

# A Critical Analysis of Women Empowerment and Economic Development in India with Future Perspective: Conceptual Framework

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**Abstract-**Women Empowerment refers to the creation of environment for women where they can make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society. Women Empowerment in India is dependent on many different variables like education status, social status, economic status, and political status etc. Divided into four sections, this paper presents on Women Empowerment in India and its challenges in section I; an effort put by India for empowering women in section II; and the role of Women Empowerment in economic development of India in section III; Future work challenges towards women empowerment in India in section IV. This paper hinges fundamentally on secondary sources of data.

**Key words:** Empowerment, Educational status, Social status, Economic status, Empowering Women, Economic Development.

## SECTION I

### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

#### A. Introduction:

Empowering the women means creating an environment in which women can take independent decision for their personal development and the development of society in general. Empowerment is the process by which the women achieve increase control and participation in decision making which in-turn helps to achieve equality in political, economic, social, and cultural status in the society. Mahatma Gandhi has stated that the position of women in the society is an index of its civilization, "train a man and you train an individual, train a women and you build a nation". Swami Vivekananda one of the greatest son of India, quoted that "there is no chance for the welfare of the world, unless the condition of women is improved; it is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing". At present, the government of India has come up with various welfare programs to transform colossal women force into an effective human resource for overall development of economy.

#### B. Review of Literature:

The various studies conducted by social and political scientist have discussed various micro and macro issues and problems related to women empowerment.

Only 2 per cent of women have been married among other caste. In a Hindu dominated society we see my stringent rules

against marriage with in gotra, fraternity etc. and regulation about not allowing the women to marry certain type of close relative. (Chandrakala Hate: 1969)

The march of literacy failed to keep pace with the growth of population and the total number of illiterates among males and females at the end of each census decade exceeded the corresponding number at the beginning of the decade, although percentage increase in literacy was substantial. (Ashok mitra: 1979)

The necessity to women organization to educated and mobilize the women folk has been realized by a section of people since the earlier part of this country, but owing to political limitation of all the political parties, name of the organization turned the women movement into a movement of real liberation of women from all women bondages and capitalistic values. (Chandan Mitra: 1984)

However, education and occupational opportunities are providing women with new roles outside the home, their social position in the family remains largely unchanged because the system of arrange marriage reasserts the authority of caste norms and the obligation to a traditional image of women. The emphasis of educational empowerment of women is to bring every women out of blind traditional belief and equip them to carry out multiple roles as citizen, house wife, mother etc. and help in building the new society. (Leela Dube Paliwala, R.D.Bhagat: 1990)

It is been revealed that apart from liberalization, globalization and privatization, a social revolution and liberalization of minds towards greater equality has taken place in the society. (Akilesh Kumar: 2003)

The establishment of Shree Shakthi Group in Karnataka has increased the socio-economic condition of rural and semi urban poor women (A.T.Kitrur and M.V.Shidaganal: 2010)

Women empowerment in urban society is similar to that of other structure, where many women are not involved in it, especially in the decision-making bodies. It is hard for them to participate in public spheres such as the political, administrative, judiciary and trade union due to cultural

barriers, low educational status and other problems. (Vipin Kumar Singhol: 2012)

The women empowerment has gotten to be a standout amongst the most essential worries of 21<sup>st</sup> century at national level as well as global level. Government activities alone would not be adequate to accomplish this objective. Society must step-up with regard to make an atmosphere in which there is no sexual orientation segregation and women have full chances of self-basic leadership and taking an interest in social, political and monetary existence of the nation with a feeling of equity. (Shail Mishra: 2017)

### C. Challenges to women Empowerment in India:

There are several constraints in the process of women empowerment in India. Social norms and family structure in developing countries like India, manifests and perpetuate the subordinate status of women. The society is more biased in favor of male child in respect to education, nutrition and other opportunities. The root cause of this type of attributes lies in the belief that male child inherits the clan in India. Some of the challenges towards women empowerment are discussed below:

#### a. Violence against women:

The life of Indian women is full of sorrow and anxiety. According to latest report by NCRD (National Crime Records Bureau) it is clear that crime against women have increased by 34% in last 4 years, various types of crime like rape, molestation, dowry harassment, wife battering etc... are been reported from time to time in Indian community. This have become a greater challenge towards women empowerment in spite of various measures that is been taken by the government to impress condition of women in the field of education, health and finance etc.

#### b. Gender Discrimination:

Various statistics related to gender discrimination proves that there are greater obstacles in India towards women empowerment. One such factor is abortion where 34,790 underwent abortion in 2015-16; there was 13% jump from 2014-15. Around 20,000 women in India die every year due to abortion related complication.

