

## Women Empowerment

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### Abstract

India with its diversity and rich heritage has an ugly side to it. If women have been worshipped as Goddess, there has been “Sati” too. Though the situation has improved but some facts (education rate, sexual harassment among others) are daunting. Many women have broken the barriers and we would still witness a lot more. To help women is to help society, as Jawaharlal Nehru said “You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women”. Through the journey of women empowerment our nation will achieve its dream. This paper attempts to analyze the status of women empowerment in India and highlights the issues, government schemes, challenges of women empowerment. The study is based purely from secondary sources. The study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by government. The study concludes by an observation that access to education, employment and change in social structure are only the enabling factor to women empowerment.

### Introduction

You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women” - Jawaharlal Nehru.

We might be listening to news, reading in newspapers or magazines, would have gone through incidents and accidents with women in India. We read many articles where woman are given equal status to men, But the TRUTH is that in the modern India, the woman has always been a second grade citizen, no matter what leaders have said or done.

Women constitute half of humankind and 40% of the global workforce. They are a growing in every working aspect. As workers, entrepreneurs and service providers they contribute to social and economic development. They are more strong and hardworking than men, dominate the unprotected informal sector and are more likely than men to be in part-time formal employment in most high income regions, spend more time than men in unpaid care-work globally, have lower public and corporate economic decision-making. Women’s empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different factors that include geographical location, educational level, social status and age. Policies on women’s empowerment exist at the national, state, and local levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence, and political participation. However, there are significant gaps between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. Women workers in rural and urban areas have also been hard hit by the current financial and economic crisis, volatile food prices, the energy crisis, export driven agriculture and subsidized imports. Empowering women economically and making them central to solutions is a moral imperative. But it also makes good economic sense. A growing body of research shows that enhancing women’s participation improves national economies, in-creases household productivity and living standards, enhances the wellbeing of children with positive long term impacts and can increase women’s agency and overall empowerment.

### Review of Literature

**H. Subrahmanyam (2011)** Author has highlighted that there has been a growth in terms of education to women. More empowerment has been given to girls compared to men.

**M. Bhavani Sankara Rao (2011)** has highlighted that health of women members of SHG have certainly improved. It clearly shows that more focus is given to health related sector and various policies for their betterment of health are framed.

**Doepke M. Tertilt M. (2011)** Does Female Empowerment Promote Economic Development? This study is an empirical analysis shows that women if employed can herself take better care of child.

**Duflo E. (2011)** Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research Cambridge The study argues that relation of empowerment and development is weak and policies to be framed to bring equality between men and women.

**Venkata Ravi and Venkatraman (2005)** focused on the effects of SHG on women participation and in decision making at family level.

### **Objective of Study**

1. To know the need of Women Empowerment.
2. To assess the Awareness of Women Empowerment in India.
3. To analyze the Factors influencing the Economic Empowerment of Women.
4. To study the Government Schemes For Women Empowerment.
5. To identify the Hindrances in the Path of Women Empowerment.
6. To offer useful Suggestions in the light of Findings.

### **Research Methodology**

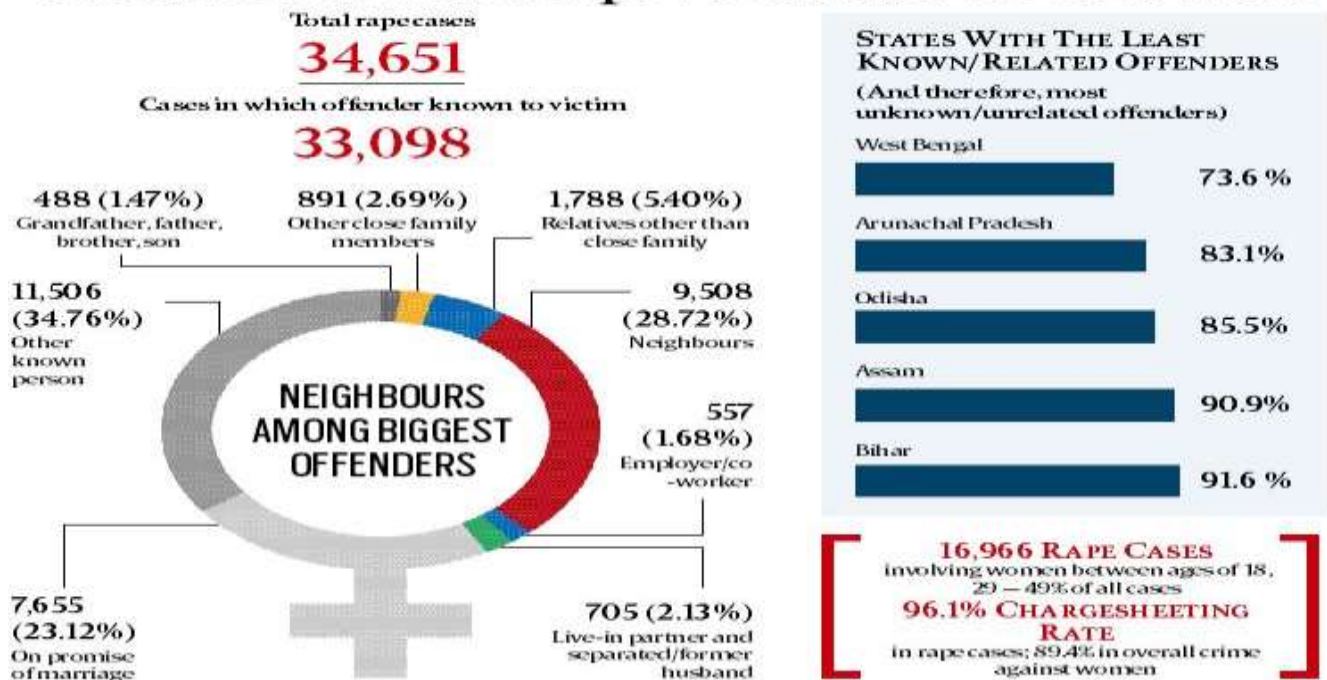
This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been taken to analyze the empowerment of in India. The data used in it is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study.

