



## Women Empowerment - A Multidimensional Perspective

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Empowerment is the procedure by which people generate power in individuals over their own lives, society, and in their communities. People are empowered when they can access the opportunities obtainable to them without any restrictions such as in education, profession and lifestyle. Feeling free to take your own decisions creates a sense of empowerment. Empowerment incorporates the action of women through literacy and training. Women's empowerment is all about permitting women to live life as she wants to live. The history of human development, woman has been as important as man. In fact, the position of employment and work performed by women in society is the parameter of a nation's overall growth. Without the involvement of women in national activities, economical, social or political progress of a country will be stop.

Empowerment is multi-dimensional and refers to the expansion of freedom of choice and action in all spheres (social, economic, and political) to shape one's life. It also implies control over resources and decisions. The World Bank also defines the term empowerment as "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

Women constitute half of the population; even contributing two-thirds of world's work hours. Women earns only one-third of the total income and owns less than one-tenth of the world's total available resources. This indicates that the economic status of women is in very bad condition and this is more severe in a country like India. Among total Indian citizens of 1027.10 million women constitute 495.73 million. Therefore, women constitute nearly 50 per-cent of population, perform two-thirds of the work and produce 50 per cent of food product consumed by the country. They earn one-third of salary and own 10 per cent of the property or wealth of the country. (Chakravarty et al, 2013)

It is a fact that women have been suffering in every age and country from their "protectors" i.e., fathers, brothers, uncles, neighbours and others in childhood; husbands and in-laws in married life; while from sons and others in old age. Man has imposed an unspeakable loss upon woman by bounding her in different phases in their lives and through the ages. