



In India, More Needs to be Done in Terms of Women's Empowerment.

Dolly Nagrath*

**Research Scholar of Political Science, Department of Political science, Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu India*

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Abstract: *Empowering women in India is the most effective instrument for development at this time because women all over the world are actively working as leaders and outperforming others in all aspects of life. In India, this means that women's empowerment is the most effective tool for development. India is currently "the fastest-growing major economy in the world," and it is anticipated that this growth will continue to increase over the course of the next decade. Nevertheless, in spite of India's recent success in terms of economic development, women and girls continue to lag behind the rest of the population. A National Family and Health Survey that was place between 2019 and 2021 found that India has a population of more than a billion people and that there are more women than men in the country at a ratio of "1,020 women for every 1,000 men." Despite the fact that women make up the majority of the population in India, they continue to confront obstacles that are mostly caused by social notions of the roles that men and women should play. The effects of this discrimination and inequality between the sexes are extremely widespread. In order to solve this problem, various organisations are focusing their attention on enhancing the autonomy of women in India. The purpose of the study is to shed light on the meaning of women's empowerment in India, as well as its significance, as well as the obstacles and solutions now available.*

Keywords: *Women, Empowerment, Challenges, Importance and schemes etc*

1. INTRODUCTION

The term "women empowerment" comes from the combination of the two terms "women" and "empowerment." To "empower" someone is to invest them with power or authority in some way. Therefore, putting power in the hands of women is what we mean by "women empowerment." It means that women should be given equal opportunities in every field, and that there should be no prejudice in providing those opportunities. The term "women empowerment" refers to the authority bestowed upon women, as well as the power bestowed upon women in the form of shared rights.

The term "emancipation" refers to the process through which women are freed from the social and economic constraints of dependence. Women account for approximately half of the total population in this nation; nonetheless, the majority of unemployed women in this



demographic remain economically dependent on one another. In this day and age of feminism, there is a subset of women in India who are liberated, who can exercise their free will, and who are given the opportunity to carve out their lives in the manner in which they choose. However, there is a significant demographic gap among the women in this country who are in need of positive reinforcement. Even though they may have the necessary knowledge, women in the majority of rural and semi-urban areas of India are not permitted to receive foundational education and are never given permission to continue their education at a higher level.

The fact that women can so deftly juggle the many hats they wear in a single day is one of the primary reasons why they are regarded as a society's pillar of strength. Women who live in civilizations dominated by men take on a diverse spectrum of responsibilities, including those of nurturing moms, devoted daughters, and capable co-workers, among other things. The finest aspect is that they are a perfect fit for whatever role they are considered for. Nevertheless, in many parts of the world, this segment of society has always been seen as one of the most disregarded. In turn, this has led to women surviving the brunt of inequity, financial trustworthiness, oppression, and other societal evils. In turn, this has resulted in women surviving the brunt of these issues. Since the dawn of time, women have been forced to live in conditions akin to slavery, which prevents them from achieving their full potential in both their personal and professional lives. In recent years, there has been a widespread focus on the advancement of women's rights. It is accurate to assert that empowering women has developed into a requirement of the present moment.

Women should have the freedom, faith, and self-worth to choose what is best for their own requirements and needs. When one considers the progress that has been made by women over the past few decades, it is clear that discrimination on the basis of gender is pointless and serves no purpose. Women are paid less than men, and in many households they are still expected to perform traditionally female roles such as that of housekeeper and slave. The empowerment of women in India is necessary in order to combat issues of this nature and to give women the opportunity to play an independent role in Indian society. The right of women must be prioritised in order to empower women. They ought to be granted privileges proportional to their contributions to society's economic, educational, and political systems. They are permitted to pursue higher education and are provided with care that is comparable to that which males receive.

Research objectives

- To explain the meaning of women empowerment
- To analyse the importance and challenges of women empowerment in India
- To discuss the various schemes for Women Empowerment.

2. METHODOLOGY

The current study could benefit from both research done after the event and research done analytically. As a direct consequence of this, the research is carried out in a manner that is both historical and descriptive. As a direct consequence of this, the research makes use of both primary and secondary sources. A qualitative method was used to analyse secondary data that was obtained from reliable sources such as books and websites on the internet, news



articles from newspapers, and a large number of foreign magazines and publications. In addition, the findings of the study are based on observations made directly by the researchers.

