

India's Empowerment of Women: A Critical Examination

Dr. B.H. Hanumanthaiah

*Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
Government First Grade College, Nagamangala*

Beereshwarapura Post, Nagamangala Taluk, Mandya District, Karnataka, India

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Abstract

Because of the traditional patriarchal nature of our culture, women are viewed as second-class citizens in the political, social, and economic arenas. However, women equality and empowerment has always been a key issue and has been given uttermost care by stake holders. The goal of the article is to determine if India is ready to meet Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 of the UN by critically examining its position in relation to other nations. The paper builds argument on the basis of secondary sources as study of current literature published in journal, books, reports of different, NGOs, Government and international organizations and websites. The study critically looks at several approaches and aspects of women's empowerment in India. Indicators of women's empowerment, government policies and programs, and constitutional safeguards are all included in this article. Still, the nation comes in last when compared to other nations. Programs must be reevaluated and altered in order to meet SDG-5 by 2030.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Gender Equality, Government, Social, Rights

JEL Codes: I14; I24; I32; I38; O15

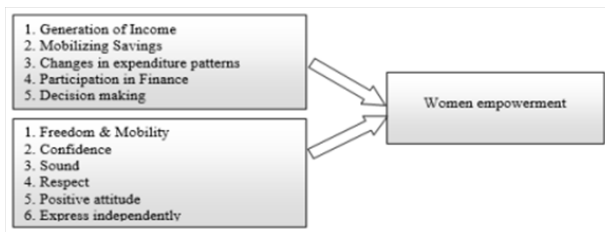
Introduction

Women make up approximately half of the world's population, but India has a disproportionately low proportion of women compared to men due to its skewed sex ratio. They are not always placed on an equal footing with males in terms of social prestige. Women in Western nations enjoy the same rights and status as men in all spheres of life. However, prejudice and impairments related to gender still exist in India today. She was concerned as a goddess at times and only as a slave at others due to the contradictory circumstances.

India has always been a patriarchal country, with women playing a secondary role in every household. Though the path has seen repositioning over time, policy makers have always prioritized issues related to women's welfare since independence. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974–1978) onwards, there has been a notable shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. Additionally, India has supported a number of international initiatives, including the 1993 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Platform for Action, the 1993 Mexico Plan of Action, the 1985 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, the Beijing Declaration, and the UNGA Session's Outcome Document on Gender Equality and

Development and Peace for the 21st Century. In light of this backdrop, the paper addresses the current state of women's empowerment in India as well as its standing internationally in relation to the UN's 2030 target of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5. The following is the study's plan. The review of the literature and discussion of the idea of women's empowerment with supporting role models and dimensions are covered in the next part. The study's methodology and research objectives are presented in Section 3. Following an international comparison of the status of women's empowerment, Section 4 analyzes various laws and government programs for women's empowerment, as well as a variety of initiatives taken by various NGO's and the corporate sector. Section 5 offers recommendations for overcoming obstacles and forging ahead.

Conceptual Framework for Women's Empowerment



(Source: Chen & Mahmud, 1995)

Need for the Study

Empowering women has the potential to drastically alter both the nation and society. In order for our nation to become developed, women must first be empowered via the efforts of men, the government, laws, and women themselves. The male dominance and gender discrimination in Indian society created a demand for women's empowerment. Women must be empowered if they are to have a good future in their families, communities, and nation. Studies on women's empowerment in India are quite rare. Research on women's empowerment in the twenty-first century has not been done. One of the biggest issues of the twenty-first century is now women's empowerment. The researcher feels compelled to conduct "A Study on Women Empowerment in the 21st Century" as a result.

Objectives of the Study

The study's particular goals are listed below.

- To be aware of the ways in which women are empowered.
- To learn about gender-based violence.
- To examine women's rights and the Indian Constitution's legal protection of women.
- To be aware of the government's initiatives and programs aimed at empowering women.
- To learn how education has aided in the empowerment of women.
- To give a summary of how women's empowerment in the twenty-first century is transforming Indian society

The Empowerment Aspects

Ten significant empowerment-related factors are taken into consideration while evaluating female employees. Given that the qualitative characteristics pertaining to female employees are not precisely quantified. When empowering female employees, all factors are taken into account.

