising the economic, social, and political position of traditionally underprivileged women in society. It refers to the process of protecting kids from all types of violence. Women's empowerment is constructing a culture and a political climate in which women can live without fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination, and the general sense of persecution that comes with being a woman in a traditionally male-dominated structure.

### **Women's Empowerment Movement**

The movement for women's empowerment began in North America in the nineteenth century and created the groundwork for women's rights movements around the world. In the nineteenth century, prominent reformers in India, including Savitribai Phule, Pandita Ramabai, and Tarabai Shinde, exposed issues of discrimination and patriarchy in Indian society. These movements advocated for a more liberal understanding of an individual's rights in regard to society, rather than their constrained form in relation to society.

### **Concept of Women Empowerment**

The term women empowerment is all about authority, or the power embarked on women sharing indistinguishable rights. The term refers to the liberation of women from socio-economic restraints of reliance. Women empowerment is a stage of acquiring power for women in order to understand her rights and to perform her responsibilities towards oneself and others in a most effective way. Empowerment of women will enable a greater degree of self-confidence, a sense of independence and capability to resist discrimination imposed by the male dominated society.

In the context of women, empowerment is referred as a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase self-reliance, to assert their independent right, to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination. Empowerment as the word suggests, is to empower or enable women to do certain things and in most cases it connotes women wielding political power. A deeper understanding of the word throws light on many of its dimensions and implications. The very concept of empowerment of women which

is based on equality between genders is a long drawn, conscious and continuous process comprising enhancement of skills, capacity building, gaining self-confidence and meaningful participation in decision-making. As the foremost precursor to development, empowerment of women comprehensively seeks to ensure an equitable division of resources and carve a clear role for them in decision-making.

It helps them articulate theirs as well as others rights and participate actively in the democratic processes. Empowerment also wards off retrogressive practices like female infanticide and gender based violence. Empowerment means to make one powerful or to equip one with the power to face challenges of life, to overcome the disabilities, handicaps and inequalities. Empowerment is an active multidimensional process, which would enable women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. It would consist in providing greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision-making, greater ability to plan their lives, greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and freedom from the shackles imposed on them by custom, belief and practice. Empowerment does not mean setting women against men. Indeed it means making both men and women realize their changing roles and status and develop a consensus for harmonious living in the context of an egalitarian society.

It means redistribution of work roles, redistributing their values to the changing world and attitudes and evolving new kinds of adjustments, understanding and trust with each other. Empowerment of women is a new ideology for carrying democratic values into the family and society. Empowerment is an active process of enabling women to realize their identity, potentiality and power in all spheres of their lives. Empowerment of women also means equal status to women. Here the balance of power between men and women is equal and neither party has dominance over the other. Empowering women socio-economically through increased awareness of their rights and duties as well as access to resources is a decisive step towards greater security for them.

Empowerment includes higher literacy level and education for women, better healthcare for women and children, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in economic and commercial sectors, awareness of their rights and responsibilities, improved standards of living and acquiring self-reliance, self-esteem and self-confidence. Thus the framework of empowerment encompasses the welfare of women, satisfaction of basic needs, access to resources, conscientisation to attain gender equity participation in the decision-making alongside men, and control, which refers to the ultimate level of equality and empowerment. Women empowerment does not mean 'deifying women' rather it means replacing patriarchy with parity.

**A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** stated that "empowering women is an essential for making a decent country, when women are empowered, society with stability is guaranteed".

