



## Women empowerment in India- A conceptual study

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### Abstract

Without Women Empowerment, human development will remain half empty. By women empowerment no one require extra power or dominants. The demand is simply an equal share of power with equal responsibilities. This paper voyages through history, geography and economics to know their role in women empowerment and comes to a conclusion that economics is little bit fair to women and their empowerment. Global warming and any other calamity are a lesser threat compared to women deprivation. It endangers social life every day and distorts harmony in all walks of life. Achievement of fullest potentiality of human beings lies in women empowerment. This paper points out the panchayat raj legislation and its reservation for women to empower them in political space. Abdicating power and handing over them to men seems to be the order of the day, which defeats the spirits of the legislation. Women themselves should withstand the pressure, defend their power and exercise it also. Women should wake up to their cause. This paper speaks about female empowerment could be defined in five separate categories as Social, Educational, Economic, Political, and Psychological. Let us hope that women will empower themselves and attain equal glory to enshrine a non-dominant society on gender, caste, religion and economic status.

**Keywords:** women, empowerment, power, education, legislation, society, economy

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### Introduction

Dictionaries often gives a vague answer towards the meaning of empowerment. There is always a distance for the meaning of empowerment and what we pursue it should be. This perception also differs from person to person, society to society. To get a common ground on empowerment can we take it as equally powered. Power does not come alone. Yes, equally powered with equally shared responsibility is the desired empowerment we do like.

Does empowerment done by or given by others? To be honest, it is self-attained or self-taken one. Women have to empower themselves by their own and definitely it is not by mercy petition.

### Women Empowerment

Humanity is made up of men and women approximately evenly divided. Why not all the powers equally shared? Why women cannot take decisions on their own by themselves? Why do men take the extra burden for deciding of women issues? Are they not pitiable due to over burden? We are seeing their struggle of overload and take wrong decisions. If we can make them to understand the importance of shedding their over load, it will be much easier in attaining women empowerment. Women of the world are desiring actually to free men from their suffering. It is clearly understandable; women empowerment is not women centric alone but also to relieve the over burden from the men.

### History and women Empowerment

History is more silent on the status of ancient women because it is his(s)tory and not her story. Were women always enslaved? They are little oasis period for women in the long history of every civilization. In the Vedic and tamil sangam periods they claim women were more respected and powered with knowledge. They cite many respected women sages and women poets of high order in those periods. Some say "Swayamvaram" was right to choose, others correct it the right to choose within aristocracy only. Mythological women are portrayed as super heroic as well as subjugated. History and mythology do not give full picture of the women of that era.

### Geography and Women Empowerment

Geography also plays a crucial role in the sufferings of women. We can see in water starved; dry areas women carry water pots for a long distance every day. Why and when it has become the duty of women only to bring water. In addition, collecting fire woods from a distant forest has also fallen on women's shoulders. Is geography unfriendly to women?

### Economy and Women Empowerment

To be fair to economics, economy did not subjugate women for a very long time. Actually, women were also an equal partner and unique contributors in production of goods and marketing them. As long as there was no

distinction between home and work place women were equal economic participants. Before the dawn of industrial revolution most of the societies were involved in agriculture and allied cottage industries only. The nature of the work was collective and entire family members had to contribute their part in the work. In this situation, women would not have been considered as dependent at least in economic terms. This is the comfortable assumption based on hard economic fundamentals of the period.

In this period, family life would have been a collective sharing one and not over burdening anyone. Unfortunately, industrial revolution separated the work place and home. Someone had to go a distant place to earn money and men took it on their shoulders leaving women at home. Women had to bear household work and child rearing. Until then, home activities and economic activities were shared and not separated. The separation of the two gave men an upper hand and made women on dependent status.

### **Changing Scenario**

With increasing literacy among women in India, their entry into many types of work, formerly the preserve of men, women can now look upon the bearing and raising of their children not as a life's work in itself but as an episode. Its women have started taking men's work, it could be said that men have taken over women's. Now, women are re positioning themselves as knowledge and economic power house. With this economic and educational tool, they want to surpass the enslavement era. Women understand it is not easy to come out of the clutches of injustice as it involves psychological attitude of dominance which will resist to shed their exclusive power and go for shared power environment. But, basically women an embodiment of love and affection tries to impress upon the men how women's empowerment will make men better and humanity greater.

Young fathers could be seen wash up and making beds, caring of the young and doing many other domestic works. The division of labour between sexes has changed somewhat. They do similar work and share both household activities and tastes. *Keshab Chandra Mandal* wrote that female empowerment could be defined in five separate categories: Social, Educational, Economic, Political, and Psychological.

### **Social**

Social empowerment might be one of the most prominent forms of empowerment shown in the mainstream media. It strengthens women's social relations and their positions in social structures, giving them more of a purpose outside of the home. Their contributions to society are recognized and valued as opposed to looked down upon simply because it was a woman's creation. Social empowerment also fights back against discrimination, no longer letting people of different disabilities, races, ethnicities, religions, or genders be walked over by what's considered 'normal'.

### **Educational**

Education is a crucial part of growing and developing, but there are still places in the world that deny education to girls like the recent example of Taliban's Afghanistan. We can recollect the horror happened Malala in Pakistan. This takes away a fundamental skill everyone has the right to: knowledge. Without a proper education for all, gender empowerment isn't possible. Education puts everyone on equal footing, and lets young girls have access to what their rights and duties are. Not only that, obtaining knowledge can boost self-confidence, self-esteem, and make girls self-sufficient. It also gives them access to the development of social, political, intellectual, and religious consciousness, and can discourage the growth of bigotry, narrow-mindedness, superstition, intolerance, and so on.

### **Economic**

People say money can't buy happiness, but being at an economic disadvantage can take away access to becoming empowered. Being poor, landless, deprived, or oppressed doesn't allow access to resources that those in good financial standings do. Closing this gap would allow everyone to have equal footing, and women, in particular, would gain a more significant share of control over the material, human, intellectual, and financial resources.

### **Political**

Having a voice in politics can be substantial in letting a group's view be pushed into the light of mainstream media, and that's no different for advocating women's rights. The political involvement of women "implies the decentralization of power and authority in the deprived, oppressed, and powerless people who have not been able to participate in the decision-making process and the implementation of policies and programs of both government and organizations as well as familial and societal matters". In other words, having political influence would not only give a voice to those who haven't had a voice in how things are governed, but it would also allow the possibility of policies and programs being put into place that would work with these discriminated groups. The women reservation in local bodies is a step in this direction. Demand for reservation for women in Parliament and State assemblies is waiting for a very longer period. The worry is women should not surrender their powers to take decisions and defeat the spirit of legislations like Panchayath Raj Act.

**Psychological**

Psychological empowerment aligns with social empowerment—it transgresses the “traditional and patriarchal taboos and social obligations” and lets women go beyond what’s expected of them in society. This can build self-confidence, help women recognise their self-worth, and gives them the chance to take control of their income and body.

All five of these categories intertwine with one another, but it’s equally important to consider them separately as well. Each group has different main goals they’re aiming for, so trying to focus on them as a whole would be unbeneficial ultimately. Knowing what work has to be put into these five categories can provide a boost in the right direction, and allow empowerment not just for women, but eventually for all.

**Conclusion**

Empowered Women is a symbol of empowered society. The soft power of women will usher an era of peace, prosperity, harmony, equality and enlightened world order.

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