### **Crime Against Women**

The year 2015 has witnessed a reduction in crime against women as compared to 2014. Recording a decrease of 3.1%, 2015 saw the registration of 3, 27,394 cases under the head of Crimes against Women as compared to 3, 37,922 cases in 2014, and show figures from the National Crime Records Bureau.

Cases of rape have fallen by 5.7% — coming down from 36,735 in 2014 to 34,651 in 2015. Incidents of gang rape too have shown a decrease from 2,346 in 2014 to 2,113 in 2015. There has been a marginal increase of 2.5%, however, in other sexual offences against women. Under the category of “assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty”, 2015 saw 84,222 cases being registered across the country as against 82,235 in 2014. The category includes offences such as sexual harassment, assault or use of criminal force to women with intent to disrobe, voyeurism, and stalking. Kidnapping and abduction of women also increased in 2015 to 59,277 cases from 57,311 in 2014.

# Offender known to rape victim in over 95% cases



Forcing a woman into marriage continues to be the chief reason to kidnap her. According to the data, in 2015, close to 54% of all abductions of women were carried out to force them into marriage. In 2014 too, this reason was behind over 50% of all kidnappings of women.

Police sources said such high numbers of kidnappings for marriage were probably due to the fact that parents of girls who eloped often registered cases of kidnapping against the man the girl had fled with.

## STATES WITH THE WORST RATES, NUMBERS OF INCIDENTS

State	Incidents	Per 1 lakh female population
Delhi	2,199	23.7
Chhattisgarh	1,560	12.2
Madhya Pradesh	4,391	11.9
Odisha	2,251	10.8
Rajasthan	3,644	10.5
Maharashtra	4,144	7.3
<b>UTTAR PRADESH*</b>	<b>3,025</b>	<b>3.0</b>

\*Surprisingly low rate suggests widespread non-registration of rape cases

## OVERALL CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

Delhi tops rate chart, UP has biggest national share

State	Cases	Per 1 lakh female population	%age contribution to all-India total
<b>1 Delhi</b>	<b>17,104</b>	<b>184.3</b>	<b>52</b>
2 Assam	23,258	148.2	7.1
3 Telangana	15,135	83.1	4.6
4 Odisha	17,144	81.9	5.2
5 Rajasthan	28,165	81.5	8.6
6 Haryana	9,446	75.7	2.9
7 West Bengal	33,218	73.4	10.1
8 Tripura*	1,267	68.2	0.4
9 Madhya Pradesh	24,135	65.5	7.4
10 Chandigarh*	463	64.8	0.1

\*Fewer cases, but small populations raise the rate

Delhi has the highest rate of crimes against women overall. With 17,104 cases, the capital recorded a crime rate of 184.3 per 1 lakh female population. Assam is second with a rate of 148.2, with 23,258 cases.

However, the high rate of crime is often a reflection of police registering cases and dealing with the crime. It does not necessarily show deteriorating law and order.