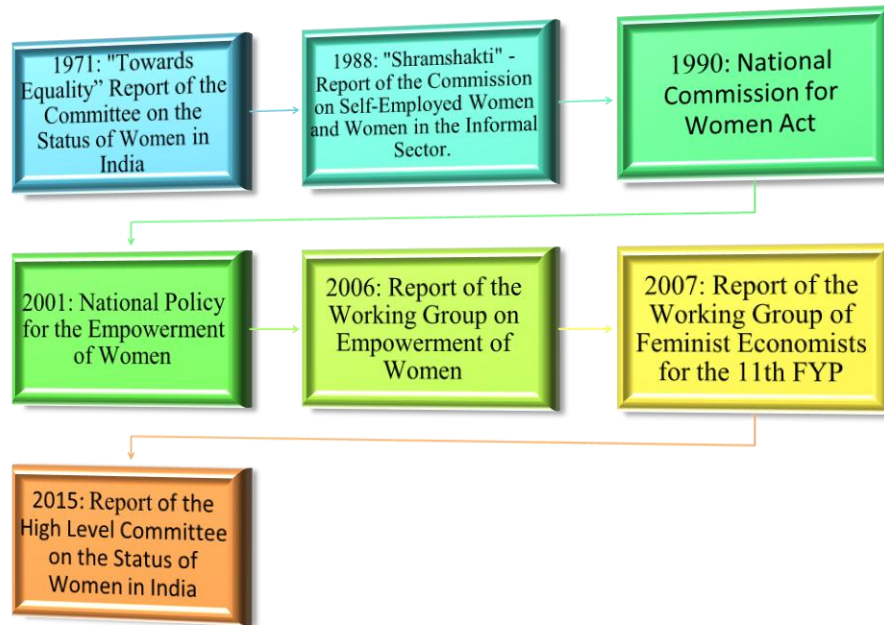
**Sayulu, Sardar & Sridevi, (2005)** defined that "Women empowerment is any process that provides greater autonomy to women through the sharing of relevant information and provision of control over factors affecting their performance".

### **Current Scenario of Women Empowerment in India**

Women comprise around 50% of the country's population, and a bulk of them stays economically dependent on each other without employment. In the age of feminism, a small portion of women in India are freed and can employ their free will and are permitted to carve out their lives the way they want. But there is a considerable division of the women in this nation who require optimistic support. In most Indian villages and semi-urban cities, women are still denied fundamental education and are never authorized to continue higher education despite amassing the understanding required.

The principles of gender equality are enshrined in the Indian constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to undertake affirmative action in favor of women in acknowledgement of the wide gender disparity that exists in society. India set a precedent by recognizing women's rights through universal suffrage right from independence. Since then, the Government of India has taken several steps for empowering women, many of which are reflected in the Planning Commission's Five-Year Plans (FYP). The fifth FYP, for instance, included women in the planning exercise, while focused interventions for women empowerment were incorporated from the sixth FYP onward.

In parallel, the government also commissioned a number of reports on the issue of women empowerment, a brief timeline of which is presented below figure 1. It must be noted that all of these reports left a mark on the Planning Commission's FYPs that were being framed around the time and thereby, informed the policies crafted by the government.



Furthermore, we have discovered that there are numerous impediments to women's empowerment. They are addressed briefly below:

- **Early Child Marriage:** Although it is banned in India, nearly half of all women aged 20 to 24 were married before reaching the legal marriage age of 18.
- **Sex Ratio:** As per UNICEF, unethical medical practitioners determining foetal sex has developed into a 1,000 crore industry in India. Following the 2011 census, a number of campaigners expressed worry that up to 8 million female foetuses had been terminated in the previous decade. Despite an increasing child sex ratio, India still ranks 127th out of 146 countries in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index. The sex ratio (females/1000 males) in India fell from 946 in 1951 to a far lower level of 927 in 1991. Following that, the sex ratio rose to 943 in 2011. However, according to World Bank predictions, India's sex ratio will fall to 931 by 2021.
- **Lack of Political Willingness:** Lack of Political Will: Despite existing reservations for women, political participation is hampered at the Panchayat (local governing bodies), state, and national levels. The 108th Constitutional Amendment Bill (also known as the Women's Reservation Bill) was passed to reserve one-third of the seats for women in order to ensure their active participation in all areas. This is certainly a light of hope for a bill that could help improve the female composition of parliament and state legislatures. Despite the fact that the 2014 Lok Sabha elections saw the largest ever presence of women in parliament, it remains at 61 (11.23%) of 543 seats. There were just 59 women members in the Lok Sabha after the 2009 elections. The reserve bill guarantees 181 out of the 543 seats in Parliament and 1,370 out of the 4,109 seats in the State Assembly. This is a watershed moment in Indian politics, as women now hold less than 15% of seats in the national legislature.
- **Social Inequality:** Because the bulk of the Indian people is impoverished, the chance for education and participation in social and civic life is limited to women from the top and middle classes. Women are exploited as domestic helpers and wives whose salaries are taken by the man of the house due to abysmal poverty. If poverty were not an issue, the girl child would be able to pursue her ambitions without fear of sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, or a lack of education or employment.
- **Illiteracy:** Women's illiteracy prevents them from working in business and commerce, agriculture, and traditional and modern sectors. The proportion of female students has consistently climbed since independence, particularly in the last decade. Women's literacy rates have increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 29.75% in 2001 to 54.16 percent in 2001. According to the 2011 Census data, literacy among women is only 65.46 percent. It is somewhat discouraging to note that the literacy percentage of women in India is even lower than the national averages, which are 74.04. Since 1995, the number of women enrolled in higher education has increased. However, when compared to the enrolment figures for boys, these figures are insufficient. When compared to the enrolment figures for boys, these figures are insufficient. The biggest impediment to women's education in India is rural residency, low caste, low economic position, and the conventional attitude toward