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULT

Importance of women's empowerment

In India, women's empowerment has emerged as one of the most central concepts in discussions about the evolution of society as a whole. Participating in the progress that is being made in society is in no way a sinful endeavour. In the business sector, women are increasingly filling a wide variety of responsibilities in fields such as medicine, engineering, and other related fields. In addition to contributing to the field of technology, they are actively participating in various aspects of the security services, such as the police, navy, military, and so on. The community is being elevated to a higher level as a direct result of the aforementioned services. There has been a consistent rise in the amount of authority and agency granted to women over the past few decades. Women need to have a healthy sense of self-worth and confidence, as well as the flexibility to pick their own requirements and demands. It is irrational and pointless to classify people according to the gender they were born with. Women are still paid less than men are expected to do more housework, and have more restrictions placed on them by their families. Empowering women is necessary if they are to emerge victorious from the aforementioned predicaments and assume a position of autonomy within society.

One of the most essential rights that women have is to be empowered. They are able to enjoy equal rights to engage in educational institutions, societal institutions, economic institutions, and political institutions. They are treated in the same manner as males and given the opportunity to pursue higher education. You will have an understanding of the significance of women's empowerment after reading this article. Therefore, come to a complete stop on this page and read the stuff that comes next. One of the most widespread difficulties that may be observed in a society that is still developing is high unemployment. According to the findings of the research, women make up fifty percent of the total population. With the support of women's empowerment initiatives, India may be able to eliminate the high rate of female unemployment as well as unequal possibilities in the workplace. When women are forced to contend with unemployment, the full extent of their ability is never put to use. It is imperative that women be given equal chances in order to fully tap into their capabilities, strengths, and potential. You can inspire them to work harder by presenting them with unique presents. The day designated specifically to honour women is known as "Women's Day." They could be honoured with presents on the day dedicated to ladies. It is inconceivable to comprehend and evaluate the manner in which women live by merely seeing their outward appearance. The manner in which they approach challenges and the ways in which they search for solutions might provide insight into the level of intellect they possess.

Women in today's society are very capable when it comes to resolving issues that are technological in nature. In each of these instances, the empowerment of women is a very important factor. You won't be able to evaluate and comprehend the level of women's intelligence in India until women are given more agencies in their own lives. As a result, being able to support oneself through one's labour is not only very vital but also advantageous. You are free to choose any present to show your appreciation for the effort that they have done. One of the most widespread issues that can be observed in civilizations that



are still in the process of evolving is the problem of unemployment. According to the findings of the survey, women make up almost half of the total population. With the support of women's empowerment programmes in India, problems such as unequal employment possibilities and a lack of employment opportunities for women can be eradicated. Every time women are forced to deal with problems related to unemployment, their real potential is overlooked without any intention. It is important that women have access to an equal amount of opportunities in order to fully take advantage of their bravery and potential.

Notable Gains

Women in India are making strides toward equality and participation in many spheres of society, including politics, business, medicine, sports, and agriculture. Chandrayaan-2 was India's second lunar mission, and it was headed by two female scientists from the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) from its commencement in 2008 until its conclusion in 2019. This was a watershed moment in the country's history. The Meta narrative that rocket science is a field that is exclusively reserved for men was challenged by the fact that a significant space mission was led by a woman. When the United States Supreme Court overturned the government's claim that women cannot serve as army leaders after the year 2020, another important milestone was attained. In 1992, women were first allowed to enlist in the armed services, and since then, they have held a variety of roles within the military, such as fighter pilots, doctors, nurses, engineers, signallers, and many more. In spite of the fact that the question of whether or not women should be allowed to serve in combat roles is still a contentious one around the world, these are examples of Indian women who have broken through the glass ceiling in the armed forces.