The other major problem is female infanticide. According to the population research institute, at least 12,771,043 sex-selective abortions have taken place in India between 2000 and 2014 on an average of 2,332 per day.

Education of women is one of the factors that indicate women empowerment. Although at the primary and secondary level of education the enrollment of girls have improved but women are still much behind as compared to boys at higher and competitive level. According to 2011 census the female literacy rate is 54.16% as compared to 75.85% among males.

Female work participation rate in India is only 27% as reported by India spend survey on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2016. At present only 12%

of women participate in politics.

The above discussed issues indicate that India is still facing greater challenges towards women empowerment.

## SECTION II

### GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA:

Press Information Bureau, the Government of India- Ministry of Women and Child Development had reported on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 about the measures that are taken by the government towards women empowerment. According to the National Sample Survey Report (2011-12), the workforce participation rates of male are 54.4% and female is 21.9%. As per the India Country Report, 2015 by Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation on the Millennium Development Goals, the percentage share of females in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector during 2011-12 increased to 19.3% which is higher than 18.6% reported during 2009-10 by National Sample Survey Organization.

Some of the schemes that are introduced by government of India towards women empowerment are mentioned below:

- Swadhar and Short Stay Homes to provide relief and rehabilitation to destitute women and women in distress.
- Working Women Hostels for ensuring safe accommodation for working women away from their place of residence.
- Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP) to ensure sustainable employment and income generation for marginalized and asset-less rural and urban poor women across the country.
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) to provide micro-finance services to bring about the socio-economic upliftment of poor women.
- National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) to strengthen the overall processes that promote all-round Development of Women
- Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers (including single mother) to provide day care facilities for running a crèche of 25 children in the age group 0-6 years from families having monthly income of less than Rs 12,000.
- One Stop Centre to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence.
- Scheme for Universalisation of Women Helpline intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence.
- Sabla Scheme for holistic development of adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18 years.
- In order to strengthen the process of gender budgeting the Ministry of Women and Child Development has been undertaking various capacity building measures

for the officials of the State Governments by organising training programs/workshops regularly.

In order to improve employability of women, a separate Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has been created.

Equal Remuneration Act, 1973 provides for payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers for the same work of similar nature without any discrimination. In order to ensure social security to the workers including women in the unorganized sector, the Government has enacted the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act 2008.

The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 regulates employment of women in certain establishments for a certain period (12 weeks) before and after childbirth and provides for maternity and other benefits.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) Scheme is being implemented as Conditional Maternity Benefit for pregnant and lactating women to improve health and nutrition status to better enabling environment by providing cash incentives to pregnant and nursing mothers to partly compensate wage loss both prior to and after delivery.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 has been enacted, which covers all women, irrespective of their age or employment status and protect them against sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organized or unorganized.

The Constitution of India has also laid down certain Provisions for Empowering Women in India such as:

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

Panchayats and Municipalities- Articles 343(d) and 343 (T).

The various other Government Schemes for Women Empowerment are mentioned below:

The Government of India has over 34 schemes for women operated by different department and ministries that actually promoting women empowerment.

- Rastria Mahila Kosh (RMK) 1992-1993
- Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) October, 1993.
- Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) 1995.
- Women Entrepreneur Development programme given top priority in 1997-98.
- Mahila Samakhya being implemented in about 9000 villages.
- Swayasjdha.
- Swa Shakti Group.
- Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP).
- Swalamban.
- Crèches/ Day care centre for the children of working and ailing mother.
- Hostels for working women.
- Swadhar.
- National Mission for Empowerment of Women.
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (1975),
- Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG) (2010).
- The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers.
- Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS) (2009-2010).
- Dhanalakahmi (2008).
- Short Stay Homes.
- Ujjawala (2007).
- Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan).
- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
- Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM).
- Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY).
- Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS).
- Working Women's Forum.
- Indira Mahila Kendra.
- Mahila Samiti Yojana.
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission.
- Indira Priyadarahini Yojana.
- SBI's Sree Shaki Scheme.
- SIDBI's Mahila Udyam Nidhi Mahila Vikas Nidhi.
- NGO's Credit Schemes.