women's education in general. Women's education is growing slowly in rural areas. Furthermore, education is not equally accessible to all. Gender disparity is reinforced in school, as seen by the fact that the literacy rate for women is just 65.46% compared to 82.14% for males, according to the 2011 Census. Women's school dropout rates are also observed to be relatively higher. Women's higher prevalence of illiteracy surely contributes to women's reliance on men and subordination. The primary cause of women's exploitation and neglect is a lack of knowledge.

- **Crime against Women:** Over the previous three years, there have been over 24,000 recorded dowry deaths in India. Approximately 70% of married women in India between the ages of 15 and 49 are beaten or raped. According to a 2014 data by the National Crime Record Bureau, 39.8% of rape victims in India are girls under the age of 18. According to a Thomson Reuters Foundation survey (2011), India is the fourth most dangerous country in the world for women to live in, as women of any class, caste, creed, or religion can be victims of the terrible violence of an acid assault. Acid attacks against women who decline a man's marriage proposal or want a divorce are common in India. As per the Avon Foundation for Women in 2011, 72% of acid-attack instances in India from 2002 to 2010 featured a female victim. The list of everyday crimes against women is never-ending. It is a true reflection of so-called civilized society.

### **Features of Women's Empowerment**

Specific qualities are present in women's empowerment. Here are some of them:

- Building awareness and capacity is the process of empowering women.
- Women's empowerment gives them the ability to band together and become more independent.
- Women's empowerment fosters a greater sense of self-confidence and independence in women.
- Women's empowerment is the process of giving women more authority so they may better understand their rights and fulfill their obligations to others and to themselves.
- Women are given more liberty as a result of women empowerment.
- Women's empowerment also entails equal standing.
- Women's empowerment refers to their ability to shape ideology, intellectual resources, and material resources.
- Women's empowerment allows them to realise their full identity and strength in all aspects of life.
- Women's empowerment entails women's engagement in policy and decision-making processes at both the household and public levels.
- Women's empowerment happens at numerous levels, including individual, group, and community, and in sociological, psychological, political, cultural, family, and economic arenas.

### **FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA**

1. **Gender Discrimination Must Be Addressed:** Gender discrimination has slowed the rate of women's emancipation in India. Gender discrimination must be eliminated in all areas of action. To achieve the goal of empowering women, women must be given the opportunity to participate actively in decision-making at all levels and in decision-making procedures. They must gain the respect and importance that they are entitled to in society in order to fulfill their destiny.
2. **Women's Attitude Changes-** Women should empower themselves by becoming aware of their oppression, taking initiative, and seizing opportunities to bring about a change in their status. The soul must be empowered. Women must empower themselves by adopting a new mindset. Women's empowerment is beneficial to the growth and advancement of the family, society, and nation. As a result, the Indian Government must prioritise bringing women to the forefront of development strategy by empowering them through a variety of development-oriented programmes.
3. **Educational Aspect-** Education is the most vital factor in advancing and growing. It is the only relevant technique for predicting women's empowerment and human resource development in India. It sheds light on the prospects for gaining employment and earning a living, which in turn revitalizes women's economic empowerment. To join the group of developed countries, people must recognize the value and relevance of women's education and work together to set India on a progressive path. Education makes a person conscientious, allowing them to analyze, interpret, criticize, and eventually influence their environment. It leads to the acquisition of a plethora of abilities that increase a person's excitement and ability to mould life in a more positive way.
4. **Implementation of the Women's Development Programme and Other Acts-** Training programmes based on action in villages or rural areas of India, as well as vocational programmes and growth-oriented entrepreneurship development programmes, must be organised to make women self-sufficient after becoming self-employed by improving their efficiency and capacity to make quick decisions. It is critical to prevent cases of female feticide and infanticide by prohibiting the sex determination of a child who has yet to be born



