

## Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in India

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### **Abstract:**

The path to women empowerment and gender equality in India is a journey of resilience, struggle, and hope. While there have been significant achievements in doing away gender inequality, the journey toward dismantling deeply ingrained patriarchy and achieving women empowerment and gender parity in India in a true sense remains arduous. This article delves into the multifaceted aspects of women's empowerment and gender equality in India, highlighting women's empowerment programs in India, the progress made, the obstacles that still remain, and the steps needed to build a gender-equal India

**Keywords:** Resilience, Dismantling, Arduous, Delves, Obstacles.

### **1. Introduction:**

Women empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women. To ensure equal right to women, to make them confident, freely live their life with self respect and self dignity. Empowerment aspect visualizes the full participation of people in the decision making process that shapes their lives. The goal of inclusive growth and human development cannot be achieved without the development and empowerment of women. The present status of women in India is characterized by a complex interplay of progress and ongoing challenges. Some significant achievements have been made towards Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. However, deeply entrenched societal norms, economic disparities, and political challenges mean that Gender Disparity continues to exist in India.

### **2. Objectives of the Study**

The study has following objectives:

1. To study the status of women and efforts made in present
2. To study the measures for women empowerment in India

### **3. Impact of Women Empowerment in India**

Women empowerment in India has significantly contributed to the nation's progress by fostering gender equality and boosting economic growth.

Empowered women actively participate in decision-making, both within families and in public life, leading to stronger social and political systems.

Their increased presence in education, entrepreneurship, and the workforce has enhanced household incomes and national productivity.

Women's leadership in various sectors has inspired positive change and social reform.

#### **Challenges to Women Empowerment and Gender Equality**

Achieving gender equality and women empowerment in India is a complex challenge that involves socio-cultural, economic, and political factors. Women empowerment is essential for achieving gender equality as some of the prominent hurdles coming its way are as follows:

#### **Social Challenges Faced by Women**

**Discriminatory Social Norms:** Historical legacies mean that socio-cultural norms for men and women continue to remain discriminatory in many parts of India, especially in rural regions. While men are allowed to be "loud", women are expected to be soft-spoken, calm, and quiet.

**Role Stereotyping:** A large section of Indian society still considers that women are meant to stay limited to taking household chores. All the financial responsibilities and work outside are considered exclusive for males.

**Low Literacy:** Traditional practices like dowry, and other factors mean that many families find it economically unviable to educate the girl child. Thus, the literacy rate of women in India, especially in rural areas, still remains poor.

**Safety Concerns:** Women in India continue to be silent sufferers of gender-based violence such as female feticides, domestic violence, rape, trafficking, forced prostitution, honor killings, sexual harassment at the workplace, etc.

Economic Challenges Faced by Women

**Lesser Employment Opportunities:** Gender role stereotyping attributed to women leads to prejudice and discrimination against women in the economic sphere. For example, women may be considered to be less reliable as workers because of their child-rearing and other household responsibilities.

**Glass Ceiling:** The prevalence of the “**Glass Ceiling Effect**” means that women not only in India but across the globe face unsaid barriers, preventing them from reaching higher levels of professional success.

**Economic Disparities:** Lesser work opportunities as well as access to finance mean that women in India suffer from economic disparity vis-a-vis men. This remains a major barrier to making them independent.

Political Challenges Faced by Women

**Low Political Representation:** The representation of women in different legislative bodies, including the Parliament as well as State Legislative Assemblies, remains low across India.

**‘Sarpanch-Pati’ Culture:** The prevalence of ‘sarpanch pati’ culture across India, wherein men relatives of elected women run the office in their place, means that even meager political representation of women is mostly nominal.

Other Challenges Faced by Women

**Inadequate Implementation of Laws:** While strong legal frameworks exist for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in India, their effective implementation remains a challenge due to weak enforcement mechanisms and societal attitudes.

**Emerging Challenges:** While Globalization and Urbanization have brought new opportunities to women, they have also exposed them to new vulnerabilities like trafficking and exploitation.

#### **4. Measures for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in India**

The continued prevalence of gender disparity or gender inequality in India means that achieving gender equality and women empowerment in India requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy that covers multiple dimensions. Some of the suggested measures to achieve these goals are discussed below.

Social Empowerment of Women

**Changing Social Attitude:** The fact that the problem has persisted despite so many legislations says that a social problem cannot be tackled only through legislation. What is required is a sustained campaign to change the social attitude.

**Better Education Opportunities:** Education and women empowerment have a strong link and enabling access to **education is the best tool for empowering women**. It goes a long way in improving the status of women in India by instilling in them enough self-confidence to decide and build their own destinies.

**Ensuring Women’s Safety:** Ensuring effective implementation of existing laws through efficient judicial systems and law enforcement will help reduce gender-based violence faced by women.

#### Economic Empowerment of Women

**Skilling:** Providing women with market-relevant skills will help them enter the labor force easily.

**Access to Credit:** Enabling access to credit through tools such as micro-financing can enable women to participate in economic activities. This, in turn, will make them financially independent.

#### Political Empowerment of Women

**Promote Political Participation:** Women should be promoted in leadership roles so that they become architects of India's progress and development, rather than being passive recipients of the fruits of development.

**Leadership Development:** Offer leadership development programs for women to prepare them for roles in politics and civil society. This will go a long way in doing away with gender disparity in India and improving the status of women.

Women empowerment and gender equality in India are not just goals in themselves but are fundamental to the nations overall development and prosperity. As India strides towards its vision of “**Viksit Bharat @2047**”, the government, civil societies, communities, and individuals, should put their collective efforts into fostering a society where every woman has the opportunity to thrive. Measures, as suggested above, can help in this direction.

#### 5. Conclusion:

The women play a strategic role in the society and the economy. The status of women in India is rising. The government of India, by passing timely acts and implementing rules and regulations trying to empower the women. The effect of women employment on family and society is more evident in situations where women possess higher levels of employment and income. The empowerment of women employees is also higher when they are at high levels of employment. No doubt, the government of India has many weapons to tight for women empowerment.

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