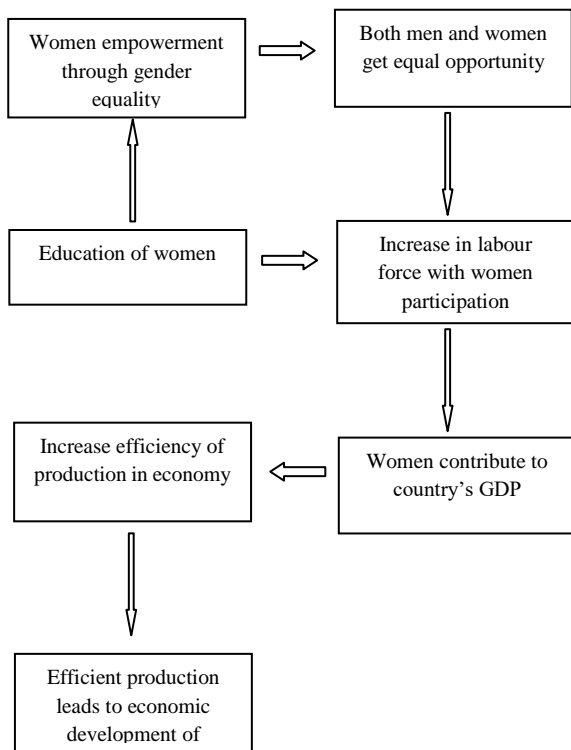
- National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development's Schemes

The efforts of government are supported by NGO organizations that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. Despite concerted efforts of governments and NGOs there are certain gaps that avoid women empowerment. India has come a long way in empowering women yet the future journey is difficult and demanding.

### SECTION III

#### ROLE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA:

##### A. Frame work of Women Empowerment and Economic Development



The conceptual frame work of women empowerment and economic development clearly states how a nation achieves economic development with the progress of women in the field of education. By educating the women the nation becomes more stronger and create awareness on the significance of the gender equality. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the increase in enrolment of women in higher education, they have become more intellectual which have led to create equal opportunities with men in the field of socio, economic and political areas.

While women are being educated, their participation in the field of social, economic and political areas have increased significantly. In today's scenario women are taking up multiple roles, they have become more competitive to their counterparts. With an increase in women labour force, the country is capable of getting additional labour force which helps in producing additional goods and services in the country.(women contributes to country's GDP).

With increase in production of goods and services in the economy, country can generate more revenue which in-turn leads to economic development of country.

### SECTION IV

#### FUTURE WORK CHALLENGES TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA:

India has come a long way in empowering the women status. According to Upanishad the primary duty of women is to be in service of her husband and family. But in today's time we speak about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> seat reservation for women in parliament.

The different phases of women empowerment is here:

Ancient India- primary duty of women is husband service.

Medieval India- when women were not let out and express her opinion, sati system was in practice

Pre-independence-sati system was stopped but women were made to stay inside the house after her husband death.

1950's- women were encourage to go to schools and colleges

1960's- dowry system was prohibited

1990's-women were given responsible status in social structure.

2001- India saw progress in women empowerment.

2010 onwards- 1\3<sup>rd</sup> seats were reserve for women in parliament.

Even with such a progress India has to go a long way to witness complete empowerment of women. India has to face certain challenges in future in the process of achieving women empowerment. India being a land of rich culture and tradition, it is difficult to change the mind set of people on certain aspects of women in the field of education, work, social status, political status etc...

Though government have taken a strong initiative to educate a girl child in the country, most of the community in India are still believing that education is not a primary aspect of girl instead the primary duty is to get marry and be a good wife and a caring member in the family. She is not meant for taking tough task of taking decision in the family. This is why we see only 54.16% of literacy rate among women.

When it comes to women participation in labour force, it is more challenging task, A New York Times op-ed, published in 2015, tried explaining this absence of women from India's work force. "Much of the reason they don't work appears to lie in the persistence of India's traditional gender norms, which seeks to ensure "purity" of women by protecting them from men other than their husband and restrict mobility outside their homes."

The movie like Dungle is the best example of how countries like India as to face challenges in empowering women due to a narrowest view of people in our community. We the people in India decide whom the girl should marry? What should she wear? How should she talk? Where should she work? How much education does she need? Etc... all this is the future challenges for women empowerment in India.

#### SECTION V

#### CONCLUSION:

"Women is an incarnation of shakti- the goddess of power. If she is bestowed with education, India's strength will double. Let the campaign of 'kanya Kelavni' be spread in every home, let the lamp of educating daughter be lit up in every heart" – Sri Narendra Modi. A woman is a mother of race and liaison between generations. The women have come a long way. The

gender gap in infant mortality rate has narrowed, enrolment of girls in schools has improved and participation of women in the organized sector has taken a quantum jump. But still in India we can see a drawback of people outlook towards women due to our strong tradition and beliefs that were in practice since many generation. The policies of the government towards women empowerment are very effective but their implementations are ineffective. The women empowerment is possible only if the mindset of the people are changed towards the women issues.

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