## Present Situation Of Women

**Trust Law, a news service run by Thomson Reuters, has ranked India as the worst G20 country in which to be a woman.** This in the country where the leader of the ruling party, the speaker of the lower house of parliament, at least three chief ministers, and a number of sports and business icons are women. It is also a country where a generation of newly empowered young women are going out to work in larger numbers than ever before. But **crimes against women are rising too**.

With more than 24,000 reported cases in 2014, rape registered a 9.2% rise over the previous year. More than half (54.7%) of the victims were aged between 18 and 30. Most disturbingly, according to police records, the offenders were known to their victims in more than 94% of the cases. Neighbor's accounted for a third of the offenders, while parents and other relatives were also involved. Delhi accounted for over 17% of the total number of rape cases in the country. And it is not rape alone. Police records from 2014 show kidnappings and abductions of women were up 19.4%, women being killed in disputes over dowry payments by 2.7%, torture by 5.4%, molestation by 5.8% and trafficking by an alarming 122% over the previous year. Women form 48% of India's Population, only 29% of the National workforce, only 26% women have access to formal credit.

## Need For Women Empowerment

We have seen various schemes of central and state government to empower women. But in India women are still discriminated and not given equal status, whether it is social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education or any other sector. Women are found to be economically poor and dependent on others. Only few women came out as example and is engaged in other activities. So, they need economic power to stand on their own legs as per with men. According to 2014 census, rate of literacy among men in India is found to be 76% whereas it is only 54% among women. Thus, increasing education is important for women to empower them. It has also noticed that some of women are too weak to work. They consume less food but work more, even labour class women suffer from starvation because they are forced to work more. On the other hand there are more cases of rape, molestation, gang rapes, so in order to end this there is more need of women empowerment. To sum up, women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come with and help to self-empower themselves.

**Hindrances of Women Empowerment:** The main Problems that were faced by women in past days and still today up to some extent:

1 Gender discrimination	8 Low need for achievement
2 lack of education	9 Absence of ambition for the achievement
3 Female Infanticide	10 Social status
4 Financial Constraints	11 Dowry
5 Family Responsibility	12 Marriage in some caste and child marriage
6 Low Mobility	13 Atrocities on women ( Raped, Kicked, Killed, Subdued, Humiliated almost daily)
7 Low ability to bear Risk	

## Ways to Empower Women

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work—respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality



## 8. Self-employment and Self-help group

### **Government Schemes for Women Empowerment**

The National Resource Centre for Women has been set up which functions as a national convergence center for all schemes and programs for women. It acts as a central repository of knowledge, information, research and data on all gender related issues and is the main body servicing the National and State Mission Authority. This commission has around 15 major ministries of Indian government as its partner.

There are number of schemes running under the women empowerment mission we will discuss the major schemes here:-

- Poverty Alleviation and Economic Empowerment of Women
  1. Schemes of Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying Fisheries
  2. Scheme on Development of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture
  3. Scheme on Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post-harvest Operations
  4. Scheme on Fisheries Training and Extension
  5. Assistance to Cooperatives
  6. National Bamboo Mission
  7. Central Poultry Development Organisation
  8. Development of Commercial Horticulture through Production and Post-Harvest Management
  9. Promotion and Strengthening of Agricultural Mechanization through Training, Testing & Demonstration
  10. Gramin Bhandaran Yojna
  11. Capacity Building to enhance Competitiveness of Indian Agriculture and Registration of Organic Products
  12. Technology Development and Transfer for Promotion of Horticulture
  13. Marketing Assistance Scheme
  14. Scheme of Support to Voluntary Agencies for Adult Education and Skill Development
  15. Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)
  16. Performance & Credit Rating Scheme for Small Industries
  17. Entrepreneurship Development Institutions (EDIs) Scheme
  18. National Award Scheme/ Guidelines [Launched by Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise (MSME)]
  19. Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS) for Technology Up gradation of the Small Scale Industries
  20. Management Training Programs
  21. Scheme For Market Development Assistance For MSME Exporters
  22. Credit Guarantee Cover Fund Scheme for Small Industries
  23. Rajiv Gandhi Udyami Mitra Yojana (RGUMY)
  24. Raw Material Assistance Scheme
  25. Bamboo Cultivation
  26. Organic Farming
  27. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)
  28. Mushroom Farming
  29. Scheme of Financial Assistance for Preparing Young Professional in Rural Areas
  30. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
  31. Pottery Technology
  32. Technopreneur Promotion Program
  33. Consultancy Promotion Program
  34. Technology Development & Utilization Program for Women
  35. Industrial R&D Promotion Program(IRDPP)
  36. National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation

37. National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation
38. Marketing and Export Promotion Scheme
39. Scheme for Working Women Hostel
40. Grant in Aid Scheme – Export
41. Diversified Handloom Development Scheme (DHDS)
42. Grant in Aid Scheme – Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojna
43. Jute Manufactures Development Council Schemes
44. Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks
45. Grant in Aid Scheme – HRD Scheme
46. Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme
47. Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (Handloom Sector)
48. Dairy/Poultry Venture Capital Fund
49. Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)
50. Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY)
51. Old and Infirm Persons Annapurna
52. National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Program (NIDDCP)
53. Nutrition Education and Extension
54. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana(RSBY)
55. Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)
56. National Rural Drinking Water Program
57. Assistance to Cooperatives Scheme
58. Strengthening Infrastructure for Quality & Clean Milk Production

The all above schemes are indirectly influencing the women workers and their economic condition. These schemes basically give stress on the individual training and entrepreneurship. They also provide employment to the people through various means. So these schemes provide supplements and food items to poor families, hence playing a pivotal role in women empowerment.

Constitution of India under Article 15(3), states that it allows positive discrimination in favour of women and children. Following are the list of Women Empowerment Programmes instigated by the government:

### **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh**

The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was set up in 1993 under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, with an aim to fulfill credit needs of poor and women with no financial assistance specifically in the formal sector. The micro finance services under RMK is provided through a client friendly and hassle-free loaning mechanism for livelihood activities , housing needs , family needs etc. with a motive to uplift the economic status of poor women. It is also known as National Credit Fund for Women as it provides financial assistance to poor women to meet their needs.

### **Support to Training and employment Programme for Women (STEP)**

STEP was launched by the Government of India in 1969 in the Central Sector called the Short Stay Homes for Women & Girls to protect and rehabilitate those women and girls who are facing social and moral danger due to family problems mental strains, social ostracism, exploitation or other causes. The services extended in these Homes include medical care; case work services; occupational therapy; education- cum- vocational training and recreational facilities.

### **Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) – ‘Sabla’**

The Sabla scheme was launched in year 2011. It aims at covering all out-of-school Adolescent Girls in the age group of 11 to 18 years who would assemble at the Anganwadi Centre on a fixed day at regular interval. The others, i.e., school-going girls, meet at the AWC at least twice a month, and more frequently (once a week) during vacations/holidays. Here they receive life skills education, nutrition and health education, awareness about socio-legal issues, etc.

This provides an opportunity for mixed group interaction between school-going and out-of-school girls, motivating the latter to also join school and help the school going to receive the life skills. This scheme

mainly aims at reducing the dropout rate of Adolescent Girls by increasing their literacy rate and work participation.

### **Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB)**

The Central Social Welfare Board was set up by a Resolution of Government of India dated 12th August, 1953 with the object of promoting social welfare activities and implementing welfare programmes for women, children and the handicapped through voluntary organisations.

### **The Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)**

IGMSY was introduced in year 2010 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development for pregnant and lactating women, aiming to partly compensate them for wage-loss during childbirth and childcare and also provide conditions for ensuring safe delivery and promote good nutrition and feeding practices for infants and young children.

### **Swayamsidha scheme**

Swayamsidha scheme was launched in the year 2001 dedicated to Women empowerment. It is a Self Help Groups (SHG) based programme with emphasis on convergence activities. The objective is to ensure that SHG members avail the benefit of all schemes and services in an integrated and holistic manner. This scheme is being implemented in 6 Swayamsidha Scheme districts under which 13 blocks have been sanctioned in Haryana State.

1,300 SHGs have been formed under the scheme and all the 1,300 SHGs are doing saving and have accumulated savings to the tune of Rs. 526.48 lakh and all these groups are conducting interloaning which is to tune of Rs 442.24 lac and all of them have also opened bank accounts out of which, 603 groups have even availed Bank loans.

### **Swadhar**

This is a Central sector scheme for providing holistic and integrated services to women in difficult circumstances such as destitute widows, women prisoners released from jail and without family support, women survivors of natural disasters; trafficked women/girls rescued from brothels or other places or victims of sexual crime, mentally challenged women who are without any support etc. The package of services made available include provision for food, clothing, shelter, health care, counselling and legal support, social and economic rehabilitation through education, awareness generation, skill upgradation. The scheme is implemented through voluntary organisations including Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, Boards, State Women's Development Corporation, urban bodies etc., provided they have the required experience and expertise in the rehabilitation of such women. The scheme also supports a helpline for women in distress, counselling centre, training centre and medical centre. At present, 34 swadhar centres are functioning in the State.