through the Regulation and Prevention of Misuse Act of 1994, as well as the PNT ACT (Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act), as well as other rulings relating to marriage, succession, divorce, adoption, dowry, moral safety, and protection against sexual harassment.

5. **The Media is Driving Change-** The media is responsible for projecting and propagating related concerns, most notably women's empowerment in India. The countless programmes about women's status broadcast in the media enable her spouse to treat her with dignity and respect. He can change his attitude and help her in the domestic domain to lessen tension and worry. The media has an important part in fixing the attitude and manner of discourse of husbands and other family members toward women.
6. **Organization for Awareness Programmes-** State and National level commissions for women, Non-Governmental Organisations, ICDS Programmes, must undertake e- awareness, the Taskforce for women & children Development DWACRA (Concerning Development of Women & Child in Rural Areas), women's rights, human rights, a campaign about legal rights, education about saving schemes, population education, environmental education, rehabilitation programmes with all integrity and solemnity.

### **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND INDIAN CONSTITUTION**

The Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights to men and women. It is one of the world's best equality documents. Various articles in the Constitution defend women's rights by giving women and men equal social, economic, and political standing. The Preamble to the Indian Constitution treats men and women equally. It ensures the individual's justice, social, economic, and political equality of status, opportunity, and dignity. The policy of women's empowerment is well supported by the Constitution's Fundamental Rights. The various provisions are as follows:

- Article 14-Equality before law for all persons
- Article 15(1)-Prohibition of Discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth
- Article 15(3)-Special provisions may be made by the state in favour of women and children
- Article 16-Equality of opportunity for all citizens relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state
- Article 39(a)-State Policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood
- Article 39(d)-Equal pay for equal work for both men and women
- Article 42-Provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief
- Article 51A(e)-Promotion of harmony by every citizen of India and renouncement of such practices which are derogatory to the dignity of women
- Articles 343(d) and 343(T)-Reservation of not less than one-third of total seats for women in direct election to local bodies

### **HOW TO MAKE WOMEN STRONGER**

Women's empowerment would lead to a more advanced society. The world would undoubtedly be a better place to live if women contributed equally to it as did men. There are numerous methods for empowering women.

- **Provide a secure working environment:** Female members of society should feel secure in their places of employment. The establishment of a secure workplace can empower women.
- **Women Education:** Women who are educated contribute to the national income of the nation and to the health and well-being of their families. They are also regarded politically active. Educated women are more aware of their rights and are better able to defend themselves.
- **Raise your voice against gender inequality:** Women may be empowered by reducing the gender disparities in society.
- **Job skills:** Women should have the appropriate training for better outcomes.
- **Expand the number of part-time job opportunities:** To increase the number of employment options for women, more part-time and flexible jobs should be established.

### **GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

The Indian government has been attempting to empower women in many ways:

1. Women Helpline Scheme
2. Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme
3. Swadhar Greh

4. Support To Training And Employment Programme of Women
5. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Schemes
6. One Stop Centre Scheme
7. Working Women Hostel
8. Ujjawala Scheme
9. Nari Shakti Puraskar
10. Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana
11. Mahila Police Volunteers

### CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment has the potential to transform many aspects of society and the country. If we want to make our country a developed one, we must first empower women via the efforts of men, government, laws, and women. The need for women's empowerment arose as a result of gender inequality and male dominance in Indian society. Women's empowerment is critical for a successful future in the family, society, and country.

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