It is impossible to tell the full story of women's empowerment in India without concentrating on the grassroots efforts that have been taken by the government and civil society organisations. New initiatives, policies, and programmes have been implemented by both the federal government and state governments to empower women in both urban and rural settings. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (which translates to "Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter"), Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (which is a scheme to provide gas connections to women from households that fall below the poverty line), and Mahila-E-Haat are some of the flagship programmes that have been launched by the Narendra Modi government to promote gender equality. The Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana programme was initiated in January of 2015 with the intention of resolving the problem of a gender imbalanced ratio and providing a higher standard of living for young women and girls. The focus is primarily on Northern India, namely on areas such as Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, and Uttarakhand, which have a more even distribution of males and females. The year 2016 marked the beginning of the Mahila-E-Haat initiative, which was an internet marketing effort. It does this by utilising technology to aid female business owners, self-help organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Each programme has its own distinct mission, which may include promoting the health and safety of young women and girls, fostering engagement in local communities, or providing financial assistance to budding female business owners.

Additionally, the federal government has opened the door for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), municipal governments, and private businesses to collaborate with



foreign organisations. For instance, the World Bank is cooperating closely with the governments of the federal government and the state of Andhra Pradesh in order to enhance the standard of public health services offered within the state. These services include healthcare for pregnant women and children. Another initiative is being carried out by the United Nations (UN) India Business Forum, which has collaborated with the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) to establish the UN-India NITI Aayog Investor Consortium for Women Entrepreneurs. The goals of this consortium are to encourage more women to become business owners and to foster an environment favourable to financial investments.

How to give women power:

Women's empowerment began in 1985. Rights and fairness are at the heart of empowering women. Education, awareness, literacy, and training are all parts of empowering women. Men have hurt women for a long time. They were almost forgotten in earlier times. As if men could do anything, even vote. Over time, women got more power. That's when women got more power. Women getting more power were a good thing. It showed girls how to stand up for their rights and be independent of men. It said that a person's gender doesn't always give them an advantage. Still, we have to talk about why we need it. Women's empowerment is about giving women the tools and confidence they need to make decisions that can change their lives. From the time they are born until they die, women face bias. As women's rights and gender equality gain steam around the world, states are taking amazing steps to close the economic gap between men and women and promote equality.

1. Give her more faith in herself

When you tell women and girls to speak up, magical things can happen. Girls learn about the "ideal female" from the time they are young. In short, people expect women to be quiet, calm, modest, etc. As they get older, kids realise that these things are bad, but they are afraid to say so because they have an unconscious image of the perfect woman. Encourage and help the women around you. Encourage your friends to speak up and let them know you care about what they have to say. Help her express herself early on. Girls can wear and talk however they want to. After hearing your friend explain her actions, gently tell her that "just because you want to" is a good enough reason.

2. Shut out bad things

Women are shown beauty standards that aren't realistic in magazines, on TV, and on social media. In our minds, bullies pick on pretty girls. They must be thin, fair, and so on. People get angry when you don't meet their standards, and women of colour face even more problems. Raise women by standing up to mean people online, at work, in school, and everywhere else. Encourage body positivity, being smart, and being honest. Shut down negativity in a direct and honest way. Accept and value what they can do. Don't pick on someone because of their skin colour, how much they weigh, how tall they are, etc. Everyone is beautiful, and it's awful to say that someone isn't. Recognize unconscious biases against other women based on their race, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, physical abilities, body type, and socioeconomic background. Raise the voices of women of colour who are being treated badly at work.



3. Help businesses owned by women

We understand women entrepreneurs' challenges. Female business owners often don't have enough money or skills to grow their businesses. Many women with business skills give up because of problems. More women are starting businesses around the world. Added more women business owners. They don't have much control over the resources of the home or business. The World Economic Forum says that women who start their own businesses are "the way forward." Women business owners still have trouble finding their place in the economy. Even though more women start businesses abroad, they manage fewer of them and run them in less profitable areas where they grow slowly and are more likely to fail. Their company offers safety.

