



# **Women Empowerment**

**Dr. Tazyn Rahman**

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# Women Empowerment

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Women Empowerment

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## Preface

*“To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves”.*

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Women empowerment is a global issue, which has gained momentum in recent decades as the development of a society or a nation depends on the social as well as economic wellbeing of women. **Women Empowerment** means to create an environment for women where they have the right to make their own decisions. Women Empowerment ensures that women have equal rights and also gives them the confidence to claim their rights. It also ensures that women live their lives freely and with a sense of self-worth and dignity. Women Empowerment gives women an opportunity for education and equal employment opportunities without any gender bias. It also means to provide a safe and comfortable working environment for women.

The first step towards Women Empowerment is to provide education to them. Education will increase Women's self-confidence and enable them to find jobs. In particular, education empowers women to make choices that improve their own and their children's health. Education will also increase women's awareness of their human rights their confidence and their actual ability to assert those rights. Despite significant improvements in recent decades, education is not universally available and gender inequalities still persist.

In India, half of the population consists of women. In modern India, besides rectification of international conventions, there are provisions in the Constitution and several legislative Acts have been passed to ensure women empowerment. Also the role of women in many aspects underwent changes like participation in the development process and formation of self-help groups etc, which is essential for sustainable development in which women play a direct and exclusive role. It however, appears that on this front the situation on ground is far from satisfactory. Hence, the empowering strategies need substantial fine-tuning to ensure that they are effective and result oriented. The vision for the future should be built on gender perspective; hence there is a need for a comprehensive and holistic policy for women. This would enable the country to fulfill the constitutional mandate of women equality and the objective of women's total involvement in the development of the nation.

This Edited book comprises of Twenty three chapters. The first few chapters focus on various ways through which women can be empowered like Education, Digitalization and Sports. The next few chapters talk about the role of ICT, Self Help Groups, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Cooperatives etc in empowering women. The last few chapters highlight the participation of women in politics.

We hope that this book will be prove to be helpful to students, research scholars, academicians and business executives in having a better understanding of the concept of Women Empowerment.

**Editor**

IV

## **Acknowledgement**

I am really feeling very honoured and privileged to have had this Opportunity to bring out an Edited book on a topic very close to my heart “Women Empowerment”. At the onset I would like to express my heartfelt Gratitude to the Almighty for always showering his blessing on us.

This Edited Book would not have been possible without the contribution of the learned authors who have put life to this book through their valuable research work. I am indebted to each one of them for their contribution.

I am thankful to my parents Ms. Nazma Begum & Mr. Nakibur Rahman for making me what I am today. The upbringing they gave has helped me to become a confident and a capable individual. No words can do justice to the feeling of gratitude that I have towards them.

I am indebted to my Mother-in- law Ms. Rumena Begum who has always been very supportive in all my endeavors. Without her support I could not have been able to pursue my professional career. I know she is always blessing us from the Heaven above.

My deepest gratitude is towards my Husband Dr. Akhter Alam and my Son Irfan Alam for always coping up with my erratic work schedules. They have been my pillar of strength. Without their motivation and support I would not have been able to complete this project.

Last but not the least, I express special thanks from the core of my heart to Mr. Arvind Kumar and Empyreal Publication House for their support to print and publish this book in a very short period of time.

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## Women Education and Empowerment in India

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### **Abstract**

*“If you educated a man you educated an individual, however, if you educated a woman you educated a whole family. Women Empowerments means mother India empowered.”*

*Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru*

*Women are the most importance part of our society and they can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is the most important factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Educated women can make valuable contributions towards development of family and thereby society. Educated women have fewer and healthier babies and they are more likely to raise them to become educated and productive citizens like themselves- creating a healthier and more stable society (UNICEF, 2007). Hence children of educated mother are having scope for wider career opportunities in future. Education is the strong power of women empowerment because it enables them to change their life. Women and education is the most importance instruments that can change our life, society. Hence it can develop our nation. According to 2011 census female literacy rate are 65.46% and when the male literacy rate is over 80%. And only woman has the power to bright future for upcoming generations. So as early as possible the growth rate of women education should be uplifted. And only 31.8% women are skilful and workforce (swaniti.com) so the rests 68.2% also have to make skilful for better achievement of our country.*

*Keywords: Women Empowerment, Women and Education, Skill Development*

### **Introduction**

India is the seventh largest country in the world. Our country is blessed with many natural resources. But all these resources cannot help our country unless they are tapped, handled and used in a planned way. This can be done only by the people. Man can develop the resources only when he is wise, healthy, educated and properly trained. Thus, the real resources of our country are its people. They are our human resources. And Women are the most importance part of our human resources.

Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. The empowerment strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience.[1] Education leads to enlightenment as it facilitates knowledge, skills and abilities. It helps a person with average intelligence to identify the difference between right and wrong and hence good and bad practices in the society. In a way education helps a man to be more civilized, a responsible human being towards his family and society at large.[2] Education is the most importance part of every human beings. Thus many countries accept this and make free and compulsory education for everyone. Article 13 of the United Nations’ 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNESCO) recognizes the right of everyone to an education.

Women's empowerment is not limited only for the Indian society. If we deliberate the global aspect in this regard, we see that women are being given equal treatment in developed nations. In fact, if we take a recollection of history, we come to know that women have always been given secondary position in society, but the difference between men and women created by the Nature is but natural. It is education through which we realize this fact.[3]

**Meaning of Women Empowerment:** Women's empowerment is the way or a social action in which women elaborate and recreate what it is to be in a circumstance that they previously were denied.[4] 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".[5] Empowerment is the process that creates power in individuals over their own lives, society, and in their communities. People are empowered when they are able to access the opportunities available to them without limitations and restrictions such as in education, profession and lifestyle. Feeling entitled to make your own decisions creates a sense of empowerment. Empowerment includes the action of raising the status of women through education, raising awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society.[6]

Alternatively, it is the process for women to redefine gender roles that allows for them to acquire the ability to choose between known alternatives whom have otherwise been restricted from such an ability.[4] There are several principles defining women's empowerment such as, for one to be empowered, they must come from a position of disempowerment. Furthermore, one must acquire empowerment themselves rather than have it given to them by an external party. Other studies have found that empowerment definitions entail people having the capability to make important decisions in their lives while also being able to act on them. Lastly, empowerment and disempowerment is relative to other at a previous time; therefore, empowerment is a process, not a product.[7]

**Women and Education:** Now everyone believed that "While educating a man benefits him alone, educating a woman benefits the whole family and society at large". A mother is one of the largest influences in her child's life and with this power comes responsibility. The care and love a mother provides, moulds her children into the adults they are destined to become, but her own education has a great effect on her children's future. Education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for mothers and this education leads to social change and advantages for her children. Having an educated mother in developing countries is more important than ever because if a mother is well educated, she can bright the future of his children. And if the mother is uneducated, she will raise children that will lead similar lives to her.

As well as leading a happier and healthier life, there are many benefits of having an educated mother such as:

- An educated mother will have high expectations for her children's educational success and will continuously encourage them to develop high expectations of their own
- An educated mother will spend more time with her children on their school work and will regularly read to them
- An educated mother is more likely to have health knowledge ensuring her children receive the proper vaccines for their health and provide healthy meals that are nutritionally beneficial.

**Women Empowerment in India:** The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)) and Article 42.

As per Census 2011, the work participation rate for women is 25.51 percent as compared to 25.63 percent in 2001. The Work Participation Rate of Women has reduced marginally in 2011 but there is an improvement from 22.27 per cent in 1991 and 19.67 per cent in 1981. The work participation rate for women in rural areas is 30.02 per cent as compared to 15.44 per cent in the urban areas.

Total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million and female workers in rural and urban areas are 121.8 and 28.0 million respectively. Out of total 149.8 million female workers, 35.9 million females are working as cultivators and another 61.5 million are agricultural laborers. Of the remaining

females' workers, 8.5 million are in household Industry and 43.7 million are classified as other workers. [8]

In so far as the organized sector is concerned, in March, 2011 women workers constituted 20.5 percent of total employment in organized sector in the country which is higher by 0.1 percent as compared to the preceding year. As per the last Employment Review by Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T), on 31st March, 2011, about 59.54 lakh women workers were employed in the organized sector (Public and Private Sector). Of this, nearly 32.14 lakh women were employed in community, social and personal service sector. In India, women often have limited access to education and to skills because of cultural norms about their role. Other sensitive groups are rural communities and people with disabilities, because of limited access to vocational education and training. [8]

**Women Empowerment through Education:** Women empowerment is the pivotal part in any society, state or country. It is a woman who plays a dominant role in the basic life of a child. Women are an important section of our society. Education as means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. It is therefore, crucial for the socio economic and political progress of India.[9] Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political right are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment. To see the development in women education India is supposed to upcoming super power of the world in recent years. The increasing change in women education, the empowerment of women has been recognised as the central issue in determining the status of women. [9]

Education is the key to women's empowerment. Through it, women have better access and opportunities in the workforce, leading to increased income and less isolation at home or exclusion from financial decisions. With an education, women are able to live their dreams by pursuing their own goals and values.

Let's see the difference in the literacy rate between men and women in given table are as under.

**Literacy rate in India:**

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	62.38	76	54
2011	74	82	65.46

On observing the above table, Here We see that the literacy rate of woman is very lower than that of man. And in every census women takes secondary place in education. So as early as possible the growth rate of woman education should be uplifted. And every women has to get chance to live freely and with a sense of self-worth and dignity and to be given an opportunity for education and equal employment opportunities without any gender bias. And this is only possible through Education.

**Women Empowerment through Skill Development:** Woman is one of the most important parts of our society for development of not only our family but also our society. At present they are not bound in their household work, they are taking part in various fields like Education, Art and Culture, Sports,

Science and Technology etc. Due to their energy and enthusiasm, our society is rapidly developing and they prove their skills in every field.

But Workforce Participation Rate (swaniti.com) wonders us that only 31.8% woman are skilful. It is very shameful to us. But we know very well that from ancient age our India is a country, enriched with human resources. And for the development of our country, each and every human being should have to be active and energetic so that they become educated, productive and skilful. Women must not be excluded from it because future generation depends on mainly mothers i.e. women. So the rests (68.2%) also have to make skilful for better achievement of our country.

Women form a substantial part of the workforce but the working percentage rate of women in the total labour force is declining. A large number of them are working in the informal sectors and in their houses as house wives. This represents lack of employment opportunities and skills for women workforce. Currently, a majority of the female workforce in India is unskilled. And they can be motivated to develop their skills.

To make them skilful following programmes have to be arranged-

**Vocational Training:** Vocational training programme is introduced to enhance livelihood opportunities of women who are at a disadvantageous position and have a scant exposure to technical skills and knowledge. The women's Vocational Training will be expanded and the institutional network providing training facilities exclusively for women, so that they can obtain skills with high wage and self-employment potential will be greatly expanded.

**Handicraft Training:** Women are trained to make some very beautiful products such as Basket, Bag, and Embroidery etc. And these trained women start their handicraft as a second source of income for the family and can lead their livelihood.

**Prime Minister's National Council on Skill Development:** Under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister has been set up as an apex institution for policy direction and review. The Ministers for Human Resource Development, Finance, Industries, Rural Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Labour and Employment and Micro Small & Medium Enterprises are members. Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Chairperson of the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council, Chairperson of the National Skill Development Corporation and 6 experts in the area of skill development are other members. Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister is the Member Secretary to the Council. [8]

**Women's Industrial Training Institute Program:** ITI can help to develop their skills and make them much productive. Consequently they become independent being employed whether in Company or Govt. Job.

**Training of Rural Women:** There is a need to make better assess and quality of training in marginalized section of society mainly in the rural areas to increase productivity and income. This will help to give opportunities for better livelihood and to be employed rural people. In India this is very important as the large pool of the demographic group resides in the rural areas. This requires development in training capacities for the development of skills of rural people.

**National Skill Development and Co-ordination Board:** A National Skill Development Co-ordination Board has been set up under the Chairmanship of Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission. This board helps women to develop their skills, potentialities, capabilities and productivities.

Besides some more skills have to be developed in women for their development-

- Communication skills
- Business etiquettes
- Language development
- Leadership skills

- Management skills
- Basic accounting skills
- Basic computer skills
- Personality development
- Entrepreneurship skills

**Importance of Women Empowerment:** Woman Empowerment is the Global issue in Present days. The role of Woman Empowerment is increase day to day life.

- **Sustainable Development and Woman Empowerment:** Sustainable Development is impossible without women's empowerment and gender equality. Consequently, it is asserted that equality is both a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable development.
- **Economic Growth and Woman Empowerment:** Sustainable Development depends on Economic growth of Society. When every woman will have an opportunity for education and equal employment opportunities without any gender bias, automatically country will develop, and thus country will be strong in Economic conditions.
- **Social Development and Woman Empowerment:** Woman is the most importance part of our society. Social development is a key pillar of sustainable development. The education of girls is equivalent to the education of a nation. And Educated Women can change their Society and develop their nation.
- **Domestic Violence, Sexual Exploitation and Woman Empowerment:** It is important that women understand what unacceptable behaviour is, in order to fight against it. This is why education is very importance and education is another great key towards woman empowerment, and also the result of woman empowerment.

**Woman Empowerment plays vital roles in our society, such as-**

- Without women's empowerment, we cannot remove injustice and gender bias and inequalities.
- If women are not empowered, they cannot enjoy security and protection in life
- It also provides them a safe working environment.
- Empowerment acts as a powerful tool against exploitation and harassment of women
- It is a great means to get adequate legal protection for women.
- If not socially and economically empowered, women cannot develop their own identity
- If women are not employed, the global economy will be adversely affected as women constitute a vast chunk of the world's population.
- Women are highly creative and intelligent which makes it imperative to receive their contributions in socio-economic activities.
- For a just and progressive society, women need to be provided equal opportunities for work. [10]

### **Benefits of Women Empowerment**

Women empowerment adds to confidence of women in their ability to lead meaningful and purposeful lives. It removes their dependence on others and makes them individuals in their own right.

- They are able to lead their lives with dignity and freedom.
- It adds to their self-esteem.
- It gives them a distinct identity.

- They are able to gain positions of respect in society.
- As they are financially independent they are able to spend on all their needs and desires.
- They are able to make meaningful contributions to the well-being of society.
- They act as capable citizens to make the country achieve enhanced Gross Domestic Product growth.
- They get fair and equitable access to resources of the country. [10]

### Conclusion

Women play a vital role for making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society. If we want to bring about women empowerment in India, women need to be given equal opportunities for education to develop their skill without any sense of discrimination.

To develop education and skill in women; schools, colleges, and universities, should be established exclusively for women in large numbers in every areas of our country. In every census, women take secondary place in education. So as early as possible the growth rate of woman education should be uplifted. And every woman has to get chance to live freely and with a sense of self-worth and dignity and to be given an opportunity for education and equal employment opportunities without any gender bias. And this is only possible through Education and Skill Development.

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## Women Empowerment in Digital India

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### **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this Book Chapter is to describe an overview of Women Empowerment in Digital India. This Chapter Focuses on the Current Scenario of Women Empowerment in Digital India.*

*Women in India are joining hands in the growth of country. Be it health, education or industry of any kind, women are leading in many parts of it. But when it comes to developing rural women, they are displaying strong determination and an ability to be progressive. Empowering their life in order to get access to environmental, social change, health care and education, they are making use of 'Digital India' for the next big leap.*

*Digital India is a flagship program of the Union government that seeks to transform India into “a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy”.*

*Only 29% of India's internet users are women. Unless this digital gender divide is bridged, India's aggressive push towards digitization will further entrench the political, economic and social marginalization of women.*

*Digitalization offers a variety of opportunities for Women Empowerment and for a more equal Women (Female) participation in labour markets, financial markets, and entrepreneurship.*

*Secondary data has been collected from multiple sources of evidence, in addition to books, journals, websites, and newspapers.*

*Keywords: Challenges, Digital India, Empowerment, Internet, Rural and Women.*

### **Chapter Contents**

Introduction to Women Empowerment – Concept of Women Empowerment – Characteristics of Women Empowerment – Dimensions and Parameters of Women Empowerment – Indicators of Women Empowerment – Components of Women Empowerment – Digital technology empowering women in India – Digital India Initiatives for women empowerment – Need for Digital Empowerment – Advantages of Digital Empowerment – Success Stories in Other Countries due to Digital Empowerment– Concerns / Challenges due to Digital Empowerment – Way Forward due to Digital Empowerment.

#### **1. Objectives**

**After studying this chapter, the reader will understand**

- Meaning of Women Empowerment
- Concept of Women Empowerment
- Characteristics of Women Empowerment
- Dimensions and Parameters of Women Empowerment
- Indicators of Women Empowerment
- Components of Women Empowerment
- Digital technology empowering women in India
- Digital India Initiatives for women empowerment
- Need for Digital Empowerment
- Advantages of Digital Empowerment



- Success Stories in Other Countries due to Digital Empowerment
- Concerns / Challenges due to Digital Empowerment
- Way Forward due to Digital Empowerment

## **2. Introduction to Women Empowerment**

‘EMPOWERMENT’ may be described as a process which helps people to assert their control over the factors which affect their lives. Empowerment of women means developing them as more aware individuals, who are politically active, economically productive and independent and are able to make intelligent discussion in matters that affect them.

**Women’s empowerment** can be seen as a process of renegotiating accepted norms and expectations about female and male roles, relations, and responsibilities, opening up new opportunities for women within the household, the community, state agencies and civil society. From an individual perspective, it is a process that enables a woman to analyse her situation, decide on her priorities, develop solutions to her problems, and take action towards improving her situation.

**Women’s empowerment** is seen as the process and the result of the process of:

- Challenging the ideology of male domination and women’s subordinations.
- Enabling women to gain equal access to and control over the resources (material, human and intellectual).

Women empowerment is an important component of India’s socio-economic growth. The government and many other agencies are undertaking measures to further improve the situation through various policies focused on social reforms and generating employment opportunities. “One of the important factors that would lead to women empowerment in India is their financial independence. Women need to be empowered economically. This will make women self-reliant and give them the freedom to choose. This will enable them to benefit from the different options available at their free will. This will make women’s lives enriching and joyful. Once a woman becomes financially independent and can exercise her choices, she can also help her mother, sister, daughter, and other women in the society to become empowered. This will elevate women’s position in the society and will bring in equality,”

## **3. Concept of Women’s Empowerment and its activities**

Empowerment of the women has taken an edge in the present era. Empowering may be understood as enabling people, especially women to acquire and possess power resources, in order to make decision on their own or resist decisions that are made by others that affect them. Time when the women were regarded as the weaker sex is gone now. This task of women Upliftment was first initiated by Father of our Nation Mr. M.K. Gandhi. He found that the women are the real power of the nation. This sincere effort by Gandhi acted as a spark which lit the fire of hope, strength and confidence among the women in India. As a result, this gender started growing in every aspect.

Women constitute almost 50% of the world’s population. As per as their social status is concerned, they are not treated as equal to men in all the places, through in the western countries women are treated on par with men in most of the fields, their counterpart in the east suffers from many disabilities. The disabilities on the one hand and the inequalities between men and women on the other, have given rise to what is known “Gender problem”. All one the world and particularly in South and East Asia and Africa the gender problem has assumed importance during the recent years the gender issue has become virtually a crucial point of argument. It is now widely believed that empowerment of women i.e., providing equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities to women will go a long way in removing the existing gender discrimination. Women empowerment in contemporary Indian society in forms of their work, education, health and media images in the context of lineage, rule of residence and household chores, their participation in social and political activities, their legal status in terms of marriage, divorce and inheritance of property, seeking wealth care should be taken into consideration. Empowerment in terms of knowledge and awareness of one’s own life and society including legal raise their status with regarded to the lives.

#### **4. Characteristics of Women Empowerment**

##### **Characteristics of Women Empowerment**

- (i) It defines their attitude, values and behaviours in relation to their own real interest. They have autonomy because they claim their freedom from existing male hierarchies, whether they live in traditional societies or modern industrial societies.
- (ii) It maintains equal mindedness. They act out roles that challenge male dominance. They respond as equals and co-operate to work towards the common good.
- (iii) It uses their talent to live fulfilling lives. They not only survive the harshness of their own subjugation but also transcend their subjugation.
- (iv) It maintains their strength on the face of pressures from the religion and work and contribute towards the empowerment of all women.
- (v) It defines their values and formulate their beliefs themselves, they do not derive their sense of being from male authorities nor do they live vicariously through men.

#### **5. Dimensions and Parameters of Women Empowerment**

##### **Dimensions and Parameters of Women Empowerment**

**The process of empowerment has five dimensions, viz. Cognitive, psychological, economic, political and physical:**

- (i) The cognitive dimension refers to women having an understanding of the conditions and causes of their subordination at the micro and macro levels. It involves making choices that may go against cultural expectations and norms;
- (ii) The psychological dimension includes the belief that women can act at personal and societal levels to improve their individual realities and the society in which they live;
- (iii) The economic component requires that women have access to, and control over, productive resources, thus ensuring some degree of financial autonomy. However, she notes that changes in the economic balance of power do not necessarily alter traditional gender roles or norms;
- (iv) The political element entails that women have the capability to analyse, organise and mobilise for social change; and
- (v) There is a physical element of gaining control over one's body and sexuality and the ability to protect oneself against sexual violence to the empowerment process.

##### **Parameters of Women Empowerment are:**

- Raising self-esteem and self-confidence of women.
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girl child.
- Building and strengthening partnership with civil society particularly women's organisations.
- Enforcement of constitutional and legal provisions and safeguarding rights of women.
- Building a positive image of women in the society and recognizing their contributions in social, economic and political sphere.
- Developing ability among women to think critically.
- Fostering decision-making and collective action.
- Enabling women to make informed choices.
- Ensuring women's participation in all walks of life.
- Providing information, knowledge, skills for self-employment.

- Elimination of discrimination against women's participation in the areas of: Access to food, Equal wages, Property rights, Family resources, Freedom of movement & travel, Access to credit, Control over savings, earnings & resources and Guardianship & custody of children and their maintenance.
- Gender sensitization training in schools, colleges and other professional institutions for bringing about institutional changes.

## **6. Indicators of Women Empowerment**

### **Indicators of Women Empowerment**

#### **Qualitative Indicators**

- increase in self-esteem, individual and collective confidence;
- increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness on health, nutrition reproductive rights, law and literacy;
- increase in personal leisure time and time for child care;
- increase on decrease of workloads in new programmes;
- change in roles and responsibility in family and community;
- visible increase on decrease in violence on women and girls;
- responses to, changes in social customs like child marriage, dowry, discrimination against widows;
- visible changes in women's participation level attending meetings, participating and demanding participation;
- increase in bargaining and negotiating power at home, in community and the collective;
- increase access to and ability to gather information;
- formation of women collectives;
- positive changes in social attitudes;
- awareness and recognition of women's economic contribution within and outside the household;
- women's decision-making over her work and income.

#### **Quantitative Indicators**

- demographic trends: maternal mortality rate, fertility rate, sex ratio, life expectancy at birth and average age of marriage.
- Number of women participating in different development programmes;
- Greater access and control over community resources/ government schemes — creche, credit cooperative, non-formal education;
- Visible change in physical health status and nutritional level;
- Change in literacy and enrollment levels; and
- Participation levels of women in political process.

## **7. Components of Women Empowerment**

### **Four components of women's empowerment are identified:**

- (i) Acquiring knowledge and an understanding of gender/power relations and ways in which these relations may be changed;
- (ii) Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life;

- (iii) Gaining the ability to generate choices and thereby acquiring leverage and bargaining power; and
- (iv) Developing the ability to generate, organise or influence the direction of social change to create more just social and economic orders nationally and internationally.

### **8. Digital technology empowering women in India**

“Digital technology and several recent government policies are playing a significant role in empowering women in a big way. Technology is also helping women feel secure at the work place as well as on the street,”

“Encouraging and empowering women in the workforce is something the country needs to take up on a war footing. Most corporates nowadays want more women in the workforce because they are really dedicated and committed to completing work.”

“Digitization has helped women to be more safe with the help of various apps and mobile.” Digitization is a positive move for both India and its female population, because its very foundation lies in social and economic progress. It provides a ubiquitous platform to enable equal opportunities transparently across all Indian social strata, with equal access to knowledge, skills and workforce readiness across all domains.

#### **The Road Ahead: Women Empowerment Matters**

*With the power of digital technology and growing opportunities, there is a revolution materializing in the way women are emerging as the harbingers of the next frontier in India. Some of them are already running successful enterprises, vital government missions, and many more are joining the bandwagon. For India's story to be a success, it is important we invest in women while considering them as equal partners, starting today.*

*One of the transformational initiatives of modern India has been the Digital India (DI) movement led by Prime Minister. Our honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been championing Digital India initiative to drive empowerment, transparency and accountability.*

*The pink 2017-18 Economic Survey got the country talking about how gender equality should be as much of a policy priority as improving ease of doing business in India. The digital economy is expected to multiply by five times by 2023. Digitalization offers a variety of opportunities for women empowerment and for a more equal women participation in labour markets, financial markets, and entrepreneurship.*

*Only 29% of India's internet users are women. Unless this digital gender divide is bridged, India's aggressive push towards digitization will further entrench the political, economic and social marginalization of women. The bulk of policy and commercial interventions focus on improving access to internet services by upgrading spectrum and broadband infrastructure and bringing down the costs to individual users, in addition to facilitating the uptake of digital technologies through programs for digital skilling. Isolated technical solutions however, will be inadequate to address the social and cultural roots of India's digital gender divide.*

### **9. Digital India Initiatives for women empowerment**

Countries around the world including India are emphasizing on women empowerment. With initiatives like #metoo and #time'sup, violence and discrimination against women gained attention and helped raise the voice of vulnerable and silent victims around the world.

The Indian government has also recognized women issues and their contribution to the country's economy.

Digital India is a flagship program of the Union government that seeks to transform India into “digitally empowered society and knowledge economy”.

**Some of the Digital India Initiatives for women empowerment available to women in India are:**

**Mother and child Tracking System (MCTS)**

This is a Digital India initiative started by Ministry of Health and Family welfare. This initiative uses information technology for ensuring delivery of full variety of healthcare and immunization services to pregnant women and children having below five years' age. This application was developed by National Informatics Centre. It provides communication between beneficiaries and service sources. This initiative is useful for Auxiliary Nurse and Midwives to generate their work plans. It is also useful to provide alerts about service due dates to both beneficiaries and service providers. This initiative also provided a dash board to provide information to health managers of various levels to ensure quality service delivery. This initiative is also useful in universal immunization and micro birth planning. This facility is much useful for women in Ante Natal care, delivery and Post Natal care services. This initiative is useful to give thirty varieties of immunization to children.

**One Stop Centre Scheme**

Popularly known as 'Sakhi,' it was implemented on 1st April 2015 with the 'Nirbhaya' fund. The One Stop Centres are established at various locations in India for providing shelter, police desk, legal, medical and counselling services to victims of violence under one roof integrated with a 24-hour Helpline. The toll-free helpline number is 181. Here is a list of Sakhi Centres across the country. These Centres can be contacted for: Emergency Response and Rescue Services Medical assistance, assistance in lodging FIR /NCR/DIR Psycho - social support/ counselling Legal aid and counselling Shelter Video Conferencing Facility to record statement for police/ courts.

**Nirbhaya app**

This is an android emergency application, which can send a distress call or emergency message to a specified contact or group in an emergency situation faced by a woman.

**Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao campaign**

This is a social campaign aimed at eradication of female foeticide and raising awareness on welfare services intended for young Indian girls. The "Save the Girl Child" movement was launched on 22 January 2015, it is a joint initiative run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao - The scheme was launched with an initial funding of Rs 100 crores. It mainly targets the clusters in Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi and Haryana. It is aimed at guaranteeing girls are born, nurtured and educated without discrimination.

From 1961, Child Sex Ratio is continuously declining in India. CSR is defined as the number of girls between zero and six years per One thousand boys. In India, the child gender ratio in the age group of 0 - 6 years stood at 931 girls for 1000 boys and it dropped to 918 girls for every 1000 boys in 2011. The CSR is 945,927 and 918 during 1991, 2001 and 2011 respectively. Sex - selective abortion or female foeticide in India has led to the sharp decline in the ratio of girls born in contrast to the boys in some states in the country. The wide gap in child gender ratio was first noted in 1991 when the national census data was released and it turned out to be a worsening problem after the release of 2001 national census data. This indicates women disempowerment and the situation is alarming. CSR indicates pre-birth discrimination and post birth discrimination. Misuse of diagnostic tests is leading to Decreasing Child Sex Ratio.

To deal with declining CSR Government of India had announced Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative. This is being implemented in hundred selected districts where we find low child sex ratio. This campaign is jointly carried out by Ministry of women and child development, Ministry of Human Resource development and Ministry of Health and Family welfare.

The prime objectives of this initiative include to prevent gender biased sex selective elimination, to Ensure survival and protection of the girl child and to ensure education and participation of the girl child. To bridge the growing gap between the birth of girl and boy infants, the government of India has taken up an initiative to promote Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and many programmes has been organized

to promote 'Save Girl Child' and to 'Educate Girl Child', since January 2015. The campaign has also received support from the Indian Medical Association.

### **Mahila E-Haat**

This is a portal in two languages. It was started in 2016. This is a direct online marketing platform launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to support women entrepreneurs, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs). This portal is useful for showcasing the products manufactured and services rendered by women. This portal facilitates direct contact between buyer and seller. Women entrepreneurs from 24 states are showcasing more than two thousand products as on date. There is a provision for eighteen categories of products. They include clothing, bags, home décor, carpets, rugs, foot mats, fashion accessories, jewellery, decorative and gift items, baskets, boxes, pottery, grocery, cushion covers, staples, organic, natural products, file folders, soft toys, industrial products, educational aids, and miscellaneous items. This is useful for more than three lakh beneficiaries directly and indirectly. Women can register themselves at [www.mahilaahaat-rmk.gov.in](http://www.mahilaahaat-rmk.gov.in) and leverage technology for showcasing their work to a broader market.

### **Women helpline scheme**

According to this scheme a toll free 24 hours' service is provided to girls or women facing violence in any sphere including both private and public. They can also get information about women schemes and welfare programmes. This scheme also facilitate intervention in crisis and non-crisis situations by directing to police, hospitals, protection officers, ambulance and local district level authorities.

### **Mahila Digital Saksharta Abhiyan**

This initiative was formulated to instruct training in Information Technology to Fifty-Two and Half Lakh women including Anganwadi and ASHA workers in different states across the country.

### **Prime Minister Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDSA)**

This is the scheme implemented to make six crore People in rural areas of different states digitally literate. The main aim is to reach around forty percent of households in rural areas. The prime goal of digital India programme is to make one person digitally literate in one family. The main purpose of the scheme is to make train a woman or man in such a way that they can operate a smart phone or a tablet or any other computing device. They should be able to browse internet, make digital payments and send and receive e-mails. The main aim of this scheme is bridging digital divide. The main concentration of this scheme is marginalized sections of the country. Much concentration is on Scheduled castes, Minorities, Scheduled Tribes, people of below poverty line and women. They should be able to access government services.

### **Working Women Hostels**

The objective of the scheme is to promote the availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women, with daycare facility for their children, wherever possible, in urban, semi-urban, or even rural areas where employment opportunity for women exist. Further details of the Working Women Hostel Scheme can be accessed on the Department of Women and Child Development's official website.

### **Swadhar Greh**

The Swadhar scheme was launched by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2002 for rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances. The scheme provides shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls who are in need. The beneficiaries include widows deserted by their families and relatives, women prisoners released from jail and without family support, women survivors of natural disasters, women victims of terrorist/extremist violence etc. The implementing agencies are mainly NGOs.

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

The Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme aims to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/ entrepreneurs. A particular project will be for a duration of up to 5 years depending upon the nature, kind of activities and the number of beneficiaries to be undertaken. Sectors

include Agriculture, Horticulture, Food Processing, Handlooms, Tailoring, Stitching, Embroidery, Zari etc., Handicrafts, Computer & IT enable services along with soft skills and skills for the workplace such as spoken English, Gems & Jewellery, Travel & Tourism, Hospitality, etc.

### **Nari Shakti Puruskars**

Nari Shakti Puruskars are national level awards recognizing the efforts made by women and institutions in rendering distinguished services for the cause of women, especially vulnerable and marginalized women. The awards are presented by the President of India every year on 8 March, International Women's Day at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

### **Internet Saathi**

A long term vision from the Chairman of Emeritus of Tata Sons, Ratan Tata launched a pilot project in 2015 an initiative called 'Internet Saathi' focuses on educating women to use the Internet who then impart training to other women in their community and neighbouring villages. This aims to go deep with the internet usage among rural women in India. Ratan Tata has joined hands with Google and Intel to help women in rural India to access the internet in large number. Only internet will help rural women to get educated and to make them ready for the future. Those women who have not been able to find a way of earning yet, seems this initiative will build their career. Women internet users in urban India have outnumbered men, but when it comes to the rural India, only a few have access to the internet.

Internet Saathi has helped in bridging the digital gender divide and empowering 15 million women in rural India. It has become a major force of change in rural India — inspiring millions of women, their families to embrace the change and gain from the Internet.

The three-way project Internet Saathi will deploy 1000 specially designed bicycles with connected devices to give villagers an altogether new internet experience for a period of four to six months.

The initiative will be launched in 4,500 villages in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Jharkhand within the next 18 months. 'Internet Saathi program is expected to reach about five lakh rural women.

### **ArogyaSakhi**

'ArogyaSakhi' helps rural women developing their own personality in order to providing health care to the rural area. It's a mobile application that helps rural women entrepreneurs deliver preventive health care at rural doorsteps. Women armed with tablets and mobile healthcare devices like glucometers, blood pressure checking machine visit homes and collect data from the village women. This data can be accessed by doctors at any location who could provide treatment to the patients remotely. Similarly, several apps have been launched to enable farmers get accurate and timely information related to crops, market prices and analytics to enhance productivity and profitability of farmers.

### **Women for Empowerment and Entrepreneurship (W2E2)**

Women for Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, in short W2E2 is helping rural women with digital tools, e-learning, internet connection. Women tend to use the Internet for their own projects in fields like sustainable agriculture and rural health. Some are setting up their own kiosks and shops to provide online services to the local community, while others have taken up work as digital literacy trainers in their own local communities.

### **National e-Governance Plan**

It gives a chance to the rural entrepreneurs to provide citizen-centric services including access to land records and utility bill payments. This plan helps them to follow up on rural enterprise, facilitate community participation, enable citizens to make informed decisions and act as a single-window interface, eliminating corruption process. Women have been matured in computer literacy, that's the only qualification needed. The cost of hardware, such as computers and printers, and the Internet connection is usually on the learners' side.

Current Digital India Initiative provides opportunity for women empowerment. It has following pillars: Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access

Program, e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology, e-Kranti – Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for All, Electronics Manufacturing, IT for Jobs and Early Harvest Program.

## **10. Need for Digital Empowerment**

### **Need for Digital Empowerment**

- Lack of internet penetration in rural areas has led to low awareness levels, misinformation, inaccessibility and myths.
- Only one out of 10 internet users in rural India is a woman.
- Evidence from randomized evaluations shows how mobile technology can transform the lives of rural Indian women.
- Bridging the gender gap in digital literacy help dismantle social norms.
- Addressing the gender divide in digital literacy is necessary to ensure inequality of opportunity across gender does not widen in India.
- Digital inclusion for female beneficiaries in rural India could stimulate substantial empowerment for them.
- A study on mobile phone ownership and usage by women in India, found higher women's autonomy in mobility and economic independence.
- Without digital literacy, one of the most vulnerable sections of society, women from poor households, may be left too far behind to catch up with "Digital India".

## **11. Advantages of Digital Empowerment**

### **Advantages**

- Direct Benefit Transfer makes women have greater access to finances which improve the socioeconomic circumstances of women.
- Can lead to changes in financial behaviour of women, particularly saving behaviour.
- Help in shifting to alternate occupational choices from subsistence agriculture and multiple part time jobs to business ownership.
- Access to economic prosperity and the benefits of technology to women will have a positive impact on the whole of society.
- Increased incomes for poor mother's results in immediate dietary improvements for their children.

## **12. Success Stories in Other Countries due to Digital Empowerment**

### **Success Stories in Other Countries**

- In the aftermath of a drought in Niger, female members in 96 villages received an unconditional cash transfer.
- Results show that households which received transfers via mobile phones saw a 10% improvement in diet diversity, a one-third increase in children's meal consumption per day, and an increase in the cultivation of marginal crops that are primarily grown by women.
- When women adopted mobile phone services to directly receive cash transfers, it increased their agency in household decision-making.
- Prioritizing digital literacy for women with existing welfare programmes targeted at women can lead to similar empowerment of women in rural India.
- The promise of digital inclusion for women can be found in Kenya.
- The access to M-Pesa mobile money service has uplifted 2% of Kenya's households out of poverty.



- The results are most compelling for female beneficiaries.

### **13. Concerns / Challenges due to Digital Empowerment**

#### **Concerns / Challenges**

- Difficulty in learning how to use the internet.
- Lack of resources to buy a smartphone.
- The social stigma attached to illicit use of the internet.
- According to a survey, in rural areas majority of the women who owned cellphones did not know how to operate the phone.
- There has been numerous report of khap panchayats and other conservative groupings banning or restricting mobile phone use for women.
- Cumbersome banking procedures and delayed funds flow under DBT in some cases.
- These are some of the hurdles that sometimes prevent rural women from enjoying advances in technology.
- Sometimes digital technologies can act as tools of control and surveillance, not empowerment.

### **14. Way Forward due to Digital Empowerment**

#### **Way Forward**

- If women are to realize their full potential in the digital age, the government need to target the current gender gaps.
- Adoption of mobile phone-enabled check-ins for a conditional welfare programme.
- Example: Scholarship for girls can be received only by those who can verify their attendance at school via phoned-in check-ins.
- Integrating benefits targeted to the poorest women with mobile phones could plug leakages and make welfare programmes more effective.
- Expanding Internet Saathi to more villages to improve digital literacy and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for women in rural India.
- Governments can develop customer protection frameworks to help protect women with low financial literacy and build trust in digital payments.
- Need for broader shifts in social and cultural belief systems.

### **15. Conclusion**

**Women empowerment** is an important component of India's socio-economic growth. Encouraging and empowering women in the workforce is something the country needs to take up on a war footing. Most corporates nowadays want more women in the workforce because they are really dedicated and committed to completing work. Digitization has helped women to be more safe with the help of various apps and mobile. Digitization is a positive move for both India and its female population, because it's very foundation lies in social and economic progress. *With the power of digital technology and growing opportunities, there is a revolution materializing in the way women are emerging as the harbingers of the next frontier in India. Only 29% of India's internet users are women. Unless this digital gender divide is bridged, India's aggressive push towards digitization will further entrench the political, economic and social marginalization of women.*

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## **Social Media for the Empowerment of Women: Empirical Evidence in Karnataka State**

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### **Preamble**

The social media have emerged as the alternative media of communication, participation, emancipation and empowerment of people in the world. The social media have become multi-faceted sources and resources of development centric communication in the new millennium. The social media application is top of the agenda for the stakeholders of social justice, economic equity, sustainable development and empowerment of marginalized sections of society. The social media have become effective means of social networking in all walks of life. The media scholars, scientists and technocrats have explored new avenues for better social media application for social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women in the globe. The present investigation was carried out in Karnataka state to analyze the role of social media in social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women.

### **Women Empowerment**

The subject of empowerment of women assumes great significance in the present times. The question of empowerment of women is now on the international agenda. The empowerment of women can take place at a hierarchy of different levels-individual, household, community and societal. There are also other progressive legislations which protect gender justice and equity in India. The Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Rights are the basis for making special provisions for the empowerment of women in India.

The goal of empowerment of women cannot be achieved in the absence of political will, progressive legislations, women-specific development projects and allied supportive measures (Mason, 1986:15). The state is responsible for creating a healthy environment to develop the skill, entrepreneurship and personality of women through meaningful initiatives. The development agencies, NGOs and media institutions are responsible for the attainment of the goal of economic empowerment of women.

Lack of strong movement and pro-active initiatives for women empowerment are primarily responsible for the disempowerment of women in India (Dutta and Bhakta, 2017:11). *Absence of holistic and pro-active perspective on development interventions has impeded the progress of women (Srivastava, 2018:20)*. A national strategy for the security and progress of women can be designed and implemented in India. A transformative approach to the empowerment of women needs to be developed in India.

### **Review of Literature**

The social media have become effective sources and resources from the points of view of social networking and social capital development of marginalized sections in modern times. Prominent studies concerning the present topic of investigation include – Mason, (1986:15), Kapur (2001:12),

Bhatia (2002:01), Biju (2003:02), Deshpande (2005:07), Venkatesh (2006:23), Choudhury (2007:04), Vasanthakumari (2008:22), Rajan (2009:17), Desai (2010:06), Kumar (2011:14), Thakur (2012:21), Rathnamma (2013:18), Cornwall (2014:05), Shettar (2015:19), Drame (2016:10), Dishman (2017:08), Krasnova et. al. (2017:13), Dutta and Bhakta, (2017:11), *Srivastava (2018:20)*, Zaei et. al. (2018:24), Premalata and Jukariya (2018:16), Donohoe (2018:09) and Zarya (2018:25). The synthesis of the available literature confirms that the subject of social media intervention for social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women in Karnataka state has not drawn the attention of researchers to a considerable extent.

### **Significance of the Study**

Scientific research on the nature and forms of discrimination and social exclusion faced by women and weaker sections is essential in modern times. The social media have emerged as effective means of participatory communication and development of the women in India. Social media are widely used for the social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women in the globe. The review of literature clearly indicates that adequate scientific investigations were not carried out in India on the role of social media in the social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women in Karnataka state. Hence, the present study assumes great professional significance in a pluralistic society like India.

### **Objectives of the Study**

With the role of social media in social networking, social capital development and empowerment of women in Karnataka state being the thrust area, the research proposes to:

1. Assess the access of social media among the women in Karnataka state.
2. Analyze the role of social media in the social networking of women in Karnataka state.
3. Evaluate the role of social media in the social capital development of women in Karnataka state.
4. Explore the role of social media in the empowerment of women in Karnataka state; and
5. Suggest appropriate strategies for better social media intervention for the empowerment of women in Karnataka state.

### **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The present investigation was carried out by (Chakraborty, 2016:03) on the conceptual framework offered by the scholar who has found a positive relationship between social media centered social networking and social capital development in Indian context.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study was conducted on the basis of survey research methodology. Questionnaire, interview and non-participant observation were the major tools of primary data collection. About 360 respondents were approached for the purpose of primary data collection. Incidental sampling, stratified sampling and purposive sampling techniques were followed in selecting the respondents. These methods of selection also give significantly correct results.

### **Findings of the Study**

**Accessible Social Media** - Facebook (100%), Whatsapp (100%), YouTube (92.78%), Instagram (87.78%), Messenger (87.22%), Yahoo.com (86.67%), Twitter (86.11%) and Google+ (75.56%) are accessible to the respondents.

**Inaccessible Social Media** - PLP Community Hub (100%), Meetup (100%), Medium (100%), Kik (100%), Ask Dot (100%), XING (100%), e-Telegram (100%), Flickr (85.0%), Tumblr (80.56%), Talk (79.44%), Pinterest (78.89%), Quora (77.22%), Snapchat (76.11%), Reddit (71.67%), Skype (71.67%), Wechat (70.56%), Hike (66.67%) and LinkedIn (66.11%) are not accessible to the respondents.

### **Social Media for the Empowerment of Women**

- Social media have enabled the women to assert their rights and privileges (87.78%).

- Social media have enabled the women to understand the issues and concerns of their lives (73.89%).
- Social media have enabled the women to improve social mobilization for empowerment (87.78%).
- Social media have enabled the women to participate actively in progressive social movements for empowerment (77.78%).
- Social media have enabled the women to participate actively in the progressive political movements for empowerment (85.0%).

### **Testing of Hypotheses**

*H1. The social media are not accessible to the women of society in Karnataka state.*

A good number of social media are not accessible to the marginalized sections of society in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands disproved according to the data analysis.

*H2. The social media have not played effective role in the social networking of the women of society in Karnataka state.*

Social media have not adequately contributed for the social networking of women of society in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

*H3. The social networking has not adequately contributed for the social capital development of the women of society in Karnataka state.*

Social networking has not significantly contributed for the social capital development of the women in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

*H4. The social media have not contributed decisively for the empowerment of women in Karnataka state.*

Social media have not played a vital role in the empowerment of the women in Karnataka state. Hence, the above hypothesis stands proved according to the data analysis.

### **Implications of the Study**

*The empowerment of women is a challenging task. The stakeholders of social justice, economic equity, good governance, judicious development and human rights protection have to give a serious thought to the subject of empowerment of women in India.* The implications of the study in general terms are presented as follows.

#### ***Social Media Application Related Implications***

- *The policy makers should ensure adequate social media application for women centered development in India.*
- *The policy makers should ensure optimum use of social media for social networking and social capital development endeavors of women.*
- *The policy makers should facilitate constructive use of social media for social network development, social capital development, social transformation and economic development of women of society.*
- *The policy makers should encourage women to use social media as alternative sources and resources of emancipation and empowerment.*
- *The rural development and Panchayat raj institutions should harness the potentials of social media for the inclusive development of the women.*

#### **Social Networking Related Implications**

- Social media should become a new platform for the mobilization of ideas, resources and empowerment of women.

- Social media should create social networking for transformational social learning and action among the women.
- Social media should facilitate the development of social networking for the expansion of human collaboration among the women.
- Social media should enable the creation of social networking for political organizing and action for the women.
- Social media should contribute for social networking for better coordination among various agencies at different levels for the women.
- Social media should facilitate social networking development for strategic intervention and lobby action for the women.
- Social media should strengthen the social networking for better transnational advocacy networks for the women.

#### **Social Capital Development Related Implications**

- Social networking development should be undertaken to facilitate greater institutional trust and collaboration for the social capital development of women.
- Social networking development should be ensured to facilitate greater inter and trans-disciplinary collaboration for the social capital development of women.
- Social networking development should be achieved to promote community preparedness, participation and action for social capital development of women.
- Social networking development should be accomplished to ensure consistent collaboration between the government institutions, corporate houses and non-government agencies for social capital development of women.
- Social networking development should be ensured to promote creativity, entrepreneurship and leadership opportunities for social capital development of women.
- Social networking development should be achieved to promote social entrepreneurship and system dynamics for the social capital development of women.
- Social networking development should be accomplished to facilitate a new paradigm shift for the social capital development of women.

