

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to analyze the status of women empowerment in India using various indicators based on data 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. Gender gap exists regarding access to education and employment. It is found that acceptance of unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. More than half of the women believe wife beating to be justified for one reason or the other. Fewer women have final say on how to spend their earnings.

Control over cash earnings increases with age, education and with place of residence. Women's exposure to media is also less relative to men. Rural women are more prone to domestic violence than that of urban women. A large gender gap exists in political participation too. The study concludes by an observation that access to education and employment are only the enabling factors to empowerment, achievement towards the goal, however, depends largely on the attitude of the people towards gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment to participate fully economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability , improve quality of life for women , men, families, and communities. Women empowerment is a burning issue all over the world. "Women empowerment" and "women equality with men" is a universal issue. Women empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for women where they make decision of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society.

"Women empowerment" refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal –right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights, such as:

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- Freely live their life with sense of self-worth, respect and dignity.
- Have complete control of their life, both within and outside of their home and work place.
- To make their own choices and decision. Have equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities.
- Have equal social status in the society.
- Have equal rights for social and economic justice.
- Determine financial and economic choices.
- Get equal employment opportunity without any gender bias.
- Get safe and comfortable working environment.

WHY WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IS IMPORTANT?

Women population is around 50% of the total population of the world. They have every right to be treated equally with men in every spheres of the life and society. The empowerment of women

would result in overall development of society both at micro and macro level. Active participation of women in economic activities and decisions, would contribute towards overall economic development.

THE CHALLENGES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT ARE THE FOLLOWING:

- Because of the inherent superiority complex among the males, they often doesn't allow their female counter-part to rise as high as them.
- High level of domestic responsibilities.
- Restriction to participate in social, economic and religious activities.
- In our society, the boy child often gets preference for education and healthy diet over the girl child.
- Preference for male child still exist among many families in the society.

THE SOLUTION FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Education through mass communication is very important. Both women and men should be made aware of their responsibilities to promote and practice gender-equality.
- The society should be made aware that both boy-child and girl-child are equal, and they both should have equal access to resources.

CONCLUSION

Women represent half the world's population, and gender inequality exists in every nation on the planet. Until women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform below their true potentials. The greatest need of the hour is change of social attitude to women. Women shared equal rights with men in ancient Egypt. Civil administration grew and men become involved in its hierarchy. Women empowerment has a positive impact on children's dietary diversity as well as women's dietary diversity.

“Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform choices into desired actions and outcomes.”

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