4. By teaching

Even though we live in the 21st century, many places still don't let girls go to school. Some reasons are safety, lack of nearby schools, or people who don't think it's important. UNICEF says that 132 million girls around the world are not in school. Of these, 34.3 million are in primary school, 30 million are in lower-secondary school, and 67.4 million are in upper-secondary school. Girls and women can only help a society or country move forward and strive for economic growth and development if they go to school. It lets people deal with problems, change their lives, and face their usual role. Education shows a person how important she is to society as a whole. A good education for girls leads to job success, self-awareness, and happiness. It gives people the power to make their own decisions, stand up for their rights, and reject traditions that hurt them.

5. Jobs

In some countries, bringing the number of women working up to the level of men can boost GDP growth by 34%. If women aren't treated unfairly, a country's productivity can go up by 25%. Without safe working conditions, social security benefits, and a fair wage, women don't work until they have to in order to stay alive. In 2016, women held 21.2% of S&P 500 board seats. Even though there are more women in college and in leadership positions, women still fight for equal rights at work. Getting women jobs is a key way to give them more power. Women are better off inside and outside of the home when they work. Women's economic status improves when they work and do other things that bring in money, which leads to better treatment. Speak up if someone is treated unfairly in a meeting or on their pay check. Working women need to help each other out. Women who have jobs and are confident and strong can move mountains.

6. Tell the truth

Someone might be inspired by your story to stand out and do something great. Sharing your stories and letting your guard down can help a lot of women. Women wouldn't have the rights they do now without Rosa Parks, Malala Yousafzai, and Susan B. Anthony. Thanks to these women who talked about the hard times they had. Their stories really made a difference. Recognize a woman's bravery when she tells her story and is open about how she feels. Tell her you believe what she says.



7. Boost women's signals

Women aren't just men's duty. As a woman with access to leadership teams, conference line-ups, speaking roles, and media sources, help other women who deserve a place on the platform. Sometimes self-empowerment means letting someone else shine. Does any other woman know more? If so, give her a chance.

Challenges Remain

Despite the fact that India has taken considerable steps toward human development, the country still has a poor standing internationally in terms of gender equality. The Global Gender Gap Report, which was commissioned by the World Economic Forum, ranked India 112th in 2020, which is a fall from its previous rating of 108th in 2018. In terms of political empowerment in particular, India has been successful in narrowing the gender gap to the extent that it has been reduced by two-thirds. Given that a woman served as the nation's leader for the preceding 20 years, it received a ranking of 18th on the Political Empowerment sub index. However, there are only 14.4 percent female MPs in the Indian parliament and 23 percent of cabinet positions are held by women.

This results in a relatively low overall political representation. Since 2006, it has unfortunately seen a decline in its performance on the economic empowerment of women. According to the findings of the poll, only 25 percent of women, compared to 82 percent of men, are now employed or actively looking for job. In addition to this, the average income that women make is around one fifth of what men in the same position receive. Even in cases where Indian women are successful in obtaining employment, there is a significant likelihood that they will be paid a lower wage than male workers. According to the findings of the ILO's Global Wage Report 2018/19, India has the largest average pay difference between men and women, at 34.5 percent, out of the 73 countries that were analysed in depth. Many women are on the receiving end of this pay inequality because the rate of female participation in informal jobs is higher than the rate of female participation in jobs in the official sector. There are just 14% of leadership jobs in India that are held by women. Everyone will be better off as a result of women gaining economic independence. According to research conducted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a 27 percentage point boost in India's gross domestic product may be achieved by achieving gender parity in the workforce. In order to provide more opportunities for women to participate economically, India should learn a thing or two from the Japanese model.

The participation rate of women in the labour market in Tokyo has clearly increased from around 66.5 percent in the year 2000 to 76.3 percent in 2016, mostly as a result of the Women economics plan, which takes into account policy, demographic, and economic considerations. Its policies have undergone significant evolution over the course of time, including the introduction of new anti-discrimination rules, the modification of current labour laws, and the improvement of child care policy. Women can be encouraged to enter the workforce and to remain employed after marriage and the early years of childrearing if laws, both newly enacted and those that have already been passed, are strengthened and put into effect. Even though India has one of the most generous maternity leave policies in the world, it only applies to a small percentage of the country's working women. Due to the government's obsession with emulating successful policies from other countries without taking into account how things actually operate on the ground, very few women are actually benefiting from these programmes. Even if a detailed examination of these models proves



fruitful, they still need to be contextualised and adjusted so that they are applicable to the conditions in India.