#### **Empowerment of Marginalized Sections Related Implications**

- Social media intervention is required to create better awareness among the women about protective, affirmative and promotional measures.
- Social media intervention is essential to obtain adequate means of organized activism at various levels for the empowerment of the women.
- Social media intervention is crucial for the development of life skills and managerial competence of the women.
- Social media intervention is vital for the betterment of production and productivity of the women in various walks of life.
- Social media intervention is solicited to achieve social justice, economic equality, political participation and cultural transformation of the women.
- Social media intervention is necessary to facilitate emulation of success stories and adoption of best practices for the empowerment of the women.

## Conclusion

The international organizations have also called upon the stakeholders of empowerment of women to implement series of affirmative programmes for the benefit of women. The present investigation clearly emphasizes that social media have to go a long way in the empowerment of the women and other weaker sections through meaningful and constructive nation building endeavors. The social media intervention for the social networking development, social capital development and empowerment of the women has become highly crucial in India.

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## Women Empowerment through Sports

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### Abstract

*Sports are a powerful instrument for girls and women's empowerment around the world. Women sports participation enhances their empowerment. Women sports rose dramatically in the twentieth century. Once the women are considered they are not capable of taking part in the sports and even they were not allowed to participate or witness the sports. It has been changed large extent, and they come up to the level of challenging with the counterpart. There is no doubt they are physically not the same status of men naturally in the creation of god. But they are capable of doing every sport that men are engaged. There is a wider gap among men and women sports in considering their participation, prize money, and recognition and media coverage in earlier days. But it has been changed large extent at present. Now Sport becomes one of the women empowerment program in the glove. The women's educational, economic, sociocultural and political realities are developed through sports. Women's Sports participation is made them as lawmakers, administrators, ambassadors, crusaders to fight for their rights and leaders of sports organizations. To empower the world proper employment is necessary. Sports achievement of women provides employment opportunities in the government and public sector organizations as sports quota appointments. Sports helped women to empower and change their image as a strong, confident, brave, wealthier, healthier and happier person in the society today.*

*Keywords: Ambassadors, Gender Equality, lawmaker, leadership, Socialization*

### Introduction

*"Sport has huge potential to empower women and girls"- Lakshmi Puri.*

Women Empowerment can be defined as the process which allows women to take decisions of their own, provide fair laws and rights without gender bias, etc. (Shikha Goyal, 2019). Sport has enormous power to generate the social, economic, cultural and political empowerment of women along with healthier life. It is really a great experience to witness the fast development of women sports all over the globe. Women participation and popularity in sports increased dramatically in the twentieth century, particularly in the last quarter-century. Women's sports are generally accepted throughout the world today including Arab countries in some extent. Countries around the world including India are emphasizing on women empowerment. In order to facilitate women empowerment, government is providing various welfare schemes for the women. Sport is a Universal Language and there will not any disparity in gender, religion, race, and nation. In practical, it is to understand the status of women's sports from ancient days to present day there will be a huge development. Sports provide the opportunity for women to explore the outer world. Once the sports are meant for men alone but now it is changed large extent.

There is a large amount of compelling evidence from both developed and developing countries reflecting the relationship between sport participation and its empowerment.

Women are not permitted to take part in sports and games as like men in earlier days but now it has been changed large extent. People all over the world are becoming more and more health conscious and the women also make many special programs for keeping healthier body. United Nations Population Division slogan, "Healthy Women, Healthy World" embodies the fact that as custodians of family health, women play a critical role in maintaining the health and well-being of their communities. Health is the basic requirement to live happier and healthier. This can be achieved through many ways and the women sports programs are gives the answer for the same.

### **Progression of Women's Sports**

The Modern Olympic Games just started for men alone in the inaugural year of 1996. Women were not allowed to take part. They were allowed to participate in the second Olympic Games only with 22 women out of a total of 997 athletes competed. It is just 2.2% in comparison with men. They have participated five sports: tennis, sailing, croquet, equestrian and golf as against 19 sports for men. Women participation started with just 2.2% and increased Olympic to Olympic and it increased more than 45% in the recently concluded 2016 Rio Olympic Games. In the 2016 Rio Olympics Synchronized Swimming and Rhythmic Gymnastics are two women-only events. Such a way women are competing so many sporting events in the Olympics and other International tournaments. The sporting events for women are increased as like men. This is part of women empowerment program and these programs made them to excel in sports.

### **Women athletic events progression**

There has been a long struggle for women to gain parity at the Olympic Games. Participation in the ancient Olympic Games was very much restricted to male athletes and women were only eligible to participate in equestrian events. That all has changed now. But it hasn't happened overnight; it has taken decades. Women finally got a chance to run in 1928. The 100 m went just fine, but the 800 m race proved problematic as many women athletes collapsed at the end of the race that eventually led to the banning of the event. But the 100 m race prevailed.

Let's check out here how women were embraced into various track categories since their path-breaking admission into the 100 m in 1928 Amsterdam Olympic, 200 m in 1948 London Olympic, 800 m in 1960 Rome Olympic, 400 m in 1964 Tokyo Olympic, 1500 m in 1972 Munich Olympic, Marathon (42.195 kms) in 1984 Los Angeles Olympic, 10,000 m in 1988 Seoul Olympic and 5000 m in 1996 Atlanta Olympic. Now including triple jump and pole vault are added in the Olympic program for women. Women are restricted to participate less number of athletic events in earlier days, but now it is completely changed.

### **Sports and its benefit for women**

Sports participation will have more number of benefits to come up in life as an empowered woman. Research on sport, gender, and development indicates that sport can benefit girls and women by Enhancing health and well-being, Fostering self-esteem and empowerment, Facilitating social inclusion and integration, Challenging gender norms and providing opportunities for leadership and achievement (Haseena, 2015). Girls and women who play sports have higher levels of confidence and self-esteem and lower levels of depression. Girls and women who play sports have a more positive body image and experience higher states of psychological well-being than girls and women who do not play sports. Sports brings healthiest condition of women by way of fewer chronic illnesses, reduced risk of obesity, stronger bones and reduced risk of osteoporosis and regular menstruation. There will be positive, direct effects of engaging in regular physical activity in the prevention of several chronic diseases, including: cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis. To empower the world proper employment is necessary. Sports achievement of women provides employment opportunities in the government and public sector organizations as sports quota appointments.

### **Status of Sports Women**

In India, sportswomen are on a rise at a national and international level. The Indian Sports women, namely P.T.Usha, Sania Mirza, Mary Kom, Saina Nehwal, P.V.Sindhu, Mithali Raj, Dipika Pallikal, Geeta Phogat, Joshna Chinappa, and many others made India proud in the international arena. They are an inspiration for young girls to take up sports as a career. Sport is making empowerment of women. Women Sports have proven to help in personal and professional development and also build their confidence and leadership skills. Sports women are role models for young girls. To empower the world proper employment is necessary. Sports achievement of women provides employment opportunities in the government and public sector organizations as sports quota appointments. Women Sports achievers also equally recognized as like sportsmen, and they are respected by everyone and it

makes them to empower the world. All over the world top-level women athletes are recognized in an excellent manner.

### **IOC and UN towards women empowerment**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and United National Organization (UNO) are taking many initiations and efforts to empower women through sports. UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said that “Sport is an invaluable tool to equip women and girls with leadership skills, reduce marginalization and dismantle stereotypes, and I am excited to continue our strong relationship with the IOC,” “Together we can bring substantive equality—a Planet 50-50—to the world of sport at all levels,” she further added.

IOC President Thomas Bach said that “Sport gives girls and women self-confidence,” Especially in countries where women’s rights aren’t a top priority yet, there’s a tremendous benefit to women’s and girls’ participation in sport”. Further he said that “Working together with UN Women, the IOC wants to empower women in sport and through sport.” With this MoU, we will build on our efforts already underway to promote access to sport for girls and work towards gender equality. This is another step to extending this great partnership,” he added. After five years of successful collaboration on women and sport, UN Women and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have renewed their commitment through a second Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU lays out the vision for the next five years of partnership, which will empower women and girls through sport and increase women’s leadership and gender equality in the sport industry.

According to UN Women, the UN entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, there has been progress in recent years, notably through the International Olympic Committee in introducing quotas for women’s representation in sports organizations. IOC’s taken initiation to empower women within the organization, including through increasing women’s membership in the Commissions, executive position in IOC and compulsory inclusion of women in the Olympic team with the goal of reaching full equality in the future.

### **IOC Rules on compulsory inclusion of women in the team**

The International Olympic Committee made the rules that the team will not be permitted to take part in the Olympic competition if they not included women in the team. It made every country to include at least one female member in the team. London 2012 Olympics was the first in which every country sent at least one woman on the team. Brunei, Saudi Arabia and Qatar all had female athletes as a part of their delegation for the first time. But still many Muslim countries still discourage female athletes from competing in public. Every four years, the IOC organizes a world conference on Women and Sports to encourage women sports participation. Despite these numerous accomplishments, there is still sex discrimination. In the Rio Olympics USA team out of 555 competitors in 27 different sports, 292 are women. This isn't the first time that women outnumbered men on Team USA — that honor went to the 2012 London games — but it's the largest amount of women competing for any nation in Olympic history.

### **Barriers of women in sports**

There are many hurdles for women in sports participation. We have to continue to educative people about the value of women sports. The several benefits that are derived from the regular physical fitness workouts. Physical activity offers a broad range of benefits, including the prevention of obesity, improved self-confidence, and an overall sense of well-being. Sports and physical fitness programs are the answer for the women. But in the society is giving women so many restrictions in taking part in sports and games and also every one see differently in women sports. The practical, personal, social and cultural reasons are restricted women and girls in participating sports as like men. Participation rates among women and girls are much lower than men but the gap is narrowing year to year. All these barriers are overtaken by the women and empowering themselves through sports.

### **Gender Equality in Sports and Empowerment**

Sport is one of the most powerful platforms for promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls. Nelson Mandela said that “Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to

inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair". The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.

As the leader of the Olympic Movement, the IOC has an important responsibility to take action when it comes to gender equality – a basic human right of profound importance and a Fundamental Principle of the Olympic Charter. Many Olympic Movement stakeholders have also implemented significant gender equality initiatives so that girls and women around the world are being given greater access and the opportunity to participate in sport. However, there are still many challenges to be addressed.

In 2012, 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women and Sport took place in Los Angeles, USA, with the following two main recommendations: "The IOC should revisit and review the minimum number of women to be included in leadership roles which it set for its constituents, and set up a mechanism to monitor and ensure that this minimum number is being respected" and "the IOC should establish closer working partnerships with the UN and its agencies, especially UN Women, and share in the work of the UN Committee on the Status of Women in order to foster its own gender equality agenda. Effort is taken to women to include certain percentage in all Sports Bodies and IOC and its subordinate organizations.

We have an opportunity to put these ideals into action for the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment—both in sport itself and in the wider world, through sport. Sport can be one of the great drivers of gender equality, by teaching women and girls the values of teamwork, self-reliance and resilience. It can provide girls with social connections and a refuge from violence in their homes and communities, and help them to understand their bodies and build confidence and the ability to speak up, particularly during adolescence, when the pressure to conform to traditionally "feminine" stereotypes leads many girls to abandon sport entirely.

Sport can and does have a positive influence on the advancement of gender equality. Not only does the field of play provide a platform upon which to build a better world, it also allows for a space where we can promote gender equality, giving girls and women equal opportunities to benefit from sport. There is no better venue for this than the Olympics. Every country competing must follow the same rules and play on the same field – and having the opportunity to represent your country and meet strong, talented women from around the world opens up your perspectives. The Olympics become an equalizer within women's sport (Donna de Varona). Sports promote gender equity and empower girls and women are often overlooked because sport is not universally perceived as a suitable or desirable pursuit for girls and women.

### **Women from Sports to Lawmaker**

Sport can serve as a vehicle to improve women's and girls' leadership roles and participation in decision-making. Indian Boxer, Mary Kom born in 1983, and she secured a silver medal in the 2001 world boxing championship and then after she secured many medals including 2018 AIBA World championship gold medal in her 35 age. She is the only woman to become World Amateur Boxing champion for a record six times, the only woman boxer to have won a medal in each one of the first seven World Championships, and the only boxer (male or female) to win eight World Championship medals She became the first Indian woman boxer to get a Gold Medal in the Asian Games in 2014 at Incheon, South Korea and is the first Indian woman boxer to win gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. She is also the only boxer to become Asian Amateur Boxing Champion for record five times. She is nominated as Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha in March 2017 in recognition of her achievements. These recognitions are part of empowering women excelling in sports.

### **Recognition of women Sports Achievers**

Indian Boxer, Mary Kom is awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree (D. Litt) from North-Eastern Hill University in 2016 and Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil) from Kaziranga University in 2019. The biographical film of her life was released in 2014. She was awarded Arjuna, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna etc. besides AIBA award. She is promoted the rank of

Superintendent of Police (Sports) by the Manipur Government. The 2016 Olympic Badminton singles silver medalist P. V. Sindhu is awarded with Arjuna, Padma Shri and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna awards besides receiving around \$5.5 million from Government and private entrepreneurs for her exemplary performs. She is appointed as Deputy Collector in Andhra Pradesh by the government. The women Gymnast Dipa Karmakar, who narrowly missed the medal in Vault event is awarded the Padma Shri and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna and also with many laurels. The Tennis Player Sania Mirsa, winning a singles WTA title, and winning six major titles (three each in women's doubles and in mixed doubles) is awarded Arjuna, Padma Shri and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, and Padma Bhushan and prize money earned over \$6.9 million for her exemplary performance in Tennis. The retired Track athlete P.T. Usha is still an inspiration for many. She participated in four Olympics and narrowly missed the medal in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. She has been conferred with D. Litt. (Honoris causa) by University of Calicut and awards of Arjuna and Padma Shri. Like many Indian Internationally reputed sports women's are inspiration of young girls to take up sports as a career to empower the world. Many top-level women sport achievers from the globe are empowering the world.

### **Women's Psychological Wellness through Sports**

Women involved in sporting activities are reported higher levels of mental well-being and life satisfaction compared with women not involving in sports. Psychological well-being (PWB) is quite similar to other terms that refer to positive mental states, such as happiness or satisfaction incorporates with physical, social and mental domains. Exercise can promote psychological well-being as well as improve quality of life apart from physical health.

All those taking part in exercise program are developing the following psychological benefits directly

- Improved mood and mental health
- Less stress as well as better coping ability with stress
- Build self-esteem and self-confidence
- Better body image
- Improved cognitive power
- Feeling relaxed condition against boredom
- Sense of control
- Increased feelings of energy
- Decreased symptoms associated with depression

A number of studies have shown that exercise may play a therapeutic role in addressing a number of psychological disorders. Studies also show that exercise has a positive influence on depression. Physical self-worth and physical self-perception, including body image, has been linked to improved self-esteem. The evidence relating to health benefits of physical activity predominantly focuses on interpersonal factors such as physiological, cognitive and affective benefits.

### **Healthy lifestyle of Women through Sports**

Participation in sport is a key aspect of a healthy and happier lifestyle. The individual who takes part in Sport and physical activity are follows healthy lifestyle. Scientific evidence has proven physical activities, making a path for many healthy lifestyles. The lifestyle skills by taking balanced nutritional food, maintaining healthy body weight, following disciplinary principles, systematic planning to reaching the goal and taking sufficient sleep and relaxation are developed through sports.

### **Sports made Women to move freely**

“Sport is the most effective tool of empowerment,” says Suheil Tandon, who in 2013, founded Pro Sport Development (PSD), a social enterprise that uses sport for the holistic development of youth. PSD just completed a three-day workshop with 23 football-playing girls in Ajmer district. “Earlier these girls were not even allowed to leave their homes” says Tandon. “Now they are leaders in their

villages” (Hindustan Times, e – paper). Women's empowerment is the way or a social action in which women elaborate and recreate what it is to be in a circumstance that they previously were denied (Mosedale, Sarah, 2005). In the earlier period women were not allowed to travel outer places due to family restrictions. This denial is completely changed for the sports women to move freely anywhere for the sake of sports participation. This made the women to empower the outer world. This free movement made women to develop the sociocultural status as part of their empowerment.

### **Socialization through sports**

Sport has been one of the most important socio-cultural learning experiences. Socialization is part of women empowerment. It is not possible to empower the outer world in an isolated condition without forming a friendship or social attitude. Sport programs can help to reduce the social isolation of girls and women. Sport programs can provide girls and women with safe places to gather, help them to build social networks, offer social support, and connect them to health, education and employment information, services, and opportunities that can help to address their marginalization in society (Haseena, 2015).

Socialization is a basic necessity for empowerment. Sports are on vital organ for women to socialize themselves which ultimately aim for their empowerment. By creating opportunities for women and girls to engage in sport, communities and societies empower women and girls on an individual level, by promoting self-confidence, leadership, teamwork skills and a sense of achievement. They also challenge existing gender norms and roles within the society.

As a result of gender-role socialization, women are often discouraged from viewing themselves as strong, competent, and self-determining individuals. Becoming empowered at the personal level would represent a foundation from which women could counteract these limiting self-perceptions as well as gain control over their lives. We explore the potential of sport participation to provide women with this increased sense of power. Athletes' responses suggest that sport participation related to the development of three empowering qualities women tradition ally lack: (a) bodily competence, (b) perceptions of a competent self, and (c) a proactive approach to life (Elaine M. Blinde, et al., 1993). Sport can be an important tool for social empowerment of women, and they learn the skills of teamwork, negotiation, leadership, communication and respect for others.

### **Sports women as Brand Ambassadors**

Sports provide the opportunity for the sportswomen to become Brand Ambassadors. A brand ambassador is a position given to the top personalities to popularize fixed program or brand to the population. They are employed by a company or organization to help raise brand awareness and increase sales/program. They complete a variety of tasks ranging from promoting products or services in-store to implementing marketing campaigns. They are also known as influencers or corporate ambassadors.

Celebrity men and women from different field are more often chosen to become brand ambassadors because they are generally of a higher profile and attract a larger audience, which can increase the profit margins/popularize of the brands they endorse. But celebrity sports women are also getting opportunity brand ambassadors as like sportsmen and others. Sports personalities are considered as vehicles for advertisements or product endorsements (Arai, Ko and Ross, 2014), and athletes who promote symbolic messages can attract companies seeking effective endorsers. The prospect of sportswomen and their commercial viability are making them as brand ambassadors during and after their careers. The brand ambassadors are getting many social and financial benefits and this made them to empower.

### **List of Few recently appointed sports women as Ambassadors**

<b>Name of Brand and Campaigns</b>	<b>Name of Sports women Ambassadors</b>
Payment Technology Company Visa	P V Sindhu (Badminton)
PNB MetLife	
Gatorade by PepsiCo	Hima Das (Athlete)
BSNL	Mary Kom (Boxing)

PUMA	
French Open	Justine Henin (Tennis)
Clean India Mission	PV Sindhu and Sakshi Malik
Bata's new sport wears	Smriti Mandhana.(Cricketer)
Vistara	Deepika Padukone (Badminton and Heroine)
Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)	PV Sindhu (Badminton)
Indian Psychiatric Society	Deepika Padukone (Badminton & Heroine)
Kerala's Ayurveda	Steffi Graf (Tennis)
Beti Bachao, Beti Padoo campaign”(Haryana)	Sakshi Malik (Wrestling)
2018 Women's World Boxing Championship	Mary Kom (Boxing)
2020 Tokyo Olympics	
2020 Tokyo Olympics (Team Visa)	PV Sindhu (Badminton)

### Necessity of women's participation in physical activity

Women's prevention from partaking in physical activity is both a health concern, and a wider social and economic development issue. 30 minutes of moderate daily activity is recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) for good health, well-being and self-esteem. However, the WHO reports that 60% of the world's population – the majority being women – fail to achieve this recommended exercise quota. Participating in physical activity is an important part of being healthy – it helps with physical, mental, social, and emotional health. So, encouraging physical activity and reducing barriers is something that we as a society should be trying to do.

Girls involved in athletics feel better about themselves, both physically and socially. It helps to build confidence when the skills improving and goals become reality and also maintaining a healthy weight, and making new friends. This is benevolent to our communities and society, economy and moreover in their independence.

### Women in Leadership Roles

Women's participation in athletics and their presence in the leadership ranks of sporting bodies have improved greatly. The International Olympic Committee encourages NOCs and IFs to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. This section shows statistics of the number of women on Executive Boards at the IOC, in NOCs and in IFs. Currently, there are four women on the IOC Executive Board out of fifteen Members. In 1990, the first woman ever was elected to the Board, Flor Isava Fonseca from Venezuela. In 1997, Anita DeFrantz became the first female IOC Vice-President. More and more women are also chairing IOC commissions. Currently, seven of the 26 IOC commissions are chaired by women (27%). In 2015, 11 NOCs had a woman president and 30 had a woman Secretary General. Twenty-seven NOCs (of 135 who participated in the IOC survey) had 30 per cent or more women on their Executive Board. Sixty-two NOCs had less than 20 per cent women on their Executive Boards and 10 NOCs still had no women on their Executive Board

### Exclusive Women Sports Organization

Women's Tennis Association (WTA) is started in the year 1973 in line with the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) in 1972 men's tennis governing body. International Olympic Committee (IOC) created Women in Sport Commission to take care of the women Olympic programs. Apart from these many other sports organizations are formed globally and nationally. The few global women's sports organizations are

- International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG): Its objective is to promote and facilitate the development of opportunities for girls and women in sport and physical activity throughout the world.
- The International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW)
- The Women's International Sports Movement

List of few National level Women's Sports Organizations are formed to promote women's sport and women's sport activities in the respective countries.

- Women Sport Australia (WSA)
- Women in Sport Association of the UK
- Japanese Association of Physical Education for Women
- Pakistan Association for Women
- The Women's Sports Foundation (United States)
- Iran Women Sports Federation

### **Struggle for Equal Price Money**

Grand slam Tennis tournaments are the prestigious tournament in the world. The huge price money differences between men and women for many years. There are many struggles in equalizing the price money. After the long struggle now it is same for both for men and women. In 2007, Wimbledon became the last of the four major tournaments to award equal prize money, with the US Open rolling out pay parity in 1973, the Australian Open in 2001 and the French Open in 2006. Now the price money is same for both men and women Grand Slam Tennis Tournament. Before that women players were paid less than men players.

The US Open was the first major to offer equal pay back in 1973, after women's champion Billie Jean King threatened to organize a boycott of the tournament. Just one year prior, King earned \$10,000 for first prize — 40% of Ilie Năstase's \$25,000 award.

A study conducted by the BBC in 2017 revealed that 83 percent of sports now pay men and women the same amount in prize money. However, till there is prize money gap is wider in some sports and it is narrowing very closer. Women's empowerment made them to fight for the rights of equal prize money, and we can forecast, it will be equalized in the near future.

### **Conclusion**

Sport is one of the most powerful platforms for empowering women and girls. Sports make the women stay independently in many aspects in their lives by way of achievements. They empower the world through name and fame, leadership roles, ambassadors, administrators and sports officials. The reputation and recognition are flourishing from different angles for the women achieving international reputation in sports. Physically active girls and women are enjoying the physical and mental well-being thereby sports provides the platform to enable positive life changes. Sports provides opportunities for women to develop personal and social responsibility of leadership roles, a range of team building activities, challenging gender stereotypes, development of building self-esteem and enhancing health and well-being with the ultimate aim to reach empowerment. Sports made many women empowerment up gradation by way of equality in gender and prize money. The employment opportunities for the sports women are flourishing in different organizations. Sports helped women to empower and change their image as a strong, confident, and brave person in the society today. No doubt sports empower the women and it ultimately becomes the Nation's empowerment.

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## Women Empowerment through New-Fangled Schemes in Tamil Nadu

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### Abstract

*Tamil Nadu, a southern state of India always focused on the development of every individual, particularly women empowerment. Moreover, this state stands first implementing several programmes for the overall development of women and children viz., education, health and economic development. Perhaps, the state has been implementing variety of welfare scheme namely granting of financial assistance to the women pursue education, marriage and widow remarriage and also providing healthy and protective environment of women. Empowering women doesn't mean to provide financial assistance for survive her daily life and fulfill her needs. First up all, women should be treated as equal to a man. The empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development of the countries all over the world. Tamil Nadu has a glorious tradition of recognizing of importance of empowering women over several centuries. Now days, the birth of girl child was not welcomed by the families, particularly poor background families. On these circumstances, girl child was killed both by birth and after birth. So the Government of India and Tamil Nadu take necessary steps to safeguard women for its policies or government schemes. The state Government of Tamil Nadu provide financial assistance to the women in several phases; child, marriage, remarriage, inter-caste marriage, widowhood. This financial assistance which helped the poor families a lot, leads smooth and happy life ever. Thus the new-fangled schemes were the great solution for the problem of women in contemporary period.*

*Keywords: financial assistance, New-fangled schemes, safeguarding women, women empowerment.*

### Introduction

Over the years, historians and philosophers wrote the books about human history by using the term 'Man' instead of human. Even though the political philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau quotation "man was born free, but everywhere he in chains" clearly shows the discrimination of Women. Nobody realize society was included both women and men, but concentrated only the Men ever. On this man centric society women had faced several difficulties in the form of discrimination, exploitation and harassment. In this respect, Indian women were celebrated in Vedic age. There is evidence of women scholars like *Gargi, Maiteri, Lopamudra, Sabitri, Gayatri, Saraswati* etc., but Mughal period women empowerment was diluted by their plans. During British rule, the status of women was improved by their programmes and educational plans. Thus Government plan was the only tool for the development of women empowerment. Nevertheless, a country's image has been scaled by world countries through the position of women status. So, all the developing or undeveloped countries always concentrated to enhance the women empowerment into high position. After Independence, both Indian Government and State Government of Tamil Nadu were implemented focused to enhance the status of women gradually. Hence, they are implemented the innovative schemes to empowering women for all field. But the implementation of schemes and utilization of funds have some constrains over the period. By planning, implementing is not only the major issue, but maintains the position is also the herculean task. However, the visionary schemes always help the women to transform the position ever.

### Position of Tamil Nadu

India is a multi cultural country which has consisted 28 states and 9 Union territories, Tamil Nadu is the one among them. Tamil Nadu, a southern state of India always focused on the development of every individual, particularly women empowerment. Moreover, this state stands first implementing several programmes for the overall development of women and children viz., education, health and economic development. Perhaps, the state has been implementing variety of welfare scheme namely granting of financial assistance to the women pursue education, marriage and widow remarriage and

also providing healthy and protective environment of women can be analyzed this chapter. According to the census of 2011, Tamil Nadu has population of 72,147,030 Crore which consists male and female are 36,137,975 and 36,009,055 respectively. Indeed, Tamil Nadu is the first state which provided reservation for women in employment. It was laudable measure taken for the welfare of women. 30 percent of reservation to women in Government jobs attracted and motivated the women to higher education in all subjects. In order to release women from their dependent and subordinate status, improvement in their employment opportunities and earning power have been given the high priority. According to Periyar E.V.R., all women, “must be educated and hold highest position...women with proper qualification and competence should not give up their jobs after marriage and ruin their lives”. It should not be forgotten that economic independence is a potent tool for emancipation of women.

### **Empowerment of women**

Empowerment of Women conceptually forms district category by itself. It implies process by which women’s power of self organization is promoted and reinforce, they develop the capacity for self-reliance out crossing the relationship of subordinations on account of gender, social and economic status and the role in the family and society, it encompasses and enjoy participatory within family and community. Empowerment means the process by which people take control action to overcome obstacles. Empowerment especially refers to the collective action by the deprived and oppressed to overcome the obstacles of structural inequality which previously caused their disadvantages position. It is a continuous and multi- dimensional process by which women are able to realize their potential and overcome obstacles. The parameters of empowerment are developing the ability to think, critically building self-confidence, building up the group cohesion and fostering decision making and action ensuring effective participation on social change encouraging group action and providing infrastructure and climate for transformation. Perhaps, empowerment women should be able to enhance the self –esteem, inner power, realize their collective and bargaining power. The movement for the empowerment to women and its ideology has undergone significant differentiations in India since the time of the national movement, which was the first systematic effort in our country to bring women in the foreground of the national level participation in the activities of social, economic, and political regeneration of society.

### **TNSRLM-AMMA two-wheeler scheme 2019**

Generally, women have faced several difficulties in home and working places. Particularly working women struggled to travel between home and office. So the problem solving scheme was planned for working women travel. During the 2016 assembly election, Tamil Nadu former chief minister Amma Alias Jayalalitha announced the TNSRLM-AMMA two-wheeler schemes as electoral promise. This scheme had promised to subsidy 50 percent for women who have purchased two-wheeler. Unfortunately, Jayalalitha has passed away for her illness. Few years later, the next Government of Tamil Nadu has desire to launch the same scheme for paid homage to her. The innovative scheme was launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of former Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalitha’s 70<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary on 24 February 2018. This scheme, christened Amma two wheeler schemes has launched by the State Government of Tamil Nadu for women. Besides, this scheme provides the financial assistance to the women of the state whom to need of mode of transport for the purpose of travel between their work and home. Under this scheme, every beneficiary might be given 50 percent of cost of a two- wheeler or grant of Rs. 25000. Besides, the subsidy amount was little high for disabled women; exactly Rs.31250.It will cover around one lakh working women every year. Perhaps, this scheme has restrictions over the beneficiaries to get the subsidy. Those women in the age group of 18-40 and have an annual income of less than Rs, 2.50 lakh are eligible for the scheme. Preference would be given to families run by a woman, a widower, disabled women and transgender, only one person from a family was eligible for the scheme. This successful scheme had benefitted not only the women, transgender also. This successful scheme helps the working women for smooth travel and reach on time. But some of them faced constrain to get the subsidy on bank. Banks refused to beneficiaries, also some of them get only Rs.21000 instead of Rs.25000. however, and several women’s were benefitted under scheme to fulfill their needs.

### **Sivagami Ammaiyar Memorial Girl child protection scheme**

This scheme is framed on the unique objective viz., Promoting family planning, eradicate female infanticide, and promote the welfare of girl children in poor families and to raise the status of girl children. The social welfare and Nutritious Meal programme Department, Government of Tamil Nadu has preceded the scheme and provide the financial assistance to the girl children in poor families. This scheme has classified in to two criteria; scheme-I for one girl child, scheme -II for each girl child where the family has two girl children only. Scheme-I provide financial assistance Rs.22000 on fixed deposit for her future needs. Scheme-II provides financial assistance to the two girl children for each fixed deposit Rs. 15200. Moreover, an amount of Rs.150 as monthly incentive would be given to the girl child on completion of 5 years from the date of deposit and up to 20<sup>th</sup> year of deposit for her educational purpose. However, Government has maintained some criteria for eligibility; those who have under Scheme-I family income should be below Rs.50000, for Scheme-II eligibility per annum are Rs.12000.

### **Sathiyavanimuthu ammaiyar ninaivu free supply of sewing machine scheme**

This scheme has to provide the sewing machine free of cost , for those who were struggling to survive the family. The social welfare and Nutritious Meal programme Department scrutinize this scheme. This scheme mainly focused to enhance the income of the widows, deserted wives, women from economically weaker sections, differently able men and women and socially affected women through self-employment.

### **Marriage assistance scheme**

Marriage is an important milestone for both women and men. Women travel a long journey in her life on three phases; as a daughter, as a spouse and a mother. While, women getting marriage several women struggling for the marriage on burden. Also, women have facing difficulties after marriage too. In Tamil Nadu tradition marriage is the important event in women life. Thus Government of Tamil Nadu had been implemented numerous schemes for women welfare. Surprisingly, five marriage assistance schemes were launched to help the daughters of economically poor, orphan girls, widow re-marriage, widow's daughter marriage and inter-caste married couples.

#### **1. Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme**

Over a decade, most of the women spinsters caused dowry problem and financial burden. For a futuristic approach, Government of Tamil Nadu has introduced the scheme to assist the poor, destitute and downtrodden women. Selvi.J.Jayalalitha, former chief minister of Tamil Nadu launched this scheme in the name of social activist Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Thirumana Nidhi Uthavi Thittam. This scheme was the first welfare scheme was launched when she came to the power on first time. Under this scheme a women get the amount Rs.2000 at the time of marriage. However, the bride might have passed her 10<sup>th</sup> standard examination. In case of Scheduled tribe, the bride might have studies up to 5<sup>th</sup> standard. Those who crossed the age 18, and being a single child for her parents get this benefit under this scheme. This scheme was introduced by the Government of Tamil Nadu in the year 1989, yet 4.39 lakhs of women benefited between years 2006 to 2011. An extended version of above scheme was announced during election campaign in 2011 elections. The famous quote 'promise is promise' proved while the scheme was announced on the first date of in charge (6.6.2011) by Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Jayalalitha. This scheme provides financial assistance of 25000 and also provide for making Thirumangalyam to 4 gram or 22ct gold. Moreover, she encourages the women education on this scheme, to increase the amount of 25000 into 50000 for degree holders.

#### **2. E.V.R Maniyammaiyar Memorial Widow Daughter's Marriage assistance scheme**

On the high vision, the Tamil Nadu Government implemented the different scheme called E.V.R Maniyammaiyar Memorial widow Daughter's Marriage assistance scheme for providing financial assistance to the poor girls. Perhaps, this assistance is given to the girls who have completed the 10<sup>th</sup> standard, plus two or diploma degree. There are two schemes under this category with different perception. Scheme-I would help the poor mothers who are widows by providing financial assistance for their daughter's married and to promote the educational status of the poor girls. This scheme has had some restrictions; the bride should have completed 18 years, bride groom have completed 21 years

at the time of marriage. Moreover, this scheme only applicable for those who have only one daughter of the poor widow is eligible. Besides, applications should be received before 40 days or at least one day prior to the marriage in case of unavoidable circumstances.

Scheme-II would help the poor mothers who are widows by providing financial assistance for their daughter's married and to promote the educational status of poor girls. This scheme provide the eligibly candidates to Cheque of Rs.50000/- and gold coin of 8 grams. The bride should have passed degree or diploma, at the time of marriage. The bride might have completed 18 years of the age and bridegroom might have completed 21 years at the time of marriage. Only one daughter of the poor widow is eligible, application should be received before 40 days or at least one day prior to the marriage in case of unavoidable circumstances.

### **3. Dr.Dharmamal Ammiyar Ninivu Widow Remarriage assistance scheme**

This visionary scheme would be provide the financial assistance of destitute widow in the society; the Tamil Nadu Government has planned several schemes with several categories for nobody missing to get assistance ever. This scheme also classified into two categories; Scheme-I encourage remarriage of widows to ensure their rehabilitation and provide financial assistance with Cheque of Rs.15,000/- and gold coin of 8 grams, Age limit 20 to 40 years, should apply within 6 months from the date of marriage. Moreover, the bride should submit the death certificate of the first husband, marriage photo, widow certificate, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage invitation of the remarried widow, community certificate, no income limit. Scheme-II has to encourage remarriage of widows to ensure their rehabilitation and assistance provided of Cheque of Rs.30,000/- NSC bond of Rs.20,000/- and gold coin of 8 grams. The bride should have passed degree or diploma, at the time of marriage. No income limit, also age must be 20 to 40 years. Applications should be submit before 6 month of time fixed date of marriage.

### **4. Annai Teresa Ninaivu orphan Girls marriage assistance scheme**

The Annai Teresa Ninaivu Orphan Girls marriage assistance scheme was mainly launched for the Tamil Nadu Government to enhance the educational position of the poor orphan girls. Scheme-I, has to provide the assistance is given who have completed 10<sup>th</sup> standard, plus two or diploma or degree. The main aim of the scheme has to provide financial help the orphan girls at the time of the marriage. The financial assistance for the cheque of Rs.25000/- and gold coin of 8 grams. The bride should have completed 18 years and bridegroom should have 21 years at the time of marriage. Only one daughter of the poor widow is eligible. Applications should be received before 40 days or at least one day prior to the marriage in case of unavoidable circumstances. Scheme-II also assist the orphan girls at the time of their marriage, with cheque of Rs.50,000 and gold coin of 8 grams. The bride should have passed degree or diploma, at the time of the marriage. The bride should have completed 18 years and bridegroom should have completed 21 years at the time of marriage, single daughter of the poor widower has eligible, applications should be received before 40 days or at least one day prior to the marriage in case of unavoidable circumstances.

### **5. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Memorial Inter caste marriage assistance scheme**

The Dr. Muthulakshmi Ninaivu widow remarriage assistance scheme is being implemented by the Tamil Nadu Government to abolish untouchability in the community inter-caste marriage assistance scheme. This scheme aims to abolish caste based discrimination was main objective. The financial assistance of Rs.15000/- NSC bond of Rs.10000/- and a gold coin of 8 grams. The bride should have completed 18 years and bridegroom should have completed 21 years at the time of marriage, should apply within 2 years from the date of marriage. Perhaps scheme-I provide the facilities above all.

Scheme-II also aims to abolish caste based discrimination, provide the financial assistance those have married inter caste marriage. The cheque of Rs. 30000/- NSC bond of Rs.20000/- and gold coin of 8 grams, 18 years and bridegroom should have completed 21 years at the time of marriage, should apply within 2 years from the date of marriage. Both schemes applications, should included 10<sup>th</sup> mark sheet, degree certificate, mark sheet and transfer certificate, marriage, invitation, marriage registration certificate, marriage photo, age proof and nativity certificate.

### **Conclusion**

Empowering women doesn't mean to provide financial assistance for survive her daily life and fulfill her needs. First up all, women should be treated as equal to a man. The empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development of the countries all over the world. Tamil Nadu has a glorious tradition of recognizing of importance of empowering women over several centuries. Now a days, the birth of girl child was not welcomed by the families, particularly poor background families. On these circumstances, girl child was killed both by birth and after birth. So the Government of India and Tamil Nadu take necessary steps to safeguard women for its policies or government schemes. The state Government of Tamil Nadu provide financial assistance to the women in several phases; child, marriage, remarriage, inter-caste marriage, widowhood. This financial assistance which helped the poor families a lot, leads smooth and happy life ever. Thus the schemes were the great solution for the problem of women in contemporary period.

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## A Study on Women Empowerment in Digital India

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper revolves around the topic of Women Empowerment in Digital India. A descriptive study was done by conducting a survey and collecting the responses from the respondents consisting of both male and female. The Digital India programme is a flagship programme of the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. E-governance initiatives in India took a broader dimension in the mid-1990s for wider sectoral applications with emphasis on citizen-centric services. The major ICT initiatives of the Government included, inter alia, some major projects such as railway computerization, land record computerization, etc. which focused mainly on the development of information systems. Later on, many states started ambitious individual e-governance projects aimed at providing electronic services to citizens. It is universally accepted that like all human beings, women too, have a right to freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity as their male counterparts do, all over the world. Yet the position of women has always been a subordinate one. Despite protests, movements, agitations and other means of resistance, there has been no respite from this social evil. Gender discrimination continues even in the present times*

*Keywords: Digital India Programme, E-governance, Gender discrimination, ICT Initiatives.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Women's empowerment is the way or a social action in which women elaborate and recreate what it is to be in a circumstance that they previously were denied. 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. Empowerment is the process that creates power in individuals over their own lives, society, and in their communities. People are empowered when they are able to access the opportunities available to them without limitations and restrictions such as in education, profession and lifestyle. Empowerment includes the action of raising the status of women through education, raising awareness, literacy, and training. Women empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development and economics. Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. Digital India is a campaign launched by the Government of India in order to ensure the Government's services are made available to citizens electronically by improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity or making the country digitally empowered in the field of technology. The initiative includes plans to connect rural areas with high-speed internet networks. Digital India consists of three core components: the development of secure and stable digital infrastructure, delivering government services digitally, and universal digital literacy. Launched on 1 July 2015 by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is both enabler and beneficiary of other key Government of India schemes, such as BharatNet, Make in India, Startup India and Standup India, industrial corridors, Bharatmala, Sagarmala. As of 31 December 2018, India had a population of 130 crore people (1.3 billion), 123 crore (1.23 billion) Aadhaar digital biometric identity cards, 121 crore (1.21 billion) mobile phones, 44.6 crore (446 million) smartphones, 56 crore (560 million) internet users up from 481 million people (35% of the country's total population) in December 2017, and 51 per cent growth in e-commerce.

For an Indian woman and citizen, freedom does not just mean those guaranteed under the Constitution. It also means more jobs, opportunities for entrepreneurship, increased safety, ease in day-to-day living, and protection of the girl child. In short, the road to women's empowerment has several factors dotting its path. To ensure women are empowered, the government and the public sector need to play important roles to enable their welfare in various sectors. Whether it is providing free cooking gas and education schemes or enabling women to leverage technology, a slew of schemes has been launched in recent years to empower women to be independent in their lives. Here are a few that are breaking new ground and improving the lives of women, and encouraging them to think big, both in urban and rural areas:-

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana.
2. Mahila Shakti Kendra.
3. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana.
4. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP).

The digital revolution, characterized by artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing and mobile robotics could improve female participation in economic life and enhance the economic and social autonomy of women in (at least) three ways. Firstly, mobile and digital technologies offer women the potential to bypass some of the traditional cultural and mobility barriers, particularly in emerging and developing countries. Digital technologies could help women access new markets, work flexibly and distantly, acquire and interact with customers, receive training and provide mentoring, improve financial autonomy and access finance for their ventures. Second, women quite often possess superior social skills, which can expect increasing rewards on labor markets in the digital age. Such social skills are often a feature of women-dominated jobs and they include, for instance, a heightened sense of responsibility towards the wider community, greater empathy, more effective communication and a greater willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. They should help women avoid the enormous employment losses from automatization, which, in developed countries, are predicted to account for up to 60 percent of all jobs over the next two decades.

Women often find themselves trapped in a vicious circle, where current gender gaps hinder the chances for future improvements. Thus, prevailing legal and cultural restrictions towards female autonomy in many emerging and developing economies tend to prevent women from accessing digital devices that could help overcome some of these restrictions. Moreover, even in the most developed G20 countries, lower female enrolment rates in higher education, especially in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), deters women from fully realizing the chances offered by digitalization. Accordingly, women are at risk of missing out on the most promising jobs of the digital age. Digitalization is likely to create a vast variety of new opportunities for entrepreneurship, too. Current gender imbalances like gaps in entrepreneurial skills, lack of developed social networks for female business founders, insufficient number of female role models of entrepreneurship and prevalence of financial constraints may keep women from recognizing and pursuing those entrepreneurial opportunities. If women are to realize their full potential in the digital age, the G20 governments need to target these current gender gaps. Many of these gender imbalances can effectively be addressed by means of deploying new digital technologies.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

1. **Kumar (2011):** Based on secondary data source Kumar had investigated the inter-state disparities in India in the status of women and economic development and its changes over time. This study has reported a high level of dispersion among the Indian states with respect to the various indicator variables of women's status. During the period 1980-90, the disparities have declined for most of the educational and health status variables. The disparities have declined for most of the educational and economic status variables over the period 1990-2000. On the other hand, urbanization rate, per capita income and the number of factories per lakh of population have been found to be the dominant factors to explain the nature of economic development of the states. It has found that Kerala, which occupies tenth/eleventh rank in accordance to economic



development, tops the ranking for women status for each year under study. This decadal analysis has shown that the states of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh have improved their position among the states over time in the rank of women's status. On the other hand, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Gujrat have shown deterioration in their rankings.

2. **Bhuiyan, (2007):** have defined empowerment as a mechanism of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation in decision-making and greater access to and control over physical resources as well as power structure. This study says that empowerment includes women's participation in work place. Women's entrepreneur help women increase the courage to talk with people associated with business and trade. They say that entrepreneur increases women's participation in decision-making in family and social matter; removes social seclusion and religious sanction against women. It decreases social discrimination against women and increases the income of the women. The authors have argued that women's entrepreneur changes the social-psychophysical quality of individual women, which is most effective for empowerment. Trade and generation of income increase the self-confidence of women. Finally, we can conclude from the study that working as entrepreneur increases the empowerment of women. However, working as entrepreneur is not the only determinants of women's empowerment, there are many other determinants of women's empowerment. This study remains silent about the other determinants of women's empowerment.

#### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand about the terms like Women Empowerment, and Digital India.
2. To study the challenges in women empowerment in Digital India.
3. To know the role of Digital India (Digitalization) in empowering the Women of our society.

#### **HYPOTHESIS**

H0:- There will be a negative impact of digitalization on Women Empowerment.

H1:- There will be positive impact of digitalization on Women Empowerment.

#### **RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY**

Research Design: Descriptive.

Sources: This paper contains both primary as well as secondary data.

Primary data- Primary Data has been collected by conducting online survey.

Secondary Data- Secondary data has been collected through various websites.

#### **DATA INTERPRETATION**

Q.1] How do you feel about the possibility of women serving in the following units?

Q.2] Do you think that the Government schemes for Women Empowerment will build up confidence & self-esteem of women?

Q.3] Do you think that there will be a negative impact of digitalization on women empowerment?

Q.4] Do you think that there will be a positive impact of digitalization on women empowerment?

Q.5] Do you think that in a male dominated society, women entrepreneurs can have opportunities of handling their business/enterprises?

Q.6] Do you think women entrepreneurs can also have an equal and important role in the economy?

#### **FINDINGS**

A survey/ questionnaire was made to collect the responses from the respondents. From that, 63.6% of the respondents were Male and 36.4% of the respondents were Female. Most of the respondents were of the age of 19, while the remaining ones were of the age of 17, 18, 20 & even 48 to 50.

1. 72.8% of the respondents agree that the Government schemes for Women Empowerment will build up confidence & self-esteem of women.

2. 72.8% of the respondents disagree that there will be a negative impact of digitalization on women empowerment.
3. 90.9% of the respondents strongly agree that there will be a positive impact of digitalization on women empowerment.
4. 91% of the respondents agree that in a male dominated society, women entrepreneurs can have opportunities of handling their business/enterprises.
5. 91% of the respondents strongly agree that women entrepreneurs can also have an equal and important role in the economy.

### **ROLE OF DIGITALIZATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT/ DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY EMPOWERING WOMEN IN INDIA**

Digital technology and several government policies are playing a significant role in empowering women in India, the women's wing of industry chamber FICCI said at a conclave of global Chief Information Officers on the theme of "Digital leadership and Inclusive Culture". A FICCI Ladies Organization statement said that the all-women panel of tech corporates for the seminar, organized jointly with Dell EMC on Saturday, consisted of the Department of Electronics arm ERNET India Director General Neena Pahuja, Airtel Head of Digital Harmeen Mehta, IFFCO

"Digital technology and several recent government policies are playing a significant role in empowering women in a big way. Technology is also helping women feel secure at the work place as well as on the street," the statement cited panelist Pahuja as saying. According to Mehta, being digital means not being afraid of using emerging technologies to solve business problems. "Digitization has helped women to be more safe with the help of various apps and mobile," she said. "Encouraging and empowering women in the workforce is something the country needs to take up on a war footing. Most corporates nowadays want more women in the workforce because they are really dedicated and committed to completing work," said Gaur.

1. **Internet Saathi:** A long-term vision from the Chairman of Emeritus of Tata Sons, Ratan Tata recently launched an initiative called 'Internet Saathi'. This aims to go deep with the internet usage among rural women in India. Ratan Tata has joined hands with Google and Intel to help women in rural India to access the internet in large number. He thinks that internet will help rural women to get educated and to make them ready for the future. Those women who have not been able to find a way of earning yet, seems this initiative will build their career. Women internet users in urban India have outnumbered men, but when it comes to the rural India, only a few have access to the internet.
2. **W2E2 (India):** Women for Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, in short W2E2 is helping rural women with digital tools, e-learning, internet connection. Women tend to use the Internet for their own projects in fields like sustainable agriculture and rural health. Some are setting up their own kiosks and shops to provide online services to the local community, while others have taken up work as digital literacy trainers in their own local communities.
3. **National e-Governance Plan** gives a chance to the rural entrepreneurs to provide citizen-centric services including access to land records and utility bill payments. This plan helps them to follow up on rural enterprise, facilitate community participation, enable citizens to make informed decisions and act as a single-window interface, eliminating corruption process. Women have been matured in computer literacy, that's the only qualification needed. The cost of hardware, such as computers and printers, and the Internet connection is usually on the learners' side.

### **CHALLENGES**

Women have been prey to the patriarchal society since ages. She has to face challenges right from her birth until the time she steps out of her house to become something and beyond that too. She has to fight against the society at every point in time. They say that the trend is changing. Women are giving cutthroat competition to men today.

1. **Financial resources:** First and foremost is the problem of raising capital. They consider the women entrepreneurs as handicapped in handling the financial resources for their business. They cannot crack deals and convince the investors for their ideas easily because the mindset is such that women entrepreneurs are not given priority easily.
2. **Conflict between family and Dreams:** Women entrepreneurs have to deal with the conflict between their personal and professional life. How to manage their children and family and get the support of their family is the biggest challenge they face because at the end the upbringing of the children is posed on the mother.
3. **Marketing of Products:** It is hard for them to promote and market their products and develop their business because men are considered to be more powerful in this arena to market their products and hence the even the most knowledgeable women fails to make a mark. Thus, they approach the intermediaries who eat up a large chunk of profit.
4. **Competition:** Women entrepreneurs face a stiff competition in making themselves stand determined in their venture to become successful. There are many restraining forces, which stop them. Women are still given suspicious looks when they go out late in the evening. Thus, women face a major challenge in facing the harsh attitudes of officials and the hardwork required to start up a business.
5. **Education:** While the nation has developed from very different since freedom where instruction is concerned. The hole amongst women and men is extreme. While 82.14% of grown-up men are instructed, as it were 65.46% of grown-up women are known not proficient in India. The sex inclination is in advanced education, particular expert trainings that hit women hard in business and accomplishing top authority in any field.
6. **Poverty:** Destitution is viewed as the best risk to peace on the planet, and annihilation of neediness ought to be a national objective as critical as the annihilation of lack of education. Because of this, women are misused as household makes a difference

**TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS:**

**t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances**

	<i>AGE</i>	<i>QUESTION 3</i>
Mean	22.09091	3.36363636
Variance	74.69091	7.45454545
Observations	11	11
Pooled Variance	41.07273	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	1	
df	20	
t Stat	6.487039	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.26E-06	
t Critical one-tail	1.724718	
P(T<=t) two-tail	2.52E-06	
t Critical two-tail	2.085963	

As we have applied T-test in this paper, and since the P value was more than 0.05, thus, our null hypothesis (H0) is rejected.

**CONCLUSION**

Women constitute almost half of the total population in India but they are not enjoying their freedoms, equalities, privileges, on par with their male counterparts. Since implementation of planning in India, several policies and approaches were made to reduce inequalities between women and men. Both government and NGO’s sectors were intervening to empower the women. The National Empowerment Policy, 2001 also emphasized that women’s economic empowerment may be visualized only with the

development of women entrepreneurship. The Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise. Accordingly, a woman entrepreneur is defined as an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to a woman. Generally, the areas chosen by women are retail trade, restaurants, and hotels, education, cultural, insurance and manufacturing. Majority of the women entrepreneurs have under taken enterprises like Beauty Parlors, Fancy Stores, Hardware / Electrical, Readymade / cloths, Food processing / Paper products, and others in the study. A shift of economic activities from such above areas to Industries, Trade, Commerce, Hotels and other large-scale enterprises owned by women entrepreneurs may be sustained. Support from Government Organizations and Non-Government organizations should be provided for such activities. Then only women will be in high yielding enterprises and their real empowerment can be achieved. Women entrepreneurial development is one of the important area where 268 majority of countries have focused upon as a part of overall Human Resource Development. It is well ascertained by policy makers across the countries that strategic development of an economy required equal participation and equal opportunities to all sections and gender. Entrepreneurial development is one significant instrument for sustainable socio-economic development

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## Need for Women Empowerment in R&D Wings of Science and Technology

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### Abstract

*This paper has been focussed on the issues of women empowerment in technical education and why women are not settled on par with men in key positions in their career especially in Science and technology wings. Even if a few women are settled in academic institutions, industries, research organizations and in IT sector, they are ending up their career only at the middle level. In other words they are not reaching to managerial cadre. Some of them, even though they are continuing are not able to deliver their duties as efficiently as men.*

*The issues and strategies to be adapted to overcome these fallbacks are dealt in this paper. Mainly the facts discussed in this paper are related to women's role in Research and Development of Science and Technology wings and on women's secondary and higher education options. The schemes initiated by various academies and professional bodies to empower women in research groups of Science and Technology are also discussed.*

*Keywords: Industry, Institution, Research and Development, Science and Technology, Research organization, Women in Engineering.*

### Introduction

Women empowerment is high priority issue in the present day scenario. However empowerment of women can be categorized into five main parts - social, educational, economic, political and psychological.

Women can be empowered only if they are provided with proper education and made aware of their rights and hence they themselves prioritise their lives. Not only in education but also it is needed to create awareness in the field of research and development in Science & Technology (S&T) to make any country strong in its resources. If they are strong in research and development, automatically they improve their confidence level in the fields of works of life. Although efforts have been put in all sectors to improve the status of women, the constitutional dreams of gender equality miles away from becoming reality. Even today the main stream remaining very much as a male stream. It's a multidimensional social process that helps women to gain control over their own lives and give contribution in strong nation building by their knowledge and skills in various fields of science and technology. Women are becoming aware of their rights and trying best to improve and upgrading their intellectualism & positive value assertion to create own definition of herself and view herself as a complete human being with strong liberal values without any gender discrimination. Science and Technology have been an integral part of Indian civilization and culture. Over the years Indian women have overcome the traditional mind-sets and have excelled in professions like teaching, medicine, engineering, information technology, biotechnology, nuclear science, space science and many such specialized fields in the domain of science and technology. Their contribution to socio-economic development as employer and employee, getting recognized and honored in public and private sectors. The vision document of women in science developed by National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI) says that women are universally underrepresented in science and technology and highlights the need for schemes to increase the participation of women in science

Empowerment is a process of positive change that improves women fallback position and bargaining power within a patriarchal structure and identifies different pathways of change like material, cognitive and relational. Viewed from structural view point women's empowerment approach is

psychologistic, structural and elitist. It is psychologistic in the sense it places over optimism on the efficacy of conscientization as a key to women's empowerment. The empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Women constitute half of humanity, yet the number in mathematics, physical sciences, engineering, etc. is low. Also these professional women seldom reach the pinnacle of the hierarchy in academic and research institutions. Women empowerment refers to increasing social, economic, research and developmental strength of women.

### **Why women are lagging in S&T wings in academic and industrial sectors**

Viewed from liberal perspective women's empowerment approach suffers from their fallacies exclusionary bias, adversarial orientation and subversive logic.

Still the women in all sections of life are suppressed and underestimated and valued less. Although women have made important advances in participation in higher education, they are still under represented in key positions of Science and Technology wing. This problem is more severe at the senior levels of academic and professional hierarchies. This problem is there not only in India but also in the advanced countries like USA, UK and Canada. In these countries also most of the women are settled in the middle level of administration only, not many are reaching to the key positions. This is mainly due to binding of themselves to the family matters. Mostly by nature women have no aptitude to enter into stream of Science and Technology. They prefer medical and other humanities streams.

### **Participation of women in various fields**

The important factor in achieving their goals will be to make greater presence of women in decision making bodies of the organizations. The voice of women in Governance is required to create awareness that will benefit all sections of the society. They have to be given due respect in a society and also in the workplace. They are to be provided with newer opportunities in all aspects. This will enhance their job opportunities and promotions to the next position. Gender equality programs are to be focussed. Promoting women in leadership positions is need of the day.

No doubt, in the present day trend eighty percent of women students after completing their graduation and post graduation are settling in IT jobs. But many of them are leaving in the middle before reaching to managerial level. Probably this might be due to domestic problems that they are facing at home. If we look into statistics, the wife and husband having the same qualification and having equal opportunity for employment, only men are going to job and women are staying at home to look after their children and household duties. This is one way traditionally imposing on women to stay at home. A critical mass of scientists, engineers, health and agriculture professionals covering a wide spectrum are needed.

But in medical side since olden days women doctors are attending to duties and performing their job very well. For them mostly time constraint is not a problem only thing is that they have to complete their task in a stipulated time to save the patient.

To some extent women intend to prefer teaching side even with higher education rather than administrative side. This might be due to limited working hours for teaching and easy handling. Same is the case in banking sector. But the women working in other sectors especially in Research and Development (R&D), they have to stay in the organization for their eight hours duty per day sometimes beyond.

A Very few women prefer Civil Service jobs because of hectic responsibility of their position and odd timings of the work duty and risk involved in handling their duties. But by some means or the other we have to come out of this circle and framework.

The female employees are reaching to equal level with male only in academic side and medical field. In some cases female domination is also there in these sectors. It has become traditional approach.

Statistics have been presented in many reports and the trend is in the last two decades, more number of women are joining in science and technology groups e.g. in U.S., very large number of Ph.Ds are there in Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Mathematics and other areas.

### **Women involvement in R&D wings of Science and Technology**

Basically many women are not opting for science and technology side beginning from their studies. Most of them are choosing humanities, life sciences, medical field and related subjects. Only twenty to twenty five percent of the educated women are settling in R&D wings of Science and Technology. This might be due to work pressure and restricted timings in their work environment. Even if a few are opting, they may not be very successful in completion of their assignments efficiently in the stipulated time bound. They are not able to obtain time bound promotions and achievement of recognition for their work. In this digital era not only for India even for other countries the digital divide is to be bridged only by means of technical means. Some of the women engineers and scientists on par with men should have to put efforts in developing new ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools using latest technological trends. This is possible only by means of working on various research methodologies. In this, women role is also essential on par with men who can showcase their skills on the required platform.

In India, there are many engineering colleges meant exclusively for women. They are being run excellently well. MHRD (Ministry of Human Resources and Development) is encouraging to start and run such engineering colleges. Government can give good boost up to management to run such colleges still in a better way by introducing some leverages to provide adequate facilities to the students in the campus. Here women can showcase their technical talent and hidden talents in NSS & sports freely. This helps them to build the strong Nation and to bring the Nation to new origins. Some focus has to be put in this direction by MHRD of state and central governments. Students are getting good employment opportunities in various DRDO (Defence Research and Development) laboratories and IT sector. And also they are getting admissions into higher studies like in PG programs in Indian and foreign universities. Some of them get admissions in prestigious institutes like IITs (Indian Institute of Technology) and NITs (National Institute of Technology).

### **The strategies to be taken up to overcome these weaknesses**

Even as the importance of "awareness generation" among women for the empowerment cannot be over emphasized of women alone is not sufficient, perhaps even more than that change in the women for setting gender relations on an even keel. Above all, while attitudinal change among both men and women are necessary for gender equality.

From student level the teachers, parents and administrators should take the initiative to collect opinions from girl students in decision making instead of merely boys, they should take the girl's opinions also to implement in various activities that will be the root cause of identifying the female abilities. By this way they come forward to express their views to solve any task and can develop analytical skills. The teachers at school and parents at home have to make them to create the interest in opting for next higher studies relevant to S&T courses. By adopting this, since their childhood they will come to know the importance of S&T and their role for the development of the nation. In a related way, attention to women's concerns has helped to reveal the value of cognitive diversity in the scientific process.

The human intellectual repertoire consists of many styles and many ways of organizing the production of knowledge. The scientific method can be enhanced by our appreciation of the wealth of intellectual resources to be gained by valuing and promoting cognitive diversity. It is to be ensured that a people centric sustainable development ensures women's equal access to science and technology, economic resources, information, communication and marketing.

Utilization of the talents of women should not be viewed only from the perspective of gender equity. It must be understood that full involvement of women in scientific and technological efforts is today essential for rapid economic development and sustainable happiness.

The important factor in achieving their goals will be to make greater presence of women in decision making bodies of the organizations. The voice of women in Governance is required to create awareness that will benefit all sections of the society. They have to be given due respect in the society and also in the workplace. They are to be provided with newer opportunities in all aspects. This will

enhance their job opportunities and promotions to the next position. Gender equality programs are to be focussed. Promoting women in leadership qualities is need of the day.

The following strategies are strictly to be followed and implemented to bring women to key positions in S&T.

- 1) Make science and technology an enabling environment for women.
- 2) To include gender dimension in the whole process of research and innovation.
- 3) Providing reservation for women at entry level and higher positions.
- 4) Government has to encourage and extend special support to start and run women colleges in Science and Technology disciplines.

Holistic and analytical approaches are to be taken into account and full spectrum of topics and issues are to be addressed.

On the implementation of the following structural change in gender relations with scientific organizations, some motivation for empowering women could be initiated.

1. Setting up of knowledge centres/parks.
2. Experimentation planning **Road Map Support** Service from parents and spouse.
3. Creation of **Institutional Committee** for promoting optimal quality of life for women.
4. Creating inclusive institutional climate
5. Institutional framework

The main features that were faced by women in past days and still today up to some extent are mainly due to:

1. Gender discrimination
2. Lack of education
3. Family responsibility
4. Low mobility
5. Low ability to bear risk
6. Absence of ambition for the achievement.

Technological empowerment of women at the grass-roots is essential in the following aspects:

1. Decision making power
2. Access to the education and employment
3. Exposure to media
4. Enabling leadership qualities
5. Generating a cadre of women scientists and engineers as in the case of DST
6. Increasing women's participation and visibility
7. Supporting a healthy work-family balance
8. Urgent need for confidence building amongst women scientists
9. It is important to understand and take into account the multiple role of women have to play
10. To provide suitable support systems to reduce their drudgery and strain
11. Advocating and promoting education and careers of women



12. Engaging women as partners in S&T global capacity building
13. Promoting women members to decision -making levels
14. To appoint women scientists to panels and committees
15. Increase the number of women scientists in the nomination pool for membership, prizes and awards, give visibility to women scientists and engineers.

**In order to improve the situation, the DST is increasingly boosting its interventions for participation of women in S&T at multiple levels through various new schemes.**

Department of Science and Technology (DST), New Delhi has already taken an initiative in launching several Special Schemes for the benefit of unemployed women or with service break to bring them to the main stream. Under Women Scientists category they can apply for funding projects in the emerging areas of Science and Technology. The highly valued and evaluated projects by Members of Subject Expert Committee consisting of six to eight members from various reputed institutions. DST had launched this scheme during 2002-03. The projects awarded will be funded by DST which includes monthly fellowship to the young Scientists. The women with no job and left the job due to family problems could be benefitted in this scheme. This scheme is in many specialisations like Engineering and Technology, Life Sciences, Earth Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Physical and Mathematical Sciences to encourage women scientists (WoS) of the particular group. This scheme is actively functioning. Initially DST has organized several sensitization programs to get the scheme into required group of people. Actually these sensitization programs conducted all over the country have worked out very well to give awareness about the scheme into young scientists and to encourage many unemployed young women scientists between age group 25 to 50 years. Many young women scientists under this group are benefitted to great extent by this scheme.

Another scheme KIRAN (Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing) embraces women-exclusive schemes of DST with the mandate to bring gender parity in S&T through gender mainstreaming. Different programs and components of KIRAN deal with various crucial issues (break in career primarily due to family responsibilities, self employment, part time career, relocation, etc.) faced by women scientists in their career path.

IEEE (The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) which is US based Professional Body has introduced separate group named as WIE (Women in Engineering) to empower women. Under this umbrella they are conducting many events globally to train women in developing creative and innovative thinking and to develop leadership qualities in women. This is a global network of IEEE members dedicated to promoting women engineers and scientists and inspiring women around the world to follow their academic interests in their career at the same time giving boost to unemployed women. Because this is not a national problem rather it is an international problem common to all countries. Its goal is to facilitate the recruitment and retention of women in technical disciplines globally. IEEE as a whole is the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity.

IETE (The Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers) is a national level body with head quarters at New Delhi. This is spread all over India with about 66 centres located at different main cities. This professional body also has introduced a separate committee under this group called as Women in Engineering in a similar grounds as of IEEE to motivate women to involve in technical and women centric activities This special committee aims that women to come forward and to take leading role in organizing events related to health care, women welfare, ICT awareness and self defence programs to educate women in rural areas.

Women scientists and engineers should have to play a leading role in strategic research in the fields of space technology, biotechnology information technology and they should also make themselves to involve in developing technologies useful to the rural women.

By incorporating the above strategies with proper attention women could be brought to main stream on par with men instead sitting at home ideal and wasting their skills and calibre. If these facts are properly implemented, women can be empowered in the society to play their role to build strong nation. When women move forward, the family moves, the village moves, and the whole nation moves.

It is visible today that young girls are pursuing science and technology specialized subjects and taking up various disciplines for their future progress. This would be possible only by creating adequate social environment conducive for women scientists and technologies and providing large number of scholarships, research grants, awards, recognitions etc.

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 in Research and Development in Science & Technology wing may benefit for the development of technological growth of the country in a significant way. The persistence of gender inequality is most starkly brought home to the phenomenon of "missing women". If such situation arises in the country, there is possibility for system to collapse at one stage or the other. Society should have to be cautious to avoid from such situation. As per INSA (Indian National Science Academy) 2004 Report, 22% women are in engineering and technology, 40% in sciences. Present statistics may stand at 30% and 50%. Over the years, not much change has been taken place. Without the equal inclusion of women in development, women would not be able to benefit or contribute to the development of the country

As per the NASI report, the percentage of women contributing to science education at the school level has increased significantly and percentage of women in government laboratories has also increased. However, the percentage in high profile institutions still remains low as does women's participation at leadership positions in science and technology.

Gender Parity - Participation of women in STI (Science Technology and Innovation) activities is important. New and flexible schemes to address the mobility challenges of employed women scientists and technologists will be put in place. A broad scope for re-entry of women into R&D and facilitation mechanisms for special career paths in diverse areas will be sought.

Unless a deeper talent pool is tapped, it will be difficult for our country to maintain women competitiveness in science and engineering. Academicians can give major thrust world over to create knowledge-based society with full involvement of women scientists and technologists to create a strong sustainable science & technology base.

### **Conclusions**

The issues discussed in this paper will be useful to women students and working women belonging to Science and Technology disciplines. Women academicians and scientists can adapt some changes in their life style to tune to the growth of their career in getting timely promotions, good incentives and reaching to higher positions which helps for their ultimate success in their career. And also they should have to be explored to how professional bodies at national and international level are giving impact on their lives to motivate them for their empowerment and for better working style in their office environment by means of developing technical skills and leadership qualities. If women are encouraged to participate in all sorts of sociological, economical, political, managerial, science and technological fields and if people readily accept their opinions, decisions, initiatives in frontier areas, definitely they can exhibit their skills and knowledge in the fields of their interest. This not only provides a platform to the women in the above said sectors but also they come forward to take active part in education that too in science and technology specifically. For this within some framework they are to be concentrated and focussed. Since their secondary school education, later in their higher education, the role of teachers and parents is significant to motivate them to opt for science and technology related subjects and courses. All these statements in one way or the other have emphasized the need for according priority to women scientists and technologists, in particular focusing on harnessing science & technology for their benefit. If this trend is continued, then the

percentage of women in science and technology will definitely be enhanced. Later stage, once they enter into career they have to take up the Research and Developmental activity as a part of their regular job.

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## Science Education and Research for Women Empowerment

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### ABSTRACT

*Maximum exploitation of existing human resources is possible by immediate engagement of women in science. But, historically, scientific field is found to be male-dominated. Women empowerment embraces the good quality education. Sensitizing and encouraging the women towards education embracement enables them to set free from ignorance, poverty and starvation. Hence, education is continuing as the most practicable avenue for women empowerment. Imparting science education to the entire population expedites the accomplishment of scientific and technological progression. The present article enlightens the efforts of Indian government and United Nations towards empowerment of women through science education and research.*

*Keywords: Gender discrimination, Science education and research, STEM, Women Success*

### INTRODUCTION

Women are underrepresented in Science. Attrition rate of women in science area of academic field can be explained taking into consideration of a number of reasons. Gender based discrimination and bias, hostile working environment, Poor professional / financial support and amplified work-family conflict are some of those most frequently faced issues. At present, women are underrepresented in enrolment, graduation and employment in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Out of more than 600 awarded Noble prizes till 2019, only 20 were bagged by women [1] (Table 1)

Women encountered a relentless tussle to participate in science. It may be permission to study the science, to become full-fledged researchers, to secure appropriate cadre, to overwhelm favouritism, to get the acceptance for publications, and to get funding for research proposals, to get entry into professional bodies, and to acquire appreciation, awards and honours [2]. Rosalind Franklin (1920–1958) provided proof to the double helix theory based on which Nobel Prize was jointly won in Physiology or Medicine in 1962 by Crick, Watson and Wilkins for unearthing the DNA structure. Posthumous nominees are prohibited for Nobel prizes, hence, Rosalind Franklin was not recommended for noble prize [3].

Reports reveal that female doctoral students experience more stress compared to males. In addition to family responsibilities, female research scholars are affected by the general stress factors like difficulty in management of time & family, financial restrictions, own expectations and recurrent appraisal of research progress. Women undertake manifold roles in their regular life. Balancing the private life with that of professional is a courageous task, which makes them to expose to an internal conflict. Physical as well as psychological health issues arise for women due to stress caused by multiple responsibilities and a scarcity of time and vitality [4]. Relocation issue is one of the prime reasons for discontinuation of PhD program by women, which leads to gender gap in R&D. Enacting policies related to flexible leave policies for maternity and to take care of the infants will assure the improvement of women scientists.

**Table-1: Women Noble Prize Winners**

Name	Field/ Subject	Year of Award	Contribution
Marie Curie	Physics	1903	Radiation phenomena.
Maria Goeppert Mayer	Physics	1963	Nuclear shell structure.
Donna Strickland	Physics	2018	Laser physics - method of generating high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses.
Marie Curie	Chemistry	1911	Discovery of the elements radium and polonium.
Irene Joliot-Curie	Chemistry	1935	Synthesis of new radioactive elements.
Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin	Chemistry	1964	Structures of important biochemical substances by X-ray techniques.
Ada E. Yonath	Chemistry	2009	Structure and function of the ribosome.
Frances H. Arnold	Chemistry	2018	Evolution of enzymes.
Gerty Theresa Cori, née Radnitz	Physiology or Medicine	1947	Catalytic conversion of glycogen.
Rosalyn Yalow	Physiology or Medicine	1977	Radioimmunoassay of peptide hormones.
Barbara McClintock	Physiology or Medicine	1983	Mobile genetic elements.
Rita Levi-Montalcini	Physiology or Medicine	1986	For their discoveries of growth factors.
Gertrude B. Elion	Physiology or Medicine	1988	Important principles for drug treatment.
Christiane Nüsslein- Volhard	Physiology or Medicine	1995	Genetic control of early embryonic development
Linda B. Buck	Physiology or Medicine	2004	Odorant receptors and the organization of the olfactory system.
Francoise Barre- Sinoussi	Physiology or Medicine	2008	Human immunodeficiency virus.
Carol W. Greider	Physiology or Medicine	2009	How chromosomes are protected by telomeres and the enzyme telomerase.
Elizabeth H. Blackburn	Physiology or Medicine	2009	How chromosomes are protected by telomeres and the enzyme telomerase.
May-Britt Moser	Physiology or Medicine	2014	For their discoveries of cells that constitute a positioning system in the brain.
Tu You you	Physiology or Medicine	2015	Novel therapy against Malaria.

### NEED FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Discussing issues related to 'Gender Equality' is an embarrassing issue for the both genders in view of the involvement of emotive topics. Hence, a constructive deliberation is required, which provides real material regarding the issues involved and specifics of organizations as well as their programs which back the women to pursue a scientific career [5]. Scientific aptitude is the essential requirement in the technology dependent world [6]. Substantive gains can be obtained by improving the women's contribution in scientific movement.

Providing the men and women with correct knowledge, valuable aptitudes and good technical abilities is possible through science education which develops self-reliance and generates employment. "Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large" was the goal stated at the UN climate change conference-

2016 held in Paris. It clearly indicates the UN has recognized the fact that economies are benefited by achieving gender parity and empowering all women and girls [7].

### **ACADEMIC FIELD ISSUES**

A stretched history of gender difference was recorded. Either downplaying or ignoring the contributions of female scientists was reported in scientific communities of western and eastern countries. Science education was not permitted for female students during a great part of history. Marie Curie was able to prove that women can do science of worthy. In the history of science, milestone is receiving her 2<sup>nd</sup> Nobel Prize against her work in chemistry. She inspired female category to opt science programs and pursue professions in science [8]. Comparable enthusiasm and interests were shown by female and male science students of both elementary and secondary schools of US. But, science interested male and female students preferred physical and biological sciences respectively. Gender differences are clear at the university level from the higher orientation of men towards engineering and physical sciences [9].

### **PRESENT STATUS - GLOBAL**

Globally, at the levels of bachelor's (45–55%) and master's (53%), equality was achieved by women. But, slipped down the parity at PhD level (43%) and further the gap widened at researcher level (28.4%). In order to foster gender equality, a specified quota (30%) was introduced at company board of director's w.e.f. 2013 in countries like Germany [10]. The numbers of women choosing careers in the scientific professions have risen dramatically over the past 20 years. Yet, the corresponding rise in middle and senior levels of all career paths has not materialized. An overview of the current demographics of women in the professions and potential shows the presence of discrepancy [11].

Women researchers' number is under minority in the world. Almost in all nations, there is a rising plea for higher statistics on women in science. But, mostly, usage of available data in policymaking is limited. UNESCO Institute for Statistics compiles the data and releases the fact sheet regarding profiles at global and regional levels and areas of their under-representation. As per the fact sheet of June 2019, worldwide percentage of female researchers is 29.3%, whereas, statistical data in different countries about participation of female researchers is 75.6% (Myanmar), 53.2% (Thailand), 48.2% (Malaysia), 46.6% (Srilanka), 40.6% (Indonesia), 30.1% (China), 38.4% (Pakistan), 30.1% (Singapore), 20.2% (Israel) and 13.9% (India) [12]. 1.740, 1.371, 0.290 and 0.283 million researchers are present in China, US, UK and India respectively [13].

### **PRESENT STATUS - INDIAN**

As per 2011 Census, the literacy rates for women and men in India are 65.46% and 82.14% respectively. As per 2012-13 statistics from AISHE (All India Survey on Higher Education), percentages of female enrolment at bachelor's / master's level are 37.84 / 5.42 (Arts), 11.30 / 2.60 (Commerce/Business), 12.09 / 2.31 (Science), 4.46 / 0.39 (Technology), 4.06 / 0.22 (Engineering), 9.32 / 15.47 (Law/ Education / Computer / Other). % of women enrolment in Universities has grown from 29.2 (1990-91) to 39.4 (200-01). Low fraction of women in prestigious institutions can be attributed to the fact that inertness of parents to spend the amount for girl child [14]. The female Ph.D. awardees increased at a faster rate (9.35 per cent per annum) than male Ph.D. awardees (5.86 per cent per annum) during the period 2012-2017. This has reduced the gender gap in research at Ph.D. level. Number of PhD Degrees awarded to female are 8775 in 2012; 9638 in 2013; 8578 in 2014; 9284 in 2015; 12505 in 2016 and 14121 in 2017 [15].

Breakdown of researcher's data on sector of employment (% of researchers) in India is Business enterprise (26%), Government (31%), Higher Education (39%) and Private-non-profit (4%) [16]. As per the statistics of 2008, % Women scientists in various institutions are 16.05 (CSIR), 20.8 (DST), 15.0 (DAE), 27.4 (DBT), 29.0 (ICMR), 14.0 (DRDO) and 14.3 (ICAR). Similarly, percentages of women faculty in prestigious Universities are 7.7 (IISc, Bangalore), 20 (University of Hyderabad) and 20 (JNU, Delhi). Women percentages in fellowships are 7% (IASc), 5% (INSA) and 8% (NASI). % of Women in Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awardees (1958-2014) 3.75 % (Chemical Sciences) and 3.38 (Total) [14]. In India, women at PhD level are 20-25%, but it falls to 10-12% while reaching professors or heads of divisions [14].

Social conditioning (like gender – bias) can be changed by ‘Role Models’. The Indian Academy of Sciences (IASc) compiled the biographies of Indian women scientists in the form of a book entitled “Lilavati’s Daughters: The Women Scientists of India”. Some of the prominent Indian women scientists are listed in Table 2.

**Table-2.Prominent Indian Women Scientists**

Name	Field / Subject	Contribution
Asima Chatterjee	Organic chemistry and phytochemistry	Developed anti-epileptic drug, Ayush-56 and anti-malarial drugs.
Dr. Indira Hinduja	Medicine (Gynecologist, obstetrician and infertility specialist)	Introduced GIFT (Gamete Intra fallopian Transfer).
Shubha Tole	Neuroscience	Developed master regulator gene which controls the development of the brain's cortex hippocampus and amygdale.
Darshan Ranganathan	Bio-organic chemistry	Supramolecular assemblies, molecular design, chemical simulation of key biological processes, synthesis of functional hybrid peptides and synthesis of nanotubes.
Paramjit Khurana	Plant Biotechnology, Genomics, and Molecular Biology	'All Weather Seeds'.
Dr.Aditi Pant	Oceanography	Oceanography and geology (Antarctica).
Tessy Thomas	Technology	Project Director for the Agni-IV and Agni-V missile in Defence Research and Development Organisation.
Usha Barwale Zehr	Biotechnology	Produced India's first genetically modified food, the Bt brinjal.
Charusita Chakravarty	Chemistry	Classical and Quantum Monte Carlo, Molecular Dynamics and Structure and Dynamics of Liquids.
Anandibai Gopalrao Joshi	Western Medicine	First Indian women doctors to learn and practice western medicine at the age of 21.
Mangala Narlikar	Mathematics	Simple Arithmetic and Advanced Mathematics.
Aditi Pant	Oceanography	Geology and oceanography (Antarctica).
Sunetra Gupta	Theoretical Epidemiology	Infectious agents that cause diseases such as influenza and malaria, among others
Nandini Harinath	Scientist at the Indian Space Research Organisation	Worked on 14 missions, deputy operations director for the Mangalyaan mission.
Rohini Godbole	Physics	Particle Phenomenology.
Janaki Ammal	Botany	Cytogenetics and phytogeography.
Kamala Sohonie	Biochemistry	Discovered ‘cytochrome C’.
Rajeshwari Chatterjee	Electrical Engineering	Microwave engineering and Antennae Engineering.
Kalpana Chawla	Aerospace Engineering	Space Shuttle.
Kadambini (Basu) Ganguly	Western medicine	First female physicians of South Asia to be trained in western medicine.
Anna Mani	Physics	Meteorological instrumentation

Dr.Suman Sahai	Genetics	Founder of the Gene Campaign in India, an organization working on food, nutrition and livelihoods.
Sunita Sarawagi	Data mining, machine learning	Works on extracting structured info from unstructured data & how to maximise the reuse of deep neural network models used in translation.
Vidita Vaidya	Neuroscience	Works on how experiences, stress affect the circuitry of the brain.
Gagandeep Kang	Gastrointestinal sciences	India's first indigenous rotavirus vaccines.
Farah Ishtiaq	Evolutionary ecology	Spread of malaria in birds.
Devapriya Chattopadhyay	Paleoecology	Works on fossil records of molluscs from Kutch to study the effects of ocean circulation millions of years ago.
AditiSen De	Quantum computation, information, cryptography	Works on finding the right quantum mechanical system for a quantum computer.
Muthayya Vanitha	Data interpretation, mission design	Telemetry and data interpretation, including creating data handling systems for remote sensing satellites
RituKaridhal	Data interpretation, mission design	Mars Orbiter Mission.

### NEED FOR ENHANCEMENT OF WOMEN'S RESEARCH CAPACITY

Augmentation the involvement of women in STEM fields is above the social-justice issue. Relatively, the number of women academic researchers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematical) fields is less. Research capacity of academic women in STEM includes rewarding research productivity, recognition and merit evaluation for awards) and enhanced grant funding [17]. Considering the fact the women are also the part of the university community, augmented participation of women in STEM has to be ensured by Universities.

### GLOBAL INITIATIVES

The number and involvement of women in the scientific field can be improved by three strategies. One of it is ensuring educational awareness i.e., safeguarding encouraging gender balance in faculty, popularizing the triumph of women scientists, educating on unconscious gender bias. Second strategy is nominating women for scientific boards, scientific awards, selection committees and speaker lists of conferences. Third one is data analytics to quantify women regression, followed by publishing the data trends [18]. Other measures are conception of special events / casual get-togethers, giving the deserved credit and release of dedicated special issues in journals with research articles from women.

Gender gap details in STEM were collected as a part of D&B survey by UN in order to provide knowledge on the drivers and the barriers in Science and Engineering, which facilitates the end users like policy-makers & other crucial patrons, academic wings, active groups working on gender equality in STEM etc. STI GOL (SAGA Science, Technology and Innovation Gender Objectives List) is embedded in D&B survey. The underlying objectives or policy impacts for STI GOL are: changing perceptions, assertiveness, manners, social customs and stereotypes in order to reroute the women towards STEM; engaging girls and young women in primary to technical education; Inviting, providing entree to and safeguarding women retention in higher education of STEM; promoting gender equality in (a) STEM-associated policy-making (b) innovation and entrepreneurship undertakings and (c) career development for scientists and engineers, promoting the gender element in content, plans and practices related to research [19].

In higher education of STEM, only around 30% of female students are interested, as per the data of UNESCO (2014-16), whereas, women researchers are less than 30% in the world. In recognizable



posts of STEM, women strength is 12%. Hence, 11<sup>th</sup> February is declared as “International Day of Women and Girls in Science” by UN General Assembly in order to facilitate complete as well as equal access to women for involvement in Science. One of the development goals in “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” is science and gender equality. Hence, theme of 2019 is "Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth" [20].

### **INDIA GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES**

In India, women are sensitized by NGO's and Government Departments. Three Science Academies in India (The Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore; The Indian National Science Academy, Delhi; The National Academy of Sciences, India, Allahabad) have given many recommendations regarding Women in Science based on their documented information in this area. To coordinate different programs of Women in Science, “Inter-Academy Panel” was established under the chairmanship of Prof. Manju Sharma, former Secretary to the Government of India. A vision document was proposed by it which mainly focussed on summarizing the recommendations and to give implementation strategy [14].

Numerous hurdles are faced by women faculty to receive research funding. In India, prior to 2001, less number of research fellowships, postdoctoral positions, start-up grants and other research grants were received by women. Moreover, they receive less credit for their contributions in a team work [21]. Disproportionate share of household and caregiving duties to women are the additional factors under the deficiency of social support which distress women's grant-writing productivity and grant success.

By 2010, principal investigators of funded research projects reached to 23% due to launching of special funding schemes launched for women. To encourage participation of women in Science and Technology fields, funding agencies are offering the special awards and funding schemes to encourage the re-entry of women scientists having mid-career break. DST, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India has constituted a Standing Committee for Promoting Women in Science in March 2016 which tries to create gender empowering atmosphere in science and technology institutions, recommends different measures to safeguard women progression in science and also recommends tailor made programmes to foster utilization and support of women in science [22]. KIRAN (Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing) embraces women-exclusive schemes of DST like **Women Scientist Scheme-A (WOS-A/B/C)**, **Indo-U.S. Fellowship for Women in STEMM**, **Women Entrepreneur Quest (WEQ)**, **S&T for Women**, **Women Technology Parks** and **Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in Women (CURIE)**. DST gives a national award for “Women's Development through application of Science and Technology”.

DBT (Department of Biotechnology), India is helping to build capacities for women scientists who are interested to resume after a career break by offering special schemes like Women Scientist Scheme (Career Re-orientation) and Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation programme for women scientists (Bio-CARE) [23]. Age relaxation in young scientist programs like Start Up Grants offered by UGC and DST. As per recent regulations of UGC, maximum duration permitted for women candidates to complete Ph.D. / MPhil program is relaxed by two / one year(s) and permitted the maternity / child-care leave up to 240 days. In addition, research data transfer is allowed in case of relocation of woman researcher [24].

### **WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Acquirement of entrepreneurial skills by women profiles them to grow into entrepreneurs, which aids to relieve from poverty. Some of the suggested recommendations are amalgamation of entrepreneurial skills with science education curricular, making compulsory the gaining these skills to accolade the certificate, and, providing the amenities and resources by government to impart entrepreneurial skills [25].

### **CONCLUSION**

Counselling the women helps them to believe in themselves and also improves confidence in them that their scientific work materials for society. Confronting the discrimination and defying the gender bias

by women is required. Healthy gender equality can be maintained through equalized temperament, attitude and style which facilitate the advancement of women. Gender disparities can be eliminated by effective implementation of government laws in order to achieve the parity of women in researcher population.

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## Women as Educationists

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### ABSTRACT

*“If you educate a man u educate an individual, however if you educate a woman you educate a whole family, Women empowered means mother India Empowered”.* -Pt.Jawaharlal Nehru

*Women’s education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. In a world of accelerating change, we see women, proud and informed, making important and responsible decisions about their lives, families and communities. We see women, vibrant and determined, choosing careers for which they are confident and well prepared. We see women, courageous and enterprising, preparing the way for others to follow. To assist women of limited means liberate their inner spark: to become confident, educated, self-reliant, and responsible citizens and, for those pursuing a professional path, to develop fulfilling careers of their choosing. The common perception is that the girls of the family will get married one day and would not contribute to the financial needs of the family. But what we are not able to understand is that the upbringing and empowerment of future generations is left to illiterate mothers. This is like a chain reaction wherein the next generation of daughters, mostly from the rural areas, are treated the same. But in many rural areas, if the child is a girl then there are many hindrances to her access to education in India. Women’s education in India is still perceived as an unnecessary indulgence in many parts. While Kerala tops the charts with 92.07% female literacy (and 94.00% overall literacy), Bihar scores much lesser with 51.50% of female literacy (and 61.80% overall literacy).*

*Keywords: Women Education, Education in India, Government Rules.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

WOMEN'S EDUCATION is ironic that although Indians have deified knowledge as the goddess Sarasvatī, Indian women have been relegated to educational subservience throughout India's long history. Education means power, which in India remains largely in male hands. The earliest British educational surveys in Madras presidency in 1822 brought to official attention the relative absence of girls in formal schools. In 1881 the Hunter Educational Commission noted that a mere .2 percent of the women in British India were literate, although as in all early colonial surveys, investigators focused solely on school enrollment and failed to count the girls taught informally at home. On the eve of independence in 1947, literacy rates for both genders were abysmally low at 6 percent (female) and 22.6 percent (male). Since then, called they have plodded forward slowly but surely, and there has been a noticeable improvement since the 1980s. Thus, in 1961 the literacy rates were 15.3 percent (female) and 40.4 percent (male); in 1981 they rose to 28.5 percent (female) and 53.5 percent (male); and in 2001 they had risen to 54.3 percent (female) and 76 percent (male). However, women's education still shuffles far behind that of men, with the disparities greater in a state like Bihar, where rates are 33.6 percent (female) and 60.3 percent (male), than in Kerala, where they are 87.9 percent (female) and 94.2 percent (male). The last century's goal for women was to educate better mothers and wives for the nation. However, some of the urban literate classes have begun to acknowledge that women are a national resource that India cannot squander away in this competitive era of globalization and computer technology.

## II. EDUCATION IN EARLY INDIA

For much of Indian history, education involved the oral and written transmission of sacred texts, and the acquisition of survival and craft skills. Among some *adivasis* (aboriginals) like the Birhor of Jharkhand, for example, there was greater gender parity in learning the skill of toolmaking. However, Sanskritization and Westernization as "civilizing" agents have today marginalized women's vestigial rights among many tribal communities, which have been integrated into the mainstream society and economy. Artifacts from the literate Indus Civilization (6000–1650 b.c.) include icons of goddesses and the female genitalia (*yōni*), while some seals suggest that there may have been priestesses in an arboreal religion. The inhabitants clearly revered the female in nature, a vision of divinity that persists across India today. However, male power was also venerated, and no evidence exists of a matrilineal society. The absence of gendered spaces in the houses and public buildings do indicate that women had freedom of movement, but we have no information yet as to how and where education took place.

The arrival of patriarchal Aryan groups in the early second millennium b.c. profoundly shaped Indian notions of gender equity. Their most revered skill was the oral transmission of the Vedas (Books of knowledge) to propitiate the gods. Known as *shruti* (revelations that are heard), this form of oral learning became central to the acquisition of knowledge, although these Sanskrit hymns were later also written in the Devanāgarī script. At first, some women initiates, who wore the sacred thread of the twice-born upper castes, recited the Vedas. The Rig Veda (1500–100 b.c.) attests to some *brahmavādinis* (women bard-poets) like Lōpamudra and Ghōsha. Even as late as 800 b.c., there were spirited female savants like Gārgi and Maitreyī in the Brahadaranyka Upanishad, and Sāvitrī in the Mahābhārata.

By the first century a.d., as society absorbed new immigrants across racial lines, Brahmins reinforced gender and caste hierarchies in texts like the Mānava Dharmashāstras (Laws of Manu). This work praised women's domestic duties and denounced their sexual proclivities. Artisan groups transmitted craft skills, and both working and elite castes transmitted their oral traditions across generations. However, the lowest castes were excluded from literacy, while women's education became largely informal and haphazard. After the sixth century, in the medieval climate of invasions, wars, and feudalism, elite women retreated further into the domestic arena, instructed informally at home until the nineteenth century.

### FROM 1917 TO 1947:

During this period development of women education took place very rapidly. At the time of Independence, there were thirty thousand Institutions related with women education and approximately fifty lakh women were getting education from these Institutions'. Educating the women will empower them to seek gender equality in the society. Women will be able to earn that would raise their economic condition and their status in the society. They will be aware about the advantages of small and planned family and this will be a big step towards achieving stabilized population goals.

## III. INDIAN WOMEN EDUCATION DURING MODERN PERIOD

After Independence revolutionary changes came into the field of women education. Many committees and commissions were established for the welfare of women and their education, namely:

Durga Bai Deshmukh Committee – 1958

Hansa Mehata Committee--- 1964

National Policy on Education—1986

There is considerable expansion in educational facilities for women all over the country at all levels. Major emphasis is given on women participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. The special emphasis was laid on the removal of disparities and equalization of opportunity to women for attending their specific needs in acquiring education. Various steps were taken by State Governments and Central Government to remove prejudice and complexes present in Indian Women in acquiring education. Special vocational training Institutions' for women were

established by the State Departments of vocational education. During Modern Period women education has become a revolution. Now the women are present in the every field of education. The knowledge explosion has made them universal. During this period the women education has been treated at par with the men. They have equal opportunities and facilities for them. More facilities have been given to them by the governments. The Railway Budget 2000-2001 introduced in the Lok Sabha by then Railway minister Miss Mamta Banerjee has provision of free pass to girls' student to attend their colleges and schools up to the level of class XII. The government is seriously thinking of making girls education free up to the level of graduate. In this period the women education is far ahead in comparison to their Vedic Period.

#### **Need for Education for Rural Women**

Numerous studies show that illiterate women have high levels of fertility and mortality, poor nutritional status, low earning potential, and little autonomy within the household. A woman's lack of education also has a negative impact on the health and well-being of her children. For instance, a recent survey in India found out that infant mortality is inversely related to mother's educational level.

Therefore, there is a need for minimum threshold of education (more than 5 or 6 years) that must be achieved before bringing about significant improvements in female autonomy. Of the literate women in India, 59 percent only have primary education or less. This level of education may not be sufficient to meaningfully improve the status of these women.

#### **IV. LITERACY AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA!**

Education is regarded as a key instrument for the empowerment of women. Education changes their worldview, improves their chances of employment, facilitates their participation in public life, and also influences their fertility. Several studies indicate that educated women have, on an average, fewer children and they take good care of their socialization.

Although considerable progress has been made with regard to literacy and education, the overall picture still remains unfavorable to women. At the beginning of the 20th century, the country as a whole was largely illiterate with just 5.3 per cent of the population counted as literate. Only 0.60 per cent women were then literate. In 1951, the first Census taken four years after independence, the picture was not much better.

The states of Bihar and Jharkhand have the lowest female literacy rates (33.57 and 39.38%, respectively). These data suggest that nearly half of India's female population is still illiterate. This is not a small number. A massive programme is needed to make nearly 240 million women literate.

The number of women goes down as we move to higher levels of education. However, women are to be found in all professions, including medicine and engineering. An idea can, however, be had by knowing the percentage of females by number of years of schooling.

#### **Education and Women**

Status of Indian women has been subject to change since the dawn of history. Women were treated equally with men and they had access to education and employment during the pre- Vedic period. But during the post-Vedic period, series of foreign invasions reduced her status to 'property' which needs to be protected always. Gradually she was denied freedom to move out from her house, access to education and thereby employment. Religious and cultural obligations ruled her behaviour depriving her of the freedom to make decisions with regard to any trivial matter in her life. Lack of education and awareness and among women guide them to blindly practice customs, traditions and also social evils like- Sati, Child marriages, forced widowhood and dowry system. All of them gained wide social acceptance in this regard

A popular saying goes 'While educating a man benefits him alone, educating a woman benefits the whole family and society at large'. It is a proven fact that children of educated women enjoy high education standards and fare better than children of illiterate mothers. Educated women, manage their homes better as they support their families economically, financially and emotionally. Women comprise approximately half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology

made them bear a lot as they were denied equivalent opportunities in different parts of the world. Despite best efforts by national and international organizations education is still not accessible to many particularly women from developing countries like India. Key challenge in achieving gender equality in education is reaching those girls who remain out of school even in countries where school campaigns have led to significant gains in enrolment.