### **Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)**

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) introduced in 1982-83 in a sub-scheme of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) at district level. The primary objective of the scheme is to focus attention on the women members of rural families below the poverty line to provide them the opportunities of self-employment on a sustained basis. The programme was initially introduced in 50 selected districts. Later, it was extended to more districts in a phased manner all over the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi latest programme '**Internet Saathi**', a joint digital literacy programme of Google India and Tata Trust, is all set to roll out across 400 villages and reach one lakh women in Purulia district in West Bengal in the next few months.

Under the programme, women are trained to learn and explore various uses and benefits of the Internet. After covering nine states, the programme will now be made available in West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura.

Women will be selected and trained to become adept in using the Internet on smartphones and tablet devices. These women will further coach other women in their villages and neighbouring hamlets.

"This has a ripple effect among the community and is a sustained, long-term effort through which these women get comfortable in using a smartphones

## Challenges

There are many challenges that are currently plaguing the issues of women's rights in India. A lot of issues are redundant and quite basic which has been faced across the country; they are contributory causes to the overarching status of women in India. Targeting these issues will directly benefit the empowerment of women in India.

**Education** While the country has grown from since its independence but the gap between women and men education is worst. In comparison to 82.14% of adult educated men, only 65.46% of adult literate women are there in India. Eradicating this gap and educating women about their real place in the world is going to take a long process.

**Poverty In The Country** Poverty is considered the greatest threat in the world, and eradication of poverty is equally considered important as the eradication of illiteracy. Due to poverty, women are exploited as domestic workers and wives whose incomes are used by the man of the house. If poverty is considered a concern then only a girl child can follow her dreams.

**Health And Safety** The health and safety concerns of women are important for the wellbeing of a country, and is crucial factor for the empowerment of women in a country. However material health care should be concerned. Women are physically weak because of inadequate intake. While there are several programs that have been set up by the Government and several NGOs in the country are working on this matter but still a wide gap that exists between those under protection and those not.

**Professional Inequality:** This inequality is practiced in employment and face lot of problems in male dominant society. They are criticized and not given equal status as that of men at working places.

**Household Inequality:** Only women are considered as having the responsibility of house hold matters. Women are still being treated as slaves and to give birth to young one.

## Legislation

**1. Immoral prevention act, 1956:** An Act to provide in pursuance of the International Convention signed at New York on the 9th day of May, 1950, for the prevention of immoral traffic.

**2. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (Amended in 1986):** An act that abolishes the dowry system practiced in Indian weddings and imposes penal charges on violation of the act. It discourages the taking or giving of dowry.

**4. The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987:** An act to provide for the more effective prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification and for matters connected herewith or incidental thereto, whereas sati or the burning or burying alive of widows or women is revolting to the feelings of human nature and is nowhere enjoyed by any of the religions of the India as an imperative duty.

**5. Women's Reservation Bill (The Constitution 108th Amendment Bill):** It proposes to amend the Constitution of India to reserve one third of all seats in the Lok Sabha, and in all state legislative assemblies for women. The Rajya Sabha passed the bill but the Lok Sabha has not yet voted on the bill. This will be helpful in increasing the political participation of women.

**6. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976:** This major piece of legislation deal with the equal rights in employment for women workers. This act was implemented in the International women's year on the demand for equality in employment voiced by working women.

## Suggestions

- Proper awareness for laws should be there that is law should not be restricted to papers only but the implementation of law should be there so that every woman can be familiar with her rights.



Significant steps should be taken to implement all the laws which are amended to facilitate detention, prevention and punishment of crimes against women.

- Women education has to be made compulsory and women should be encouraged to become literate because without being educated women cannot have an access to her right.
- Strict implementation of the schemes and policies for women empowerment should be done.
- Awareness camps for women should be organized where they can become familiar with the framed schemes and policies and can take benefit of those schemes and policies

### **Conclusion**

Thinking on development has shifted repeatedly over the past forty years. So has thinking on women in development. This shift in thinking coincides with a growing concern about the lack of progress observed in improving the quality of life for women via a via men over the past few decades. This leads one to suggest that the past shifts in development thinking have not been of much help to women.

Women around the world share a common condition; they are not full and equal participants in public policy choices that affect their lives. Nowhere is the gap between de jure and de facto equality among men and women greater than in the area of decision making. The top decision making position remain largely male dominated spheres where women have little influence.

The lack of women's participation in political decision making has important consequences. It deprives women of important rights and responsibilities as citizens, and excludes their perspectives and interests from policy making and decision making. Their voices are missing from key decisions on national budgets and setting of government priorities. Their skills and viewpoint often. For this to happen apart from Government, NGOs are also doing efforts and first of all efforts should begin from our homes where we must empower female members of our family by providing them equal opportunities of education, health, nutrition and decision making without any discrimination.

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