The legal system in India is also plagued by disconnects between official policy and day-to-day operations. In spite of the fact that laws have been passed to protect women and girls, there is a dearth of convictions for suspected offenders and inadequate enforcement of these laws. The inefficiencies of these systems are exacerbated by the systematic bureaucracy and corruption that exists inside them. The legendary "Nirbhaya" gang rape case dragged on for seven years before the culprits involved were finally executed by hanging. The issue of women's empowerment being less visible in rural India than in urban settings is another problem that has to be addressed. In spite of rising urbanisation and the expansion of cities, India's rural population still accounts for approximately 65.97% of the total population, so this should be a major cause for concern there. Women who live in metropolitan regions have more opportunities open to them in terms of education, employment, healthcare services, and political influence.

The persistent problems of gender inequality in India should be viewed within the broader framework of South Asian countries. There is still a large gender gap in rural areas, particularly in the region considered to be the "heartland" of Hindi. Women are still restricted to the roles of caregivers and housekeepers, with very little or no voice in economic decision-making. The levels of literacy, nutrition, and access to health care remain dismal, and the country's social welfare parameters are worse than those of its neighbour, Bangladesh. The gender gap in this region is the second largest in the world, behind the one that exists between the Middle East and North Africa. With the exception of Sri Lanka, female representation in parliament has remained consistently low across the region, hovering around 20 percent or less. The social conventions, metanarratives, and gender stereotypes that are strongly ingrained in South Asian culture may be to blame for these contributing variables. Researchers Jawad Syed and Edwina Pio have argued that efforts to achieve women's empowerment in South Asia should be viewed through the lens of religious, cultural, and socio-economic particularities. They believe that this is necessary because new provisions in the legal sphere may not always be enforced, and discrimination may continue within the structures of society and the family. Customs that are patriarchal and patrilineal, with a few notable exceptions, have led to forced marriages, restricted the mobility of women, limited their access to basic healthcare, and prevented them from receiving an education. When victims lack agency and authority, gender-based violence in the form of domestic violence, sexual assault, and physical violence is especially prevalent in South Asia. This includes all three types of violence. Just in India, the percentage of crimes committed against women is approximately 53.9 percent. In New Delhi, the city that serves as the nation's capital, 92 percent of women have reported having been the victims of some form of physical or sexual violence in public places.

4. CONCLUSION

The year 1947 marks the beginning of India's path toward women's empowerment and gender equality. This journey began when India became an independent state. In spite of the observable progress that has been made in New Delhi as a result of legal reforms, human development, and grassroots initiatives, there is still a significant distance to travel in many aspects of women's empowerment. It is necessary to make a more concerted effort in order to



bridge the gap between urban and rural areas and guarantee that women living in rural areas have the same opportunities in terms of education, employment, healthcare, and decision-making as their counterparts living in urban areas. Given that many of the obstacles to women's empowerment can be traced back to patriarchal and patrilineal traditions, which are strongly ingrained in many South Asian civilizations, the most difficult issue will be to alter attitudes. Changing attitudes will be the hardest hurdle.

There are many different avenues that can be taken to empower women. It is also possible to accomplish this goal on an individual level, in addition to being possible through government programmes. On an individual level, we need to begin treating women with respect and providing them with opportunities on par with those available to males. We need to promote and encourage them to participate in activities such as getting jobs, pursuing further education, starting businesses, and so forth. For the purpose of empowering women, the government has established a number of programmes, including Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana, Mahila-E-Haat, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Working Women Hostel, and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, amongst others. Aside from these programmes, each of us as individuals can also help empower women by working to eliminate social ills such as the practise of child marriage and the dowry system.

The position of women in society will improve as a result of these modest measures, and women will experience a greater sense of agency as a result. Equality between the sexes is an essential component for the development of any society or nation because it has an effect on all facets of society, including the expansion of the economy, the improvement of education and health, and the general standard of living. Inequality between the sexes in India is not only a long-standing problem that is convoluted and multifaceted, but it is also an obstacle that must be surmounted in order for the country to realise its full potential.

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