## **V. CONSTITUTION OF INDIA GUARANTEES**

(<http://mospi.nic.in>) 1. Equality Before Law for Women

(Article 14) 2. The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them

[Article 15 (I)]: The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children a) Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State

(Article 16) 1. The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39 (a)]; and equal pay for equal work for both men and women

[Article 39 (d)] 2. To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities (Article 39A): The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

(Article 42): The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation

(Article 46): The State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of Public Health

(Article 47): To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women

## **VI. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO WOMEN**

The Constitution ensures equal status to women (art 14) and also empowers the state to adapt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Thus since independence Government of India has been monitoring the progress of women and girls by providing them with socio-economic support through multiple public policies and legislations.

Some of the initiatives of GOI till date towards women girls and women education are mentioned as under:

1. Shiksha Sahayog Yojana – This scheme provides scholarships to students whose parents are living below or marginally above poverty line & who are covered under Janashree Bima Yojana. Already 3,20,253 people are recorded as beneficiaries under this scheme (till 2006).

2. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – The Scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a national flagship program & is being implemented in all districts of India. The aim of this scheme is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years by 2010. The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in 2001. 50,000+ students are studying at 399 centres at different locations. India's Cellphone Gender Gap. According to another estimate, just 29% of internet users in India are women.

In general, barriers to accessing digital technologies can be two-fold. Provision of additional material support can help overcome hard barriers of infrastructure and affordability. More complex issues, such as digital illiteracy and lack of appropriate content may disproportionately hinder women's access. There are also concerns surrounding the threat of online violence and cyber-stalking, along with cultural disapproval of technology use. Tackling these clearly goes beyond the realm of monetary or technological solutions.

The GSMA (2018) report points to the importance of both of these barrier types in the case of India. Affordability of handset/SIM and usage is without doubt an important barrier, especially given women's low labor force participation rates. This is in addition to the issue of financial dependence on male family members. However, an even more important reason for the digital divide in access and usage seems to be reading/writing difficulties. This is a disparity that infrastructure improvements alone cannot correct. Similarly, the relatively higher insistence among female non-users that the internet is irrelevant for them, may point to the role of social norms in de-emphasizing access to technology for women. Some evidence of this can be seen in the fact that more women than men assert that their families do not approve of their cellphone ownership and internet use (though the overall proportions are low).

## **VII. HIGHER EDUCATION**

Socio-cultural barriers for higher education among women are even stronger. Traditional Indian mind-set to restrict women for household activities reduces her opportunities to pursue higher education particularly technical education. Women enrolment in higher education was less than 10% of the total enrolment on the eve of Independence has risen to 41.5% in the academic year 2010-11. Out of 169.75 lakh students enrolled in higher education in 2010-11, almost 70.49 lakh were women as compared to just about 47.08 lakh women enrolled in 2006-07 (University Grants Commission (UGC) report). Thus slow but steady progress of women can be observed generation after generation as a result of continuous imparting of knowledge.

Access to ICT Access to information and knowledge through technology is an added advantage to the present generation job seekers. New line of jobs with fat pay and perks are offered to candidates choosing software as their career. But computer education is not accessible to everybody particularly womenfolk who are deprived of basic education itself. Gender divide is first identified in 1995 by UN commission on science and technology during its preparation for Fourth World Conference on Women. The Commission identified gender difference in levels of access to, control of and advantages accruing from a wide range of technological developments. It pointed out information revolution appears to be bypassing women. Further neither the research nor the practical projects in IT field have addressed the specific problems of women. NASSCOM survey report shows that male female ratio in terms of computer usage is 65: 35. Even among the women who have access to computer education they are either mere computer operators or programmers and very few are found to be the real hardware designers. Global gender gap report 2013 prepared by world economic forum ranks India 101 out of 136 countries in gender equality. Recognition to women's role in the society and gender equality cannot be achieved unless women are given formal and informal education, skill and vocational training.

## **VIII. CASE STUDIES**

Study of Mulapadava Mulapadava village is situated in Vakudu mandal of Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh. Since the village is situated very close to Bay of Bengal and hence the main livelihood of the villagers here is fishing along with paddy cultivation. Currently total population of the village is 316 and number of families are 92 only. This is the result of gradual reduction of families -loss of life, properties and migration. All the families belong to SC community. Out of the 316, 150 are males and 140 females and remaining are children of different age groups. Overall literacy rate is 60% and among women, it is 49% only. There is an Anganwadi and primary school in the village having classes from 1st to 5th standard only. The school building is having only two rooms where the classes go on for 13 students' altogether. Toilets and washrooms are also available within the school premises, however they are not under usage. There are two teachers in the school and one of them is the Headmaster of the school. Public policies like Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan, Integrated Child Development Scheme & Mid-day meals scheme are under implementation here. Classes go on regularly and there are no drop outs in the primary school. However the girls were observed to discontinue their secondary education as high school is 3 KM away from the village. Marriageable age for girls was found to be low - 12 to 14 years of age. Further same school children, both boys and girls were found to be fetching water, sweeping and cleaning the school premises. As far as women in the village are concerned, 49% are literate i.e able to sign, little bit do read and write. All of them are school



dropouts. Not a single women graduate or post graduate was found from this village. Further the village women are members to 8 SHGs and all of them depend upon male bookkeeper for maintenance of their accounts.

### **IX. SOME SUGGESTIONS**

Girls enrolment in schools should be strictly monitored from Village Panchayat level itself so that school dropout cases can be reduced.

Parents should be properly counselled about their girl's education and its long term implications.

Nutritious food to be provided to school children as a part of mid-day meals program

Schools for girls should be at reachable distance and sufficient infrastructure facilities like toilets should be provided

Quality education should be imparted to the students by all the teachers on a regular basis and more number of female teachers should be appointed

Scholarship and other financial aids should be increased for girl students who would like to pursue higher education.

Computer and other technical education should be provided to girls based on one centre for every two to three villages.

Girls and Women hostels with tight security should be provided for every two to three villages so that parents can send their girls for higher education without any hesitation.

### **X. CONCLUSION**

Women might have the chance of a healthier and happier life should be reason enough for promoting girls' education. However, there are also important benefits for society as a whole. An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen. Women have played a very important role in human society. They are creator; they should be given facility to get knowledge so that they may earn their own bread. Women should be taught about environmental deterioration and protection as they have played a significant role in environmental movement such as chipko movement; they played a role in protestation against the commercial exploitation of the Himalaya forest. Now the world has awoken and United Nations in 1995 realized and recognized women's need in planning of natural resources and decision-making process. Indian women's education has, however, certainly improved since independence. Many urban women are highly educated in the sciences, medicine, computer technology, and the social sciences. India now has missions of female doctors, nurses, teachers, and social workers. Yet, in most important fields, girl students are outnumbered, and women professionals do not often receive equal pay, even though Indian women scientists, for example, are among the world's most talented. Such gender disparities in education will continue until girls are valued as highly as boys; until patriarchy and sexual predation are reduced; and until female feticide and infanticide, reflected in the sex disproportion of India's population. Women Education is very necessary to make the bright future of the family, society and country.

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## Women and Education: An empowerment of women in society

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### **Abstract**

*Empowerment means power given to individuals over their own lives that enables them to access available opportunities without any limitations and restrictions such as education, profession and lifestyle in the society and within their communities. An analytical study has been done through a conceptual framework to identify the antecedents and empowerment of women for the economic growth of a nation. Lack of education to the girl child, traditional and cultural barriers results in child marriages, early pregnancy and complications, domestic violence and sexual harassment from informed partner. Adolescents were vulnerable for sexual abuse and trafficking. When girl child is empowered with education the above issue can be prevented. Higher Infant mortality and maternal mortality rate occurs due to child marriages, sex selective, poverty and malnutrition. A holistic approach like National Health Mission can reduce infant and maternal mortality rate. Programs like Skill development and Mudra Yojana empowers women to become employable and generates self-employment. Women empowerment through Mudra Yojana contributes to the economic growth of the country and generates employment. Reservations to women in political, social, employment and judicial empowers women to participate in decision making to address the above issues. Enactment of Act on Sexual harassment at workplace can protect and prevent the women from sexual harassment and abuse from the class who dominate the power on women at workplace.*

*Keywords: child marriages; women education; women empowerment; women entrepreneurs; sexual abuse;*

### **Introduction**

Through formal education one can acquire knowledge and expertise their skill. One with expert skill and competencies can grab a job in this competitive world. In the pre-industrial relations era, women were restricted only to household activities and lack of education, low participation in labour force and were exploited. Women education is essential to get an equal opportunity, when compared with men in society. Formal education empowers women in the family and society to enhance the quality of life through a better job, troubleshoot her family issues with optimal decisions, educate the children and act as a role model in the neighborhood. When Women is empowered through formal education, she can participate in labour workforce and enhance her earning capacity. This is very significant to the growth of an economy. Apart from contractual employment, women can generate employment opportunities through innovations.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To analyze the policies for girl education in India.
2. To identify the women participation in workforce
3. To analyze the various factors that effects lack of girl education in the society
4. To synthesis the women empowerment as a change agent to enhance the quality of life and contribute for the growth of an economy.

### **Theoretical Framework**

28 million of girls have no access to education in West and Central Africa as per the report from Save the Children and The Regional Coordination group on SDG4- Education 2020. Only 76 girls for every 100 boys were enrolled in secondary school education in West and Central Africa according to data briefed in 'Promoting Girls right to learn in West and Central Africa (Global Partnership for Education 2017). The low participation and performance rates of girls includes certain social barriers such as child marriage, early pregnancy and unequal gender norms.

Every year on 8 March is celebrated as International Women's day to honour women all around the world for their exceptional achievement to combat the oppression against women. In 2015, European Union Parliament's gender equality and women's rights committee had decided to look at the significance of education of women. During this year there is a considerable increase in number of educated women in developed nations, but a large number of underdeveloped countries suffers from a lack of women in education. A comparative gender education in worldwide represents only 30 percent of girls have made it to secondary education and more than 66 percent of all university students are male. Over two thirds of the world's illiterate people are women (Barbara Matera 2015, March 6).

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and 5 of UNESCO aims at "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", the later one aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". As per the UNESCO Institute for Statistics there were 16 million girls will never set foot in a classroom and women account for two thirds of the 750 million adults without basic literacy skills (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019)

In Sub-Saharan African places like Ethiopia, South Africa, Ghana, Benin and Togo, Uganda, Kenya has traditional and cultural practices linked to child marriages. Some of these includes Telefa (Ethiopia), Ukuthwala (South Africa), Trokosi (Ghana, Benin and Togo), Female Genital Mutilation (Kenya). The author concludes the reasons for increased child marriages are poverty, inequality and slow government response lead to increase in child marriages. These practices result in lack of education, prone to sexual transmitted diseases and have an adverse impact on development of girls. When a girl child drop out of the school tends to lack relevant and useful information concerning health (Mlambo, Hlongwa, & Msthalui, 2019)

A study on child marriages in north Kordofan State of Sudan indicates that drivers for child marriages are tradition, love, peer pressure, to scape parental control, to improve child economic status, strict parents and for prestige. Education can put an end to child marriage (Gindeel, Etim, & Salem, 2019).

The study in Romani Ethnic region indicates that the parents with lower education and who had low income did child marriage to their children who completed their primary school graduates. This results in discontinuation of education due to marriage at early age. The women who were early marriage were unemployed and vulnerable to spousal violence (Duran & Tepehan Eraslan, 2019).

The National Household sample survey of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics during 2015 indicates involuntary unemployment in the Brazil (southeast and northeast) have the highest levels in urban areas especially women than men (Maia Amorim et al., 2019).

Unemployment is associated with lower self-esteem that turn to greater depressive symptoms especially men but not for women (Álvaro, Garrido, Pereira, Torres, & Barros, 2019).

The unauthorized migrant women navigate sexual harassment when they suffer from different forms of violence. Sexual harassment intersects with structural violence. Sexual harassment occurs because there was a difference in power that men takes advantage of. The aggressors take the advantage of situations of hierarchal and social superiority to commit sexual harassment. It was also found that unauthorized migrant women expanded the scope of sexual harassment compared with Spanish women not only the time they were working but also the time during which they were searching for a job (Rodríguez-Martínez & Cuenca-Piqueras, 2019).

Women trafficking mainly occurs due to supply and demand along with poverty. The most vulnerable are youngsters to sexual trafficking. This supply and demand can be looked at from either the

trafficker’s point of view who is driven by money or from the perspective of the consumer, who is driven by sexual desire. The consequences of sex trafficking to the victims include physical health, mental health and societal consequences (Ferreira, 2018).

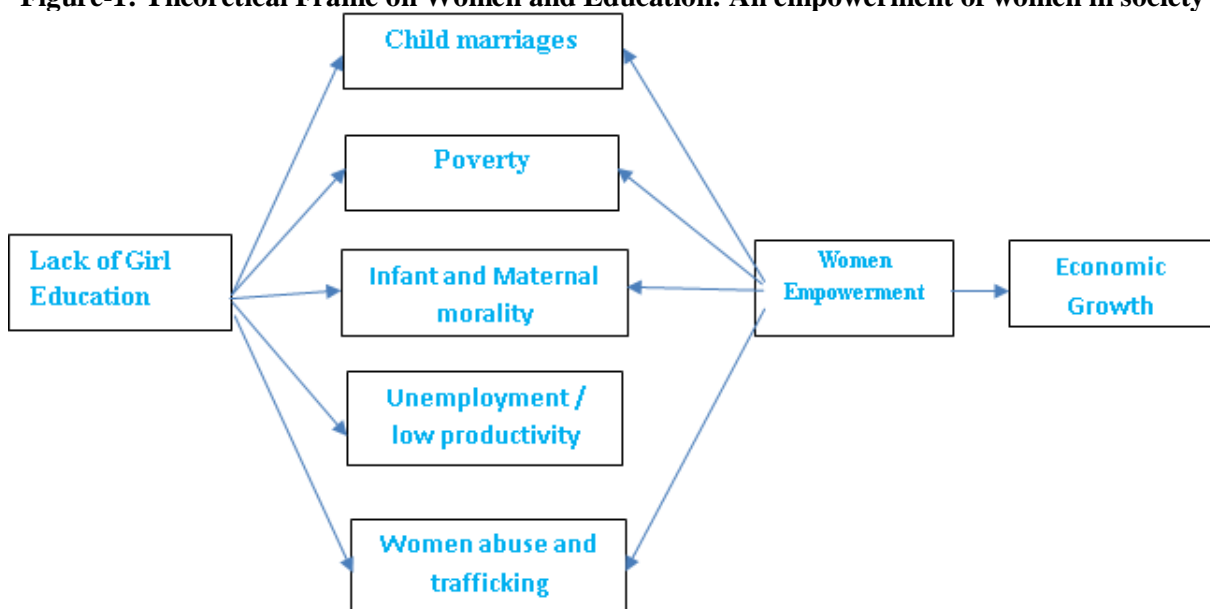
Physical injuries form the Domestic violence where 1- 20% of women have been the victims during pregnancy too. Justification of wife beating, abuse as child, poverty, unemployment, early marriage are other forms of domestic violence. Sexual violence in India reveals approved violence, harmful gender norms, violence as accepted means of conflict resolution (Chhabra S, 2018).

Micro financing institutions in Ethiopia has become poverty reduction strategy to sustain the household economy. These institutions act as key sources of financial services to the poor women to generate income to improve their living standards through self-employment projects. These institutions has a positive impact in reducing poverty (Bogale, 2019).

Violence is the key to women and girl’s vulnerability to HIV. Biological, behavioral are the multiple pathways and structural linking violence against women and girls are the increased risk of HIV infection. Most common form of Violence against women and girl globally includes physical intimate partner violence, sexual intimate partner violence against the women and child sexual abuse before age of 15 and Sexual assault by someone other than intimate partner since age 15. The structural drivers of HIV and Intimate partner violence includes poverty and economic stresses, gender inequality, social norms condoning use of violence and social constructions of masculinity and femininity, woman's exposure to child sexual abuse, psychological distress, Increased sexual risk (Heise et al., 2019).

The author concludes that education and poverty are the two factors of child marriage at aggregate level in his research in India. Girls with higher secondary, higher secondary and higher level of education has significantly lower in child marriage compared with girls with no education and primary level of education (Paul, 2019).

**Figure-1: Theoretical Frame on Women and Education: An empowerment of women in society**



Source: Author’s Compilation

**Research Methodology**

A conceptual framework has developed from the available literature to do analytical study on women and education, empowerment of women in the society. A system review of literature has done to understand the reasons for women empowerment that necessitates overall growth of the world. The sources of literature include Journals, Reports of International agencies, Government annual reports and websites.

## Discussion

The child marriages are prevalent due to traditional and cultural practices of Sub-Saharan areas (Mlambo et al., 2019), the lower education and poverty acts as factors for early child marriages (Paul, 2019). The UNESCO in its sustainable development Goal 4 and 5 ensures quality education and lifelong learning, gender equality and empowering of the women and girls. The National Health Mission, Government of India has done some interventions to reduce infant and maternal mortality rate. These interventions include:

- Janani Suraksha Yojana (promotion of institutional deliveries)
- Health center at different levels
- Mother and child protection card
- Antenatal, intranatal and postnatal care for prevention and treatment of anemia
- Adolescent reproductive sexual health programme
- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to absolutely free and no expenses delivery including Caesarean section.
- Universal immunization programme
- Management of malnutrition and
- Strengthening facility based newborn care.

The Government of India has introduced Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme with an objective to prevent gender biased elimination, survival and protection of the girl child, ensuring education and participation of the girl child. The sexual trafficking is mostly prevalent in the world due to difference in supply and demand of women (Mlambo et al., 2019). Adequate maintenance of child sex ratio by discouraging sex selective with stringent legal action can address the sexual trafficking. The Telangana State in India has introduced an innovative scheme Kalyana Lakshmi or Shadi Mubbarak to prevent gender bias, KCR Kit to avoid sex selective and maintain child sex ratio.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) during the 2017-2018 the total sanctions stood at Rs.7,977.90 crores and total disbursements at Rs.7,501.05 crores as against Rs.3,708.94 crore and Rs.3,525.94 crore compared previous 2016-17. Under the Mudra Yojana, the three categories of loan disbursement include: Shishu (upto Rs.50,000), Kishore (above Rs.50,000 and upto Rs. 5 lakhs) and Tarun (Above 5 lakhs and upto Rs. 10 lakhs). The table 1 depicts category-wise analysis of the PMMY Scheme.

**Table-1: Category-wise analysis of the PMMY Scheme (Rs. in Crores)**

Category	No. of loan accounts	Sanction amount	Sanction amount	% Change
	2017-18	2017-18	2016-17	
<b>Shishu</b>	4,26,69,795 (88.65%)	1,06,001.6 (41.78%)	85,100.74 (47.13%)	<b>24.56%</b>
<b>Kishor</b>	46,53,874 (9.67%)	86,732.15 (34.19%)	53,545.14 (29.66%)	<b>61.97%</b>
<b>Tarun</b>	8,06,924 (1.68%)	60,943.36 (24.02%)	41,882.66 (23.20%)	<b>45.50%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>481,30,593</b>	<b>2,53,677.11</b>	<b>1,80,528.54</b>	

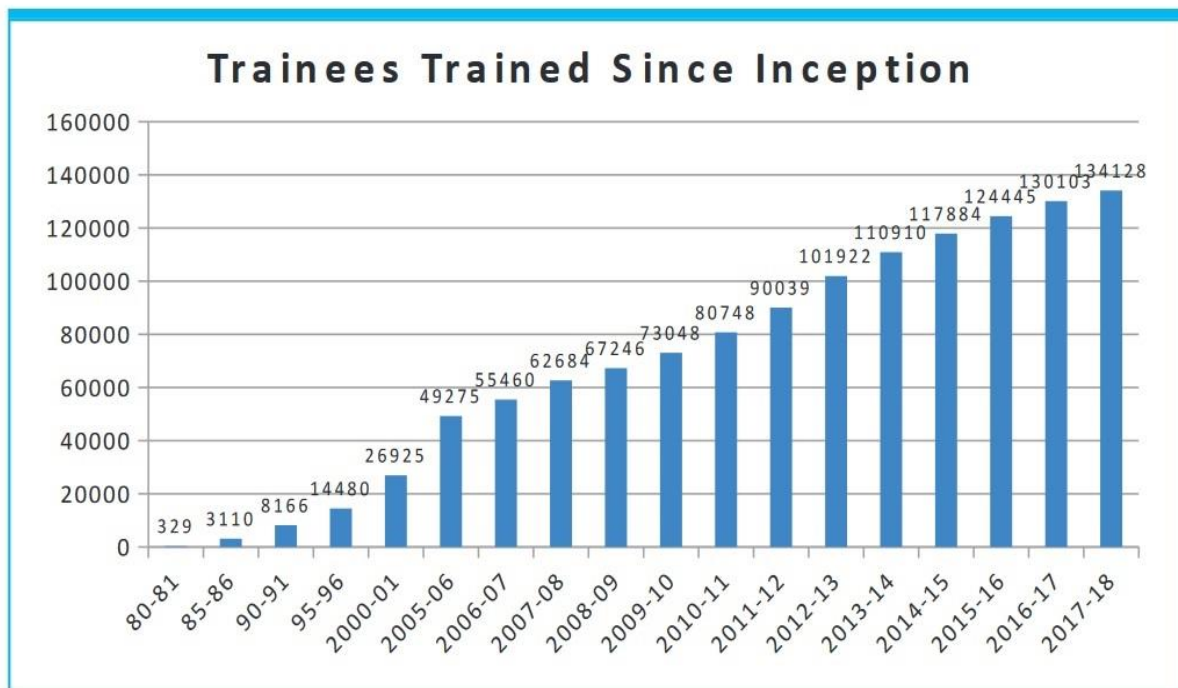
Source: Annual Report of Mudra Yojana 2017-18

Most of the women under the Mudra Yojana has got an opportunity to get the loan to setup beauty parlours, apparel shop, bakery, boutique, tailoring-cum cloth shop, retail store, floor mills, sell vegetables, saree shops, internet café center, bangle shop, flower shop etc., under the Shishu, Kishore and even Tarun. Participation of women in PMMY was 69.72% in terms of loan accounts

(3,35,58,238), 40% in terms of amount sanctioned (Rs.103,254.12 crores) and amount disbursed was Rs.100,170.55 crores during 2017-18. Thus, Women empowered through PMMY that can reduce the poverty and unemployment or low productivity in women.

Government of India has created a separate ministry during 2015 as the Ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship to tackle the shortage of skilled workforce in India. The women were trained through vocational training institutes at central and regional level to inculcate training and get employable in various industries. The figure 2 depicts the increase of women training from 1980-81 (329) to 2017-18 (1,34,128).

**Figure 2. Growth of Women training at Vocational Training Institutes since its inception**



**Source:** Annual Report 2017-18, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India

Thus, women in India were empowered by providing reservation in employment, social and political aspects to enhance the standard of living. To deal with sexual harassment at workplace legislation has enacted to take stringent action against those who abuse and sexually harass women at workplace. An awareness has been created to women employees at workplace not to become the victim for sexual harassment at workplace.

**Conclusion**

The girl child due to lack of education, traditional and culture results in child marriages especially in Sub-Saharan countries. This practice is prevalent in fewer parts of India and rest of the world. This has deprived them from education, child marriages result in early pregnancy, increase in infant and maternal mortality rate, increases in poverty, unemployment, domestic violence and sexual harassment from intimate partners. Adolescent are prone to sexual abuse and harassment from intimate partners and outsiders. When girl child and women is empowered with education the above issues can be addressed. The women can lead a better standard of living, gets employment, educates her children. The schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, National Health Mission, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Kalyana Lakshmi or Shadi Mubbarak, Skill development and entrepreneurial and reservation for women in political, employment and judiciary really empower women to contribute to the economic growth of the country.

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## **Empowering Women Through Education Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan For Promoting Girl Child Education In India**

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### **Abstract**

*The constitution of the republic of India ensures equality for women and men in every sphere of life and activity Women in India have been given equality of opportunity in all matters relating to education, employment, and legal status, and they can aspire to grace the highest offices of the state However, this is indicative of the existing position of women in general in the country. Though legally and constitutionally all women have equal access to and right to venture in every walk of life, a vast majority of them are still illiterate and uneducated. Education is a milestone for Women empowerment because it enables them to respond to opportunities, to challenge their traditional roles and to change their lives, Education is one of the most important means of empowering Women with the knowledge, skills and self confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) is a comprehensive and integrated flagship programme of Government of India to attain Universal Elementary Education (UEE), covering the entire country in a mission mode. SSA has been launched in 2001-2002 in partnership with the State Governments and Local Self Governments. The programme aim to provide useful and relevant, elementary education to all children in the 6 to 14 age group. It is an initiative to universalize and improve quality of education through decentralized and context specific planning and a process based, time bound implementation strategy. In, January 18, 2017, the Union HRD minister of India has launched a new web portal namely 'ShaGun'. The name was taken from two words 'Shaala' and 'Gunvatta'. Shaala which means school or institute and the later depicts the quality. This web portal will be an integral part of SarvaShikshaAbhiyan which is aiming to concentrate on elementary education. Also this scheme will bring training for teachers and faculties who are serving children with special requirements. The programme lays emphasis on bridging all gender and social category gaps at elementary education level with time bound objectives. Its objectives bring out the programme's intent to increase coverage of girls and bridge gender gaps in respect of enrollment, retention, completion and learning achievements. This study aims to study the role of SS and 'ShaGun' in Girl Child Education.*

*Keywords: SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA),ShaGun, Girl Child Education, Universal Elementary Education (UEE).*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In a country like India, the democratisation of education is very essential in order to achieve the welfare for the country. The government has also felt a need to universalise education for all on mandatory basis. Unlike other programmes for retaining universalisation of elementary education, as a comprehensive approach SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) has made such an attempt that covers all the aspects of school functioning and has tried to provide education for all irrespective of caste, creed, sex, religion etc. 'SarvaShikshaAbhiyan' (SSA) is a programme for universalisation of Elementary Education covering the entire country. It was started in 2001. The programme aims to provide useful & relevant free & compulsory elementary Education for all children in the age group 6 to 14 yr under Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009. For protecting, promoting and fulfilling the basic rights of education so as to realize the 86th amendment of the Indian Constitution, which made education a fundamental right, SSA has aimed at achieving the universal retention in a holistic and convergent way within the mission period.

## KEYWORDS

- **SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA):** *SarvaShikshaAbhiyan* has been operational since 2000-2001 to provide for a variety of interventions for universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education and improving the quality of learning.
- **ShaGun:** *ShaGun* (ShalaGunvatta) is a web-portal for the online monitoring of the SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) and a Repository of best practices.
- **Girl Child Education:** Girl Child Education is an important tool that enables women and *girls* to participate in decisions that affect their lives and in improving their social status
- **Universal Elementary Education:** Universalisation of elementary education means universal access to enrolment, retention and qualitative education up to the age of 14.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

- **TejaswiniAdhikari**, in a research paper, “**Study of five NMMC schools in Navi Mumbai**” (2001), identified the gaps in the existing services and needs of students and teachers in the context of quality education. The survey included five schools, under Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC). The study revealed that the infrastructure of schools was in a very poor state. There is a need to strengthen teachers on aspects of motivation, pro-children attitudes and creative teaching learning process. Appointment of suitable staff is also recommended in order to lessen the burden on teachers.
- **SunitaAggarwal, and Chugh**, in their research paper, “**Learning achievement of slum children in Delhi. New Delhi (2003)**”, highlighted that basic education is a fundamental right and recently 86th Constitutional Amendment was enacted so that all children can receive good quality basic education. The main objective of the study was to identify the social, economic and organizational factors that are associated with education and achievement level of the learner in slums. The performance of the slum children was much below the expected levels in both the subjects and in both the grades.
- **Prasanta Kumar Acharya and ManoranjanBehera**, in their research paper, “**Functioning of SarvaShikshaAbhiyanProgramme in Orissa**” (2004), pointed out that that by the end of November 2003, the progress on civil works had been very slow especially due to late release of funds, inadequate monitoring and lack of district level convergence of SSA with other allied development schemes. But remarkable progress was made by Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority (OPEPA) in organizing teachers training programmes both at state and district level.

## OBJECTIVES

- To study the role SarvaShikshaAbhiyan in promoting Elementary Education.
- To study the role SarvaShikshaAbhiyan in promoting Girl child education.
- To explore ‘ShaGun’, a web portal, as part of SarvaShikshaAbhiyan.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data. Relevant data are availed from various sources of information such as Research Papers, Books, and websites etc.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is undertaken by the use of secondary data collected by other sources which may have some deficiencies.
- Due to the limitation of time, the researcher was unable to develop a detail insight into the topic.

## MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN( SSA)

- A Programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary Education.
- Thrust on quality & making education relevant.

- A main streaming Gender approach.
- Focus on the educational participation of children from the SC/ST, religious & linguistic minorities, etc.
- An opportunity for promoting social justice through basic education.
- A partnership between the Central, State & Local Govt.
- An effort at effectively involving a Panchayti Raj Institution, School Management committees, Village & Urban Slum level committees, Parents-Teachers associations, Mother-Teacher associations, Tribal Autonomous councils & other grass-root level structures in the management of Elementary Schools.
- An opportunity for states to develop their own vision of Elementary Education.
- Community ownership of school based interventions through effective decentralization.

### **SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN INTERVENTIONS IN THE PROVISION OF THE RIGHT OF CHILDREN TO FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION (RTE – RIGHT TO EDUCATION) ACT, 2009**

- **Special Training for Out of School Children:** Section 4 of the RTE Act makes specific provision for Special Training for age appropriate admission for out - of- school children. A majority of out of school children belong to disadvantaged communities like scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, migrants children with special needs, urban deprived children, working children, children in other difficult circumstances, for example, those living in difficult terrain, children from displaced families, and areas affected by civil strife, etc.
- **Neighbourhood Schools:** Section 6 of the RTE Act mandates the establishment of a school by the appropriate government or local authority within the prescribed area or limits of the neighborhood within the period of three years from the commencement of the Act to ensure that every child in the 6-14 age group pursues and completes elementary education.
- **Bridging Gender and Social Categories Gaps:** The RTE Act in different sections makes reference to gender and social inclusion both explicitly and implicitly. Some of the relevant provisions are; no discrimination against children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections on any grounds, inclusion of women in school monitoring committees, provision of good quality education that includes equity issues, curriculum development in conformity with constitutional stipulations, training, enrolment in age appropriate classes.
- **Interventions for children with special needs:** In the case of Children with Special Needs (CWSN), the key priority areas are strengthening the identification system of CWSN, ensuring full coverage of CWSN by preparing schools to address the diverse needs that different categories of CWSN have, especially children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy, deaf-blindness, etc. Strengthening and up gradation of resource rooms, in training facilities for needs of CWSN. Strengthening the resource support team for regular and effective academic support to the CWSN. Sensitization of teachers, parents, community and peers to create an inclusive school environment in coordination with special schools.

### **SSA AND GIRL CHILD EDUCATION**

Since independence the Indian Government has been trying to improve the situation of girls. **The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986**, stated that, education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and



the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineering. The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets and effective monitoring. The **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** along with the **Education For All**, provided an agreed international framework for achieving gender equality in education. Although admission of girls in schools has gone up significantly over the past few years (because of SSA), attendance and retention rates are still low. Approximately 2000 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (residential schools under the KGBV Scheme) were set up for under-privileged girls in difficult-to-reach areas. The National Programme for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL), launched in September 2003, provided additional provisions for enhancing the education of underprivileged/disadvantaged girls at the primary level through more intense community mobilisation, the development of model schools in clusters, gender sensitisation of teachers, development of gender-sensitive learning materials, early child care and education facilities and provision of need-based incentives for girls. All Educationally Backward Blocks have been included under NPEGEL and KGBVS. The latter scheme was merged with SarvaShikshaAbhiyan in the Eleventh Plan with effect from April 1, 2007. Despite such ambitious plans, the harsh reality is that government-run schools are hardly in a position to act as agents of progressive social transformation, even when most of them have a larger presence of girls than of boys. Government schools suffer from a variety of problems ranging from lack of facilities for girls. What most of schools suffer from is a non-conducive environment for learning, particularly for girls. Most of the time there exists a gender-bias. In some schools, they are denied access to games and sports facilities which the boys enjoy. Some teachers address their lessons exclusively to boys, paying no attention to the girls. In addition, girls alone may be allotted works like sweeping and cleaning the school premises, or sometimes cooking of mid-day meals.

#### **'SHAGUN' – A WEB-PORTAL FOR SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN**

PrakashJavadekar, the Union HRD minister of India has launched a new web portal namely ShaGun on 18, January, 2017. The name was taken from two words 'Shaala' and 'Gunvatta'. Shaala which means school or institute and the later depicts the quality. This web portal will be an integral part of SarvaShikshaAbhiyan. According to Javadekar, this web portal is aiming to concentrate on elementary education. Also this scheme will bring training for teachers and faculties who are serving children with special requirements. It has been prepared by World Bank in collaboration with Ministry of Human Resource Development. ShaGun' aims to capture and showcase innovations and progress in elementary education sector of India by continuous monitoring of SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA).



#### **Some facts about ShaGun are as follows;**

- ShaGun, which has been coined from the words 'Shala' meaning schools and 'Gunvatta' meaning quality, has been developed with a twin track approach.
- First, is the repository with an engaging interface that focuses on positive stories and developments in the field of school education.
- In this repository, best practices will be documented in the form of videos, testimonials, case studies, and images, which will display state-level innovations and success stories that are driving improvements in performance under SSA.
- This repository has a decentralised management structure that enables state governments to choose, upload and manage their own content.
- Secondly, it has an online monitoring module to measure state-level performance and progress against key educational indicators.

- It has been developed to collect and report data which will enable the government and administrators to track the efficiency with which SSA funds are being utilised and the results that this is delivering.

## **CONCLUSION**

India is intended to become a super power as well as being developed one by 2020. This can become a reality only when the women of the nation become empowered lot and Education is one of the most important means of empowering women. SarvaShikshaAbhiyan is a valuable endeavour of the Government of India, in the universalization of elementary education, which strives to help citizens to realise the importance of elementary education. Social justice and equity are by themselves a strong argument for providing basic education for all. Provision of basic education also improves the standard of living, especially with regard to life expectancy, infant mortality and nutritional status of children. Educating girls is commonly perceived as unnecessary; mainly on account of the role they have been assigned in running the house & also because they will eventually leave their parental homes after marriage, where their skills in household Chores will hold them in better step. But today also, SSA needs to be viewed critically as most its goals remain unaccomplished even after its target years have passed and India still has a very long way to go towards girl's education.

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## Empowering Women with Enhanced Capabilities Using Information and Communication Technology

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### Abstract

*Women Empowerment is the ability of the women to control their own destinies in relation to other people in society. Various factors like Social, Cultural, Geographical, Political, Economic and Environmental aspects influence the women's empowerment. Women are the half of the total population in the world. Among them majority are poor. Even though women are actively participated in taking care of children, family and household activities, they have limited access to the resources and economy. Empowerment is one of the key essential element to reduce poverty. Hence, women empowerment is necessary to change their lives and to eradicate poverty as well as to uplift the next generation.*

*The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) evolved as a powerful tool for women empowerment in a developing country like India. ICT became a solution to the issues such as gaps between gender, rural-urban, rich-poor. There is a need to improve the opportunities to women so that they can able to own, manage and control industries/enterprises, to acquire higher managerial, technical positions both in government and non-government organizations. They should not only confine to the data entry, call centers and lower level organizations. In this study the factors affecting women empowerment and potential of ICT for women empowerment are presented. How ICT enable women to empower with enhanced capabilities is also presented in this paper.*

*Keywords: Case studies, Enhanced Capabilities, Factors affecting Women Empowerment, Information and Communication Technology, Women Empowerment.*

### 1. Introduction

In India, women play a central role in family, community and social development. They have to balance the complexities of surviving in extreme poverty. But women excluding from the discussion because of their illiteracy, lack of confidence and lack of mobility. Empowerment means the personal growth which helps in decision making and to face the challenges in critical situations. The process of empowerment contains dimensions [Mamta Mokta (2018)] such as cognitive, psychological, economic, physical and political. By relating all the dimensions to women it can be identified that women can empower in any field. Women can understand the conditions and causes at the micro and macro levels. Therefore, cognitive dimension is well related to the women. The psychological dimension is also related to the women because it can act at personal and societal levels. The economic component requires the access and control over productive resources to ensure financial autonomy. Women can able to identify the changes in the economic balance of power so as to access and control over the financial issues. Similarly, women have the capacity to relate themselves with political and physical dimensions. Hence, women have the capabilities to empower. But these capabilities are not enough to make women empower in higher managerial and technical position. These capabilities should be enhanced. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is such a potential tool, which can enhance the women empowering capabilities.

Information with Communication Technology has brought extraordinary changes in the way people communicate, conduct business and social interaction. With the arrival of ICT, the common man can able to access global information easily. ICT can handle any type of information like text, voice,

video and images. All information can be digitized, stored, retrieved, modified and then distributed. Indian Government is also taking initiatives and making policies related to ICT. This has strengthened India as a Software-driven ICT sector in the world. ICT is being presented as a potential tool to benefit women's empowerment. Therefore, several ICT projects [Ms. Beena, & Dr. Madhu Mathur, (2012)] established by the Indian Government with target audience as women.

## **2. Women and ICT**

In developing countries like India, even though women are playing more significant role in family they are still in traditional bounds. Since globalization is open up, the advances in ICT enable women to contribute their maximum efforts and provide opportunities for direct and interactive communication. Women who are with lower skills, illiteracy and lack of mobility can also use ICT to empower themselves.

Information and Communication Technologies can be used by everyone without any gender divide. So women can get the equal advantage when compared with men. All segments of female population get the benefits of the synergy of knowledge and ICT. ICT in convergence with many forms of communication potentially reached women who have not been reached by any media to empower women [MHRD].

ICT offer remarkable advantages in terms of easier communication, efficiency in information storage and retrieval. Hence, Women in urban area often use ICT to know information about education, research opportunities, career advancement, health, child care facilities and social system for working women [World Employment Report 2000].

Rural women have less access to ICT devices such as phones, laptops and Wi-Fi because of social norms. The price of access to ICT devices is also high. Government is promoting ICT policies to enable men and women to access and use ICT equally. Government of India initiated several policies such as scheme of Science and Technology for Women by Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), Technology Parks and exclusive Biotechnology Park for women at Chennai.

## **3. Factors affecting women empowerment**

To achieve sustainable development, women empowerment and their political, social, economic and health status are very important. Few factors that affect women empowerment along with ICT role are presented in this section.

### **Education**

Our country is on its path towards a knowledge based society, in which women's education is of much importance. Without the women's knowledge light our country never join in the developed nation's community. Hence, Education is the most dynamic factor of development. It is only the tool for realizing empowerment and human resource development. It enhances the chances of employment which in turn increases the economic empowerment to women. An economic well-being is closely linked to the family well-being. Education makes the individual conscientious, that help to perceive, interpret, criticize and finally transform their environment. It helps to acquire multitudes of skills that increase a person's confidence and her ability to shape life better.

According to the world Population Report "A mother's education is the single most important factor in keeping her family small and her children alive. Education is the first line of defense for ladies who face life threatening situations that traditional life style perpetuates. It encourages a way of control over personal destiny. It opens the door to choices that are not bound by tradition. With an education only the women's status steps beyond the confines of motherhood.

The right to education of women is one among the foremost important means of empowering so that women can participate fully in the development process with knowledge, skills and self-confidence. Thus women to respond to the opportunities and to the challenges. Hence, they can change their life circumstances. Education of women builds life skills for acquiring timely and relevant information.

Promotion of education of girls and women contributes to postponement of their age of marriage and the subsequent reduction in the size of their families [Shodhganga (2019)].

Basic education alone is not sufficient for women but skills oriented education is necessary. Therefore, they can equip themselves to take up challenges occur in their jobs and they can enjoy the economic independence. Hence, the education can be used as a tool to bridge the gender gap. To acquire skills oriented education ICT is necessary. ICT helps [Ms. Beena & Dr. Madhu Mathur (2012)] the women to get the information from around the world in a language they understand and in a medium that they would be comfortable with. ICT helps to understand new concepts easily through the audio and video aids. It also help non formal and adult women to acquire education.

### **Elimination of Gender Discrimination**

In all fields, gender discrimination should be avoided. Women should be given respect and status which they deserve in the society to reach their destiny. They should be provided with the opportunities to take active part in the decision making for the achievement of empowerment. ICT helps women to overcome the gender discrimination by providing more opportunities, capacity and understanding. For female entrepreneurs, Internet is a great enabler which creates opportunities to enter into the global market. ICT also provides opportunities to the small businesses and boost them to establish in higher level regardless of size, location. ICT support women's participation in the workforce by boosting their skills. Women are acquiring the skills by equipping with digital devices and providing training which helps them to teach their respective communities.

Women are using digital technologies less likely than men with a larger gap among youth and those over 45 years old. Countries which can leverage ICT to promote women empowerment, governments need to be well-informed about the usage of ICTs in practice and the barriers and challenges to access ICT should overcome [ICT Matter Gender Equality (2019)].

### **Steps for implementation of Women Development Programme and various Acts**

Programs related to vocational and entrepreneurship development should be organized to make women self-employed. These type of programs can increase the women efficiency and capabilities in decision making. Female feticide and infanticide should be checked by banning the sex determination of unborn child and other enactments related to marriage, divorce, adoption, succession, dowry and moral protection or protection against sexual harassment should be implemented for the emancipation of women. Various women empowerment schemes such as National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Ujjwala, STEP, Swadhar Greh, etc., are released by the Government of India.

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women [women development (2019)] main goal is to create an environment through economic and social policies for the development of women to realize their full potential. This policy makes women to get equal access in the decision making, health care, quality education and career. The main objective of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao [BetiBachaoBetiPadhao,(2019)] initiative is to prevent gender biased sex selective elimination. This scheme ensures the survival and protection of the girl child. This also ensures education and participation of the girl child.

### **Action for Organization of Awareness Programmes**

National and State level commissions for women, such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Development of women and children in Rural Areas (DWACRA), etc., should undertake programs such as awareness, women's rights, human rights, legal rights, education, etc., with all sincerity and honesty. While undertaking programs for women it should be implemented continuously by different ministries. There should be a strong interministerial coordination with the Department of Women and Child Development to successfully implement the undertaken programs for women. Education to girls should be treated as a primary need and awareness should be generated regarding this. The necessity of educating girls for the socio-economic development should be also promoted. Discrimination in employment particularly the wage differentiation between men and women should be eliminated. [Shodhganga chapter16, (2019)].



Participation of women in decision-making process at National, State and Local levels should be secured by the Government. This may imply the use of special measures for recruitment of women candidates. To provide equality and justice to the women law drafting technologies and enforcement mechanisms including police, judiciary and other need to be sensitized and strengthened.

### **Role of Mass Media**

The mass media plays an important role in changing the attitude among men and family members towards women. Various programs in the mass media related to the women's dignity enable men to treat women with respect. The mass media can effectively propagate about the women empowerment. Mass media can also implement various media campaigns to the dissemination of the gender equality. Media should focus on the success stories of established and successful women in spite of indecent representation of women. Media alone can promote the respect and dignity to women by avoiding the negative portrayal of women [Ananta Narayana, Tauffiqu Ahamad, (2016)].

Internet, one of the ICT applications has become mass media. It help the users to get knowledge about different aspects. Women can get knowledge from internet related to education, employment, health, nutrition, etc. Hence, Internet is playing a significant role in mass media. But many websites and social media are presenting women in indecent manner via pictures and offensive words. It should be eliminated and the dignity of women should be portrayed in a positive way. Therefore, the positive impact will be reflected in the society about women. Government should also take actions regarding this and necessary cyber policies should be done.

### **Change of Attitude of Women**

Women get empowerment with enhanced capabilities when their attitude changes. They should realize that the opportunities will not come easily and land in their hands. They have to create them and utilize them in an efficient way. They should fight for their rights and restore their position in the society. Women should thrive hard to enforce their rights to establish equal justice when compare with men in the society.

Women should empower themselves to change their status in the society by showing initiative and by grabbing opportunities. Women's empowerment is significant for the development of family, community and the nation. So, women empowerment should become a major concern of Government to involve women in the development process. To bring any awareness in the society, first women should be invoked. Once she is on the move, along with her the family moves later the community moves and finally the nation moves.

### **4. Women's Empowerment through ICT:**

Effective usage of ICTs contributes to enhance the capabilities of women in several ways to empower themselves. Women can enhance their capabilities by following below mentioned activities.

- Getting trained in the usage and design of computer applications like e-mail, word processing applications, etc., which builds marketing skills.
- These skills create opportunities for income generation.
- An individual independent income will give self-confidence and respect in the society.
- Many women who got the marketing skills are running businesses using computers even in the remote areas.
- By sitting in the home also women can run their business through internet and women who want to look after their family and child can do their office work from home.
- Women will get self-confidence through empowerment and they can travel more and can develop a wider network of contacts.
- Women who do not want to travel can also develop network of contacts using ICTs.
- ICTs strengthen their network through social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.

- Wider networking expose them to avail more economic opportunities.
- ICTs open new paths for getting educated through communication and information sharing.
- Several online courses offered from different universities around the world.
- With less cost, women can get educated in latest technologies through online courses.
- Education and information can increase women knowledge levels and enhance their capabilities.

ICTs proved as potential tools to enhance the capabilities of women and made them success in their work and business. Many successful stories are evidence to prove the potential of ICTs in the women empowerment.

#### **Successful case studies of women empowerment from India using ICT:**

ICTs are emerged as a powerful tool for women empowerment in a developing country like India. ICT sector has been a tremendous growth since late 1980s and the usage of ICTs expanded since 1990s. ICT has been using for development in India more than two decades and there are many good practices of ICTs for women's empowerment [Graduatewomen.org,(2019)]. Some of them are presented in this section.

- In Tamilnadu, Rural women's cooperatives are designed a website to sell products made by the rural women.
- Some of the Women are making a difference in the online e-commerce system. Swati Bhargava [Iamwire.com, (2019)] is the Chief Executive Officer and the Co-founder of CashKaro started her first online entrepreneur venture cashback site in UK. Later by spotting the huge potential in India, she started CashKaro in April 2013. The biggest challenge for her was to educate the Indian market about the concept of Cashback and affiliate marketing. She advices women entrepreneurs to be confident and determined on building a good business. She says that women should be focused in acquiring dreams, so as to win over any misconception people might hold about women. Then they can take the limit off and go forth.
- Gina Joseph, an art geek who took a break from her corporate career and accidentally became an entrepreneur. She started Zola, an online jewelry platform in India in 2014. For Zola the source jewelry comes from rural India. She empowered rural youth by providing opportunity to make jewelry using their traditional art and the rural youth were getting better salaries without any middlemen intervention. Gina noticed that rural artisans such as Pattachitra (palm leaf etching) artisans of Odisha selling their products for extremely lower prices because of middlemen intervention. Hence, to revive the tradition art she utilized the artisans. In Zola currently 10 Pattachitra artists and 20 women Dhokra (bronze casting techniques) artisans from odisha are working [Yourstory.com, (2019)].
- Anuradha Agarwal from a traditional baniya family in Rajasthan visited her hometown and realized that there was a growing insecurity among women of her age, mostly among housewives, due to a lack of English education. Lack of English education often led to low self-esteem, even while coping with the most routine day-to-day situations. She decided to break all the barriers and stereotypes and decided to set up her own startup from which the women can get English education using their regional language. Anuradha launched an Android application called 'Multibhashi' in December 2016, through which users can learn English through Hindi and Bengali languages. This application was the inspiration got from her interactive video modules postings her Facebook page. By seeing the response to that posting she decided to take a plunge into entrepreneurship. Since the application origin, the Multibhashi app has been modelled in 10 Indian languages and it has been downloaded by a million of users. On the other hand it also employs a large number of women, and provided them with an opportunity to earn a living [Yourstory.com, (2019)].

These few successful case studies presented in this section illustrate the potential of ICT. The use of ICT by women can broaden the scope of their activities. ICT played an important role in changing the concept of work and workplace related to women.

## **5. Conclusions**

Women empowerment increases the wealth of the nation. Several Women proved them as good entrepreneurs as they can balance their work life and family life. Today women are more willing to take up the activities which were considered preserved for men and they proved it. Women must be moulded properly with entrepreneurial skills and personality skills to meet the changes in trends, challenges to become competent in the global market and to strive towards excellence. ICT helps women to reach their goals and to sustain in the male dominated society.

Information and Communication Technologies removed the barriers of gender divide and enable women to get the equal advantage when compared with men. Urban and Rural women got the benefits of the synergy of knowledge and ICT. ICT in convergence with many forms of communication potentially reached women and made them socially, economically and politically strong. Factors such as education, gender discrimination, mass media, etc., affect women empowerment. Usage of ICTs in practice promoted women empowerment but the barriers to access ICTs should be overcome by the Government. ICT policies by the Government for women development can provide the opportunities to use ICTs even in the remote areas. The success stories of women entrepreneurs motivate the women who are lacking in education and skills. So that they can be educated and trained using ICT and become good entrepreneurs. Such women can give their contribution in the economic and social development of nation.

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## Women Empowerment through Self-Help Groups: An Empirical Study in Haveri District of Karnataka

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### Abstract

*The intervention of Micro Finance has brought tremendous changes in the life of woman at the grass root level. The Self Help Groups (SHGs) are the instrumental in empowering rural women with affordable banking, insurance and entrepreneurial approaches. The SHGs have greater vision for the well-being and empowerment of woman towards overall human development because of she has contributing half of the world's population by virtue of an accident of birth, perform two-third of the world's work, receives one-tenth of income and owns less than one-hundredth of property (UN Commission on status of Woman). The women participation in Self Help Groups have obviously created tremendous impact upon the life pattern and style of poor women and have empowered them at various levels not only as individuals but also as members of the family members of the community and the society as whole. They come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help. The more attractive scheme with less effort is Self Help Group (SHGs). It is a tool to remove poverty and improve the women entrepreneurship and financial support in India. The present study focused on socioeconomic conditions of SHGs members and impact of self-help groups on women empowerment in Haveri District of Karnataka. The two research questions (hypothesis) that are (I) Micro Finance creates Women Empowerment and (II) The SHGs are the best econometric tool for poverty alleviation and employment generation. Based on the analysis of women empowerment through self-help groups in Haveri district, the major findings of this study there is a positive impact of Self Help Groups on Women empowerment in Haveri District of Karnataka*

*Keywords: Women empowerment, self-help groups, human development, socio-economic problems*

### Introduction

The India is facing the socio-economic problems from several decades. It is considered as largest democratic country in the World, the country for youth, poverty, unemployment, abundant natural resources, rural, etc. The ruling Governments are struggling to destruct the vicious poverty circle and create guaranteed employment for all talents and needy people through their party manifestos. This will be achieved with respective measures like implementing policies, decentralization of administrative channel, and care for young talents and concentric on rural folk. This has lead time to reach the targeted goals with cent percent and sometime, it has loosed the objectives during plan periods. It is notified that the contribution of women is highly appreciated. India woman has strong vision that she can rule the state and/or she can become the cause for collapse of the state. However, she has brilliant skill to achieve the task in successful manner without any hurdles. Woman, in India, is considered as *Matru Devo Bhava* and has equal respect of God and the famous statements *Karyesu Dasi, Karunesu Manthri, Shayaneshu Rambha, Bhojyesu Mata* are the clear evidence for woman's dignity and respect from all generations and religions. On the other side, the group is being neglected due to gender issues, nature of work etc. by means of religions ways and customs even though, they have skill, talent, and suited personality but have been limited to only four walls of a home. Hence, she has brought under the tactical issues to bunch her all talents in a religious basket. This had led the minimal of economy progress during plan periods and some plans are brought to empower the women but they have ends without any fruitful results. But, in the present days, they have well organized and become necessary to the economy. Therefore, woman can lead her life without depending upon others, especially on men, and showcase her all tasks in the field.

The present generation having mindset those women also have equal respect and dignity as men and even though, in somewhere the women harassment cases are going hand by hand. This creates the

issue of their Empowerment and Freedom. The Federal Government has intension to empower their groups with policy measure and constitutional support. Now, they are empowered and have shown all successful results as They Can, They have utilized these rights through formation of groups, making federation/commissions at administrative level and having percentage of quota to participate in political picture. These all issues are the par to show her empowerment level. The efforts of Governmental and Non-Governmental setups like NABARD, RBI, GOI etc. are highly appreciated in empowering the women through Self Help Groups (SHGs). This has resulted the level of participation of women is increasing day by day due to increments in literacy rate, wider opportunity for woman, necessity of woman in solving home related aspects, reduction in gender discrimination, Government schemes towards woman, etc.

The Self Help Groups (SHGs) are considered as one of the most significant tools in participatory approach for the economic empowerment of women. It is an important institution for improving life of women on various social components. The basic objective of SHG is that it acts as the platform for members to provide space and support to each other. The SHGs comprises very poor people who do not have access to formal financial institutions. It enables its members to learn to cooperate and work in a group environment. Today, in India, Self Help Groups (SHGs) represent a unique approach to financial intermediation. This combines access to low-cost financial services with a process of self-management and development for the women who are SHG members. SHGs are formed and supported usually by Non- Governmental Organizations by Government agencies. The SHG are seen to confer many benefits, both economic and social. SHGs are enable women to grow their savings and access the credit which banks are increasingly willing to lend. The SHGs can also be community platform from which women become active in village affairs, stand for local election to take action to address social. In India before introduce this scheme for rural women were largely negligible. Now most significant emerging system called Self Help Group is a major breakthrough in improve lives of womenfolk and alleviating rural poverty. The Women participation in Self Help Groups have obviously created tremendous impact upon the life pattern and style of poor women and have empowered them at various levels not only as individuals but also as members of the family members of the community and the society as whole. They come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help. The more attractive scheme with less effort is Self Help Group (SHGs). It is a tool to remove poverty and improve the women entrepreneurship and financial support in India.

The SHGs have an in-built mechanism where emphasis has been given over capacity building of women through developing their dialoguing skills. An SHG functions through its regular meetings, where members perform transactional activities and discuss over different related issues. This discussion among the group members is the means through which they give voice to their needs and it proves to be a platform for addressing their social and economic problems and enlightening their inner selves as well. The Self-help Groups provide economic benefits in certain areas of production process by undertaking common action programmes, like cost-effective credit delivery system, generating a forum for collective, learning with rural people, promoting democratic culture, fostering an entrepreneurial culture, providing a firm base for dialogue and cooperation in programmes with other institutions, possessing credibility and power to ensure participation and helping to assess an individual members management capacity. The SHGs enhance the equality of status of women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life. The SHGs have inculcated a great confidence in the minds of rural women to succeed in their day to day life.

### **Significance of the Study**

As we know that the Women groups have become empowered in all cases. The question is that

- 1) Whether they are utilizing legalized empowerment right or not?
- 2) What are the barriers have developed in exercising their legal right?
- 3) Whether the Government has provided all amenities for their prosperous development or not?

- 4) How they are exercising their rights in the male dominated society?
- 5) What are the religious traditions and customs have bound their growing talent and skill?

This study elaborates the importance and performance of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in women empowerment. In the sample area, the operations of SHGs are in negligible manner and the members are not having awareness about the Government schemes and policies towards women empowerment. The creation of awareness towards Bank Linkages and Entrepreneurial activities is the main intension of the present study. This will certainly bring the changes in current activities and future aspirations in their rural area.

### Objective of the Study

The following are the objectives have been enacted for the present study:

- ✓ Impact of Self Help Groups on Women Empowerment in Haveri District of Karnataka.
- ✓ To study the level of women empowerment, to analyze the contribution of SHGs towards women empowerment, to investigate the impact of SHGs in the sample area.

### Research Methodology

The present study is empirical in nature and mainly based on primary data. The main sources of secondary data and pertinent literature include published and documented sources. For the purpose of present study, 50 women sample from Haveri District are selected. Of this, the Five Taluks (Shiggaon, Savanur, Hangal, Byadagi and Ranebennur) five villages are Bannikoppa, Karadagi, Akkivalli, Anur, and Belur were selected for this study, 10 samples from each village for this study. The sample respondents are selected mostly by adhering to the simple random sampling. In this study primary data were collected from directly respondents by pre-designed questionnaire. The simple percentages, averages and other relevant statistical techniques were adopted.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data are analyzed in the following lines. The Profile of the sample respondents in Haveri district are presented in Table - 1.

**Table-1: Profile of the Sample SHGs Members**

Age Group		Educational Status			Social Status		
Age Level	Frequency	Education	Frequency	Social Group	Frequency		
Up to 25	8 (16.00)	Illiterate	5 (10.00)	GM	8 (16.00)		
25 - 35	16 (32.00)	Primary	16 (32.00)	BC	26 (52.00)		
35 - 45	21 (42.00)	Secondary	27 (54.00)	SC	12 (24.00)		
Above 45	5 (10.00)	Higher	2 (4.00)	ST	4 (8.00)		
Total	50 (100.00)	Total	50 (100.00)	Total	50 (100.00)		
Occupational Level		Income			Savings		
Occupation	Frequency	Income (Rs)	Before	After	Savings (Rs)	Before	After
Agriculture	22 (44)	Less than 2500	6 (12)	2 (4)	Less than 500	39 (78)	8 (16)
Caste Based	7 (14)	2500 to 5000	25 (50)	10 (20)	500 to 1000	9 (18)	25 (50)
House Wife	10 (20)	5000 to 7500	15 (30)	29 (58)	1000 to 1500	2 (4)	13 (26)
Self-Employment	8 (16)	7500 to 10000	4 (8)	8 (16)	1500 to 2000	0 (0)	4 (8)
Others	3 (6)	Above 10000	0 (0)	1 (2)	Above 2000	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	50 (100)	Total	50 (100)	50 (100)	Total	50 (100)	50 (100)

Source: Field Survey – January 2019

From the Table – 1 shows the distribution of sample respondents by age. It is found that 32% of the respondents are in the age of 25 to 35 years followed by 42% respondents are in the age of 35-45 years, 16% respondents are in the age of less than 25 years and 10% in the above 45 years. The majority of women in SHG are found to be relatively between 25-45 years.

The distribution of sample respondents by their education observed that 10% of respondents are illiterates, 32% with primary education, 54% with above secondary education, and 4% with higher education.

The distribution of sample respondents their social status revealed that 52% of the respondents are drawn from backward caste followed by 24% scheduled caste, 16% socially advanced castes and 8% from scheduled tribes. Thus, most of the respondents are drawn from socially downtrodden communities.

The distribution of sample respondents by their occupation is observed that 44% of respondents are involved in agriculture followed by 14% are involved in caste based services, 20 % are involved house wives, 16 % per cent are involved self-employment and 6% are involved in other sources. Thus, the occupations of the most of the respondents are agriculture.

The distribution of sample respondents by monthly income observed that before joining in SHGs, 12% of respondents were got less than Rs. 2500 followed by 50% of respondents got between Rs. 2500 to Rs. 5000, 30% of respondents got between Rs. 5000 to Rs. 7500 and 8% of respondents got between Rs. 7500 to Rs 10,000. After joining in SHGs, 4% of respondents are getting monthly income between below Rs. 2500, followed by 20% of respondents are getting less than Rs. 2500 to Rs. 5,000, 74% of respondents are getting between Rs 5000 to Rs. 10000 and 2% of respondents are getting above Rs. 10000.

Thus the most of the respondents increased their income for month. The distribution of sample respondents by monthly savings observed that before joining in SHGs, 74.66% of respondents were got less than Rs. 500 followed by 18.66% of respondents got between Rs. 500 to Rs.1000 and 5.33% of respondents got between Rs. 1000 to Rs 1500. After joining in SHGs,15.33% of respondents are getting monthly savings between below Rs.500, followed by 50.66% of respondents are getting less than Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000, 26% of respondents are getting between Rs. 1000 to Rs. 1500 and 8% of respondents are getting between Rs. 1500 to Rs. 2000 in the study area. The impact of life of the sample SHGs members in Haveri District of Karnataka are presented in Table - 2.

**Table-2: Impact of Life of the Sample SHGs Members**

Reasons for Joining in Self Help Groups		Investment for Growing Money		Communication Skills	
Reasons	Frequency	Effects	Frequency	Skills	Frequency
For Family Support	18 (36.0)	Yes	88 (88.0)	Increased	28 (56.0)
For Increase Saving	11 (22.0)	No	12 (12.0)	Constant	22 (44.0)
For Getting Loan	6 (12.0)	Total	50 (100.0)	Total	50 (100.0)
For Business	10 (20.0)				
For Other Purpose	5 (10.0)				
Total	50 (100.0)				
Decision Making of Respondents		Self Confidence		Problem Solving Ability	
Decision	Frequency	Confidence	Frequency	Problems	Frequency
Strongly Agree	36 (72.0)	Strongly Agree	47 (94.0)	Strongly Agree	42 (84.0)
Agree	14 (28.0)	Agree	3 (6.0)	Agree	8 (16.0)
Total	50 (100.0)	Total	50 (100.0)	Total	50 (100.0)
Improvement in Economic Status		Improvement in Quality Life		Participation in Social Function	
Economic Status	Frequency	Quality of Life	Frequency	Social Function	Frequency
Strongly Agree	45 (90.0)	Strongly Agree	44 (88.0)	Strongly Agree	43 (86.0)
Agree	5 (10.0)	Agree	6 (12.0)	Agree	7 (14.0)
Total	50 (100.0)	Total	50 (100.0)	Total	50 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey – January 2019



From the Table-II refers to the distribution of sample respondents by reason for joining in self-help groups. It is observed that 36% of respondents for family support followed by 12% of respondents are for getting loans, 20% of respondents are for business purpose, 22% of respondents are for increasing savings and 10% of respondents are for other purpose. Thus, the most of the respondents said that for family support in the study area.

The distribution of sample respondents by investment for growing money in future, the observed that 88% of respondents are investing for growing money and 12% of respondents are not do investment for growing their money.

Most of the respondents are investment after getting their loan in various fields. The sample respondents by communication skills observed that 56% of respondents are increased their communication skill with the others, they will communicate with their mandal level officers and 44% of respondents are not increased their communication skill with their officers.

The members have shown the empowered sign that in decision making (72%), self-confidence (94%), problem solving (84%), and improvement in economics status (90%), quality of life (88%) and delegation in social functions/activities (86%).

Therefore, it is traced that the members should increase the level in case of participation in social activities which would be more benefit and best tool to access power to empower themselves. It has found that many families have facing some financing problem which given the meager effect on improvement in quality of life.

The SHG members learning from the past experiences are walking through the present are marching ahead for a bright future. The women empowerment through SHGs in Haveri District in Karnataka the major findings in the study justify the greater role played by the SHGs in increasing empowerment of women, by making them financially strong, as well as it helped them to save amount of money and invest it further development. It is also found that the SHGs created confidence for social, economic self-reliance among the members in two villages. It develops the awareness programmes and schemes, loan policies etc.

However there is a positive impact of Self Help Groups on Women empowerment in Andhra Pradesh. The present study reveals that the SHG members have empowered through microfinance activities. However, this can be traced in the tables that the level of participation and the status of the members in the family and society are increasing day by day. They have accessed information regarding the SHG activities and empowerment from peer groups like neighbors, women welfare department, banks and local governing bodies. These are have activity involved in the development of women status and their overall efforts towards bring them into the mainstream of the nation in order to build the prosperous and competitive nation by extending financial services through Microfinance Institutions and Banks. They are engaged themselves in self-employment activities like papad making, pickles making, dairy activities, agricultural activities etc. This has enhanced the improvement in their quality and standard life.

Finally, one can conclude with this study is that Micro Finance is the best tool for empowering women and which can be synergetic if exercised through Self Help Groups and also resulted in eradication of poverty and family problems which in turn to achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### **Suggestions**

- The members should maintain the discipline in the meetings as one of the prime personality development.
- The regular cooperation from their husband and his family is expected at all stages to make them empower and finally achieve the fruitfulness of SHG programme.

- The members should start formal banking services by involving and taking together of other colleagues. In this regard, the concerned authorities should involve in creating awareness among them.
- They should access some education from evening schools and adult education centers working in their villages.
- They should undertaking more and more entrepreneurial activities in large in order to avail the socioeconomic benefits.
- They should involve in social campaigns and other such programmes organized by Government and which creates social outreach in them.
- They should show the involvement in getting some other benefits offered by the Governments other than their SHG activities.

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## **Role of Cooperatives in the Empowerment of Women: A Study**

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### **Preamble**

Women empowerment includes empowerment within the family and empowerment in the society. Involvement of women in decision making, earning, sharing of basic needs and commanding respect for self is a pre-requisite to the empowerment of women in Indian society. Women are also required to participate actively in the process of development namely policy making, planning, implementing and evaluation along with their male counterpart. The raising social status of women, increasing educational opportunities, obtaining employment opportunities, sharing economic resources, raising of standard of living, active participation of women in governance and so on constitute the process of 'empowerment of women' in letter and spirit. Cooperation is a social movement designed for bringing about changes of a fundamental nature in the economy. Cooperation is associated with human beings in all walks of life since times immemorial. The co-operative movement in India has come a long way. The present paper is primarily based on an empirical study carried out in Karnataka State on the role of cooperatives in the empowerment of women.

### **Review of Literature**

Karnataka is one of the developing states of Indian Republic which has got a sizeable population of women. Several Central and State Government programmes are implemented in the state for the attainment of the goal of empowerment of women. Empowerment is an essential starting point and a continuing process for realizing the ideals of human liberation and freedom for all including the women. Empowerment of women is very much essentially to achieve sustainable development of the country in general and women in particular. The Government of Karnataka has realized the empowerment of women has multiple benefits not only for the environment but also for humanity as well. Hence several programmes have been implemented in the State in this direction.

Few researchers have assessed the state of educational, social, economic and political empowerment of women in India and abroad. However, quite a few studies which are distantly related with the main theme of the present study are briefly presented in this chapter. Prominent among them include- Chattopadhyaya (1929:03), Randive (1975:19), Heggade (1984:11), Mencher (1988:16), Gupta and Srinivasan (1993:08), Sethi (1994:20), Oxfam (1995:18), Biju (1996:02), Guru (1997:09), Gowda (1998:07), Chaudhary (1998:04), Haq (1998:10), Narasimhan (1999:17), England (2000:06), Kapur (2001:14), Kabeer (2001:12), Bhatia (2002:01), Kishor and Gupta (2004:15), Devi (2004:05), Singh (2005:21), Kamaraju (2006:13) and so on. There is not even a single study conducted by any researcher in Karnataka State on the role of cooperatives in the empowerment of women. Thus, the present study assumes great professional significance in letter and spirit.

### **Significance of the Study**

Providing women specific programmes and financial assistance assumes great significance in the present times in a developing state like Karnataka. Thus, women are required to play a pivotal role in

the process of management of cooperatives in order to make them more women friendly, justice friendly, accountable, competitive and competent in this age of competitiveness. The role of cooperatives in the empowerment of women with special reference to Karnataka State has not been adequately evaluated by the researchers. There are good number of anthropological, sociological, political and cultural investigations which are conducted with reference to the empowerment of women in India. The major deficiency observed in their works is lack of emphasis on the intervention of cooperatives for the empowerment of women or financial support for the development of women in Karnataka State as a whole. Not even a single investigation is conducted on the role of cooperatives in the empowerment of women with reference to Karnataka State. Hence, the problem “Women Empowerment through Co-operatives” is chosen for the present study.

### Objectives of the Study

With welfare and development of women in the cooperatives of the Karnataka State being the thrust area, the research proposes to:

1. Study the growth and development of cooperatives in Karnataka State over a period of time.
2. Index the socio-economic conditions of both members and non members of the cooperatives across various socio-economic categories.
3. Find out awareness among the women about the availability of various services for their empowerment.
4. Assess the effects of exposure to cooperative movement and access to financial resources in galvanizing women’s empowerment.
5. Examine the problems encountered by the women in the process of empowerment ; and
6. Suggest appropriate programmes and strategies for the empowerment of women in cooperatives.

### Research Design

The present study approached the problem through a systematic survey method which is very popular in the field of Social Science research including Economics and Co-operation. The major aim of the present study was to understand the role of co-operatives in the empowerment of women. Primary data were collected from about 480 respondents through structured, standardized and pre-tested interview schedules. The interview and questionnaire methods were adopted to collect primary data from the women respondents who were associated with both urban and rural co-operatives as members and beneficiaries. The entire study was exploratory in nature. Therefore, research methods were designed on the basis of flexibility, adaptability and ground realities.

**Table-1: Distribution of Study Areas and Sample**

No.	Area	Co-operative Societies	No. of Respondents
1	Hunsur Taluk	30 Societies	240
2	H.D. Kote Taluk	30 Societies	240
<b>Total</b>		<b>60 Societies</b>	<b>480</b>

### Statistical Analysis

Frequencies /descriptive, contingency coefficient (cross tabs), chi-square test, independent samples ‘t’ test, and factor analysis were carried out for the systematic statistical analysis of data.

### Limitations of the Study

The usual limitations of the survey method namely time, human inadequacies, resource inadequacies, recollection and communication were experienced by the researcher. It was practically not possible to contact all the functionaries and beneficiaries of cooperatives in Karnataka State due to lack of time. An exhaustive and intensive study was not carried out because of large numbers and practical constraints. Incidental sampling technique was followed in selecting the respondents since this method of selection also gives significantly correct results. Though much care has been taken to collect the data, the memory bias on the part of the respondent cannot be completely ruled out.

### **Findings of the Study**

The findings of the study are classified under four different heads, namely a) demographic features of the respondents, association of the respondents with financial institutions, attitude of respondents towards cooperatives and role of cooperatives in the empowerment of women.

- A majority of the respondents represented the age group of above 36 years (56.67%), of secondary level education (54.17%), agriculturists' category (51.25%) and monthly income group of less than Rs.5000/-. Even number of respondents (25%) were chosen from forward communities, backward communities, Dalit communities and minorities communities respectively.

### **Association of Respondents with the Financial Institutions**

- A majority of the respondents among forward women (56.67%) have stated that they were associated with the nationalize banks as beneficiaries while a majority of the backward women (61.67%), Dalit women (60.0%) and minorities' women have stated that they were not associated with the nationalized banks which are not functioning in the study areas of Mysore district.
- A majority of the respondents representing forward women (60.0%), backward women (56.67%) and Dalit women (56.67%) have stated that they were associated with the regional rural banks which were available to the women for necessary credit support.
- All the respondents representing forward women (100%), backward women (100%), Dalit women (100%) and minority women have stated that they were associated with the cooperatives which were available to them for necessary credit support.
- All the respondents representing forward women (100%), backward women (100%), Dalit women (100%) and minority women have stated that they were associated with the self-help groups which were available to them for necessary credit support.
- A majority of the respondents representing forward women (65.0%), backward women (66.67%), Dalit women (68.33%) and minority women (93.33%) have stated that they were not associated with the private money lenders in the study area.

### **Attitude of the Respondents towards Cooperatives**

- A majority of the respondents (90.0%) have stated that cooperatives served the rural poor and needy in the present times.
- A majority of the respondents (79.17%) have stated that cooperatives catered to the developmental needs of women in the present times.
- A majority of the respondents (82.50%) have stated that cooperatives were the alternatives to national banks in the present times.
- A majority of the respondents (74.17%) have stated that cooperatives were capable of providing micro level financial support for community development in the present times.
- A majority of the respondents (67.50%) have stated that cooperatives recognized the need for cultivating good relationship with the customers in the present times.
- A majority of the respondents (71.67%) have stated that cooperative services are not designed in consultation with the beneficiaries in the present times.
- A majority of the respondents (68.33%) have stated that cooperatives did not conduct the field work to assess the needs of the customers.
- A majority of the respondents (54.17%) have stated that cooperatives were managed by work oriented officials in the present times.
- A majority of the respondents (63.33%) have stated that cooperatives delivered the services on the basis of corporate social responsibility in the present times.

- A majority of the respondents (57.08%) have stated that cooperatives were not well equipped with sufficient staff and infrastructural facilities.

#### **Role of Cooperatives in the Empowerment of Women**

- A majority of the respondents (58.75%) have stated that cooperatives did not enable the women beneficiaries to develop civic responsibility.
- A majority of the respondents (61.25%) have stated that cooperatives did not enable the women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of gender equity and justice.
- A majority of the respondents (65.42%) have stated that cooperatives enabled the women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of human rights protection.
- A majority of the respondents (60.42%) have stated that cooperatives did not enable the women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of social harmony and unity.
- A majority of the respondents (63.75%) have stated that cooperatives did not enable the women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of environment protection.
- A majority of the respondents (55.83%) have stated that cooperatives did not enable the women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of cultural promotion.
- A majority of the respondents (59.17%) have stated that cooperatives enabled the women beneficiaries to achieve the goal of community development.
- A majority of the respondents (66.25%) have stated that cooperatives did not enable the women beneficiaries to fight against the oppressive forces in the society.
- A majority of the respondents (60.83%) have stated that cooperatives enabled the women beneficiaries to adopt the scientific innovations and technological advancements.
- A majority of the respondents (66.67%) have stated that cooperatives did not enable the women beneficiaries to develop entrepreneurship in the society.
- A majority of the respondents (69.17%) have stated that cooperatives did not enable the women beneficiaries to develop personality in the society.

#### **Implications of the study**

The following suggestions are made with a view to improve the process of management of cooperatives and role of cooperatives in the empowerment of women in the modern society.

#### **Management Related Suggestions**

- The cooperatives should have the state of the art infrastructural facilities in order to rise to the occasion in the age of economic liberalization.
- The cooperatives should have adequate skilled and competent manpower in the rural areas.
- The cooperatives should conduct systematic customer research in order to find out their needs and demands in the changing marketing environment.
- The cooperatives should deliver customer-friendly services in order to retain the existing customers and win over new customers in the age of challenging banking business.
- The cooperatives should facilitate quick delivery of services in order to win over the confidence of the customers who matter most in the present times.
- The cooperatives should develop the entrepreneurship of the beneficiaries after delivery of services in order to improve their problem-solving capacity and productivity in the rural areas.

#### **Empowerment of Women Related Suggestions**

- The cooperatives should conduct field survey and identify deserving women beneficiaries for the purpose of providing financial assistance.

- The cooperatives should identify the poorest of the poor among women and cater to their developmental needs.
- The cooperatives should recognize the need for cultivating good relationship with the customers.
- The cooperatives should design the development projects in consultation with the beneficiaries.
- The cooperatives should give proper orientation to the office-bearers, members and officials about the empowerment of women.
- The cooperatives should deliver the services on the basis of corporate social responsibility.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study is an attempt to understand the role of cooperatives in the empowerment of women at the grassroots level in a developing state like Karnataka. The empirical study was confined to Mysore district of Karnataka state in order to facilitate in depth analysis of the existing state of affairs. The future generation of researchers can concentrate on cooperatives and educational empowerment of women, cooperatives and social empowerment of women, cooperatives and economic empowerment of women, cooperatives and political empowerment of women, cooperatives and personality development of women, cooperatives and leadership development of women, cooperatives and entrepreneurship development of women, cooperatives and gender justice, cooperatives and social transformation, cooperatives and economic development, cooperatives and human rights protection, cooperatives and environment protection and cooperatives and social responsibility which are broadly associated with the processes of inclusive development and integrated development in Karnataka and Indian Republic. The role of educational institutions, media organizations and NGOs can also be studied exclusively with reference to cooperation management in modern society.

### **Conclusion**

The importance of empowerment of women forming the core of national development strategies is increasingly recognized all over the globe. Cooperatives are indeed effective instruments of development at the grassroots level. The challenge facing the policy makers today is how to strengthen the foundations of the cooperatives, widen the reach of cooperatives, how to make cooperatives accessible to women and weaker sections and how to empower the women in every respect. So long as the cooperative system remains divorced from the overall objectives of integrated national development, the goal of empowerment of women remains unfulfilled. The future agenda for the policy makers, administrators and other professionals at the grassroots level must deal with expansion of cooperatives, manpower development, resource mobilization, improving the delivery system, implementation of development programmes, involvement of women and weaker sections in the implementation of programmes and evaluation of the role of cooperatives should also be addressed. The Government of India, State Government of Karnataka, Reserve Bank of India, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Central Cooperative Bank, National Centre for Cooperative Education, National Council for Cooperative Training, Apex Bank at the State Level, Cooperatives and other agencies have to work in close collaboration toward designing cooperative management in general and delivering women empowerment oriented programmes in particular.

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## Empowering Women through Art of Weaving: A Case of Karen Tribe Woman

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### ABSTRACT

*Women is the another form of Goddess Annapurna, in today's scenario she plays several role from the housewife to the warrior in the battlefield; she is enriched with multifaceted talent. The proposed study highlighted the issues of woman belongs to Karen Tribe migrated from South-Eastern Myanmar to Thailand due to political insurgency in his own country, now they are extruded by the ruling government and the reason behind it that they are outsiders because they are arising their voice for their own rights. The subject is 85 years old woman called 'Mima' in spite of it she is looking after her family which reflects the power of the woman as entrepreneur at such tender age. Daughters Rising, non-profit organisation supports such migrated women. RISE, sister concern of it empowering Karen Tribal women which deals in hand-made ethical handbags collection of Italian leather and tribal textile, designed by Karen artisans in their hamlet. The subject follows the message of Sri Krishna about the Karma in Shrimad Bhagvat Geeta and delivers the message to follow it. The study is a mere attempt to express the feelings and emotions of the artisan migrated from their native place. The study pays gratitude to such empowered woman which empowers others and is still involved in creative work, which set an example for others to follow them. The work is original and innovative and the message behind it to inspire the human beings that 'Work is Worship' and it is another form of following the instructions of the Almighty and serving them.*

*Keywords: Empowering, Entrepreneur Karen Tribe, Weaving, Woman*

### INTRODUCTION

According to World Bank 2015 report there were **250 million** international migrants in the world today, almost 50% of them are females. 25 million persons displaced internally by conflicts more than 70% are women and children. **ILO** reports that some 0.20 million to 0.25 million women and children are trafficked annually in South East Asia and those more than a million children are affected globally every year (**ILO, 2002**). It reflects that displaced female migrants faced the problems of gender abuse and trafficking. In most of the cases it is found that women migrated due to internal conflicts, in the destination country they work so that by earning money they can uplift the status of their family and save the future of their children but ironically they fall in whoring business.

**'Migration can be both cause and a consequence of female empowerment'- Graeme Hugo**

### KAREN HILL TRIBE

Karen is an Anglicisation of the Burmese word "Kayin". The word which was originally a derogatory term used for Non-Buddhist ethnic groups comes from Mon language; it means vanished civilisation. The Karen hill tribe people are ethnic group resides in South Eastern part of Myanmar. The Karen tribe mostly speaks Sino Tibetan language consists of three mutually co intelligible branches; **Sgaw**, **Pwo** and **Pao**. Lowland **Pwo** speaking Karen tend to be more orthodox Buddhist whereas Highland **Sgaw** speaking Karens tend to be heterodox Buddhist who prefers strong Animist beliefs and while approximately 15% are Christians. Pwo Karens are found mainly in Kayin and Mon states and in Yangon, Bao and Tanintharyi regions of Myanmar. The Karen makes up approximately **7%** of the total Burmese population with approximately **5 million** people.

## **LIFE OF KAREN TRIBE IN MYANMAR**

Myanmar (Burma) got its independence in 1948; civil war soon broke out between the government and ethnic groups. The Karen and other ethnic minority groups they wanted the rights to govern their own states. In 2011 military held new election for “*discipline flourishing democracy*”. The transition of military regime to military controlled government has made no changes in the life of ethnic minority groups. Burmese army has launched a massive offensive against the ethnic minority groups; Shan, Mon, Karenni, Arkanese, Rohingya and Karen people and called it ‘**ethnic cleansing**’. Due to this conflict Karen people migrated to different parts of the world. According to UNHCR and Thai Government conducted a verification exercise in each 9 refugee camps and accounted **104,149** verified Myanmar refugees as on 31 July 2016.

## **SUBJECT**

She is 85 years old but still young, mostly people called her **MIMA** (Burmese Word for Women), belongs to Pwo Karen (Buddhist Community). She migrated from Myanmar in 2013. I named her Zarni; one who is blessed with inner and outer beauty. I met her on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015 by the help of Donna Brahamhall she has posted the same picture on her blog Haute Culture. Mima is an active member of DAUGHTER RISING and working for its sister concern RISE.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The proposed study highlighted the pain of migration which reflects through subject facial expression but in spite of it she is working for the betterment of their family and setting an example besides other women.

## **NEED & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The subject used the migration pain as weapon and makes her strong; she has joined the hands with Daughters Rising as an active volunteer. The mission of Daughters Rising is, ‘*to empower at risk girls through education to end trafficking and exploitation in their communities and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty*’. Daughters Rising, sister concern RISE has founded with the message ‘**By Women For Women**’ deals in empowering women through weaving and in this agitation our subject is playing an active role as a **master trainer**, by providing training to the upcoming generation. Our subject promotes traditional Karen weaving art with a fusion of Italian leather focused designs appealing primarily to European and US fashion lovers.

The significance of the study is to get inspiration from such non-profit social organisation and such idea will be implemented by the international agencies so that migrant female cannot be trafficked and abused. It provides suggestions to the concerned government so that they will implement the programs effectively for the welfare of the migratory.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The review of literature based on the selected studies directly related to the proposed study. Some of the selected studies along with their findings are discussed as:

**Leela Gulati (1997)**, ‘Asian Women in International Migration With Special Reference to Domestic Work and Entertainment’. The study focussed on women migration. Most of the migrant women are not qualified professionals but are domestic workers and entertainers. The study discussed the demand and supply factors of the female labour in the international market. In the latter half, the problem faced by migrant women workers in context to domestic workers was discussed. The major complaints among the overseas women workers were maltreatment and physical abuse for Philippines 34.90% whereas among Sri Lankan women 20.60%, salary related abuses in case of Philippines women 21.20% whereas for Sri Lankan women 31.70% and work related and other problems 25.90% for Philippines and for Sri Lankan women 34.40%. The study in the closing paragraph discussed need for protection of women from the illegal migration through unauthorised channels. The illegal workers are particularly vulnerable to various abuses work and contract related no less than physical, both employers and agents take full advantage of their vulnerability as illegal workers. The diplomatic officials keep tracking of women; nationals, illegal or legal their respective jurisdiction and extend to them the necessary protection.

**Nitya Rao and Kumar Rana (1997)**, 'Women's Labour and Migration: The Case of Santhals'. The study highlights the issue of Santhals migration in order to earn for their livelihood. The study focussed on three villages in Bardhaman district. Santhal labour is the backbone of agriculture in Bardhaman. The labour larger group migrated from Dumka during planting and harvesting seasons. Male migrated for longer periods of time to distant locations mainly to road building and other constructional sites in north and northeast India. The study discussed the consequences of migration in terms of negative impacts on schooling and healthcare, poorer living and working conditions and constant fear of sexual abuse and strangers.

**Biswajit Ghosh (2014)**, 'Vulnerability Forced Migration and Trafficking in Children and Women'. The study highlighted the issue related to trafficking in children and women. In order to provide jobs to the tribal communities, large number of women and children move to distant places and later on faced exploitation. The findings of the study is related with 12 sick and closed tea gardens in Jalpaiguri district, demonstrate the close link between vulnerability, migration and trafficking in children and women. Research work was carried out during May to July 2011, on the basis of review of rural affairs; children migrated and children missed by sex from 12 tea gardens in 2010 were 3,589 children migrated to different parts of country; 13 to Saudi Arabia and 267 to Bhutan and children missing were 317. The study reported that at the rate of 9 children on an average trafficked every year from each of 75 odd sick tea gardens in Jalpaiguri, the volume from the district may alone be 675. This exposes the limits of legal framework. Poverty, unemployment, poor wages, large family, lack of awareness and illiteracy are the major causes of trafficking on the basis of view local key informants. The study concluded that the child trafficking is increasing day by day it is a grave issue and we have to find out the plausible solution to this problem so that the vulnerabilities of children and women can be minimise.

**Weiss M. Anita Review By Cherukuri Suvarn(2003)**, 'Wall Within Walls: Life Histories of Working Women in the Old City of Lahore'. Laila, Farida, Hasina and Chand Bibi these were Weiss's respondents through their lives she provides a comprehensive account of what women in the walled city do?

Weiss found that women in the walled city are engaged in various economic activities such as; sewing, embroidering, teaching, shoe-making, jewellery designing, hairdressing and making parandas for braiding hair. Weiss reflected that women wanted change in various ways she supported for establishing small credit societies for women as fruitful alternatives like SEWA in India.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The major objective is to study empowering women through art of weaving. The message delivered by our subject as the pioneer for other migratory women.

Specific objectives of the proposed study are:

- i.** To study major drivers of female migration and problems faced by them
- ii.** To study how art of weaving empower migrant women
- iii.** To study association of weaving art with purpose
- iv.** To study relationship between Karen culture preservation and art of weaving.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research Methodology is the systematic procedure by which the research starts from the identification of the problem to its final conclusion. The method of research provides tool and techniques by which the research problem is undertaken.

### **AREA OF THE STUDY**

The area of proposed study is **Chai Lai Orchid**, Eco Lodge located in Mae Wang, one hour from Chiang Mai City in North Thailand which is the prime location of Female Karen Refugees.

## RESPONDENT

The major respondent of the study ‘Subject’ around which the proposed study revolves. Apart of it information collected from active members of Daughter Rising and its sister concern RISE.

## DATA COLLECTION & TOOLS

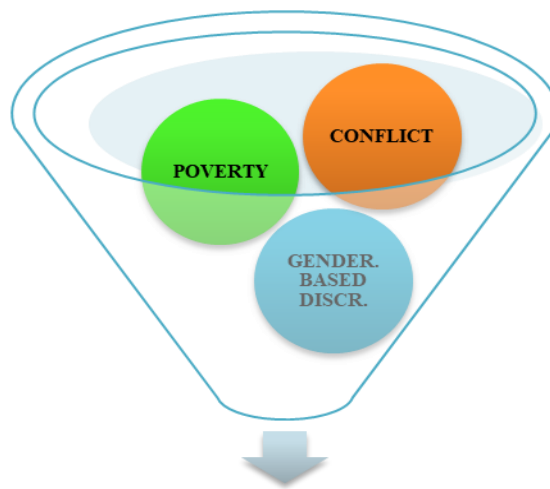
The proposed study collected primary as well as secondary data for the discussion. The primary data collected by investigator through personal interview by the help of mediator through unstructured questions from the subject. Apart of it participant observation and group discussion methods used for collecting additional information through active members of Daughter Rising and RISE sister concern.

*“RISE aspire empower mothers to empowers their children”.*

## DISCUSSIONS

Some of the major findings of the study can be discussed under following points:

- Major Drivers of female migration are shown as



**Fig.1. Female Migration Funnel**

- Chai Lai Orchid is an amazing project started in 2012 by Alexa Tkwapa and our subject as an active volunteer, trained Karen and Kayen refugees in art of weaving. Design ideas into different scales and colour ways is given by our subject as team leader, international design and ideas is given by RISE founder Allie Fitt and Daughters Rising Alexa Tkwapa.
- RISE has conducted more than 48 workshops and named it **Empowerment Workshops** based on the themes:
  - Empowering Women through Weaving (Master Trainer- Subject)
  - Women’s Health and Understanding of Disease Transmission
  - Human and Migrant Worker’s Rights
  - Warnings from dangers of trafficking
  - Gender Equality
  - Self Defence

Our subject trains young girls and women from surrounding ethnic minority villages in the art of weaving and informs girls of their human rights, think independently, recognise potential threats and inspire the next generation young women to believe in themselves and achieve their goals.

RISE sister concern of Daughters Rising promotes ethical handbags incorporated Karen women own hand made textiles. It was our subject idea and concept supported by Allie’s which comes true in form of ethical handbags.

## **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

International agencies should give directions to the Thai Government to safeguard the interest of the women; sexual harassment, trafficking, exploitation and other malpractices. A striking feature of most unorganised sector employment is that workers are employed largely through unorganised contractors or subcontractors (Sankaran Kamala and Roop Madhav, 2011).

The most suitable suggestions and recommendations in context to improvement of the employment status of migrated women are:

- Vocational and Professional Training courses run by organisation like Daughters Rising should be financially supported in order to make migrated women as skilled labour
- Minimum Wages Act should be implemented in this sector and women also get equal wages as men are getting
- Thai Government should financially support such Training Centre so that they provide training (6-12 Months) programs to the female artisans and after that course they can get certificate, toolkit as well as financial help from the Government so that they can start their own work.
- International agencies along with concerned Government should recognise the problem of women workers working in informal sector and fulfil their basic amenities.
- Women's grievance cell should be set up in every refugee camps, there will be the in charge in every refugee camps that seek out the female problem and take speedy action in favour of the victim.
- UNHCR should pass budget that will be allocated for running welfare schemes for women working in these refugee camps.
- Thai Government (Art and Craft Board) should support the migrated women and provide them platform to perform their skills on national and international platforms.
- International agencies should support existing government so that they can start pension schemes for the women artisans in this way their future will be safe.
- Thai Government should strictly follow 'The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place' so that the culprit learns the lesson from the action taken against them.
- Following sensing mechanisms, conducting time to time surveys in finding out the incidence of sexual harassment on migrated women. The existing government should bring necessary changes time to time regarding Sexual Harassment Policy.

## **CONCLUSION**

The subject of the study is safeguarding the migrant women from the evils of the society by empowering them through art of weaving. The study exaggerated the facts very nicely related to migrated women in these camps and discusses serious issues related to migration. International agencies should help such women and organisation supporting such migrated women, by providing them financial assistance and helping them by all ways. We the people also support such woman and their organisation by donating money, sponsoring child education and by purchasing and promoting such products made by them. In this we can little- bit contributes in uplifting their socio-economic status in this derrick world. Helping such depressed ones means following the divine path and in this way we minimise our evils.

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## Women Empowerment through Agriculture and Allied Activities

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### Abstract

*The term 'empowerment' is frequently heard today all over the world. Entrepreneurship is a tool of empowerment and serves a boon for poor women in India. The emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over a period, especially in the 1990s. The last decade has seen a growing importance of the term 'empowerment'. Rural women, who continue about 50% of total population, play an active role in all sphere of economic life and contribute richly towards national income. Women comprise only 13.76% of the total entrepreneur i.e. 8.05 million out of 58.5 million. Total business owned by females provides employment to 13.45 million people. Women empowerment can be done by entrepreneurship through agriculture and allied activities like dairy activities, sericulture, aquaculture, food processing, farm-tourism, etc. Of the major rural enterprises, dairy enterprise has been regarded as an important instrument of economic and social change to supplement the income and employment to the rural sector in general and rural women in particular. The rural women are having basic indigenous knowledge, skill, potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise. Now, what the need is knowledge regarding accessibility to loans, various funding agencies procedure regarding certification, awareness on government welfare programmes, motivation, technical skill and support from family, government and other organization. Empowering the rural women gives many benefits to them in form of rising economic benefits, self worth, and self-confidence.*

*Keywords: Agriculture, Allied sectors, Entrepreneurship, Rural women, Women empowerment*

### Introduction

The term 'empowerment' is frequently heard today all over the world. It is clearly connected to the word 'Power'. The term 'power' in turn connotes control. In the context of human society, it means control over resources. The resources could be material such as natural resources, financial resources and human resources such as skills, labour, or intellectual resources including information, ideas etc. Entrepreneurship is a tool of empowerment and serves a boon for poor women in India and the emergence of women entrepreneurs and their contribution to the national economy is quite visible in India. The number of women entrepreneurs has grown over a period, especially in the 1990s.

Women's entrepreneurship needs to be studied for two main reasons: 1. Women entrepreneurship has been recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. 2. The topic of women in entrepreneurship has been largely neglected both, in society in general and in the social science particular. They can create new jobs for themselves and others, also by being different. They provide society with different solutions like management, organization and solutions to business problems as well as the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities. The last decade has seen a growing importance of the term 'empowerment'. While term has been used for the poor and the deprived groups, it has now been used even more extensively with regard to women's programmes. As a matter of fact, most state governments now consider it desirable to offer women's empowerment programmes in order to alleviate poverty and to bring about women's development. Women's empowerment may be defined as a bottom-up process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it.



**Definition**

Women's empowerment may be defined as a bottom-up process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it.

**Women Entrepreneurship in India**

The origin of the basic word "entrepreneurship" is from a French word "Entree" means "to enter" and "Prendre" means "to take" and in general sense applies to any person trying a new opportunity or starting a new project. The women entrepreneurs need to be lauded for their increased use of modern technology, finding a niche in the export market, creating a sizable employment for others, increased investments and setting the trend for other women entrepreneurs in the organized sectors. Indian women business owners are changing the face of the present businesses, both figuratively and literally.

**Table-1: State wise trend of women participation in agricultural and non-agricultural activities**

State	Total Female Workers	Percent of Female worker in agriculture activities	Percent of Female worker in Non-agriculture activities
Himachal Pradesh	630521	82.47	17.53
Manipur	229137	55.59	44.41
Nagaland	279166	82.66	17.34
Andhra Pradesh	9555381	73.44	26.56
Rajasthan	4595570	81.07	18.93
Madhya Pradesh	5046293	79.45	20.55
Karnataka	5467914	61.11	38.89
Tamil Nadu	7454473	59.3	40.7
Maharashtra	10331758	74.53	25.47
Gujarat	3544508	57.12	42.88
Orissa	1584529	60.47	39.53
Tripura	170233	52.78	47.22
Assam	1265065	42.47	57.53
Punjab	1409704	24.51	75.49
Bihar	3541857	83.56	16.44
West Bengal	3528612	32.62	67.38
Uttar Pradesh	4999389	65.87	34.13
Kerala	1776280	21.27	78.73

Pune, Maharashtra

Ghosh and Ghosh (2014)

**Table-2: State wise distribution of small-scale industrial units owned by women entrepreneurs in 2015-16**

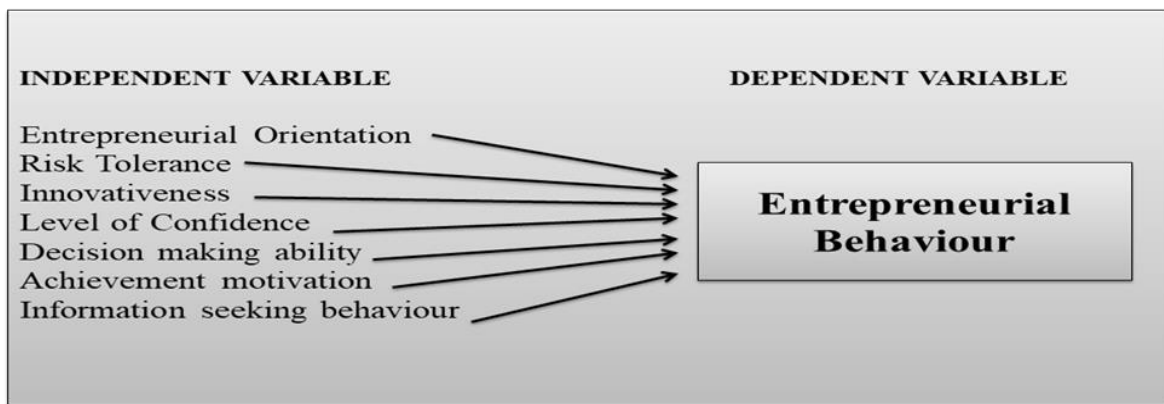
State/UTs	No. of SSI Units	Percentage to total	State/UTs	No. of SSI Units	Percentage to total
Kerala	139225	13.09	Jharkhand	7865	0.74
Tamil Nadu	129808	12.2	Jammu and Kashmir	5742	0.54
Karnataka	103169	9.7	Himachal Pradesh	3722	0.35
Maharashtra	100670	9.46	Mizoram	3700	0.35
Andhra Pradesh	77166	7.25	Meghalaya	3580	0.34
Uttar Pradesh	72667	6.83	Chandigarh	2243	0.21
West Bengal	69625	6.55	Pondicherry	1065	0.1
Madhya Pradesh	68823	6.47	Tripura	863	0.08
Gujarat	53703	5.05	Goa	810	0.08
Bihar	49443	4.65	Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagarhaveli	213	0.02

*Women Empowerment*

Orissa	38233	3.59	Nagaland	179	0.02
Rajasthan	36371	3.42	Arunachal Pradesh	150	0.01
Punjab	29068	2.73	Andaman and Nicobar Island	110	0.01
Delhi	14383	1.35	Sikkim	98	0.01
Assam	11757	1.11	Lakshadweep	67	0.01
Manipur	10745	1.01	Haryana	9620	0.9
Chhattisgarh	10034	0.94	Uttaranchal	8804	0.83
All India			10,63,721		

Chincholi, Karnataka Mamanshetty (2016)

**Determinants of Women Empowerment**



Tumkur, Karnataka Paramshivaiah and Puttaswamy (2018)

Fig-2: Model of entrepreneurial behaviour of rural women farmers

**Women Empowerment through Agriculture**

The agriculture is the economic face of any country. It is important for the prosperity and growth of the country. The aim is to build the country with the development potential to give the value of growth to the Indian economy. Agriculture is the main contributor to national income and it is the primary source of saving and capital formation, which influences the economic growth of any economy. Women are associated with agriculture sectors are facing the problems of poverty and exploitation which is affecting the total productivity of the Indian agriculture. Yet, women all over the world continue to work hard to make a difference to alter their lives and the lives for others.

**Table-3: Women entrepreneurs in agriculture**

Dimensions	Parameters
Women status in the Indian agriculture sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor</li> <li>• Underpaid</li> <li>• Silent and exploited</li> <li>• Uneducated and unskilled</li> </ul>
The degree of financial freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit facilities not available</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge to get finance</li> </ul>
Family orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total domestic burden</li> <li>• Lower status</li> </ul>
Consideration and government support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government and agricultural policies</li> <li>• Protection and consultation</li> </ul>

Jodhpur, Rajasthan Mathur (2011)

**Table-4: State wise distribution of area operated by women in 2015-16** (Area in '000ha.)

State	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	Total
Andhra Pradesh	754	688	499	211	47	2199
Arunachal Pradesh	2	4	9	16	7	38
Assam	12	16	18	6	Neg.	52
Bihar	556	150	136	47	4	893
Chhattisgarh	154	144	135	91	30	554
Goa	6	3	2	2	2	15
Gujarat	184	386	492	436	90	1588
Haryana	57	65	113	154	101	490
Himachal Pradesh	20	11	9	5	2	47
Jharkhand	91	48	52	33	14	238
Karnataka	448	588	546	398	122	2102
Kerala	169	30	16	5	1	221
Madhya Pradesh	316	436	408	299	50	1509
Maharashtra	582	916	819	455	113	2885
Manipur	3	3	3	Neg.	0	9
Mizoram	4	3	3	1	Neg.	11
Nagaland	2	8	15	26	4	55
Odisha	82	49	28	9	1	169
Punjab	3	6	13	15	6	43
Rajasthan	177	227	325	549	377	1655
Sikkim	1	1	1	1	Neg.	4
Tamil Nadu	436	274	194	101	32	1037
Telangana	419	467	305	124	22	1337
Tripura	19	6	4	Neg.	0	29
Uttar Pradesh	542	233	157	71	8	1011
Uttarakhand	37	19	10	4	Neg.	70
West Bengal	83	14	5	1	0	103
All India	5214	4813	4353	3078	1035	18493

Source: Agricultural Census, 2015-16

**Women Empowerment through Dairy Activity**

Women represent one-half of the total world's population. They contribute one third of the work, which is performed in the world, receive only one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one hundredth of the world's property. Dairying is an important entrepreneurial activity for the rural women especially of small and marginal landholding. Entrepreneurial characteristics possessed by the dairy entrepreneurs play an important role in the success of dairy enterprise. Rural women were found to devote 90 percent of labour force in livestock farming. About 75 million women as against 15 million men are engaged in dairying in India.

**Table-4: Involvement of rural women in dairy practices (N=300)**

Sr. No.	Practices	Yes	No	Mean score	Rank
<b>1</b>	<b>Feeding and watering</b>				
	(a) Taking animals for grazing	280(93.3)	20(6.7)	1.93	III
	(b) Fodder collection	275(91.7)	25(8.3)	1.92	IV
	(c) Chaffing the fodder	300(100.0)	-	2.00	I
	(d) Mixing green fodder with roughage	300(100.0)	-	2.00	I
	(e) Feeding the animals	295(98.3)	5(1.7)	1.98	II
	(f) Storage of feed and fodder	300(100.0)	-	2.00	I
	(g) Watering the animals	300(100.0)	-	2.00	I

<b>2</b>	<b>Management</b>				
	(a) Construction of cattle shed	25(8.3)	275(91.7)	1.08	IV
	(b) Cleaning of animal sheds	290(96.7)	10(3.3)	1.97	I
	(c) Washing and grooming of animals	290(96.7)	10(3.3)	1.97	I
	(d) Milking	280(93.3)	20(6.7)	1.93	II
	(e) Disposal of cow dung	280(93.3)	20(6.7)	1.93	II
	(f) Maintaining farm and dairy records	35(11.7)	265(88.3)	1.12	III
<b>3</b>	<b>Breeding</b>				
	(a) Taking animals for artificial insemination	-	300(100.0)	1.00	II
	(b) Taking animals for natural service	2(0.7)	298(99.3)	1.01	I
	(c) Taking animals for pregnancy diagnosis	2(0.7)	298(99.3)	1.01	I
	(d) Arranging material during parturition		300(100.0)	1.00	II
	(e) Calling veterinarian during dystocia		300(100.0)	1.00	II
<b>4</b>	<b>Health care</b>				
	(a) Care of sick animals	10(3.3)	290(96.7)	1.03	III
	(b) Care of pregnant animals	100(33.3)	200(66.7)	1.33	I
	(c) Taking animals for treatment	5(1.7)	295(98.3)	1.07	II
	(d) Vaccination/ Medication	5(1.7)	295(98.3)	1.07	II
<b>5</b>	<b>Processing and marketing</b>				
	(a) Processing of livestock products	2(0.7)	290(99.3)	1.01	IV
	(b) Sale of milk and milk products	150(50.0)	150(50.0)	1.50	I
	(c) Sale and purchase animals	10(3.3)	290(96.7)	1.03	III

Kanpur, U.P.

Mishra *et al.* (2017)

### Women Empowerment through Sericulture

Employment of rural women has become an important issue in the aftermath of economic reforms in the country. As income and employment opportunities in agriculture are becoming increasingly uncertain due to persons migrating from rural areas in search of better income opportunities in urban areas, and escalation of cost of critical inputs in recent years, allied activities like sericulture offer sustainable income and employment for rural women through the year.

**Table-5: Male and female participation ratio in cocoon production (Mandays/per acre/year)**

Sr. No	Activities	Family labour		Hired labour		Total labour		Male and female participation ration
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	Garden Establishment	23.55	28.39	8.45	17.17	32.00	45.56	1:1.42
2	Maintenance	86.73	79.35	43.11	65.32	129.84	144.67	1:1.11
3	Silkworm rearing	70.78	55.38	53.63	39.10	124.41	94.48	1:0.76
	Total	181.06	163.12	105.19	121.59	286.25	284.71	1:0.99

Mysore, Karnataka

Lakshmanan (2012)

**Table-6: Factors contributing to employment of rural women in sericulture**

Sr. No.	Variables	Regression coefficient	SE	t-value
1	Family size	0.121	0.040	3.025**
2	Literacy	-0.301	0.216	-1.393
3	Age	-0.419	0.956	-0.438
4	Mulberry holding size	0.219	0.042	6.928**
5	Hired labour	-0.328	0.052	-6.307**
	<sup>2</sup> R		0.59	
	DW statistics		1.894	

\*\* Significant at 1% level

Mysore, Karnataka

Lakshmanan (2012)

Lakshmanan (2012) at Mysore, Karnataka studied about factors contributing to employment of rural women in sericulture. Total five variables are taken i.e. family size, literacy, age, mulberry holding size and hired labour. From the study, it can be concluded that family size and mulberry holding size are highly significant at 1 per cent level because if both will increase, participation of women will also increase. Hired labour is negatively significant, which indicates the lack of hired labour. Due to lack of hired labour, women of family have to get involved in sericulture and employment is increased which leads to increase in rural women empowerment. DW statistics is 1.894, which is less than two indicates the absence of autocorrelation and due to which  $R^2$  is low.

**Table-7: Tools and machines developed for women's empowerment in sericulture**

Name of technology	Tools and machines developed
Weeding	Long handled weeding hoe, peg tooth weeder, grubber and self-propelled weeder
Harvesting of mulberry shoots	Pruning saw, sickle and looping shear
Spraying	Electrical sprayer and foot operated sprayer
Silkworm rearing	Hand operated deflossing machine, hand –cum–motorised deflossing machine, chawki leaf operated machine and leaf chopping machine
Silkworm egg production	Cocoon cutting machine

### Women Empowerment through Aquaculture

Over the past few years, the word 'Empowerment' has become the buzzword in rural development in India and the year 2001 was declared as the 'Women empowerment year' by the GOI. Globally, the role of women and the need to consider gender issues in aquaculture development was first recognized by the FAO-NORAD sponsored workshop on "Women in Aquaculture" in 1987. In this workshop, the scope to productivity engages women in aquaculture and help them to be important contributors to family economy was examined. The workshop recognized that aquaculture being not a labour intensive industry, the opportunity to employ more women in the sector is limited. However, the economic benefits of the fisheries sector being higher than most other agricultural crops, it was recognized that targeting women could bring multifarious benefits.

**Table-8: Scores obtained by the respondent rural women through in five dimensions of empowerment before and after their participation in fisheries sectors (N=120)**

Empowerment dimensions	Possible score range	Mean and standard deviation		Unit score		Wilcoxon signed rank test(z)
		Before	After	Before	After	
Decision making ability in family	0-36	10.61	21.97	0.29	0.61	-9.528**
Spending ability	0-30	8.78	17.93	0.29	0.59	-9.528**
Cosmo politeness	0-24	6.62	8.15	0.28	0.34	-9.550**
Social participation	0-21	7.50	9.43	0.36	0.45	-9.536**
Access to assets and resources	0-21	7.50	10.45	0.36	0.50	-9.530**

\*\* p&lt;0.01: Highly significant

Imphal, Manipur

Meetei *et al.* (2016)

### Women Entrepreneurship through Food Processing

Agro-based industry is regarded as the sunrise sector of the Indian economy in view of its large potential for growth and likely socio-economic impact, especially on employment and income generation. Globally, women represent 49.6% of the total population but only 40.85% of the total workforce in the formal sector. Micro-entrepreneurship development and income generating activities are feasible option for empowering women in agriculture.

### Benefits of Micro-entrepreneurship in Food Processing

- Raw material easily available on farm.
- Primary processing like cleaning, grading, custom milling of cereals, pulses, oilseeds, powders at small scale.
- Most technologies are available, accessible and affordable for farmwomen.
- Locally demand and market of the product is high after value addition.
- Processing adds value to raw fruits and vegetables.
- Minimal processing of fruits and vegetables has low environmental impact.

### Farm-tourism: Empowering Rural Women

Tourism is termed as an instrument for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. Farm tourism is a sub-sector of rural tourism. It is one of the five categories of rural tourism, the other being ecotourism, cultural, adventure and activity tourism.

### Societal Benefits of Farm Tourism

It is especially important to educate the visitors and public about agriculture, preserve farms and farmland, share agricultural heritage and rural lifestyles with visitors, preserve rural heritage and traditions, generate additional income for farmers and provide quality local products and produce. Other benefits are socio-culture benefits, environmental benefits and economic benefits. Training given to rural women in core areas of farm tourism like grooming skills, housekeeping skills, book-keeping, food processing skills and farm management.

**Table-9: Role of women in promoting farm-tourism**

Event	Season	Activities
Mango fest	Summer vacation (May-June)	Tree climbing, harvesting mangoes, pickle, jam making, handmade mango ice cream, outdoor camping, milking cow, bullock cart rides
Harvest fest	Dussehra vacation (October-November)	Rice harvesting, threshing, craft making, flower picking, staging Ramayana play, Ravan Dahanam, diya making, paper machie, bathkamma festivities
Winter fest	Winter break (December-January)	Rice harvest festival, threshing, kite flying, outdoor games, camping, hiking, Christmas and New Year decorations
Ugadi/Holi/Spring fest	Spring (March-April)	Ugadi-New Year celebrations, holi festivities, making natural colors, sweets/savouries, camp fire
Birthday/family get-together, Alumni meet, corporate outings, school field trips, customized rural weddings	All year through	Custom designed parties based on requests along with farm and recreational activities

Hydrabad, Telangana

Amtul (2015)

**Table-10: The benefits of women entrepreneurship – empowerment**

Sr. No.	Benefits of Entrepreneurship	Empowerment
1	Rise in economic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased income</li> <li>• Increased consumption</li> <li>• Control over spending</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence in sustaining trend</li> </ul>
2	Self worth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finds greater ability to lead</li> <li>• To work in groups</li> <li>• To resolve conflict</li> <li>• Freedom to make business life and own decision in life</li> <li>• Gets recognition in work</li> </ul>
3	Self confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be proactive</li> <li>• To face critics</li> <li>• To take risks (calculated risk)</li> <li>• To influence others</li> </ul>
4	Social status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive image</li> <li>• More gender equality</li> <li>• Sociability–net working</li> <li>• Involvement in community works</li> <li>• Involvement in political activities</li> <li>• Encouraging other women to entrepreneurship</li> </ul>

### Conclusion

The women folk can easily be considered as backbone of any nation and better half of the men in almost all spheres of community development, of which India is not an exception. Rural women, who continue about 50% of total population, play an active role in all sphere of economic life and contribute richly towards national income. Of the major rural enterprises, dairy enterprise has been regarded as an important instrument of economic and social change to supplement the income and employment to the rural sector in general and rural women in particular. The rural women are having basic indigenous knowledge, skill, potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise. Now, what the need is knowledge regarding accessibility to loans, various funding agencies procedure regarding certification, awareness on government welfare programmes, motivation, technical skill and support from family, government and other organization. Entrepreneurship can be considered as a tool of empowering rural women that gives many benefits to rural women in form of rising economic benefits, self worth and self-confidence.

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## Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Women Empowerment in India: A Study with Reference to Kerala

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### **Abstract**

*As fast advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is sweeping across the globe, the issue of women empowerment which is all the more relevant in developing countries like India needs to be looked into from a different perspective. As such, the immense potential of ICT should invariably be utilised for empowering the women effectively. The paper looks into the role of ICT in women empowerment in India with special reference to Kerala state.*

*Keywords: ICT, Knowledge Revolution, Women Empowerment, ICT Based Enterprises*

### **1. Introduction**

Worldwide, a new revolution viz. Knowledge Revolution is fast picking up momentum. Similar to the shift from a hunting society to an agricultural society, then to industrial society and further to post-industrial society and so on, the current transition is towards a knowledge society. This in turn has been enabled essentially by the fast advances in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), often referred to as ICT Revolution. Worldwide, these two mutually inter-related developments viz. ICT revolution and Knowledge revolution, have brought about a paradigm shift in the way in which business processes are being carried out, organizations are being managed, and governance of the state at its various levels is being done. ICT has emerged as an important developmental tool right from the 1980s both in the developing and developed countries. It has been observed that, the world over rapid developments in the field of ICT and its fast proliferation into all walks of life have brought about remarkable social and economic changes (Barton and Bear, 1999; Fullantelli & Allgera, 2003; and Liu and Luo, 2003). Further, it has been noted that apart from the development of information industry (Barton & Bear, 1999; and Bhasker, 2003), ICT has greatly enabled the development of traditional industries like manufacturing and service in a competitive market; locally, nationally and globally (Barton & Bear, 1999; Wang & Hou, 2003; and Pease & Rowe, 2003). Moreover, it has been observed that focus on IT-enabled operations can help organizations to improve quality on the one hand and provide various channels of delivery to meet customer expectations (Mohammed, 2002); by transforming the marketing and production activities that are considered necessary to directly produce a new product. John Paul, Robert Katz and Sean Gallagher (2004) have observed "ICTs have great potential to catalyze development in some of the poorest regions of the world". In short, it may be noted that ICT is largely recognized as the vital ingredient and most important catalyst that facilitates the fast economic development of any economy; whether in its totality or parts thereof. By accelerating the pace of generation of 'knowledge societies' as well as 'knowledge economies', ICT has proved its great developmental potential during the last two decades; these developments being more prominent in respect of many of the newly industrialized nations and some of the developing countries like India.

### **2. Relevance and Significance of the Study**

In the globalized world order of today and that too in an increasingly services-sector oriented, knowledge-intensive and information-intensive market, the role of ICT as a developmental tool need not be over emphasized. This is particularly relevant in respect of a developing economy like India which is striving to become the 'global services hub', primarily by leveraging its strength in ITO and BPO sectors. Furthermore, in the specific case of Kerala state in India, the role of ICT in economic development is even more significant because of its peculiar socio-economic, industrial and political environment. This is characterized by very high level of technically qualified and skilled manpower, near full literacy rate, extremely high level of NRI population and hence very high level of foreign

remittances, very high levels of social development as well as living standards almost comparable with any of the advanced countries, and so on, to name a few. Despite the favourable features, Kerala does not have a commendable track-record nor conducive climate for the healthy development of its industries, so far in the history of the state. Because of the above dichotomy – abundance of human and financial resources on the one hand but very little level of investment for economic activities on the other hand – it is widely recognized that Kerala has to depend primarily on its knowledge resource for its development. Moreover, in respect of knowledge resources with which it is richly endowed, so far there has been quite notable performance as is evidenced by significant success in its ICT initiatives; especially those in the e-governance front. In the above context, this paper looks into the role of ICT in women empowerment with a focus on Kerala state, with a view to bring about balanced and sustainable economic development of the state devoid of gender-divide or other divides.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

- (i) To study the role of ICT in women empowerment in the India, with special reference to Kerala state and a focus on ‘Kudumbashree’ initiatives in this regard; and
- (ii) To make suggestions for the effective use of ICT for women empowerment, based on the findings of this study.

### **4. Methodology of the Study**

The study is descriptive-analytical in nature. It is based primarily on secondary data that are available from authentic sources, like, the publications of the Govt. of India and Govt. of Kerala, the official website of ‘Kudumbashree’ Mission, Government ministries etc.

### **5. Role of ICT in Economic Development of Nations: An Overview**

The adverse impact of tourism on the environment is overwhelmingly covered in tourism literature. World over, governments have been encouraging tourism for facilitating economic development, but with due focus on preserving the natural environment. This trend is very much visible since the mid-1980s. Research focusing on the implications of tourism activities on the society as a whole are often done from a socio-ecological viewpoint. The conceptual model suggested by Brundtland (1987) [2] known as ‘Ecologically Sustainable Development Framework’ is often used in many studies, including those on ecotourism. Ajith Kumar (1998) [1] analysed the psychographic, demographic and lifestyle features of tourists visiting Kerala. The author has noted that spending pattern is integral to the life style factors of tourists and that spending is influenced by demographic factors, income group and psychographic factors like purpose of visit. Roy and Gupta (2005) [23] said that, there are three economic aspects of ecotourism, firstly, tourism’s share in the benefits and costs of natural areas. Secondly, user fees and revenue generation to support natural area protection and finally, ecotourism and economic development. Kumar, Yathish (2007) [11] has noted that the aim of tourism is to improve the quality of life of people, provide a good experience to the tourists, and maintain the environmental quality which is vital for both the tourists and the local populace. It is widely recognised that ICT and allied infrastructure can lead to economic development of nations, particularly in respect of developing nations like India. A recent empirical study by Toader et. al. (2018) has proved this with respect to EU countries. Indian development experience too has been mainly driven by its growing ICT infrastructure.

### **6. Role of ICT in Women Empowerment: The Kerala Experience**

Kerala is one of the most developed states in India and this small state has got to its credit an array of unparalleled achievements, which include inter alia, universal literacy, physical quality of life index (PQLI) on par with advanced nations, international standards in social development, service delivery points in health care, education and public distribution up to the village level and a very industrious manpower which is well-known the world over. Now Kerala is in the forefront of the global trend towards a new ‘knowledge-based’ economy. The very peculiar socio-economic climate of Kerala is, in fact, quite conducive for becoming a ‘knowledge society’ which it is striving to achieve over the years. Few regions in the developing world are as ready to embrace ICT technology at the grass-root level as is Kerala. This is because of its potential to generate opportunities and employment with little pressure on land, environment and other resources. Further, this is one of the most people-friendly and

environment-friendly industries of modern times. Kerala's experience in E-Governance has been one of the best in the whole of India.

The Government of Kerala has realized the immense potential of ICT for economic development and employment generation, including women empowerment. Firstly, it has been recognized as a very effective tool for improving governance and creating more jobs. Secondly, and probably more significantly, it has been recognized as a means for greatly enhancing the standard of living of the people. Over the years, the use of ICT in enhancing the delivery of Government services has proved to be quite responsive. Besides, ICT initiatives have been successful in offering a transparent administration which can facilitate the empowerment of people and satisfy their right to information. The specific advantages of the state of Kerala in embracing IT initiatives in comparison with developing nations in general and other states of the Indian union in particular are as follows:

- ❖ Kerala is a highly advanced society. The wide mass base which the media enjoys in the State and the penetration that communication technologies have been able to make in Kerala, will see Kerala emerging soon as a 100% internetised State - very truly, an Information Society.
- ❖ Kerala has got the highest literacy among the different states of India. Besides it has the highest exposure to the different media. Thus, what the industry needs most is what Kerala has the most of, viz. educated men and women seeking white collar jobs.
- ❖ Kerala has the highest proportion of citizens living outside the state. Being exposed to the best from the latest in terms of products, services, technologies and life styles, Keralites can very clearly impart 'demonstration effects' on those living in Kerala.
- ❖ Keralites by nature have high degree of awareness of and willingness to adopt the latest. Because of the peculiar cultural heritage of the state, with very diverse but quite harmonious religious and communal groups, Keralites have got very high level of tolerance for cultural diversities.
- ❖ Kerala society gives the highest premium to education and is willing to invest heavily for acquiring marketable skills. It has got a vast pool of English speaking technical and science graduates.
- ❖ Kerala has abundance of most of the infrastructural facilities required for the proliferation of Internet - the next frontier of growth in the IT sector. None of the other major Indian States has such an extensive fibre optic network as does Kerala. This network which reaches right down to the block level, along with the digital exchanges most of which have ISDN capability represent a formidable backbone for the making of a fully networked intelligent State. With the commissioning of the two submarine cable landings at Cochin, Kerala has emerged as a major telecom gateway for the whole of India.
- ❖ Kochi, the coastal city in the central part of Kerala and one of India's second-tier cosmopolitan cities and is fast emerging as a unique IT destination; because of its locational, infrastructural and other advantages. Kochi was ranked number two in a recent report by NASSCOM regarding the 'Super ITES Destinations' of the country. Besides, it was ranked number three by NASSCOM in a study of cities ideal to do business. Moreover, this city is directly connected by two submarine cables and satellite gateways, which in turn are used to support cities including Bangalore. Thus, the clear telecom infrastructural advantage offers Kochi better reliability as well as reduced tariffs. Apart from the major attraction of Kochi because of the presence of 'Infopark' which has been conferred the status of a SEZ (Special Economic Zone) by the Central Government in September 2006. Moreover, it is now all set to host another mega IT project named 'Smart City' - a collaborative project of the State with M/s. Dubai Internet City (DIC), Dubai, UAE. It is estimated that 'Smart City' project can offer over 33,000 employment opportunities within the next ten years.
- ❖ Kerala's development experience is characterized by significant progress in 'ICT for Development' sector in terms of investments, infrastructure development and employment generated in the sector through focused initiatives. The remarkable initiative in this regard has

been the project 'Akshaya', which is set to be rolled – out to reach all 64 lakh families of the State (presently being rolled – out in seven districts). The first 'Citizen's Call Centre' in the entire country is another glaring example of Kerala unique position in respect of ICT for Development.

- ❖ There has been a high spurt in the use of computers and Internet in the State and also in the sale of PCs and accessories in the State (assembled PC segment, Indian brands and MNC brands) with the increased emphasis given to the e-governance sector. The PC is now increasingly being considered as an aid for education and entertainment by household users. Besides, as per the findings of a recent survey conducted by MAIT (Manufacturers' Association in IT), the sale of hardware is growing in the State. At present as high as 7 Internet Service Providers are functioning in the State – about double of what was available about four years' back.

**Kerala State Information Technology Mission's Project 'AKSHAYA'**

The main objectives of the 'Akshaya' project of Kerala State Information Technology Mission, launched on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2002 were as follows: (1) To develop over 5000 numbers of networked Multi-purpose Community Technology Centers, (Akshaya e-Kendras) to provide ICT access to the entire population of the state; (2) To make at least one person in each of 65 Lakh + families in the state e-literate; (3) To enhance the quality of available IT infrastructure in the state, facilities for rural connectivity etc. 'Akshaya' project was launched on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2002 by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, as initiative powerful enough to transform the lives of 65 lakhs in the state. Under this project, one person in every family in Kerala will be familiarized with the basic use of computer and empowered to access innumerable services through the use of ICT. Over the years, Akshaya, the prestigious I.T dissemination project of Kerala could catch so much of global attention. In 2006 UNESCO came forward to support it in the field of Women Empowerment. It won the 'Golden Nica award of Prix Ars Electronica in the Digital Community category for the year 2005'. It was Runner-up 1 in 'India Tech Foundation- Telecom India 2005, Excellence Award 2005'. Further, it won 'Silver Icon award in Innovative Operations and Best Practices - New Entrants for Exemplary Implementation of e-Governance Initiatives for the Year 2004' and also 'PC Quest Best IT Implementation Award 2004'. In fact, Akshaya project in Kerala functions closely in association with (i) Kerala State IT Mission, (ii) District functionaries, (iii) Local Self-Government Institutions, and (iv) Village Micro level Enterprises. (Figure I).

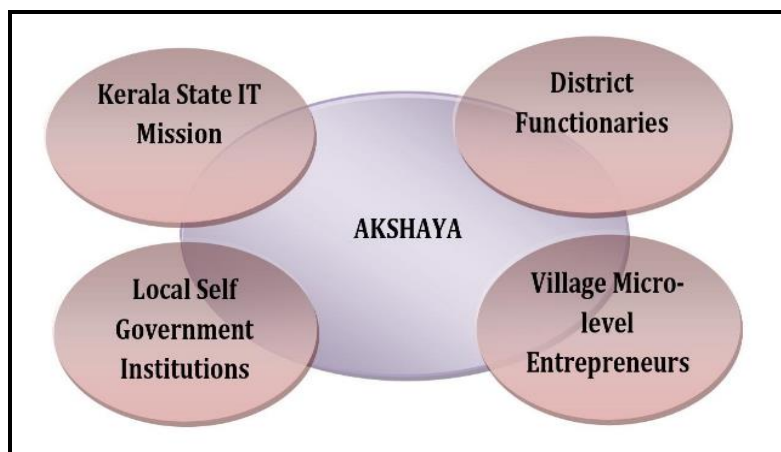


Figure (I): Framework of Akshaya in Kerala – A Typical PPP Project.

From Figure (I), it may be noted that Akshaya is a classic example of a PPP project which uses the immense potential of ICT for economic development, particularly for women empowerment. It is the key player in implementing all E-Governance initiatives in Kerala. Citizen empowerment being vital in good governance, all citizens and their democratic governance systems should derive benefits through better access to information and services. This in turn ensures a transformative platform for the public sphere and enhances their access to the various services provided by the Government for its citizens. Akshaya in Kerala, run by women, may be noted to be a classic example in this regard, as it empowers the masses and also ensures livelihood for thousands of women who are employed under

this project. As the population continues to grow in developing countries like India, more and more people will get isolated to the group of digital ‘have-nots’ unless Governments work together to dramatically expand access to ICT-based resources. To ensure that it is inclusive as well as devoid of digital divide, it must reach out to all segments of the population, e-services must meet the needs of the digitally disadvantaged sections, including the poor and the women. Kerala is the first State in India to take up this mass initiative for digital transformation in 2002, with an intention of ‘Empowering Kerala’. In fact, Akshaya project of Kerala paved the way for its migration to the unique status of the First e-literate State in the whole of India.

Akshaya Centers have been emerged as a finest network of effective Common Service Centers (CSC) envisioned to deliver a multitude of G2C, G2B as well as B2C services to the public under a single roof. Presently, around 2,650 Akshaya e-centers spread across Kerala with at least 2 centers in each Panchayats. By bringing ICT to all segments of people Akshaya acts as a vehicle for improved quality of life, accessibility to information, transparency in governance and overall socio-economic growth. More than 1000 Akshaya centers are equipped with banking kiosks and micro ATMs to offer the full spectrum of banking and insurance services at the door step of the citizens. This is to cater to the villagers residing in areas where there are lesser number of banks. Kiosk banks are designed to be mutually beneficial to banks, Akshaya entrepreneurs, and the public. With the ownership of about 650 IRDA licenses, Akshaya centers offer insurance policies to the rural populace. Needless to mention, women constitute the backbone of the Akshaya activities in Kerala, thus making it one of the most celebrated women empowerment initiatives in the whole world.

**ICT for Microfinance and Women Empowerment: Case of ‘Kudumbashree’ in Kerala**

The micro finance initiative for women empowerment in Kerala viz. ‘Kudumbashree’ as well as a large number of similar initiatives by various private agencies and reputed socio-cultural organizations have been observed to be quite successful in Kerala and the banks here are eager to finance such initiatives. In a state like Kerala which is already having an enviably high level of gender equality, ICT can bring about very fast social change through women empowerment and hence contribute towards the overall economic development of Kerala. ICT can greatly improve the efficiency and reach of Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), and can hence play a vital role in the economic development and empowerment of the poor in general and women in particular. ‘Kudumbashree’ refers to the poverty alleviation programme sponsored by the Government of Kerala. This state-sponsored programme seeks to attain broad goals like women empowerment by way of working of women’s collectives as well as local economic development through close integration with local government. This programme seeks to use self-help as the strategy for poverty alleviation. Going by its mission, it has four major objectives: (i) Women empowerment through community based organization (CBOs) (ii) Thrift and credit operations and informal banking, (iii) Decision making by the poor, and (iv) Micro enterprises and income generation activities. (Figure II).

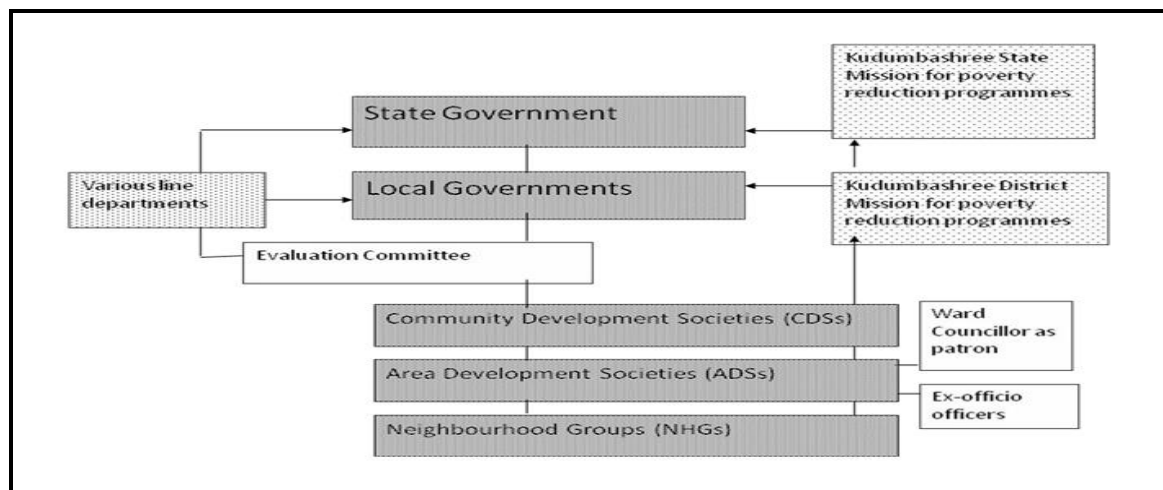


Figure-II: Organisation Structure of Kudumbashree Programme in Kerala

A Neighbourhood Group (NHG) is the lowest (first) tier in the Kudumbashree structure. It consists of, (i) Community Health Volunteer, (ii) Income Generation Activities (IGA) Volunteer, (iii) Infrastructure Volunteer, (iv) Secretary, and (v) President. (Figure III).

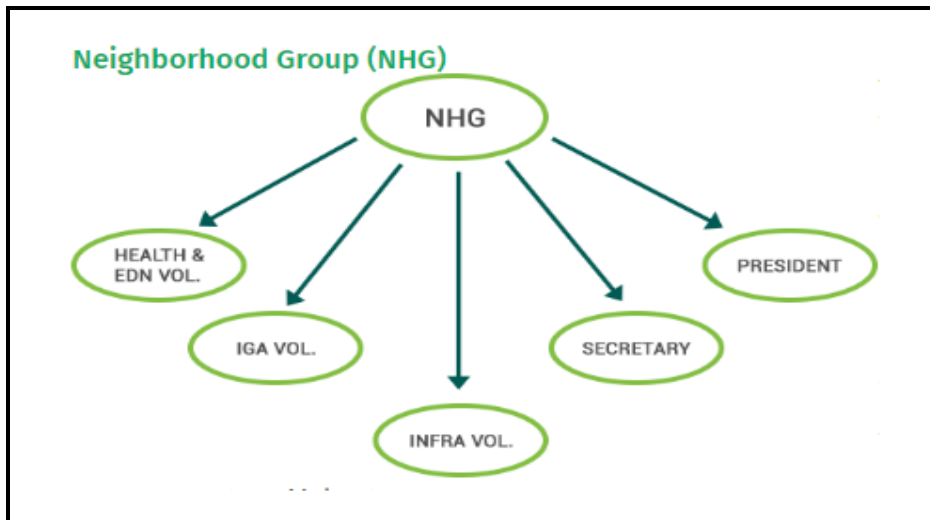


Figure-III: Neighborhood Groups (NHGs) in Kudumbashree (First Tier)

An Area Development Society (ADS) represents the second tier in the Kudumbashree architecture. An ADS monitors the functioning of various NHGs under it (Figure III). An ADS is managed by a 7-member leadership. The ADSs under Kudumbashree come under the Community Development Society (CDS), the third tier in ‘Three-Tier’ structure. (Figure IV).

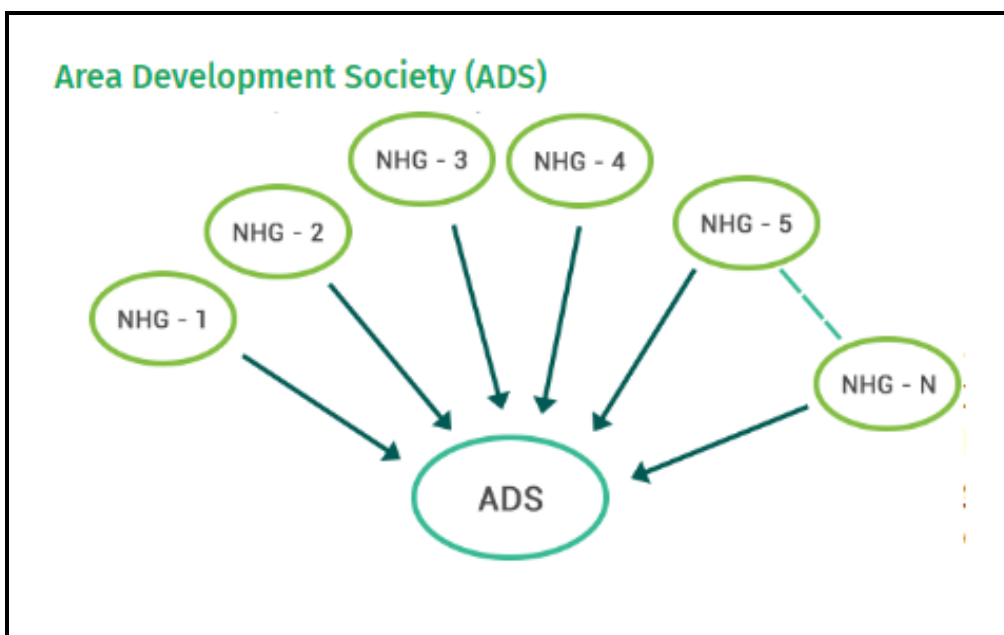


Figure-III: Area Development Society (ADS) in Kudumbashree (Second Tier)

It may be noted that Kudumbashree is developed as a federated system of community organisation based on representation. The lowest tier viz. Neighborhood Group (NHG) is typically made up of 10-20 families which may potentially include the poor and non-poor. An NHG is federated at the ward level by way of the election of its office-bearers once in three years to form the respective second-tier entity viz. Area Development Society (ADS). ADSs are federated at the city or village level to form the third-tier body viz. Community Development Society (CDS). Kudumbashree’s multi-level system, thus, by and large consists of self-governing bodies at different levels and these get institutionalized as a single entity.



Figure-V: Community Development Society (CDS) in Kudumbashree (Third Tier).

In fact, Kudumbashree has created a state-wide series of cooperative microenterprises, which are all owned, managed and operated by women from "below poverty line" families. In addition to more "traditional" enterprise, Kudumbashree has facilitated the creation of more than 100 ICT-based enterprises (IBEs) units that provide jobs for more than 1,000 poor women. Each unit employs ten women from its immediate neighborhood, plus others on a piece-rate basis. The units are focused around three main activities: data entry/digitization, IT training, and hardware assembly. Women's IBEs have been observed to be bringing benefits to both women (its members) and also the agencies (like, NOGOs) that support such IBEs and these are shown in Table (I).

**Table (I): Different Benefits from Different Viewpoints**

Perspectives	Focus of the Benefits	Examples of Benefits
Enterprise	Performance of the business	Growth of a sustainable enterprise
Livelihood	Changing livelihood assets of individuals or families	Generating stable employment and income
Gender	Approach to gender equity	Changes in opportunities for women or cultural attitude changes to the choices open to women and the role they can play

Source: Adapted from Manoj P. K. (2014) [4]

Empirical studies on real cases of women entrepreneurs working in IBEs by Duncombe, Heeks et. al (2005) have revealed that there are many benefits accruing to women undertaking IBEs. The benefits that lead to women empowerment are shown in Figure VI:

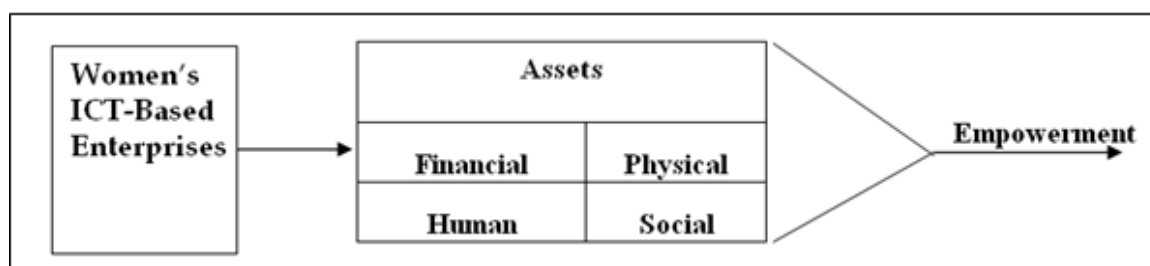


Figure-(VI): Categories of Livelihood/Gender Benefit for Women's IBEs

Source: Adapted from Manoj P. K. (2014) [4]

The benefits of women's IBEs noted by Duncombe, Heeks et.al.(2005) are as follows:

- ✓ **Improved financial assets:** regular income from work in ICT-based enterprises has enabled women to contribute to their family welfare (such as healthcare, education or payment for marriage of siblings) and even to add regularly to savings, when previously they might be unemployed with no income.

- ✓ **Improved physical assets:** regular income from ICT-based enterprises has enabled women to purchase land, housing, gold or physical goods for their family and also to purchase hardware and software equipment for use at work where previously that would not have been possible.
- ✓ **Improved human assets:** women develop personally and professionally through work in an ICT-based enterprise, particularly in terms of technical skill development and in personal confidence. Many become involved with management activities and decision-making, and some develop entrepreneurial skills such as an understanding of cash flow, customer service, etc.
- ✓ **Improved social assets:** women working in an ICT-based enterprise see improvements in three main areas of social relations: links to customers and suppliers (business linkages); links to support agencies plus banks or credit unions (other institutional linkages); and links to other women working in the enterprise or in similar/nearby enterprises (social and community linkages).
- ✓ **Empowerment:** women working in ICT-based enterprises seem to talk about this more than anything else. They talk about gaining confidence to apply new skills, to tackle problems, to deal with businesses and agencies. They talk about new "respect", "recognition" and "acceptance" within their communities. As a result, they can make some inroads into traditional gender biases: taking on management roles traditionally seen as "men's work"; hiring and managing men as employees; taking on traditionally-male activities like working late or travelling with their work; and having a different role in their families due to their new income and status.

Besides, potential gender-related benefits for women involved in IBEs are as follows:

- employment and financial independence specially in the absence of social safety nets;
- the opportunity for skills development in a women-only environment;
- work suitable for disabled women who might otherwise have limited options;
- the opportunity to increase competitiveness, both within the economy and in relation to men; and
- a means to involve women in ICT policy making.

There may also be broader benefits. These women are likely to act as role models for others. Their enterprises may create a "business node" that encourages other businesses – including women-run businesses – to set up. They may start to create a critical mass of skilled women, making migration of those women to other areas and other sectors less likely. More generally, they start to close the gender digital divide.

**Table-II: Women’s ICT-Based Enterprises under ‘Kudumbashree’.**

Units	No. of Units	Location		Av. no. of core group members	Av. no. of supporting staffs
		Urban	Rural		
IT @ School Units	151	72	79	6	1021
Data entry Units	72	42	30	10	3200
Hardware Assembly Units	5	4	1	6	15

Source: Adapted from Manoj P. K. (2014) [4]

There are 228 Kudumbasree ICT enterprises spread across 14 districts in Kerala. Based on their activities, these units can be classified into three viz. (i) Data processing units, (ii) IT @ School, and (iii) Hardware assembling units as shown in Table (II). Based on a study of the data processing units alone by taking a sample of 50% (ie. 36 out of 72), Chandrasekhar & Siva Prakash (2010) have made the following observations:

- Women ICT enterprises are significantly helping empowerment of women,
- Women ICT enterprises are facing difficulty in obtaining input resources,
- Women ICT enterprises are providing job satisfaction to its members,
- The sustainability of women ICT enterprises in Kerala is difficult at present.



Thus, Chandrasekhar & Siva Prakash (2010) [1] have concluded that women ICT initiative under “Kudumbashree” has got vast potential for empowering poor women. The socio-economic barriers of women could be effectively overcome by ICT initiatives. Let us consider some of the major problems faced by women’s ICT-Based enterprises (IBEs). Studies have revealed that the following are the major challenges of IBEs:

- ❖ Getting the payments for the work done is one of the worst problems, which results in unsustainable cash flows. The problem is chronic in respect of Government assignments. Cash crunch results in payment delays to workers of IBEs, who have to be paid promptly irrespective of the receipt of contract money.
- ❖ In respect of most micro-enterprises started by women, the worst problem is relating to marketing. Lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the market and also the potential profitability are quite common. Often problems are there in pricing of products, apart from marketing.
- ❖ Credit policies that can gradually ruin their business (many customers cannot pay cash; on the other hand, suppliers are very harsh towards women). Hence, finding suitable sources for raising the required finance is another problem for IBEs.
- ❖ Long term sustainability of women’s IBEs is often a question mark, given the multifarious problems that they face.

#### **7. Suggestions for More Effective Use of ICT for Women Empowerment**

- ❖ Though credit is required for women to take up income generating activities, like IBEs, credit alone will not lead to their empowerment. Supporting measures are also required (like, marketing, prompt payment for work done etc.).
- ❖ Additional services like training, awareness raising workshops and other activities are also an important determinant of the degree of its impact on the empowerment process of women through ICT based initiatives.
- ❖ It is quite advisable to bring together the different players in the ICT sector to draft coherent policies and procedures for more effective functioning of IBEs. Thus, ultimately, the focus should be on developing diversified women’s IBEs where different organizations work coherently, collaborate and work together to make a significant contribution to gender equality and pro-poor development.

