



**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: SPECIAL REFERENCE  
TO RURAL WOMEN**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Empowering women means giving them the authority to make their own decisions for their own personal growth. To empower women is to give them freedom of thought, rights, and decision-making, among other things. by participating in all aspects of male and female society. The Indian government established and declared the National Mission for the Empowerment of Women. World-wide celebration of women's social, economic, cultural, and political achievements is International Women's Day. Additionally, the day issues a call to action to accelerate gender parity. Gloria Steinem, a journalist and sociopolitical activist, asserts, "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights. The story belongs to the story of no single feminist nor to any one organization. Every year, March 8 marks International Women's Day. It pays tribute to the campaigns for women's rights.



**KEYWORDS:** *changes in society and science, language instruction.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In the twentieth century, it is impossible to believe the rise in the status of women all over the world. In the 18th and 19th centuries, women in India and elsewhere were treated as commodities that could be bought and sold, and for a long time, women in India remained within the confines of their homes. This led to a very low status for women in India and elsewhere. Women in rural areas play a crucial role in development. They act as a catalyst for the transformational changes in society, the environment, and the economy that are necessary for sustainable development. However, among the numerous difficulties they face are restricted credit access to education and healthcare. The global food, economic, and climate change crises further exacerbate these. Given that women make up a large portion of the agricultural workforce

worldwide, it is essential to empower them for the well-being of individuals, families, and rural communities as well as for overall economic productivity.

In India, women's empowerment is currently the most efficient development strategy; Women all over the world are actively leading by example and outperforming men in every aspect of life. Women governors and nations steered by these amazing figures are taking over the responsibility and marching ahead in the battle alone wherever necessary, while the entire world is claspings its breath and praying daily for an incredible escape from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Women's empowerment in India is greatly influenced by a wide range of factors, including age, education level, social status (caste and class), and geographical location (urban or rural). There are efforts to empower women on a national, state, and local (panchayat) level. Women, on the other hand, experience disparities in the majority of areas, including education, economic opportunities, health care, and political participation. This demonstrates that there are significant gaps between strategy advancements and actual community action. In order to eradicate the plight of women in India's society, it is possible to create and implement a concrete policy framework, spread civic awareness, and educate the public about women's empowerment. In India, women's empowerment is limited to providing women with balanced rights. Nonetheless, it is also about ensuring that they are ingrained and legitimate employees. In disguise, our organization for the empowerment of women in India is performing miracles.

### **Education of Women –**

The most significant and potent means of altering women's position in society is education. Inequalities are reduced as a result of education, which also helps them rise in the family hierarchy. Health and well-being is a concept related to the substantial differences between women and men in their access to adequate nutrition, healthcare, and reproductive facilities, as well as issues of fundamental safety and integrity of person. This was done in order to encourage women to study at all levels and to become familiar with education.

### **Women Empowerment in India:**

The concept of women's empowerment is all about authority, or the power that is given to women who have equal rights. The liberation of women from social and economic constraints on reliance is the focus of the term. Women make up about half of the country's population, and when they don't have jobs, most of them are financially dependent on one another. A small number of Indian women are liberated in the era of feminism, able to exercise their free will and live their lives however they see fit. However, there are a lot of women in this country who need positive reinforcement. Despite acquiring the necessary knowledge, women in the majority of Indian villages and semi-urban cities continue to be denied basic education and are never permitted to continue their education. Women are regarded as the foundation of every society because they are known to effortlessly perform multiple roles throughout the day. Women play a wide range of roles in societies where men dominate, including being capable colleagues, loving daughters, and caring mothers. The best thing about them is that they are perfect for every role. However, they have also remained a marginalized segment of society in various regions of the world. Women have borne the brunt of inequality, financial reliability, oppression, and distinct social evils as a result. Women have been held in shackles of enslavement for centuries, preventing them from reaching personal and professional heights. As an Indian non-governmental organization dedicated to women's empowerment, Hindrise Foundation has structured its dynamic and transformational programs so that the education of disadvantaged young girls will improve the country's overall situation.

### **Women Entrepreneurs –**

Women entrepreneurs have emerged as the primary backers of business. The work is very capable of producing results, so the government, their families, and society must encourage women entrepreneurs. They also become a part of the country's development and look forward to supportive plans.

Me, the Women's Development Program –

- Self-help group formation and training
- Group development
- Capacity building
- Income generation activities
- Mobilization of credit and savings
- Establishment of connections

### **Women Status -**

Women's empowerment has benefited as a result of various social movements and government actions elevating women's status. Women have played an important role in India's struggle for independence, and some social movements are changing the society's old ways of doing things. Today, women and men are treated equally in all fields. The empowerment of rural women and their progress and development should receive greater attention. Increasing, growing, and supporting women's educational, social, economic, political, and legal power are all examples of women's empowerment. It pertains to having equal rights in the community and society and an environment free of gender bias. Today, empowering women is crucial for better preparing a society that is educated, peaceful, healthy, successful, and prosperous with robust educational facilities.

