

## A STUDY ON THE CONCEPTS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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**ABSTRACT:**As the smooth functioning of a hand is dependent on the smooth functioning of all the fingers. In the same manner the development and growth of a nation is also dependent on the development and growth of both men and women equally. In India the growth and empowerment of women had been overlooked for many years. . It is only from the last few decades we consider the issue of women empowerment as an issue of utmost importance. Government of India and various other federations and associations are showing great interest and giving various supports for the promotion of women empowerment in India. But still there are some hindrances which restrict their way to move forward. Women's empowerment and economic development are closely related: in one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, empowering women may benefit development. Does this imply that pushing just one of these two levers would set a virtuous circle in motion?

**KEYWORDS:** women , empowerment, economic development, power, gender equality

**INTRODUCTION:** In the words of Former President APJ Abdul Kalam "Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation.

" Booz & Company issued a research report "Empowering the Third Billion: Women and the World of Work" in the year 2012 clearly indicates that women constitute an emerging workforce of 1 billion. The report also highlights that women constitutes the population of third billion and must get attention. The Harvard Business Review Magazine, April, 2013 article "Vision Statement: Women and the Economics of Equality" clearly states that, if women were employed at the same rates as men, in the United States, Japan, and Egypt then the GDPs of these countries would be higher by 5%, 9%, and 34% respectively. Pandit Jawaharlal Lal Nehru has remarked "When women move forward, the family moves, the village moves and the Nation moves." The development of a nation depends upon the development of its natives. Women who constitute the 50 % of world's population must be developed to make a developed nation. Empowerment refers to enabling people to take charge of their own lives. For women, empowerment emphasizes the importance of increasing their power and taking control over decisions and issues that shape their lives.

Women's empowerment addresses power and relationships in society intertwined with gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, culture and history. Power is identified with equity and equality for women and men in access to resources, participation in decision-making and control over distribution of resources and benefits. Gender equality is addressed at these different levels with the aim of increasing equality between men and women, and achieving women's empowerment.

Access to resources refers to both the means and the right to obtain services, products or commodities.

Gender gaps in access to resources and services are a major obstacle to women's development. The process of empowerment includes mobilizing women to eliminate these gaps. A cornerstone of gender equality is women's equal participation in decision-making. Collective participation is also one of the essential aspects of women's empowerment. Participation in decision-making is integrated with conscientization - the process of raising awareness among women about gender discrimination and the resulting oppression it creates for women as a social group.

**CONCLUSION:** Women's empowerment and economic development are closely interrelated. While development itself will bring about women's empowerment, empowering women will bring about changes in decision-making, which will have a direct impact on development. Contrary to what is claimed by some of the more optimistic policy makers, it is, however, not clear that a one-time impulsion of women's rights will spark a virtuous circle, with women's empowerment and development mutually reinforcing each other and women eventually being equal partners in richer societies. On the one hand, economic development alone is insufficient to ensure significant progress in important dimensions of women's empowerment, in particular, significant progress in decision making ability in the face of pervasive stereotypes against women's ability. On the other hand, women's empowerment leads to improvement in some aspects of children's welfare (health and nutrition, in particular), but at the expense of some others (education).

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