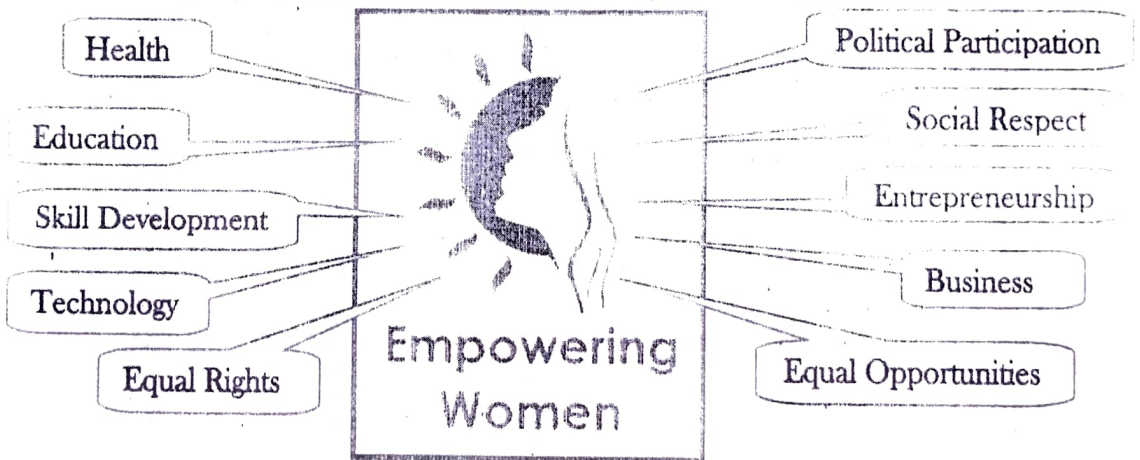


INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FELLOWS ASSOCIATION'S  
**RESEARCH JOURNEY**  
 Multidisciplinary International E-Research Journal

PEER REFREED & INDEXED JOURNAL  
 January-2020 Special Issue - 212 (B)

**Women Empowerment**  
 Through Entrepreneurship & Skill Development



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## **Empowerment of women in India : Barriers and Challenges**

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Empowerment of women is a necessity for the very development of a society, since it improves both the quality and the quantity of human resources accessible for development. Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development. In the context of women and development, empowerment must include more choices for women to make on their own. Women's empowerment is medium of a social action in which women elaborate and recreate what it is to be in a condition that they earlier were deprived of. Empowerment can be defined in many ways, however, when talking about women's empowerment, empowerment means accepting and allowing people (women) who are on the outside of the decision-making process into it. "This puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision-making and, in the economic sphere, on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision-making." (Rahman, Aminur 2013).

Empowerment is the progression that creates power in persons over their own lives, society, and in their communities. It comprises the action to lift the status of women through education, raising awareness, literacy, and training. It is all about providing and permitting women to make life-determining decisions throughout the different problems in society. With the help of Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), it is possible to measure women's contribution to a nation, both politically and economically.

Many of the barriers to women's empowerment and equity lie embedded in cultural norms. In India, everyday there are cases of violence against women in the news. The empowerment of women cannot happen without a change of attitude of men towards women but ensuring safety for women is the duty of the State.

Research shows that the increasing access of the internet can also result in an increased exploitation of women. Release personal information on websites has put some women's personal safety at risk. In 2010, Working to Halt Online Abuse stated that 73% of women were mistreated through such sites. Types of victimization consist of cyber stalking, harassment, online pornography.

Gender-related barriers related to sexual harassment in particular is a big barrier for women in the workplace. Unfair hiring practices, career progression, and unequal pay where women are paid less in compare with men, both are performing the same job. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), sexual harassment is a clear form of gender discrimination based on sex, a manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women.

The reservation of 33 per cent seats for women in the Parliament is also something that has been proposed and rejected many times. India has only 12.2 per cent women in the Parliament. In Panchayats, however, women got reserved seats in 1993, which is a milestone in the history of our rural development. Now the reservation is likely to go up to 50 per cent.

The Gender Inequality Index of India In the UN Human Development Report's (2016) is at the bottom of the pile at 125<sup>th</sup> position, out of 159 nations. In Gender Gap index (World Economic Forum) 2017, its place is 108<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries. It has felled 21 places in one year compared to the 87<sup>th</sup> position last year in Gender Gap Index!

The Economic Survey 2017-18 said that 51 per cent of women aged 14 to 49 were found to be suffering from anemia in India (the highest in the world) which makes childbirth difficult and dangerous. It is one of the reasons why the motherly mortality rate is so high in India at 167 per 100,000 live births.



Women can be empowered by the economic resources and they are on a strong wicket when they bring money to the households. Recent Family Health Survey reveals that only one fifth of working women have the power to take important decisions in the family. It is strange that in the twenty first century 42 percent of women earning equal to their husbands, they still remain subservient to the husbands. They drop out from work to lift families but re-entry is very hard once their children are grown up. This is the reason that many educated women are not working in India. In many cases, if the husband is earning well, women don't feel the need to do job. Sometimes many men do not like working wives because they think working women are negligent in their household duties and in bringing up offspring.

In agriculture, women remain discriminated her work considered as unpaid and unrecognized. If she is a pay worker, her wages are much lower in compare with men. In remote villages, a woman has to fetch water, gather firewood, tend to cattle, and look after the elderly and the children. It takes them the entire day to complete the chores. Life is hard and constrained for millions of rural women. Some of them have been liberated by NGOs and they have found group comfort in working together, learning skills and getting paid. The conditions of widows are even worse. The society still treats them in a dreadful manner, small amount of pension Rs 350 per month (which was Rs 200 earlier) is fixed to them under the Indira Gandhi National Pension Scheme.

Economic empowerment increases women's organization, access to formal government programs, mobility outside the home, economic independence, and purchasing power. Policy makers are suggested to support job training to aid in entrance in the formal markets. One suggestion is to offer more formal education chances for women that would allow for higher bargaining power in the home. They would have more way in to higher income outside the home.

Women's access to property inheritance and land rights is another method used to economically authorize women. This would allow them better means of asset gathering, capital, and bargaining power required to deal with gender discriminations. Regularly, women in developing and underdeveloped nations are officially controlled from their land on the singular basis of gender.

Another factor is Race it has a massive force on women's empowerment in areas such as employment. Employment can help produce empowerment for women. Many researcher's propose that when we talk about women's empowerment, and discussing the different hurdle that deprived women face, which makes it harder for them to attain empowerment in society, is significant when examining the impact of race in association to employment. Considerably investigating how chances are planned by gender, race, and class can become known to social change. Work opportunities and the work atmosphere can form empowerment for women. Empowerment in the workplace can completely have an effect on job happiness and performance, having equality in the work place can greatly increase the sense of empowerment.

Political empowerment chains produce strategy that would carry gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private area. Accepted methods that have been suggested are to produce ascending action policies that have a quota for the number of women in policy making and parliament sessions. "As of 2011, the global average of women whom hold lower and single house parliament sessions is 21.6 percent" (Gupta, Kamla, Yesudian, P. Princey 2006).

Further suggestions have been to boost women's rights to vote, voice opinion, and the ability to run for office with a fair chance of being elected. Policies that amplify their bargaining power in the household would include policies that account for cases of divorce, policies for better welfare for women, and policies that give women control over resources (such as property rights). on the other hand, involvement is not restricted to the area of politics. It can contain participation in the household, in schools, and the ability to make choices for one. Some theorists believe that- "bargaining power and





agency in the household must be achieved before one can move onto broader political participation". (Ellis, Amanda: 2007)

Education plays a very significant role in boosting self-confidence and also enables women to find better jobs and they can work shoulder to shoulder with men. They connect in public debate and make demands to government for health care, social safety and other issues. By empowering themselves educationally with new technologies like e-learning, women are also learning new skills that are important in today's advanced globalized world.

Internet is also a powerful tool to Empower women. The growing access of the web in the late 20th century has allowed women to empower themselves by using various tools like Face book, tweeter for online activism. With the introduction of the World Wide Web, women have begun to use social networking sites. They are voicing for equality. For example, on May 29, 2013, an online campaign started by 100 female advocates forced the leading social networking website, Face book, to take down various pages that spread hatred about women. (Global Monitoring Report 2013-14)

#### Conclusion:

On the whole, in India we have to realize that women can have the kind of empowerment that they already have in many countries, especially in the Scandinavian nations, if they work and have economic independence, exercise control over their reproductive health, have a strong voice in family matters, and have proportionate representation in politics.

For empowering women more specifically, there should be more efforts to educate them women must acquire empowerment through education rather than others give them.

Entire nations, businesses, communities and groups can benefit from the implementation of programs and policies that adopt the notion of women empowerment. Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. Many world leaders and scholars have argued that sustainable development is impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment. Sustainable development accepts environmental protection, social and economic development, and without women's empowerment.

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