### **Importance of Women Empowerment**

In recent times, everyone has been focusing on women's empowerment. It is accurate to assert that women's empowerment is now a pressing issue. Women ought to have the freedom, faith, and self-worth to choose what they want. When one considers the growth of women over the past few decades, discrimination based on gender is pointless and of no use. Women are undervalued because they are paid less and treated like cooks and slaves in families, and their true potential is not recognized. To overcome such circumstances and give women in India their own independent role in society, women empowerment is necessary. Women must have the right to be empowered. They ought to have equal rights to contribute to politics, the economy, education, and society. They are granted permission to pursue higher education and receive the same treatment as men.

There are calls for India to pay more attention to social and human development, including women's empowerment, as the country makes economic progress. This article defines efforts toward women's empowerment as "advocating for women's and girls' human rights, combating discriminatory practices, and challenging the roles and stereotypes that create inequalities and exclusion." [1] Women's empowerment is an essential component of gender equality, in which men and women have equal opportunities for education, healthcare, economic participation, and personal development.

### **Brief History of Women Empowerment**

The Indian constitution, which went into effect on January 26, 1950, establishes equal rights for men and women in Articles 14 to 16. Gender discrimination is completely outlawed. During India's independence in 1947, long before several Western nations granted women the right to vote, Indian women were granted universal suffrage. After Sri Lanka elected Sirimavo Bandaranaike in 1960, India became the second nation in modern history to have a woman as its leader in 1966. Additionally, New Delhi

has made a concerted effort to ratify important international agreements to end gender discrimination. It has ratified 47 conventions and one protocol, and it was a founding member of the International Labour Organization. It ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1993 with some reservations after signing it in 1980. The CEDAW Optional Protocol and National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security have not yet been ratified by it. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005 have been passed to make dowry and domestic violence crimes in the country. Under the Maternity Benefit Act of 2017, the government also increased private sector maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks.

Women's seats in Indian politics at all levels are reserved for 33% under the Women's Reservation Bill. This is an effort to get more women involved in politics. The Deve Gowda government first introduced the bill on September 12, 1996. The bill has not yet been approved by the Lok Sabha or all state legislative assemblies, despite attempts by previous administrations to push for its passage in the Rajya Sabha over the course of 14 years. The bill's introduction was a first-of-its-kind effort to alter India's gender composition. The argument made by supporters of the quota system is that it is a step that must be taken to increase women's effective and meaningful participation in politics. By including women's voices in governance, a process that typically takes generations could be sped up. Contrarily, skeptics believe that elite women would only gain from the bill. The Trinamool Congress, one of the most ardent supporters of the bill, went one step further by reserving 40% of seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections for women, which is a bold move considering the 33% female reservation.

### **Reasons for the empowerment of women**

Today, the central and state governments of India have enacted a variety of laws and plans to give women more power. However, women in India face discrimination and marginalization at every level of society, including access to education, reproductive healthcare, political and economic participation, and social participation. In India, women are found to be extremely poor economically. There are a few women working in services and other fields. Therefore, in order for them to stand on their own two feet in competition with men, they require economic power. On the other hand, women have been found to be less literate than men. In India, the literacy rate for men was found to be 76% in the 2001 census, while it was only 54% for women. Therefore, increasing women's education is crucial to their empowerment. Additionally, it has observed that some women are insufficient to work. They work more while eating less. Therefore, when it comes to their health, women who are weaker will become stronger. Harassment of women in the workplace is another issue. There are numerous instances of dowry harassment, rape, kidnapping, and other crimes. To safeguard their purity and dignity, they require various forms of empowerment for these reasons.

### **CONCLUSION**

The current discussion will place women's empowerment in the context of sustainable development. Women's participation has become a prerogative for the sustainability of agriculture development. India's journey toward gender equality and women's empowerment began in 1947 when it became a sovereign nation. In many areas of women's empowerment, New Delhi still has a long way to go, even though legal reforms, human development, and grassroots initiatives have made visible progress. To bridge the gap between urban and rural areas and ensure that rural women have the same access to education, employment, healthcare, and decision-making opportunities as urban women, more coordinated efforts are required. Given that many obstacles to women's empowerment are attributed to patriarchal and patrilineal traditions that are deeply ingrained in many South Asian societies, changing attitudes will be the most difficult challenge. In conclusion, women empowerment cannot be achieved unless women

participate in and support their own self-empowerment. Feminized poverty must be reduced, women's education should be encouraged, and violence against women must be stopped and prevented.

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