#### **8. Concluding Remarks**

In view of the foregoing discussions, it may be noted that while there is vast potential for women’s ICT-based enterprises (IBEs) for empowering poor women in various fronts (like, economic, social and political), this potential is yet to be effectively tapped. Thus, encouraging of IBEs is of utmost significance in the present scenario, because of the multiplicity of credit needs for the poor and the capacity of ICT to bring about fast and equitable economic development. Equally important is the need to design flexible credit instruments for the poor women to enable them to go ahead with ICT-based initiatives.

#### **9. Acknowledgement**

The author places on record her sincere appreciation by the support and co-operation given by Prof. (Dr.), Meera bai M, Professor, Department of Applied Economics, CUSAT, and the guidance and help (as well as some secondary data, published papers etc.) extended by Dr. Manoj P. K, Research Co-ordinator, Department of Applied Economics, CUSAT, during the data collection and analysis part of this paper.

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## **Empowering the Tribal Women in Kerala: Role of Community Based Eco-Tourism Initiatives through Kudumbashree Mission**

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### **Abstract**

*Though Kerala can boast of its significant achievements in various development indicators relating to social, economic, health conditions, like, universal literacy, healthcare infrastructure, longevity, infant mortality rate, human development index (HDI) etc., many of which are comparable with the advanced nations of the world, the tribal population in Kerala is still suffering from deprivation of all kinds. For instance, health conditions of tribal women and children are very vulnerable. In this context, the authors suggest that Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) model is suitable for faster development of tribal population. CBET is particularly suitable for those staying in and in the periphery of wild life sanctuaries as well as other ecotourism destinations located near tribal habitats. Given the vast network of Kudumbashree, the world renowned poverty alleviation project of the Government of Kerala, which has already got programmes targeted at the welfare of tribal folks, promotion of CBET and hence empowering the tribal women through Kudumbashree would be very meaningful.*

*Keywords: Tribal development, Ecotourism, Community-based Ecotourism (CBET), Women Empowerment.*

### **1. Introduction**

Kerala has got an enviable track-record in its achievements in human development index (HDI) and other human capital indices, various socio-economic indicators like universal literacy, healthcare facilities, longevity, infant mortality rate, quality of life etc. Many of these socio-economic development indices are comparable with the advanced nations of the world. But, the tribal population in Kerala is still suffering from deprivation of all kinds. For instance, health conditions of tribal women and children are very vulnerable even today. Various schemes and projects sponsored by the Government of Kerala that are targeted at the welfare of the tribal population have not been very successful. 'Kudumbashree', the poverty alleviation project of the Government of Kerala has been successful in empowering the poor women in Kerala. 'Kudumbashree' has got activities targeted at tribal population also. In the above context, the authors seek to consider Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) as a model that is suitable for bringing about faster socio-economic development of tribal population, particularly tribal women, given the fact that vast network of Kudumbashree is already in place in Kerala. The benefit of promoting CBET accrues to the tribal population staying in and in the periphery of various wild life sanctuaries and also those in the vicinity of other ecotourism destinations in forest areas. By encouraging the tribal women to actively participate in CBET, through the intervention of Kudumbashree, the human, familial, social, economic and political empowerment of tribal population is enabled. This in turn enables the overall development of the tribal community, and hence the economy as a whole. The above positive outcome is over and above the general economic benefits that tourism sector offers.

### **2. Relevance and Significance of the Study**

In any nation, economic development that is equitable and balanced alone can be said to be holistic and also sustainable in the long run. In respect of Kerala state in the Indian union, the available literature suggests that the tribal population in the state are suffering from utter deprivation of all basic necessities of life, like, food, health, shelter, etc. Tribal women and children are particularly vulnerable. The performance track-record of Kudumbashree, the poverty alleviation project of the

Government of Kerala, has been widely acclaimed the world over. As a women-centred and Government-sponsored project, Kudumbashree has been active among the tribal women also.

Given the vast network of Kudumbashree in Kerala and its successful interventions for the cause of women empowerment in Kerala and also the activities that it has already initiated in the tribal development front, it may logically be inferred that Kudumbashree can ensure more effective participation of tribal women in tourism initiatives. This in turn can lead to the empowerment of tribal women, and through them their families and community.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

- (i) To study the activities of Kudumbashree in the tourism sector in Kerala and also its initiatives in the tribal development front;
- (ii) To study the prospects of community based tourism initiatives in Kerala with a focus on the responsible tourism (RT) destinations especially those in the vicinity of tribal hamlets, their problems and prospects, and the role of Kudumbashree initiatives; and
- (iii) To make suggestions for faster tribal development through community based tourism initiatives, with the effective intervention of Kudumbashree.

### **4. Methodology of the Study**

The study is descriptive-analytical in nature. It is based primarily on secondary data that are available from authentic sources, like, the publications of the tourism department of the Government of Kerala (Kerala tourism), official publications of Kudumbashree Mission (under Government of Kerala).

### **5. Previous Studies and Research Gap**

The adverse impact of tourism on the environment is overwhelmingly covered in tourism literature. World over, governments have been encouraging tourism for facilitating economic development, but with due focus on preserving the natural environment. This trend is very much visible since the mid-1980s. Research focusing on the implications of tourism activities on the society as a whole are often done from a socio-ecological viewpoint. The conceptual model suggested by Brundtland (1987) [2] known as 'Ecologically Sustainable Development Framework' is often used in many studies, including those on ecotourism. Ajith Kumar (1998) [1] analysed the psychographic, demographic and lifestyle features of tourists visiting Kerala. The author has noted that spending pattern is integral to the life style factors of tourists and that spending is influenced by demographic factors, income group and psychographic factors like purpose of visit. Roy and Gupta (2005) [23] said that, there are three economic aspects of ecotourism, firstly, tourism's share in the benefits and costs of natural areas. Secondly, user fees and revenue generation to support natural area protection and finally, ecotourism and economic development. Kumar, Yathish (2007) [11] has noted that the aim of tourism is to improve the quality of life of people, provide a good experience to the tourists, and maintain the environmental quality which is vital for both the tourists and the local populace.

In another Kerala-based study, Oommen M. A. (2008) [22] warned about the danger of overlooking the environmental sustainability in development activities in the state. While referring to the growing environmental issues in Kerala from the perspective of the state's economic development model viz. 'Kerala model of development' the author has pointed out in detail the environmental and ecological issues that the state faces at present; the current scenario being critically referred to as one of 'Ecological Overkill' in his paper. The day by day worsening situation of the natural environment in Kerala and its adverse impact on the long-term sustainability of tourism has been noted by many researchers, pointing out the need for environment-friendly (nature-friendly) tourism models like ecotourism and its variants like rural tourism, responsible tourism etc. Manoj P. K. (2008) [15] in his research article, 'Sustainable Tourism in India: A Study from a Global Perspective with Focus on Tourism Prospects of Kerala' has given a macro perspective of the prospects of sustainable tourism in Kerala from an international perspective and offered some strategies for the faster growth of sustainable tourism initiatives in Kerala. In his book on 'Ecotourism Development Management', Singh, Sarvjeet (2009) [25] has stated that ecotourism is entirely a new approach in tourism and it provides opportunities for visitors to experience powerful displays of nature and culture and to learn

about the importance of biodiversity, conservation and local cultures. It focuses on volunteering, personal growth and finding innovative means to live on the earth. It involves travels towards locations wherein flora, fauna, cultural heritage etc. are the main attractions. It encourages the active participation by the local population in the conservation and education dimensions of tourism development process.

Kulwant Singh Pathania and Arun Kumar (2008) [10] have noted that one of the greatest contributions of ecotourism to conservation is the degree to which it could shift community activities from the 'threats' category to the 'opportunities' category, i.e. those activities that contribute to sustainable development and achievement of an area's conservation goals. In order to maximize the conservation benefits of an ecotourism activity, it is vital to define how local stakeholder can participate in its planning and management. Manoj, P. K., (2009) [16] in his research article 'Environment Friendly Tourism for Sustainable Economic Development in India' has analysed the utmost significance of tourism in India for the faster development of the nation and has given suggestions for environment-friendly and sustainable development of tourism in the country. In another research article by this author viz. Manoj, P. K. (2010) [17] 'Tourism in Kerala: A Study of the Imperatives and Impediments with Focus on Ecotourism' the specific case of the tourism sector in Kerala state in Indian union is studied in detail, and also made a SWOT [i.e. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats] analysis of Kerala's tourism sector. Suggestions for faster, balanced and hence sustainable growth of tourism in the state of Kerala have been given in the paper. Shihabudheen, N. & Manoj, P. K. (2014) [27] in their paper have studied the potential of 'Kudumbashree' project under the Government of Kerala in developing tourism as a community based livelihood option for women in Kerala. The authors have concluded that Kudumbashree has got high potential for women empowerment through community based tourism initiatives like responsible tourism.

A paper by Manoj P. K. (2015)(a) [18] entitled 'Prospects of Eco tourism in Kerala: Evidence from Kumarakam in Kottayam District' has made an empirical analysis of ecotourism in Kerala and made suggestions for sustainable development of ecotourism in the state based on the study findings. Another study by Manoj P. K. (2015) (b) [19], 'Employment Generation from Rural Tourism: A Field Study of the Local Community at Kumbalangi, Kerala' has made an empirical analysis of the feedback from the local community about the employment prospects of rural tourism, expectations of the tourists regarding the Governmental interventions required etc. The bright prospects of employment generation and development of the locality are pointed out. At the same time, need for improving the tourism infrastructure, primarily through Governmental interventions is highlighted. UNWTO (2015) [28] in its report on tourism has noted that China has been the fastest growing source market for tourism over the years. The major players in global tourism are U.S, Spain, China and France. The industry report by World Economic Forum (WEF) (2015) [30] 'The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report' has done a detailed study of the competitiveness of various countries of the world, in the travel and tourism front. Competitiveness of nations at the regional and global levels based a number of well-defined parameters is dealt in the WEF report. As per WEF report, the global competitiveness of Indian tourism is only 52 as against 17 in respect of China. This indicates a huge performance gap between the two comparable (and neighbouring) nations of the developing world. At the regional (Asia Pacific region) level too, there is a huge gap in the competitiveness, as India is in the 12<sup>th</sup> position whereas China is ranked in the 6<sup>th</sup> position. WTTC (2015) [32] in its latest report, 'Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism 2015 – Annual Update' has made an elaborate account of the relative performance of various countries of the world in the tourism front, including region-wise performance and future projections. WTTC has reported that South Asia, led by India and the Middle East, is globally the fastest growing region in terms of the total contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP. Accordingly, India is one among the bigger, fast growth markets along with China, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey. Besides, WTTC has reported that South Asia will be the fastest growing sub-region for total Travel & Tourism GDP long-run growth to 2025 (7.0 percent) as India outpaces China. Empirical studies on ecotourism in the Indian context, particularly in the context of Kerala state in the Indian union are rather rare. Some relevant studies are briefly discussed here.

In an empirical study done in the Kerala context by Manoj P. K. (2016) [20], “Impact of Rural Tourism on the Environment and Society: Evidence from Kumbalangi in Kerala, India” it has been noted that from the viewpoint of the local population there are definite benefits to the local community from rural tourism and also that the tourists have behaved to the local people in appreciable manner. But, it is also pointed out that there are negative effects of rural tourism on the society and environment which in turn may adversely affect its long-term sustainability. Not less than 61.67 per cent of the local population has felt that rural tourism would definitely harm the natural environment. Sudheer, B (2015) [26] in his research report submitted to University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi titled ‘Economic and Cultural Impact of Responsible Tourism Initiative in Kerala – A Case Study of Kumarakom Panchayath’ has highlighted the need for alternative and innovative practices like Responsible Tourism (RT) to minimise the negative effects of tourism on environment and to make it sustainable in the long-term. With respect to RT at Kumarakom in Kerala, the positive effects like employment to the local people, empowerment of women through RT-related activities (like, providing vegetables, fish, meat etc. often procured locally), positive linkage effects on the locality (like, earnings arising from the purchases made by tourists) etc. have been pointed out. In a study by Manoj P. K. (2017) [21], “Segmentation Strategy for Promotion of Ecotourism Products: Evidence from Thenmala Ecotourism” in *South Asian Journal of Socio-Political Studies*, the author has studied as to whether the socio-economic factors have influenced the decisions of the tourists and suggested the segmentation strategy for tourists. Kumar & Koiyam (2017) [12], promoted the Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) and his article observe that, it can be a powerful incentive to protect the environment and also the local communities. It offers a sustainable land use that can support the goals of forest, agriculture, and open space preservation. Also, it is opined that National parks and Wild life sanctuaries wherever displaced local communities, especially tribal group or have in any case restricted livelihood options of the original inhabitants. This is left the poor local communities still poorer and often without a viable resource. The utmost need for conservation has therefore to be balanced with the primacy of economic development of local communities within or on the periphery of a protected area.

It may be noted there are many studies on tourism and its significance in bringing about faster economic development in developing nations like India, and there are studies focusing on environmental-friendly tourism models like ecotourism as well. Studies done in the Kerala context are also there. However, studies focusing on the potential of tourism for women empowerment, particularly the empowerment of tribal women are very rare. In the above context, this paper seeks to bridge the above research gap by making a study of the potential of community-based eco-tourism (CBET) for empowerment of tribal women and hence balanced and equitable development of the economy. In this study, the activities of ‘Kudumbashree’, the poverty alleviation programme of the Government of Kerala, in the tribal development front specially in the empowerment of tribal women are specially focused.

### **6. Kudumbashree Initiatives in Tourism Sector in Kerala**

As noted earlier, ‘Kudumbashree’ refers to the poverty alleviation programme sponsored by the Government of Kerala. This state-sponsored programme seeks to attain such broad goals as empowerment of women by way of working of women’s collectives as well as local economic development through close integration with local government. As a whole, this programme seeks to use self-help as the strategy for poverty alleviation. The mission of this programme reads as: *eradicate absolute poverty in ten years through concerted community action under the leadership of local governments, by facilitating organization of the poor for combining self-help with demand-led convergence of available services and resources to tackle the multiple dimensions and manifestations of poverty, holistically.*

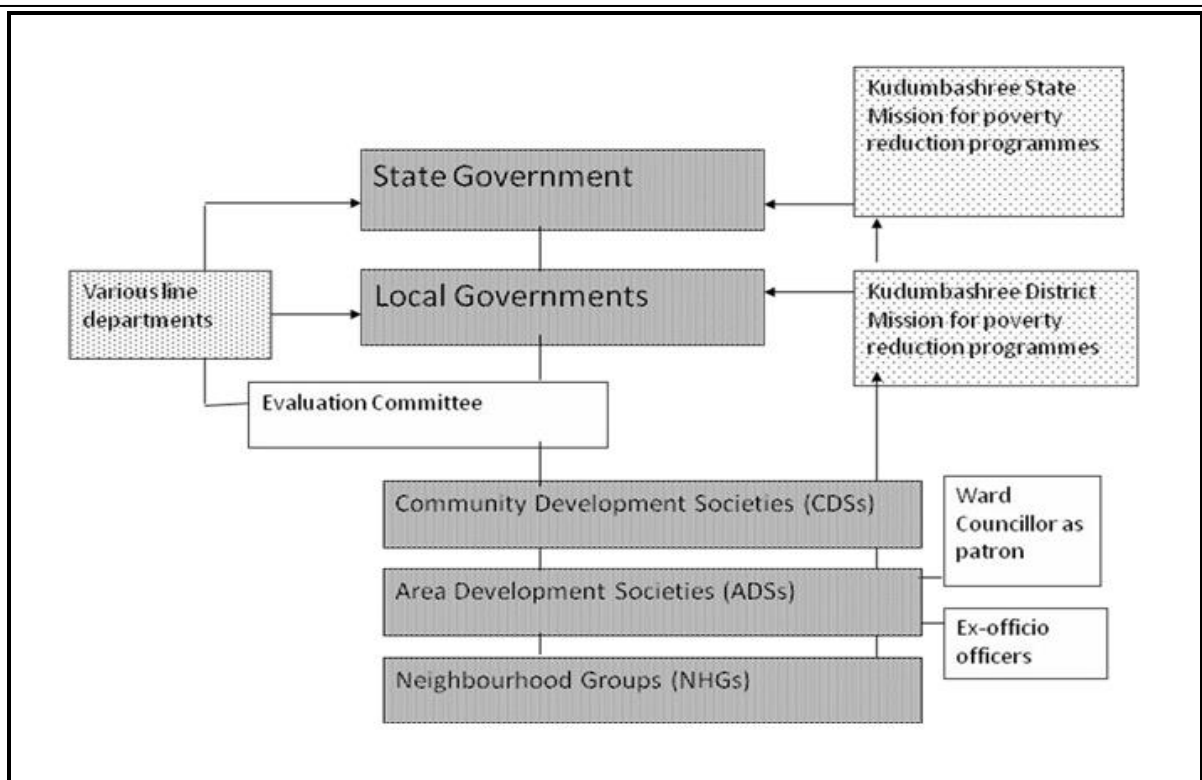


Figure-I: Organisation Structure of Kudumbashree Programme in Kerala

Going by its mission, it has four major objectives: (i) Women empowerment through community based organization (CBOs) (ii) Thrift and credit operations and informal banking, (iii) Decision making by the poor, and (iv) Micro enterprises and income generation activities. The organization structure of Kudumbashree is given in Figure I.

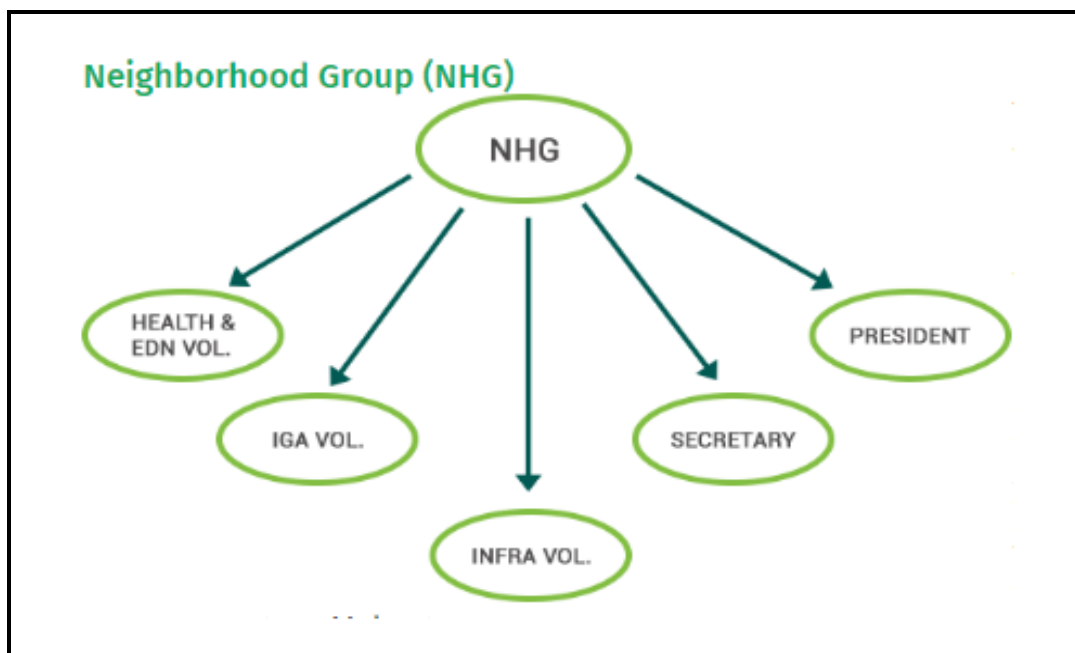


Figure-II: Neighborhood Groups (NHGs) in Kudumbashree (First Tier)

A Neighbourhood Group (NHG) is the lowest (first) tier in the Kudumbashree structure. It consists of, (i) Community Health Volunteer, (ii) Income Generation Activities (IGA) Volunteer, (iii) Infrastructure Volunteer, (iv) Secretary, and (v) President. (Figure II).

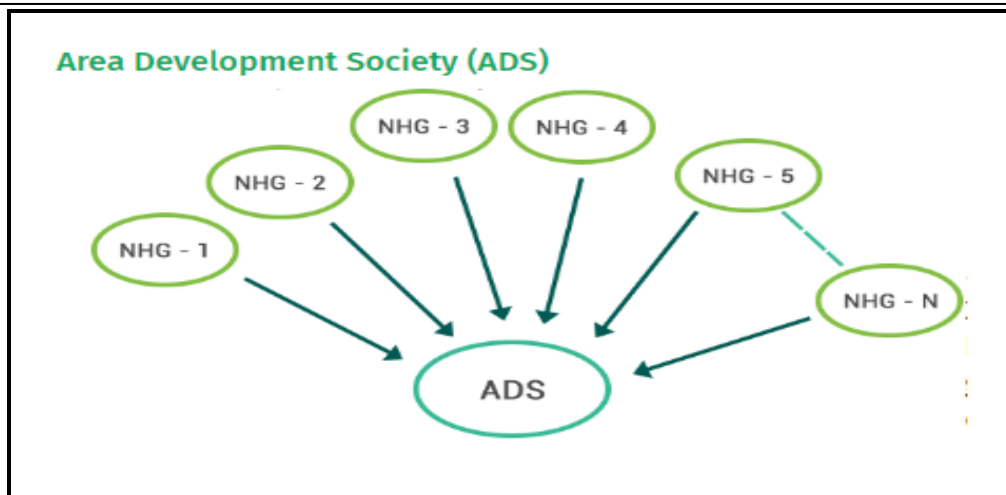


Figure-III: Area Development Society (ADS) in Kudumbashree (Second Tier)

An Area Development Society (ADS) represents the second tier in the Kudumbashree architecture. An ADS monitors the functioning of various NHGs under it (Figure III). An ADS is managed by a 7-member leadership. The ADSs under Kudumbashree come under the Community Development Society (CDS), the third tier in 'Three-Tier' structure. (Figure IV). The CDS is administered by the General Body.



Figure-IV: Community Development Society (CDS) in Kudumbashree (Third Tier).

It may be noted that Kudumbashree is developed as a federated system of community organisation based on representation. The lowest tier viz. Neighborhood Group (NHG) is typically made up of 10-20 families which may potentially include the poor and non-poor. An NHG is federated at the ward level by way of the election of its office-bearers once in three years to form the respective second-tier entity viz. Area Development Society (ADS). ADSs are federated at the city or village level to form the third-tier body viz. Community Development Society (CDS). Kudumbashree's multi-level system, thus, by and large consists of self-governing bodies at different levels and these get institutionalized as a single entity.

### 7. Kudumbashree Initiatives in Tourism Sector in Kerala

It was in 2010 that units of 'Kudumbashree', the poverty alleviation programme of the Government of Kerala, took the bold initiative to cultivate paddy in nearly 300 acres of land located at Kumarakom – a well-known tourism destination at Kottayam district in Kerala. In its maiden paddy cultivation initiative at Kumarakom, Kudumbashree could produce as high as 3825 quintals of paddy, at the rate of nearly 17 quintals of paddy per acre of land. Kudumbashree could sell its produce (paddy) worth



about Rs. 4.6 lakh Million, after setting aside adequate quantity for the requirements of its own women (members) who were involved in the paddy cultivation initiative as above. The women members of Kudumbasree had performed all the activities involved in paddy cultivation. Moreover, these women could reap reasonable return by associating themselves with Responsible Tourism Mission (RTM) of the Government of Kerala (GOK). This pioneering RTM initiative of the GOK located at Kumarakom in Kottayam district of Kerala, has become a role model for the whole of India. Other states in India have started replicating the Kumarakom-RT model in their own states.

This successful RT project at Kumarakom (Kumarakom-RT) underscores the potential tourism for women empowerment and hence balanced and equitable economic development. Kudumbashree has started actively participating in many sustainable tourism models, like, ecotourism, responsible tourism etc. At Kmarakom-RT, the Kudumbashree women could contribute to the ecological upliftment of the locality by converting the uncultivated land into cultivable land. By taking 55 acres of fallow land in 2009 on lease and cultivated crops like paddy in it. Thereafter, they repeated their success in the next year (2010) also by cultivating crops in 68 acres of land. They earned an income over Rs. 27 lakhs in 2010 by supplying their agricultural produce like vegetables to various hotels and restaurants crossed Rs. 27 lakhs in 2010. Likewise, from other products (eg. rice powder, handicrafts, snacks etc.) they could earn nearly Rs.12 lakh additionally. Responsible Tourism Mission (RTM) under the Government of Kerala (GOK) undertakes four major RT destinations, including Kumarakom-RT as noted above, the other three being at Kovalam, Thekkady, and Wayanad. (Figure V).



Figure-V: Responsible Tourism Mission (RTM) in Kerala.

Kudumbashree women are supplying vegetables to nearly 15 hotels in Kumarakom locality alone, a tourism hotspot in Kottayam district of Kerala. These hotels include a few luxury hotels as well. Demand for their products is fast growing because products like vegetables are delivered very fresh and these are cultivated organically too. Besides vegetable cultivation, farmers and various self help groups (SHGs) are encouraged to produce items like fish, egg, chicken, local snacks etc. on commercial lines so that they can earn extra income. Hence, Kudumbashree women have begun to get involved in various tourism-related activities and services which can fetch them some extra income, through diversifying their products and services. In fact, the various micro-enterprises that are functioning under Kudumbasree units are now producing products such as paper bags, local snacks,

rice powder, processed food items, handicrafts, and so on. All these items have growing demand in a tourist hotspots, like Kumarakom for instance. Such micro-enterprises under Kudumbashree with the support of tourism industry could ensure empowerment of women and could bring about prosperity to the local community.

Besides the active participation in various projects under RTM of the Government of Kerala (GOK) (viz. Kumarakom-RT, Kovalam-RT, Thekkady-RT, and Wayanad-RT), the women organised under Kudumbashree are active in other tourism destinations as well, as part of the 'Clean Destination Campaign' of the Department of Tourism, GOK. Accordingly, for cleaning the respective destinations and maintaining them clean, hygienic and tidy. Earlier they used to get Rs.200 per day for such jobs and later on it was enhanced to Rs.350 per day. This ensures livelihood for these women, and maintains the destinations clean and tidy.

### **8. Scope for Tribal Development through Community Based Tourism Initiatives**

The unique features of tribal life, characterised primarily by an agrarian economy, augers well with the principles of environment-friendly tourism models. Ecotourism and its variants like responsible tourism (RT) provide ample scope for the sustenance of tribal culture and life styles etc. while at the same time providing them with regular means for earning livelihood. Without disturbing their natural habitats, their products (eg. produce primarily procured from the hills, or products that are indigenously produced at their own habitats by the use of local resources and manpower) find regular market at tourism destinations near their own habitats. For instance, of the four responsible tourism (RT) destinations in Kerala under the RTM of the GOK, two RT destinations have substantial tribal population in their local communities. These are Thekkady-RT and Wayanad-RT. Wayanad-RT destination has got two ethnic food corners that showcase the indigenous and tribal foods. At Thekkady-RT, there is a snack bar run by the tribal communities, and also design of a village life experience pack operated by the tribal community as well as a solid waste initiative.

Tribal folks often follow a subsistence economy and they often live in forests or hills. They have little interest in wealth creation or entrepreneurship, rather they are preoccupied with meeting the day to day survival needs. This fact coupled with the long history of exploitation of the tribals by those from well-to-do backgrounds in other areas make the supply chain of the tribal products less regular. The fact the land parcels under their control are very limited (particularly at Thekkady-RT) makes the supply chains of their products less regular vis-à-vis their demands. Hence, there is always the need for re-configuring the supply chains for tribal products to their local produce, at the respective destinations for ensuring the sustainability of such initiatives. However, it has been noted that it is difficult to ensure regular and reliable supply of such tribal products. Efforts towards ensuring such regular and reliable supply chains of farm produce and also strict control of environmental pollution (especially through the use of plastics) have to be ensured for development of the livelihood for the tribal population and also long-term sustainability of the tourist destination.

### **9. Suggestions for Tribal Development using Community-based Tourism Initiatives**

Based on the foregoing analysis and discussion, the following are the suggestions made for the effective use of Community Based Eco Tourism (CBET) or its variants including RT:

- (i) Special thrust is required to protect the rights, privileges, and interests of the local community. Promotion of tourism should not be at the cost of their unique culture, peculiar life styles etc., so that long-term sustainability can be ensured.
- (ii) Complete co-operation and support of the local community be obtained for any sort of community based tourism initiative. Then only the long-term sustainability of such programmes can be ensured. At the outset, the fear and anxiety in the minds of tribal community, generated out of the long history of their exploitation, must be got rid of.
- (iii) Minimal impact on the purity of the environment be ensured at all stages of any community based tourism initiative. Environmental degradation arising because of the visits of tourism, like, plastic littering be strictly prohibited. Complete ban on the use of plastics should ideally be ensured in all such destinations.

- (iv) Considering the carrying capacity of various destinations, the number of tourists visiting various tourist destinations be limited. Thrust on 'class tourism' be ensured instead of the one on 'mass tourism'.
- (v) There are many less known tourism destinations which are very resourceful as well as promising. Developing such destinations would result in scaling up the returns from tourism on the one hand and minimizing the adverse effects of 'mass tourism'. In such a case, it would be easier to limit the number of visitors within the carrying capacity of the spots. Many such 'less known' destinations are there in Kerala.
- (vi) Special thrust on promoting the products of the local (tribal) communities produced out of various indigenous resources, including various natural items gathered by them from the forests, hills, rivers etc. (eg. honey, medicinal plants, fish etc.). Besides, reconfiguring the supply chain of such products, hill produce etc. in tune with the demand for the same be ensured so as to ensure their uninterrupted supply.
- (vii) Maximum thrust is required to minimize the environmental pollution of any sort, particularly because of the use of plastics. The involvement of Kudumbashree women for cleaning the tourism sites is advisable, as they are doing it at many sites.

### 10. Concluding Remarks

It may be noted that there is ample scope for developing community based tourism destinations in Kerala for the purpose of tribal development and hence the economic development of the whole state. The appreciable performance of various RT destinations like Kumarakom-RT and also RT destinations run with the considerable involvement by the tribal communities like Thekkady-RT and Wayanad-RT suggests that such initiatives can be expanded to other destinations as well. The ecotourism destinations at Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR), Thommankuthu, Athirappally (Vazhachal) etc. too support the development of tribal communities in their vicinity. By way of encouraging such destinations, including some more destinations which are very promising but are 'less known' now, tribal development through such destinations becomes more meaningful. The support and co-operation from the well-known women empowerment initiative viz. Kudumbashree which is promoted by the Government of Kerala is another strength as far as any women empowerment initiative in Kerala is concerned, and empowerment of tribal women through community based tourism is no exception in this regard. Let us hope that community based tourism initiatives would scale up in Kerala in the days to come resulting in tribal development, including empowerment of tribal women. Kerala Government's policies are conducive in this regard.

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## Women Empowerment in Perspective of Indian Constitution – An Analytical Study

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राष्ट्रस्य श्वः नारी अस्ति woman is our tomorrow.

नारी राष्ट्रस्य अक्षि अस्ति woman is the eye of the nation.

नारी माता अस्ति नारी कन्या अस्ति नारी भगिनी अस्ति woman is mother woman is daughter woman is sister woman is everything.

नारी अस्य समाजस्य कुशलवास्तुकारा अस्ति woman is the perfect architect of the society.<sup>1</sup>

India is a Country where women are considered as a Goddess. Position of women in India is to be observed and studied in the Vedic and post-Vedic Period, Indian vedic period is a vast period which is considered from 300 C to 600 C. Some Important observations regarding the status of women from the Vedic period. Women were never observed or practiced pardah. They were educated themselves and enjoyed freedom in taking part in public activities. They were enjoying the right of selecting their life partner. Marriages were not forcibly imposed on them, child marriages were not known to them. Women had economic freedom. They were engaged in teaching also, some of them were engaged in spinning and weaving of cloths in the home. Some of them were helping their husbands in agricultural works.

The position of ladies within the post religious text amount is found to be degrading. within the amount of your time, girls were denied of formal education. The age of wedding comes all the way down to 8-9 years, that is before attaining the time of life. The incidence of pre-puberty marriages were raised and uneducated child-wives were will increase day by day. It will concisely be explicit that “marriage established the dominance of husband over adult female. The Ramayana and Mahabharat made public the position of ladies “husbands square measure solely the divinity for the wife”.

In the nineteenth century the position of girls suffered terribly} massive approach with very less education declining to nearly nothing. The East India Company within the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and existence of widespread network of elementary colleges and better academic establishments is commented upon however the attending of women aren't there or terribly negligible.

When our country got its independence, the participation of girls nationalists was wide acknowledged and appreciated. Once the Indian Constitution was developed, it granted equal rights to girls, considering them legal voters of the country Associate in Nursing as an adequate to men in terms of freedom and chance.. Women in Asian country slowly started recognising her true potential. She has started asking the rationale of the foundations ordered down for her by the society. As a result, she has started breaking barriers and attained a good position within the world. These days Indian ladies have excelled in every and each field from social service to visiting orbiter. Each and every field is conquered by Indian ladies. Whether or not its politics, **sports, recreation, literature, technology everywhere, its ladies power right along.**

**The Special Provisions in the Constitution of India designed to secure equality of sexes and non-discrimination are:**

- Equality before law and equal protection of law (Article 14)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Yajurveda the Second Veda

<sup>2</sup> Equality before law and equal protection of law: Constitution of India, 1950

- State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. And the state is permitted to make any provision for women and children. (Article 15)<sup>3</sup>.
- Equality of opportunity in public employment. (Article 16)<sup>4</sup>.
- Equal rights for men and women to adequate means of livelihood. (Article 39(a))<sup>5</sup>.
- Humane conditions of work and maternity relief for women. (Article 42)<sup>6</sup>.
- To secure for all citizens a uniform civil code throughout the country. (Article 44)<sup>7</sup>.
- It is a constitutional duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. (Article 51 A (e))<sup>8</sup>.
- Not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct elections in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat (Article 243 D (3))<sup>9</sup>.
- Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level to be reserved for women (Article 243 D (4))<sup>10</sup>.
- Not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct elections in every municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies of a municipality (Article 243 T (4))<sup>11</sup>.
- Reservation of the offices of Chairperson in Municipalities for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the legislation of a State may by law provide (Article 243 T (4))<sup>12</sup>.

To uphold the Constitutional mandate, the State has enacted varied legislative measures meant to make sure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and varied styles of violence and atrocities and

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<sup>3</sup> State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. And the state is permitted to make any provision for women and children. (Article 15): Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>4</sup> Equality of opportunity in public employment: Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>5</sup> Equal rights for men and women to adequate means of livelihood: Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>6</sup> Humane conditions of work and maternity relief for women: Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>7</sup> To secure for all citizens a uniform civil code throughout the country: Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>8</sup> It is a constitutional duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. (Article 51 A (e)) : Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>9</sup> Not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct elections in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat (Article 243 D (3)) : Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>10</sup> Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level to be reserved for women (Article 243 D (4)) Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>11</sup> Not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct elections in every municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies of a municipality (Article 243 T (4)) : Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>12</sup> Reservation of the offices of Chairperson in Municipalities for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the legislation of a State may by law provide (Article 243 T (4)) : Constitution of India, 1950

though ladies is also victims of any of the crimes like 'Murder', 'Robbery', 'Cheating' etc., the crimes, that are directed specifically against ladies, are characterised as 'Crime against Women'. These are broadly classified under two categories.

**The Crimes Identified Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**

- Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)<sup>13</sup>
- Kidnapping & Abduction for different purposes ( Sec. 363-373)<sup>14</sup>
- Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)<sup>15</sup>
- Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)<sup>16</sup>
- Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)<sup>17</sup>
- Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC) and Importation of girls (up to 21 years of age)

(2) The Crimes identified under the Special Laws (SLL) Although all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women significantly have been reviewed periodically and amendments carried out to keep pace with the emerging requirements. Some acts which have special provisions to safeguard women and their interests are:

- The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948
- The Plantation Labor Act, 1951
- The Family Courts Act, 1954
- The Special Marriage Act, 1954
- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in 2005
- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995)
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
- The Contract Labor (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976
- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983
- The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

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<sup>13</sup> Rape (Sec. 376 IPC): Indian Penal Code, 1860

<sup>14</sup> Kidnapping & Abduction for different purposes( Sec. 363-373) : Indian Penal Code, 1860

<sup>15</sup> Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts(Sec. 302/304-B IPC) : Indian Penal Code, 1860

<sup>16</sup> Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC) : Indian Penal Code, 1860

<sup>17</sup> Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC) : Indian Penal Code, 1860



- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013  
Government has also enacted specific laws for the protection of women and for the up gradation of their status.

### **Marriage Related Laws**

- Special Marriage Act, 1954 --- Any girl of 18 years of age or boy of 21 years can take resort to this law irrespective of caste or religious considerations.
- Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 --- Marriage is deemed to be solemnised on the performance of certain rites, especially *Saptapadhi*; while first marriage subsists, second marriage is forbidden; right to judicial separation and divorce is made available on certain grounds like, for example, unsound of mind, conversion to a different religion, incurable or communicable diseases, etc.
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961--- Giving, abetting or taking dowry is a cognizable, non-bailable offense against the state and is not punishable with less than five years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 15,000 or the amount representing the value of the dowry.
- Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1955 --- An unmarried woman, a widow or a divorcee of sound mind can also take a child in adoption.<sup>18</sup>
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 --- To overcome the shortcomings of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, the Government of India enacted the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006. Which receives the assent of the president of India on 10 January, 2007? The act came into effect from 1 November, 2007 to overcome the constraints of the former legislation in effectively dealing with the problems of child marriage in India and to put in place a comprehensive mechanism.<sup>19</sup>

### **Property Related Laws**

- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 --- It vests women with rights in the matter of inheritance as well as the alienation of property at par with males.

### **Property Related Laws**

- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 --- It vests women with rights in the matter of inheritance as well as the alienation of property at par with males.
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 --- This Act is enacted for providing equal remuneration to men and women, thereby to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of sex.

### **Violence Related laws**

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 --- This Act was adopted in India as a follow-up of the International Convention on Immoral Traffic, 1950. This Act underwent several changes and exists today as the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956. This act aims at the prohibition of illegal traffic for purpose of sexual exploitation or abuse. It lays out procedure for rescue of a woman or girl.
- Commission of Sati (prevention) Act, 1987. --- This Act provides for the prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification. The Act lays out extensive provisions to check attempts to commit abet or glorify sati. The collector or District Magistrate is empowered by Act to offences relating to Sati.
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 --- This Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on 13<sup>th</sup> Sep., 2005. The act provided for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of any kind occurring within

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<sup>18</sup> SarlaGopalan, Role of govt in Empowerment of Women, in book Empowering the Indian Women, by PromillaKapur, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India. Pp. 317, 318.

<sup>19</sup>Handbook on the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. Under the Act 2005, Domestic Violence covers any abuse or threat thereof that is physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic.<sup>20</sup>

- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Provision and Redressal) Act 2013. —It is an act to provide protection against sexual harassment of women at work place and for the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Whereas sexual harassment results in violation of the fundamental rights of a women to equality under Article 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India and her right to life and to live with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution and right to practice any profession to carry on any occupation, trade or business which includes a right to a safe environment from sexual harassment.

And whereas the right to protection against sexual harassment and the right to work with dignity are universally recognised human rights by international conventions and instruments, such as Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, which has been ratified on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1993 by the Government of India.

And whereas it is expedient to make provisions for giving effect to the said Convention for protection of women against sexual harassment at work place.<sup>21</sup>

### **Women's Reservation Bill**

Since from 1990s debates and campaigns within the women's movement in India have certainly witnessed a new focus on women in electoral politics. Demands for reservation of seats first at the local level bodies (village councils and municipalities) and beginning in 1996, through vain attempts to pass legislation for a one-third quota in state and national assemblies would be clear indication of India's own investment in the dimension of gender equality. Therefore the passing of the Women's Reservation Bill in the Rajya Sabha on 9 March, 2010 marked a historic turning point in the story of Indian democracy.<sup>22</sup>

After being passed in the Rajya Sabha in 2010, the Bill, which provides for 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies, was sent to the Lok Sabha for approval, but did not see the light of the day for lack of political consensus and will.

Ironically it was just on 12 August 2014 that Congress president Sonia Gandhi made a pitch for the passing of the Women's (Constitution 108<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Bill. Speaking at a function in Thiruvananthapuram, Ms. Gandhi said that the UPA would mount pressure on the NDA to pass the Bill in Parliament —to honour its commitment to women.

And now, under Article 107 (5) of the Constitution, it is amongst the 68 government Bills that have lapse on the dissolution of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha. If the new government wants to give reservation to women, it will have to come up with a fresh legislation just as it did in the case of judicial appointments Bill.<sup>23</sup>

### **Recent developments**

The Government of India has declared 2001 as Women's management year. The national policy of management of ladies has set sure clear-cut goals and objectives. The policy aims at upliftment, development and management in socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects, by making in them awareness on varied problems in relevancy their management. The subsequent square measure the

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<sup>20</sup> The Gazette of India, Ministry of Law and Justice, New Delhi, 14 September, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> The Gazette of India, Ministry of Law and Justice, New Delhi, 23 April 2013.

<sup>22</sup> John. E Mary, —The Politics of Quotas and the Women's Reservation Bill in India. [www.cwds.ac.in/politics](http://www.cwds.ac.in/politics), 23 April, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Parsi. Gargi, —women Quotas Bill lapse due to lack of Consensus! The Hindu, 14 August, 2014.

precise objectives of National Policies significantly of rural folks on management of ladies in India. i. making associate degree atmosphere through positive economic and social policies for full development of ladies to modify them to comprehend their full potential. ii. The de-jure and de-facto enjoyments of all human rights and basic freedom by girls on equal basis with men altogether political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres. iii. Equal access to participation and higher cognitive process of ladies in social political and economic lifetime of the state. iv. Equal access to girls to health care, quality education the least bit levels, career and line steerage, employment, equal remuneration, activity health and safety, Social Security and public life etc., v. strengthening legal systems geared toward elimination of all sorts of discrimination against girls. 300 vi. dynamic social attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of each men and girls. vii. helpful a gender perspective within the development method. viii. Elimination of discrimination and every one sorts of violence against girls and therefore the woman child. ix. Encouraging and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations. The National policy for empowerment of women envisaged introduction of a gender perspective in the budgeting process as an operational strategy. Laws and legislations are enforced strictly for effective and proper implementation of this policy.

### **Women Empowerment and Protection**

Although there are some recent positive momentum, the rate of progress in realizing women's safety, protection and empowerment is still not adequate. This is reflected in the National Crime Records Bureau data, which highlighted that 3,09,546 incidents of crime against women (both under Indian Penal Code and other laws) were reported during the year 2013, as against the 2,44,270 cases reported during 2012, showing an increase of 26.7% (despite the fact that not all crimes against women are reported). The policy commitment to ensuring the safety, security and dignity of women NAVDISHA-National Thematic Workshop on Best Practices for Women and Child Development 20-21 January 2015 Panipat, Haryana Organised by Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India and Government of Haryana.<sup>24</sup>

Ministry of Women and Child Development and girls in public and private spaces was reaffirmed – including through the Twelfth Plan provisions, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.

Ensuring women's social, economic and political empowerment, fulfilment of their rights, promoting their participation and leadership requires comprehensive gender-responsive measures at different levels, including through legal, policy and institutional frameworks. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has given a new dimension to the process of women's empowerment, with women panchayat members emerging in many settings as change leaders. Now progressively, many states are earmarking 50% reservation for women in panchayati raj institutions. A major thrust for economic empowerment has been through the formation of thrift and credit based self-help groups (SHGs) formed by women – with states such as Andhra Pradesh demonstrating effective ways of making this a mass movement. Increased support for women SHGs in the National Rural Livelihood Mission and in MGNREGA with women having a share of 115.54 (53%) crore person days in 2013-14 have been positive developments. Successful linkages between SHGs and Micro-Finance institutions such as RMK, NABARD, and SIDBI besides private microfinance institutions have helped in generating additional income, jobs and in creating small enterprises for women.<sup>25</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The most critical component of women's empowerment is found to be education. It leads to improved economic growth, health and sanitation. Women's education leads participation rate in politics because of education. For well-balanced and sustainable social development, men and women must

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<sup>24</sup>At <https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/FinalBBBPRReport06042015.pdf>, as on 13Dec 2019

<sup>25</sup> At <https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/FinalBBBPRReport06042015.pdf>, as on 13Dec 2019

have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities: gender equality. Sport can make an important contribution to improving the position of women. Basically, there are two ways of stimulating gender equality. Gender mainstreaming aims to achieve equality in all activities of an organisation: policy, structure and culture. Activities specifically aimed at improving the position and participation of women are necessary for their empowerment.

## Women Participation on the Panchayat Raj System in India

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### Abstract

*In a modern era, women have actively participated in the all levels of political system in India. Though the Panchayat Raj, as a system of Governance has got efficient and flows in Indian polity ever since India attained Independence. At present it has gained momentum in development administration as a sequence of failures on the part of the Indian section in administrating development in the rural areas through various approaches modelled on the west. Panchayat as a unit of administration carried out its function within the framework established by the provision or the constitution of India. Success and failure of the units are attributed depending on the sway of the units over the rural populace. However, women have to improve themselves through education, take an interest in public and social affairs and become popular leaders themselves. This new system of Panchayat Raj which gives importance of women's participation in formal institution will help to rectify gender imbalances and to promote the interests of women. It has to be accepted that the increasing involvement of women in politics is necessary step for a sound democratic society.*

*Keywords: education, political system, Panchayat Raj, Social affairs, Women participation,*

### Introduction

Panchayat Raj, as a system of Governance has got efficient and flows in Indian polity ever since India attained Independence. At present it has gained momentum in development administration as a sequence of failures on the part of the Indian section in administrating development in the rural areas through various approaches modelled on the west. Panchayat as a unit of administration carried out its function within the framework established by the provision or the constitution of India. Success and failure of the units are attributed depending on the sway of the units over the rural populace. In ancient India village republics manifested the highest democratic tradition. Panchayat members were nominated by consensus or at time selected blots, their screening was very rigid. The Panchayats played a very vital role in promoting the material, moral and intellectual progress of villages, the institution of Panchayat survived with some changes during the Mughal and British periods. After independence Gandhiji expected that the constitution will restore to Panchayat their original position of dignity. He categorically stated that twenty men sitting at Delhi or Madras was no democracy. Article 40 in the Directive Principles says "The state shall take step to organize village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as a unit of self Government.