To provide a uniform scale for comparing various staff types. The different facet of Women's empowerment includes:

- Capacity to learn new skills
- Availability of information sources
- Self-assurance
- Asset ownership
- The ability to use one's own money
- Acknowledgment of proficiency
- Making decisions
- Independence in movement
- Independence in social interactions
- Possibility of bringing about improvements

India's Women's Status

An Indian woman had four statuses traditionally. These were a mother, a wife, a daughter, and a homemaker. In society, women's status was set. But the standing of women is evolving in the current day. They are heavily involved in political, social, and economic affairs. They obtained better training, jobs, pay, and prestige in addition to these benefits. Women's contribution to the growth of the health and education sectors is linked to a number of social, economic, and cultural variables.

Some of the main causes of women's achievement include historically favorable conditions, progressive social movements, and governmental initiatives. The factors that are directly related to women's empowerment, such as female literacy and labor force participation rates, are what cause the decrease in gender gaps throughout economic growth. These need to be complemented by government initiatives in the areas of education, women's ownership, and political engagement. Women's employment prospects were greatly aided by their access to education, which also gave housewives who were unemployed more authority.

The Significance of Empowering Women

- The global unemployment rate for women is high.
- The global economy is severely impacted by the unequal opportunities that women face in the workplace.
- Women possess the same level of competence and talent as males.
- Empowering women contributes to the advancement of civilization
- Women's empowerment enables them to stand on their own two feet and become independent.
- It also reduces domestic violence.
- It aids in women's education.
- It teaches them about their rights and responsibilities and can put an end to corruption.
- It lessens poverty.
- And it helps women become more aware of their rights.

Ways to Encourage Women's Equality

A more advanced society would arise from the empowerment of women. The world would undoubtedly be a better place to live if women contributed on an equal basis with men. Several strategies exist for empowering women.

- Establish a secure workplace.
- Female members of the workforce should feel secure in their workplaces.
- Creating a secure workplace atmosphere may empower women.
- Educated women are more aware of their rights and are better able to defend themselves

- Educated women are also seen as politically engaged
- Women who receive an education add to the nation's income
- Education for women improves family health and well-being
- Women's Education Speak up against the mistreatment of women.
- Reducing gender disparities in society can empower women by improving their job abilities.
- Women should have the appropriate training to achieve better outcomes.
- Increase the number of options for part-time employment.
- To ensure that more and more women have access to employment possibilities, more flexible and part-time jobs should be developed.

Women's Place in Society

In India, a large number of women held prominent positions, actively supported nationalism, and worked in office administration. In the past, men would prohibit women from leaving the house to attend social events. The hierarchy has now altered due to the expansion of education and the societal attitudes of educated women. Health, appearance, cultural needs and interests, academic pursuits, social interactions, religious activities, leisure demands, etc. are now concerns for the modern woman.

Women are gradually becoming more involved in politics as well. Some are signing up to become members of political parties, going to conventions and meetings, and implementing political agendas.

Government Programs for the Empowerment of Women

Through a number of initiatives, the Indian government has been attempting to empower women.

- A scheme called Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
- One-stop shop concept
- Women's assistance program
- Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme
- Ujjawala Scheme
- Hostel for working women
- Assistance for Women's Employment and Training Program
- SWADHAR Greh
- SHAKTI PURASKAR NARI
- Volunteer Mahila Police
- Indira Gandhi Yojana Matritva Sahyog

Conclusion

In both the economy and society, women are strategically important. In India, women's standing is improving. The Indian government attempts to empower women by enacting laws on time and enforcing rules and regulations. When women have higher employment and income levels, the impact of their work on the family and society is increasingly apparent. When women work at high employment levels, their sense of empowerment also increases. Without a doubt, the Indian government is well-armed in its fight for women's emancipation.

Recommendations

1. Inform women of their resources, abilities, and personal strengths in order to Encourage their vigor and fortitude as individual defense mechanisms against destitution.

2. Involve women and girls as proactive collaborators in the development and management of programs at all levels at which decisions are made.
3. Promote the growth of self-reliance, positivity, and self-assurance in their capacity to be efficient by offering chances to engage in social, entrepreneurial, and other development-related activities.
4. Promote and offer chances for community networks that are used to exchange knowledge and entrepreneurial skills in order to grow and enhance their capacity.
5. Offer and enhance the current basic, secondary, and tertiary education and training programs for women and girls.
6. Using readily available technologies, such as online training and communication, train local women peer coaches to serve as mental health resources for the community.
7. Peer coaches can benefit the community by receiving training from psychologists, social workers, and other mental health experts to identify mental health issues and offer assistance or referrals.
8. Create and assess a program that offers services and training by deploying licensed psychologists who collaborate with peer coaches.

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