The system of Panchayat Raj, which was initiated mainly for people's participation in the political and economic process somehow has not been successful in ensuring women's participation. The champions of the Panchayat Raj system desired that rural women should not only become the beneficiaries of development, but more importantly the contributors to it. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1958) was particular that women should find representation in the rural political institutions. Hence it recommended that besides the twenty members of the Panchayat Sixty-three should be between women "Who are interested in working women and children" as co-opted members." A Similar provision was suggested with regard to the village Panchayat, a result of this recommendation a few states did make provision for Women's representation. The Maharashtra Zila Parishat and Panchayat Samiti Act of 1961, provided for the nomination of one or two women in case no women's elected. The Andrapradesh Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishat Act provided for the co-options of two women for each Samiti in addition to the possibility of women members finding membership in Panchayat samitis through the electoral process.

The Asoka Mehta Committee (1978) recommended that the P.R.I's be changed from instruments for the delivery of bureaucratic development programmes to structures for sharing Power thus giving greater decision making to local council. This stimulated enthusiasm for a while in some states such as West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra. Some states such as Karnataka and Maharashtra even took the bold step of reserving 25 to 30% of council seats for women. Some states gave up nomination or co-option and resorted to reservation as the only way of ensuring women's representation in the P.R.I's. The Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 provides for reservation of two seats for women if the total strength of gram panchayat is nine or less, three seats, if the strength is between ten and fifteen and four seats if the strength is more than fifteen. In other words, 22 to 25 percent representation to women in these bodies. The Karnataka Act reserved 25% seats for women in January 1990, Bihar amended Act provided 30% reservation of seats for women.

**The constitution (73rd) Amendment Act, 1992 Article 243 D3) reads:**

"Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled up by direct election in every panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat. And clause (4) of the Act has the following provisions not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayat at each level shall be reserved for women, Provided also that the number of offices reserved under this clause shall be allotted by rotation to different panchayats at each level. "Women's empowerment is one of the major objectives of the third generation of panchayats in India. As such, the 73rd Amendment Act provides for reservation of one-third of seats for women in the P.R.I's. The participation of women in P.R.I's is considered essential not only for ensuring political participation of women in the democratic process but also for realizing the developmental goals for women. Participation of women in P.R.I's involves.

(i) Women as voters

(ii) Women as members of political parties

(iii) Women as candidates

(iv) Women as elected members of the P.R.I's taking part in decision making, Planning, implementation and evaluation and

(v) Women as members of Mahila Mandalas and their association with voluntary organizations.

It is true that Panchayat Raj has brought about some degree of social change. This is achieved both directly and indirectly. A study on the Panchayat Raj and social change sponsored by the government of Assam pointed out that while there were many variations in the performance of Panchayat Raj from place to place its main role in changing the socio-economic life of the people could not be denied. There were changes in the value orientations of the people and in the leadership roles. The process of decision making got accelerated and the value of Panchayat Raj in serving as link between rural masses and the government at higher levels got recognized. Another important achievement of Panchayat Raj is that it increased the consciousness of the people about their rights. Rural people have increasingly become conscious of their social, economic and political rights. Panchayats have contributed to the emergence of new leadership in villages. With the introduction of Panchayat Raj, a number of officials like Block Development Officer, Mukhya Sevika, Gram Sevika, Social Extension officers in charge of health, education, social welfare and women welfare came into existence. These officials are supposed to play the role of agents of awareness.

However there were certain shortcomings, in the working of Panchayat Raj which proved expensive to the overall development policies launched by the government from time to time. The domination of the Panchayat Raj institutions by the economically and socially privileged classes have hampered the realization of the goals of Panchayat Raj institutions. The economically dominant social groups in the village maintained their supremacy in the panchayat and the weaker section of the society still live in economic dependence and exploitation continued as before. Majority of the rural people still behave on the patterns of caste and religion. An enlarged and empowered Panchayat System with 33%

membership of Women (including on their of total membership of SC/ST) alone can bring home the relevance and meaning or democracy at the local for women. A participation in the same will the effective experienced and politically trained women leaders from below. The experience of women functioning in many Semi-governmental and Non-governmental programmes like DWCRA, Mahila Mandalas, Mahilaamakhya, as well as other programmes have confirmed this belief.

### **Conclusion**

In the empowerment route, participation of women in decision making at all levels has special significance especially in a democratic set up. In our country the process of political empowerment has well begun when we adopted our Constitution and gained momentum when the Constitution was amended reserving for women one - third of seats in the local bodies, as also specified post of office bearers. This process is being taken to the zenith with the introduction of 81s Amendment bill providing for one-third reservation of seats for women in Lok Sabha (lower house) and state legislatures. However, women have to improve themselves through education, take an interest in public and social affairs and become popular leaders themselves. This new system of Panchayat Raj which gives importance of women's participation in formal institution will help to rectify gender imbalances and to promote the interests of women. It has to be accepted that the increasing involvement of women in politics is necessary step for a sound democratic society.

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## Women Participation on Politics in Tamil Nadu From 1937 to 1967

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### **Abstract**

*In the middle of twentieth century, Indian political system started existence gradually along with the British. Only few people were involved in politics, especially wealthy people and high class people. Besides, women participation was limited but their contributions cannot beat most in every field. Even before the independence of our country she started to contest election. However, even though large number of women started to vote, yet only a few of them assume the office. Though India has had women President, Prime Minister and Chief Minister in many states but yet in the world India rank sat bottom in terms of women's representation in politics and Tamil Nadu is no exception. Women's participation is very limited but their contributions cannot beat most in every field. On the contribution, women have concentrated to eradicate the social evils like Devadasi system. Thus their participation changes the society and exhibit the problems in legislative assembly. This chapter has to analyze the role of Women in Tamil Nadu politics and their political status their women in Tamil Nadu and to study the Contribution. It covers a period of 20 years from 1937 to 1967 with special reference to Congress Ministry.*

*Keywords: Devadasi system, Congress Ministry, political status, social evils, Women participation*

### **Introduction**

Women occupy an important place in the society and their presence cannot be under estimated. Since Sangam Age women have played an important role indecision making. Whether it's a house or office she has been part of the decision making. Due to the introduction of modern education, she has entered our Constitution has granted Universal Adult Franchise and she was able to vote and contest election, which paved way to enter politics. Even before the independence of our country she started to contest election. However, even though large number of women started to vote, yet only a few of them assume the office. Though India has women President, Prime Minister and Chief Minister in many states but yet in the world India ranks at bottom in terms of women's representation in politics and Tamil Nadu is no exception. Women's participation is very limited but their contributions cannot beat most in every field. It's important to study the role of women in Tamil Nadu legislative assembly and understand their contribution. This chapter has to analyze the role of Women in Tamil Nadu politics and their political status their women in Tamil Nadu and to study the Contribution. It covers a period of 20 years from 1937 to 1967 with special reference to Congress Ministry.

### **1937 Election**

The status of women in politics can be defined as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of power and in the value given by society. Since 1920 election have been conducted all over India, the then largest party Congress did not participate in the all the election till 1937. In Tamil Nadu Rajaji formed the government in 1937 and his government lasted only for two years. In 1939 when the World War II started all the ministry in India resigned. In Tamil Nadu Rajaji also resigned. In 1946 after the World War II, elections for the provincial legislature held for 215 seats, Congress Party won a majority and T. Prakasam assumed the office in Madras in 1946, his cabinet consists of eleven ministers and it had only one women minster, RukmaniLakshmi pathi. She was made in-charge of Public Health and Medical Department. She was the first and only woman minister in the Madras Presidency. Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy was the only representative in the Council. Though women activity participated in all sorts of struggles during the independent movement; regarding their own independence they did not demand more than what the men were readily to grant them.



### **First election in independent India 1952-1957**

The First Legislature of erstwhile Tamil Nadu under the Constitution of India was constituted in March 1952, after the first General Election held in January 1952, on the basis of adult suffrage." Total seats were 375 and Congress won 152 and Communist won 62 seats. In the first election 24 women contested and only two women won. Mrs. Soundaram Ramachandran from Tamil Nadu and Mrs. Tamma Kottamma Reddy, from Andhra Pradesh, Tamma Kottamma Reddy resigned her post on 18th March 1952, as a revolt for demanding separate Andhra. The then Madras Presidency consisted of 375 constituencies and 1677 members contested the election. In the initial stage there as was women minister under Rajaji's ministry in 1937 and also during his second tenure when he assumed the office in 1952 but after the formation of Andhra Pradesh, there was changes in the council and Smt. Jothi Venkatachellam became the minister in 1953.

### **Second Assembly Election 1957 -1962**

In the Second General Election the Congress under the leadership of Kamaraj contested 201 constituencies and won 151 seats securing 45.3 percent votes. In these election 24 women contested all over after their assignation of Rajaji when K. Kamaraj became the Chief Minister in 1954 no women was made a minister but only during his second tenure in 1957, he had four women Tamil Nadu and 12 women got elected .new faces in his ministry and only one minister, Smt. Lourdharmal Simon.

### **Third Assembly Election 1962 - 1967**

The Third Election in 1962 was held for 206 Assembly seats. The Congress won 139 seats, in that 20 women contested election and 13 women got elected. Still only one woman was appointed as minister under the new ministry of K. Kamaraj in 1962. She was given Minister for Health, Minister in-charge of Public Health and Medicine; Women's and Children's Welfare: Orphanage; Accommodation Control. She held the office till 1963 when K. Kamaraj resigned."Under M. Bhakthavachalam's period again she was given Minister for Public and additional in-charge for Beggars and Cinematograph On 3rd October 1963, Bhaktavatsalam assumed the office," and he was the last Congress Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu And in fourth assembly election in 1967 16 women contested but only four got elected. And in Anna durai's ministry also only one woman Sathyavani Muthu, became the Minister for Harijan Welfare and information. In the fifth State General election in 1971, only nine women contested and five got elected and Dr. Kannanidhi's period also saw the same condition: Sathyavani Muthu was given the ministry post. In Sixth Assembly Election during Dr. M.G. Ramachandran period election 18 women contested and only two got elected and both became the ministers. This is the first time since independence two women became ministers in one term. Tamil Nadu got the first Chief Minister in 1988. Saw Janaki Ammal become but her period lasted only for 23 days.

### **Contribution of Women Ministers**

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century one of the worst problems which young girls faced was *Devadasi* system Dr. Muthulaxmi Reddy introduced a bill which prevented the dedication of women to Hindu temples. The Bill survived the opposition of the orthodox and became law. It was known as the Prevention of Dedication Act, 1930." It also declared illegal and the dedicated women could contract valid marriages. The passing of the *Devadasi* Bill is the best achievement of Muthulaxmi as a legislator." This was a success for the Hindu women, who were legally allowed to lead a legal and moral life. She also brought an amendment to Children's Act of 1920, according to which adoption of girl children by *Devadasi* women should be prohibited and guardian ship over such adopted children should be stopped because Such adopted children were being led to the immoral by *Devadasi* women.

**Mrs. Ammanna Raj** introduced The Madras *Devadasi* Prevention of Dedication Bill in the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1938. She requested to send the Bill consideration Rajagopalachari, then Premier announced that should be circulated for the public opinion. The Bill had the provisions for the abolition of dedication of women, marriages for the *Devadasis* and property rights. But the Bill couldn't be passed as the Congress Ministry resigned n 1939.

**Rukmini Lakshmipathi** was elected to the Madras Legislative Council as a Congress candidate in 1935. Again in 1937 she was elected but this time to the Madras Legislative Assembly and she was

made Deputy Speaker during the first Congress Ministry. In 1946 under T. Prakasam's ministry she was made Health Minister. As a Health minister she participated in the State Health Minister's conference held in New Delhi and passed a resolution to give importance to *Ayurveda* and *Unani* System of Medicine. During her period malaria eradication program was implemented in Madras Presidency. She established Medical College in Madurai and Guntur. She appointed Indian doctors in the Health Department instead of European doctors. She started maternity care in villages and attempted to improve the health conditions of the poor people." Madras State Cancer Association was formed because of her effort in 1946.

**Smt. Jothi Venkatachellam**, was the first woman minister of Tamil Nadu after independence. She was appointed as the Minister for Prohibition and Social Welfare in the Rajaji's Ministry in the year 1953. During the question hour on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1954, as a Minister of Prohibition, she appealed to the liquor permit holders to surrender their permits for their own benefit and asked them to co-operate with the Government to make prohibition a success." In 1962 she again was in ministry and made the Minister of Public Health. Her special interest was in Harijan welfare and upliftment of women and children. She started Government Medical Colleges in Coimbatore, Tirunelveli, Tanjore and Chengalpattu.

**Smt. Lourdh Ammal Simon** a teacher from Kanyakumari won Colachel constituency appointed as the Minister for Local Administration and fisheries during 1957- 1962. There are several reasons for her inclusion in the ministry, first to give presentation to women, to the Christian minority fishermen community and lastly to represent the newly constituted district Kanyakumari." She introduced new Panchayat Raj system in the State. The above elected women ministers had good academic background, and economically strong. One thing to notice was all of them had actively participated freedom struggles. Moreover, they got the support from their family as well as from the Congress Party. In spite of all these efforts their numbers were very few. This was not only in Congress Ministry, but can be seen in DMK's Ministry and the condition was the same during MGR's regime.

The research shows only women from the educated and with political family background became the ministers. Women lack family as well as party support. There was limited political access to women. Our Indian tradition has strong by patriarchal value system and the political life is also organized according to male norms and values. But now in the worldwide their number has been doubled from 3.4 percent in 1996 to 6.8 percent in 2004. In 48 countries, there were no women ministers at all. Women ministers remain concentrated more on social issues (14%) compared to legal (9.4%), economic (4.1) political affairs (3.4%) and the executive (3.9%). "A critical mass of 30% women at the ministerial level has been achieved in five countries - Barbados, Finland, Liechtenstein, Seychelles and Sweden. This shows that women are gradually making their way in politics. In India very little progress has been achieved, with the proportion of women ministers is below 10 %. In order to achieve this (30%) in India, firstly 33% women's reservation Bill needs to be passed. Otherwise it will remain a dream only. Indian women had to go a long way to achieve. In spite all these low percentage of women ministers in Tamil Nadu, they have passed several Bills and passed Acts in the Legislative Assembly. One cannot deny their dedication and contribution towards the society.

### **Conclusion**

Historically, Madras was the first state given priority to the women in politics revealed the significance of this place. In ancient women were celebrated and contributed several fields. But mediaeval era was diluted the importance of women participation in the fields, especially politics. However, the British era, the circumstances were changed gradually, and participation politics in India. According to Tamil Nadu was the forerunner to give preference to the women ever. Perhaps, several women actively participated in the politics and changed the social evils, particularly fought against women problems. Thus, the women participation was the only solution to change the society and solve the social problems ever.

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## Women in Politics – A Review

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### ABSTRACT

*Women all over the world has a vital role to play. The participation of women in politics is a crucial step in the empowerment of women at all levels. In India, during Pre- Independence women were involved in freedom struggles against British empire. The post-Independence era showed a decline in the political involvement of women in India. The laws in India provide equal rights and participation to men and women. But still the lacuna is visible in terms of women participation in politics. There are many social, economic and ritual barriers which restrict women's participation in politics in India. The participation of women in European countries has shown steady improvement and their role has improved. An ordinary woman can't think or take an adverse step to join politics. Illiteracy and non-holding of property also limit women's involvement in politics at local or national level. The European countries like Finland and Iceland work for gender parity at local and national levels. In India, still the women's role is restricted to daily chores and child rearing. But due to the increasing levels of literacy in India and worldwide, women are trying to enter politics. Rwanda, a country in African continent has more women representatives in Parliament. Women representation and their decision-making initiatives can improve gender balance and dignity. The change can bring drastic effect on society and the respective country. As Mahatma Gandhiji has rightly said that women 's participation in public life can improve the status of women. The discrimination, rape and molestation cases can drastically be reduced for the development of society. In India, where cases of rape have increased with every passing day, the empowerment and political participation of women will decrease such cruelties. The women's role is also very important at homes, which will influence the daughters of their homes. The restriction of women in decision – making and empowerment effects the home, society, local and national politics as well.*

*Keywords: Empowerment, Gender, Politics, Women*

### INTRODUCTION

Political participation has been defined in various ways. Political participation means not only exercising the right to vote, but also power sharing, co-decision making, co-policy making at all levels of governance of the state.

Women's lives in India and the world over are circumscribed by what can be termed as five 'Ps'. Patriarchy, Productive resources access inadequacy, Poverty, Promotion advancement insufficiency and powerlessness (Shodhganga1).

Democracy implies equality for all human persons, men and women. As against this basic notion of democracy what is normally seen is that women are excluded from different walks of life, more visibly in Politics. Equal treatment to women in political life, to be meaningful and effective should start from the grassroots level.

'As long as women of India' declared Mahatma Gandhi in 1925 'do not take part in public life, there can be no salvation for the country (Shodhganga2).

The gender in equality prescribed during childhood shapes the future of the society and women's place within it. The disparity in education between girls and boys demonstrates how the upbringing of each child differs depending on gender. For those who do receive education, the subject choices encouraged and curricula are inherently gender – biased. Similarly, perceptions of gender- acceptable occupations curb ambitions of boys and girls alike, though arguably the field is narrowed more for the later (Stein and Trent, 2012)

## **POLITICS AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION**

The role of women in politics has been instrumental. She participated in the freedom struggle and made her voice to the oppressors. They were to be seen matching the steps of men during every movement which led to the usurping of the British Empire. There were many notable names as Rani Lakshmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, Aruna Asaf Ali, Raj kumari Amrit kaur, Sucheta Kriplani and a host of others who were to be seen as saviours of Indian freedom struggle (Kumar et al., 2016).

The constitution of India guaranteed justice – social, economic and political, liberty of thought and equality to all citizens. Constitution provided for equality of women and called state to take measures to neutralise the socio- economic, educational and political disadvantage faced by women.

Article 14: It guarantees equality before law and equal protection of law with or territory of India

Article 15: It prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth. According to article 15(3), state can make special provision for the benefit of women and children.

Article 16: Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matter relating to employment. No citizen can be denied employment on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, residence or any of them.

Article 39: Article 39(a) provides for an adequate means of livelihood for all citizen. Article 39(b) has provisions for equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Article (c) has provisions for securing the health and strength of workers, men and women and not to abuse the tender age of children.

Article 42: It guarantees just and humane condition of work and maternity relief. Article 42 is in accordance with Article 23 and 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 325 and 326: They guarantee political equality, equal right to participate in political activity and right to vote respectively.

Article 243b(D): It provides for the political reservation to women in every panchayat election. It has extended this reservation to elected office as well.

In spite of the above provisions, participation of women in politics has not improved significantly. The increase in the number of women in legislature definitely will not bring overnight changes in the status of women. It is foolishness to think that it will solve the entire problems faced by women and bring equality immediately. It is also true that powerful women leaders in our politics have failed to do much to the women in India. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution of India with 3.33% reservation for women has given opportunity for the entry of large number of socially marginalized category such as women to enter into the domain of local institution and their performance is very encouraging (Nisha and Vezhaventhan, 2018).

## **POLITICS FOR ORDINARY WOMEN**

The staying power of women in politics is also limited due to the fact that while they may get support and even get to be treated as heroines if they win an election, very few women are allowed to remain politically active once they lose an election. A woman also continues to devote time to politics even after the electoral setback gets to be looked down on as a hopeless addict like a wayward man hooked on drugs or liquor.

Our democracy will become meaningful when ordinary women can take part in political deliberations without having to make heroic sacrifices and prove themselves stronger than men over and over again. In the existing circumstances, even talented women cannot stay in politics on their own steam especially if they married and have families. Women need the following conducive conditions in order to participate effectively in the public realm:

- a supportive family, preferably one with a political background
- someone from within the extended family willing to take over a large part of the family responsibility, especially the care of kids

- a good amount of surplus money in the family (Kishwar, 1997)

### **OBSTACLES IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Illiteracy is one of the main hurdles in making women as politically empowered. Because of lack of understanding they do not know about their basic and political rights. The parties not only discriminate in terms of seat allotments in the elections, but also in the party ranks. Patriarchal context of India is also the reason for non-involvement of women in the political arena. There are many reasons which are restricting women from being politically active. These reasons include the existing societal value system, the private-public divide in terms of domain identification and male preponderance in political institutions. Because of their low proportion in inner political party structure of India, they are failed to gather resources and support for nurturing their political constituencies. Women do not get adequate financial support from the political parties to contest the elections. Traditional roles assigned to them are also major constraints in women's political participation. Because of unequal distribution of resources or lack of resources and lack of education, they do not avail sufficient political training.

Poverty is also a great challenge in realizing women's political participation. The girl child in a poor family is the main victim and has to face many problems. Mostly women in India do not own lands and properties. They even hardly get share in their parent's property (Alam, 2015)

### **REASONS FOR LOW REPRESENTATION**

The main factors attributed to low representations could be (a) socio - historic forces inherited from nationalist movements, current social policies and the gendered nature of citizenship in hampering women's political participation in government structures, elections and community organisations (b) lack of reservation of seats for women in the Parliament and state legislatures (c) the lack of national consensus and willingness among political parties to give more tickets to women in elections (d) perpetuation of a patriarchal political structure together with class, caste and gender subordination acting as strong deterrents to women contesting elections and (e) the lack of awareness and knowledge of electoral politics combined with lack of support from the family and political parties in resources, severely affects women's chances to contest and win elections.

Even at the second strata of women's participation in electoral process as candidates in elections there are inherent barriers and restrictions imposed by political parties that severely restrict their chances of candidature (Rai, 2011)

### **GENDER BALANCE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

Gender equality within the political sphere or 'parity democracy', requires the full integration of women on an equal footing with men at all levels and in all areas of the workings of a democratic society. Parity democracy is necessary not only to uphold social justice and women's rights, but as an important condition of effective democracy and good governance that strengthens and enhances the democratic system. A key element of this is achieving gender balance in gender making positions: that is, equal (or near equal) representation of women and men in any decision-making body in public and political life (such as the European Parliament).

Increased descriptive representation (or a quantitative increase in women in politics) has sometimes been advocated on the grounds that women politicians tend to identify with and want to represent the interests of other women in society and the more there are, the more they are able to represent those interests.

Gender balance must be viewed as only one important element of gender equality in the political sphere (McCracken et al., 2019)

### **BEING A WOMAN IN POLITICS**

In 2019, there are four countries in Europe that can boast more than 40% women elected at the local level: France, Iceland, Sweden and Ukraine. In 2008, there were only three: Ukraine, Latvia, Sweden. Seventeen countries now have between 30% to 40% women on their municipal councils. Ten years ago, there were only seven.

Today there are thirteen countries where women account for 20% to 30% of the municipal councils. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Israel, Romania and Turkey, the proportion of women local elected representatives remains below 20%.

The obstacles faced by women in politics are structural, sociological and cultural. There can be a number of determining factors for women aspiring to stand for election: the selection process and electoral system, self-confidence, culture and historical inertia, work – life balance considerations limited access to funding and the media.

Women who engage in politics also must deal with the difficulty of reconciling their public and private lives (Ceciarini, 2019)

### **PARLIAMENTARY PROGRESS IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

The ECA (Europe and Central Asia) region has made significant progress towards gender equality in political participation, in part due to the successes of gender equality committees in parliament, women's caucuses, political parties and cross- sector alliances and network.

Gender- sensitive internal parliamentary policies, procedures, rules and practices are the pillars of a gender – friendly, non- discriminatory working culture and environment, which on increase representation in practice by validating the views, perspectives and priorities of both women and man, whether serving as elected officials or as parliamentary staff.

Parliamentary women's caucuses and councils play important roles in advocacy and awareness – raising activities, and cultivate relationships with actors outside elected office. Their contributions are tangible in advocating for equal representation of women and men in elected office through temporary special measures, engaging in public awareness – raising on policy- related issues, and promoting gender- sensitive legislative reforms.

In 2016, in Ukraine, the Equal Opportunities Inter- Faction Union initiated the creation of the Public council on Gender aimed at the unifying and coordinating the efforts of MPs, civil society and international organizations to promote and advance gender equality. The council's main objective is to introduce a coordination and knowledge management platform to ensure information flow and cooperation on gender issues between key stake holders in the country. The council has six permanent thematic groups:

- Group 1: Political participation (Promote women's participation in decision – making and elections, promote women leadership)
- Group 2: Security and peace – building (monitor the implementation of the National Action plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, Peace and security, support women's participation in peace – building)
- Group 3: Gender – sensitive parliament (ensure gender mainstreaming in reforms, legislation, European integrating processes and procedures and streamline regulatory frameworks on legislative and parliamentary business processes in parliament)
- Group 4: Economic empowerment (promote gender - sensitive budgeting, support women's entrepreneurship, strengthen women's decision – making in the economic sphere)
- Group 5: Implementation of the Istanbul convention (support ratification and adherence)
- Group 6: Gender education (promote gender- sensitive education, including of state servants, civic activists, journalists) (Sadasivam, 2016)

### **WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT WORLDWIDE**

Women, who are considered to be the corner stone of society, women in the modern era are representing the politics of most countries around the world. Women are playing an important role in creating society.

Women in Parliaments in 2017 – World average (Kumar, 2017)

<b>Representation of women in parliaments – world average</b>			
<b>Lower House</b>		<b>Upper House</b>	
<b>Total MPs</b>	<b>39192</b>	<b>Total MPs</b>	<b>6872</b>
Men	29924	Men	5291
Women	9268	Women	1581
% of women	23.6%	% of women	23.0%

Best performer country in the world to be a women’s representation in Politics (Kumar, 2017)

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Continent</b>	<b>%W</b>
1	Rwanda	Africa	55.6
2	Bolivia	America	51.8
3	Cuba	America	48.9
4	Iceland	Europe	47.6
5	Nicaragua	America	45.7
6	Sweden	Europe	43.6
7	Finland	Europe	42
8	Senegal	Africa	41.8
9	Mexico	America	41.4
10	South Africa	Africa	41.2

Low performer country in the world to be a women’s representation on Politics (Kumar, 2017)

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Continent</b>	<b>%W</b>
1	Maldives	Asia	5.9
2	Sri Lanka	Asia	5.8
3	Nigeria	Africa	5.7
4	Thailand	Asia	4.8
5	Kuwait	Arab-Asia	3.1
6	Lebanon	Arab-Asia	3.1
7	Haiti	America	2.7
8	Yemen	Arab-Asia	0.5
9	Qatar	Arab-Asia	0

## CONCLUSION

The participation of women in politics can bring a social movement in India. The number of women being educated has increased also their voting preferences and participation in India. This change will surely and gradually increase political participation of women in future. The policies specially in India needs to be changed which can change gender imbalance. Women in India are always left out when best has to be given. In such cases especially in politics, Men are preferred. Women are brilliant in all spheres, but when it comes to politics and seat sharing – Men are accepted. This gender imbalance has been observed and felt since many years. This set up needs a change. Without women’s participation, there cannot be a nation’s progress. The role of Indian women in freedom struggle is noteworthy.

Thus, a woman participation in politics can change the gender imbalance but it needs change at enforcement levels. Further active participation of women is required at decision making levels so that proper laws are implemented against unlawful activities. There is growing momentum among government and civil society to foster and ensure women’s participation in the political arena and specifically within local governance structures. Establishing quotas for women’s representation at different levels of government has been a strategic tactic in achieving this goal in many countries. In India, the constitution (73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act), enacted in 1992, mandated the reservation of a minimum of one-third of sets for women (both as member and as chairpersons) within all of India’s



locally elected governance bodies commonly referred to as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) (Bhatla et al., 2012)

The importance of equal participation of women in politics and especially in decision making positions, is not simply about equal numbers, it is about cultivating an environment that values women's perspectives, recognizes women as change-makers and leverages differences to improve democratic governance. Gender equality is at the heart of UNDP's mandate. It is a matter of human rights, but also a driver of development progress. By empowering women as agents of change and leaders in the development processes that shape their lives, UNDP envisions a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient world (Pettigrove, 2015)

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## A Socio-Legal Study on Empowerment of Women in India

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### Abstract

*Women constitute the half of the world population, perform nearly two-thirds of its hours, receive one tenth of the world's income and less than one hundredth of the property, even in the last quarter of 21<sup>st</sup> century their suffer is a irreparable loss to our society, "Women is in helpless victims of discrimination, and have, for long, been treated as second class citizen. The new law pertaining to property rights of women is another legislative attempt for women empowerment. In this last path new millennium there is a hue and cry over the world about discrimination. Altogether with swelling literatures on empowerment of women and with voluminous amount of public expenditure on women empowerment schemes, it becomes imperative to understand the concept of empowerment of women so as to have a better understanding of its policy implications and also the victimization in different vicinities of the society. The status and role of women and related issues, have attracted the attention of the academicians, political thinkers and social scientists both in developing as well as developed countries, partially due to the observance of the International Decade of Women years and partially because of the widely accepted truth that a society built on the inequality of men and women involves wastage of human resources which no country can afford. The present paper tries to focus on the measurement of empowerment of women through enhancement in autonomy in decision making wherein women's participation in employment acts as a catalyst. There is a still need of well defined programmes, which have tendency to tackle with the current situation of darkness in this field and more towards a fruitful future in which an equalized situation of women could be raised and prosper in every endeavour. In this research paper an attempt has been made to introspect the various issues of women victimization and also discrimination, that is a setback for social progress and denial of social and other form of justice at a large interest of the justice.*

### Introduction

The course of human history is replete with instances of war whose ruthlessness, brutality, butchery and inhumanity have shocked the human science. This Society is in a continuous process of an evolution. Since the dawn of civilization, in India and elsewhere the women are treated as second class citizenry. It will take several decades for these imbalances to be rectified. Social democracy for its full strength requires the women empowerment. A powerful generation is impossible without the powerful women; Power here means the economic and social power to the legal scale. In this present era of equity and human rights, the women from womb to tomb suffer from submissiveness. It will reveal undoubtedly that they are victims in many forms of discrimination. But the women have also right to live their luminous amplitude. Education is the backbone of society to eradicate the evils and unethical subjects. Education eradicates the dark to the path of limelight to every human being to exercise right in accordance with the norms of the society. Education is manifestation and perceptions for both man and woman. It is our duty and obligation to respect the cultural value and do not alter the traditional position that perpetuates discrimination. Victimization is also an another alarm in this modern scenario ...

"To treat all woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, woman is less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior: Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart that woman.....Mahatma Gandhi.

Law can only be an instrument of change that must be effectively used in a proper manner. The absence of an effective law enforcement agency creates havoc inside the society. It is necessary that deterrent punishments are provided in the statute, and are strictly enforced. The forces of globalization and extremism and the unwillingness of other segments of humanity continue to pose a threat to women's human rights. Structural inequalities and power imbalances facilitate such violations. Urge for easy money, at times greed, facilitating a life full of comforts, possibly luxury, has in the recent few years made women more susceptible to exploitation and violence. In spite of all these developments, the truth remains that widespread violations of women's rights continue to persist in all respects.

There is a new beginning has certainly been made in urban areas. Working women continue to remain primarily responsible for taking care of home and child rearing, in addition to their careers. Increased stress has made them more prone to heart and other stress related diseases. Woman by no means inferior to man in any respect and can perform all functions equally well if not better, though she might be found wanting when it comes to brute force of the savage end, she is better endowed with the gifts of civilization. There is no reason why a woman should be discriminated against simply for being a woman. Which affect them empowerment of women is the prerequisite to transform a developing country into a developed country. Women empowerment generally has five components:

- firstly, women's sense of self worth;
- secondly, their right to have the power of control their own lives, both within and outside home;
- Thirdly their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a just social and economic order nationally, internationally and universally.
- This educational attainment and economic participation are they key constituents in ensuring the empowerment of women.
- The economic empowerment of women is a vital element of strong economic growth in any country.
- Empowering women enhances their ability to influence changes and to create a better society. The status and role of women and related issues have attracted the attention of the academicians, political thinkers and social scientists both in developing as well as developed countries.

The constitution of India ensures dignity and honour for all women and envisages women empowerment. The male dominated society does not recognize the widely accepted truth that a society built on the inequality of men and women involves wastage of human resources, which no country can afford too but the autonomy in decision making capacity as an indicator of empowerment with respect to their working status. Women have proved themselves as equals in many professions as well as proved themselves even better suited than men in some. The situation for the changing role of Women is improving fast. Women are educated; they have achieved great stature in all industries. Bureaucracy, sports, media, women have become a familiar sight. A modern woman has indeed arisen above the past nations, about her inferior status. She fears no authoritative men; she strives to stand parallel to man and is independent. Education has given women enlightenment and a vision. They have realized that they aren't mere puppets in the society but a pillar without which the foundation of society is incomplete. "It has traditionally been accepted that the thread of family weaves the fabric of Indian society. Women are considered as the hub centre of the family. Still, in the era of political domination by foreigners, the women in India suffered most. Women Empowerment is most vital system to strengthen the future of women in India. It is a systematic approach which needs to develop more seriously in India.

### **Empowerment of women**

The Empowerment is defined as "Empowerment is described as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them." Social inclusion is defined as "the removal of institutional barriers and

the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities.” Thus, empowerment process operates “from below” and involves agency, as exercised by individuals and groups. Social inclusion, in contrast, requires systemic change that may be initiated “from above.” Women in this country have been socially and economically handicapped. They have been deprived of equal participation in the socio-economic activities of the nation. They equal to men in all aspects. Women are more perfectionists in the power to create, nurture and transform.

In this present context women are emerging as leaders in growing range of fields. Be it aeronautics, medicine, space, engineering, law, politics, education, business one can just name the profession and they are there and became a respectable persons of the society. In India, the empowerment process has already begun. We are now witnessing a steady improvement in the enrolment of women in schools, colleges and universities and also even in profession institutes. Plethora of laws has been enacted to protect the women from various crimes. Empowerment of women could only be achieved if their enhancement of educational, economical and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women and to make them realize that they have the potential to be strong human beings by which they can challenge every prospect of life in every endeavor.

Women's empowerment benefits the society at large and is the magic key to a family's as well as a nation's well being. Women empowerment in Swami Vivekananda established “Shri Ramakrishna Mission” and gave importance to women education and self-dependence. There could be statistical swells indicating improvements in indicators of gender equality, but unless the intervening process involved women as agents of that change, one cannot term it as empowerment. Whereas the role of agency in the discourse on empowerment assumes prime importance, gender equality or equity indicates the degree of equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests and requiring a redistribution of power and resources. Though they constitute half of world's population, even today, they suffer the curse of discrimination. Their problems need to be examined in this present context. That no one can be deprived from the doors of natural justice. According to Naila Kabeer, empowerment is “the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.” According to him, empowerment cannot be reduced to a single aspect of process or outcome. How women exercise choice and the actual outcomes will depend on the individual. Choices will vary across class, time and space. Moreover, impacts on empowerment perceived by outsiders might not necessarily be those most valued by women themselves.

### **Constitutional provisions for women**

The constitution of India, which is the supreme law of the land guarantees special protection to women against exploitation and makes provisions for giving them opportunity for their moral development. The enshrined article equality before law and equal protection of law has provided with prohibition of discrimination. It also guarantees the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth., excluding that also number of other rights as right to freedom, right against exploitation, freedom of religion etc. The Constitution of India has taken a long leap in the direction of eradicating the lingering effects of such adverse forces so far as women are concerned. It recognizes women as a class by itself and permits enactment of laws and reservations favoring them. Several articles in our Constitution make express provision for affirmative action in favor of women. It prohibits all types of discrimination against women and lays a carpet for securing equal opportunity to women in all walks of life, including education, employment and participation. There is also one provision in the directive principles of state policy. In the Article 51 of the Constitution obligates the State to honour international law and treaty obligations. Our natural obligation to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women has been elevated to the status of fundamental duty by Article 51-A protects and promotes the self dignity of mankind. there could be statistical swells indicating improvements in indicators of gender equality, but unless the intervening process involved women as agents of that change, one cannot term it as empowerment. Understanding empowerment in this way means that development agencies cannot claim to empower women rather they can provide appropriate external

support and intervention, which can however be important to foster and support the process of empowerment i.e., act as facilitators. In pursuance with the constitutional mandate, looking to the women population of the country the Union and State government have taken various legislative and executive measures to extend protection to women against exploitation.

The constitution provides various safeguard measures to women and legislation have been passed and amended from time to time with the existing laws to prevent crime against women. The incidence of crime has not yet decreasing it is alarming in every nook corner of the society. There is a hue and cry over this universe regarding this subject and object that women all over the world were oppressed, be it within the premises of their homes or outside. However, with the refinement of life and human race, some simmering of gender equality issues have emerged wherein, more and more women, as well as the governments are focusing on equality of women and their empowerment. There are innumerable thoughts and expressions are viewed into exception, at a large in the third world countries like India, women are more likely to be poor and illiterate as compared to men. Not only that, they are also often a victim of traditional biases that give them little or no rights to property ownership, lack of education, employment, medical care and control over their own destinies. They are also often the victims of acute domestic violence.

### **Discrimination against women**

In India women are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social participation, economic opportunity and economic participation, political participation, access to education or access to nutrition and reproductive health care. A significant few in the society still consider women as sex objects. Gender disparity is high, crimes against women are increasing and violence against women is all time high and in most cases go unreported. Dowry related problems and death is increasing and is profoundly manifesting in the urban population. Workplace harassment of women is another phenomenon which is rapidly increasing as more women join the workforce. Early age marriages are still taking place in large numbers and the number of girls going to school is abysmally low. Moreover majority of the girls who join the school drop out by the age of puberty to get married and live a life of drudgery. Female feticide and infanticide is starring the nation as one of the biggest social crisis. Majority of Women in India are poor, uneducated and insufficiently trained. They often end up in the daily struggle of managing an ill equipped family and are not in a position to propel out themselves of the oppressive and regressive social and economic conditions. Female infanticide is one of the biggest crimes against humanity that is being designated as victim of tyranny rampant practice inside the society.

The patriarchal system encourages a male child and considers women as a property or liability from the day she is born. There is an upsetting place still remains for Indian women is the negative sexual attention that women often receive. Indian societies have received notoriety for being unsafe for women. Whereby the fair sex is not only being hassled, stalked and raped but incidents of immoral trafficking also are very high. Add to this the heinous practice of female feticide and infanticide wherein nearly 10 million baby girls have been killed in the last twenty years alone. In fact, the level of atrocities against women is an indicator of the coercion of our society and underscores that we have a suppressed society. The human race women have been always looked down upon as an inferior creature of this civic society. Clearly, safety is an obsolete word in this rem. India has no exception out of its ulcer.

### **Law engineer's justice**

There is an ample of legislations and also the legislature has taken necessary steps to protect the plight of women by enacting a plethora of law. Law's have taken silent and slow steps in the direction of political participation of women preventing gender biases and removing lacunas in procedural laws and laws relating to evidence. The law cannot change a society overnight, but it can certainly ensure that the disadvantaged are not given a raw deal. The courts can certainly go beyond mere legality insulating women against injustice suffered due to biological and sociological factors. But all law is not justice; nor is all justice law alone. At times there could be more justice without law and likewise there could be times when strict adherence to, or mindless application of laws, could lead to injustice.

Justice is a combination of various factors: enactment of laws responsive to the changing needs of time, their effective enforcement, progressive and proactive interpretation and application so as to fill up any void that is left and not taken care of by statutory enactments. It is the duty of law enforcement agencies to prevent crimes against women but they fail to solve this scourge alone. We need to accept the truth that there is a great discrepancy in the ideology and the actual practice of empowerment policy in India. Everything is happening at a very superficial level and the time has come to find out an actionable path at the ground level for real and measurable change in every respect. After independence the government of India has taken following legislative measures for safeguarding women's interest. That legislations and out of some are enumerated below one after another;

The Special Marriage Act-1954., Act fixed the age of marriage at 21, males and 18 for females and provided right to women for inter-caste marriage, love marriage and registered marriage.

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955-prohibits child marriage, polygamy, polyandry & provides equal rights to women to divorce and to remarry.

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956- provides right to parental property.

The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 – according to this Act childless woman can adopt a child and claim maintenance from her husband if she is divorced by him.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961-prevents giving and taking dowry and women exploitation.

The Suppression of Immoral Traffic of Women and Girls Act, 1956

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act -1971

The Criminal Law Amendment Act,-1983

The Family Court Act- 1984

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986

Constitutional Provisions for Empowering Women in India

Equality of law and equal protection before law for all persons (Article-14); Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15(i)); However, special provisions may be made by the state in favour 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); (v) 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, via; Panchayat's and Municipalities (Articles 343(d) and 343 (T)).In spite of the various measures taken up by the government after Independence and even during British rule the Women haven't been fully empowered. We may be proud of women in India occupying highest offices of President, Prime Minister, Lok-sabha Speaker, Leader of the Opposition or women occupying highest positions in the Corporate Sector but the fact remains that we still witness dowry deaths, domestic violence and exploitation of women. The female foeticide is not an uncommon phenomenon in this critical juncture of present context.

The Empowerment of women has become one of the most important Concerns of 21<sup>st</sup> century not only at national level but also at the international level. Efforts by the Govt. are on to ensure Gender equality but Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and Women have full opportunities of Self decision making and participating in the Social, Political and Economic life of the Country with a sense of equality. The people are having hope and aspiration over the judiciary. Activism of Judiciary delivers justice to all without any discrimination. Judiciary is duty bound to do best for the next. Judiciary interprets and implements the laws. A judge is an eyewitness to a real-life

drama—how the script written by the legislature is played by real-life characters. The parties while critically evaluating the laws may tend to have a partisan look; a judge can make a correct and realistic evaluation of the laws and find out authoritatively the difficulties in implementation of or lacunas in legislation. Today we propose to identify and catalogue such difficulties and lacunas. Secondly, and which is more important, a judge while administering the laws, if deprived of requisite sensitivity may frustrate the objectives sought to be achieved by the best of the laws. According to Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, "case-law, creative, imaginative and gender-friendly, has its logic and limitation. Judges cannot make law but only interpret it and decide specific cases and controversies within defined bounds although in that process they do make law interstitially. But legislation is essentially a wider function covering vaster spaces and free to weave fabrics of fundamental mutation. There is no quest for social justice but more emphasis is given on technicalities and procedural requirement it is quite unfortunate to submit here that the unconcerned and unmindful judges bogged by technicalities in the courts" "The effort of the judge was diverted to proving the accused innocent and that was truly a case of miscarriage of justice. Therefore some of issues can be solute with if it may dealt with this measures and principles , that are given below.

- (1) They must be informed of the historical and cultural background in which the women have lived over the ages and understand their feelings and have regard to their needs as a class;
- (2) That, the women are weaker sections of the society, strike a balance in your approach in dealing with any issue related to gender, or where a woman is victim, in such a way, that the weaker are not only treated as equals but also feel confident that they are equals;
- (3) All must treat women with dignity and honour and inculcate confidence in them by your conduct, behaviour and ideology whenever they come to you as victims or seekers of justice;
- (4) they do not allow them to be harassed and certainly do not do anything yourselves which may amount to harassment of a woman; and
- (5) The judiciary makes effort to render a woman victim quick, speedy, cheaper and effective justice - true to its meaning.

Women to be treated with courtesy and dignity while appearing in the court. Any comment, gesture or other action on the part of anyone in or around the courtroom which would be detrimental to the confidence of the women is to be curbed with a heavy hand.

- Any gender bias is carefully guarded against in the courtroom and this protection should be extended to any female present or appearing in the court either as a member of the staff or as party or witness or member of legal profession. A message should clearly go that any behaviour unbecoming of the dignity of woman shall not be tolerated by the court.
- Court proceedings involving women must begin on time and proceeded with in an orderly manner and with dispatch so that they are concluded as expeditiously as possible avoiding the need for repeated appearance of women in the court.
- The examination and cross-examination of women witnesses, with the supervision of the presiding judge with such care and caution as to avoid prolixity and any harassment to the witness.
- The female members of the Bar need to be encouraged in the profession, maybe by giving assignments as Court Commissioners for inspections and recording statements of witnesses.
- Preference may be given to female lawyers in the matter of assigning legal aid work or amicus curiae briefs so that they have more effective appearances in courts.
- Crime against women ought to be dealt with on priority basis so as to be decided finally at an early date lest the delay should defeat the justice.

- Let the issue of gender injustice not be perceived as a war between the two sexes. Long before, when consciousness in society towards gender injustice was not present then resentment on the part of women was justified; but now the approach should be of complementing each other rather than competing on perceptions, which may not be real or may be non-existent. Societal bonds are based upon integration, mutual dependence and respect. The third gender recognition is also a notable judgment to our society. Equal protection of law and equality of law has come out at last with the least in this year in the gracious interest of justice to the 3<sup>rd</sup> gender is also a mankind, who has all and equal right to enjoy the same in the every nook corner without any discrimination. This positive approaches are the enlightenments path to eradicate the evils of society by our judiciary.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, it might be observed that India has enacted many constitutional and legislative provisions for empowerment of women. Many development schemes are especially for women have also been launched for improving their fortune. However these measures have started giving positive outcomes relating to women's problems. But the position of women in our country still leaves much to be desired. Top priority should be given in our developmental plans for improving female literacy and creating skills and capability among women for enabling them to stand on their own feet. Unless the process of development is properly engendered, it shall remain endangered. Empowerment of women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grass root problem. Swami Vivekananda had said "That nation which doesn't respect women will never become great now and nor will ever in future" and in pursuit of making India a great nation, let us work towards giving women their much deserved status. The empowerment of women in urban areas and the metropolises cannot be the indicator of growth in the country. In a country, where eighty percent of the population is in rural areas, until the lot of women in these areas is also not improved simultaneously, development will remain an illusion to them. The status of women cannot be raised without opening up opportunities of independent income and employment. In the rural areas, employment of women is concentrated mainly in labour intensive, unskilled jobs where simple or traditional skills are required. There is lack of access to vocational institutions. Women in the rural areas are wholly oblivious of their rights. It will require a much greater and concerted effort for the various measures to become a living reality for women in the rural areas. This can happen only through the collective effort of the State, NGOs, imparting of formal and informal education, through the media, etc. these empowerment of women are enable them to become equal partners with their male counterparts so that they have mutual respect for each other and share the responsibilities of the home and finances should be the ultimate goal that we must aspire to achieve. Enforcement of basic human rights of gender equality must take place, without undermining the institution and sanctity of marriage, and family. They have also right and privilege to claim preferential legal processes through the state's and nation's affirmative action to wipe out the vintage against them. The rule of law is, in this mother earth everyone is having honour and dignity to live happily as a dignified mankind and enjoy her human right. Law cannot be stable, it is to develop according to scientific and technological advances. Cyber crime against women is a sensational in this present juncture. The I.T Act-2000 is noble and notable but unable to check the rampant crime against women. You the viewer are the best spectator and judges of your own version in this aspect to judge and deliver of judgment for the welfare of nation is the first concern among the nation.

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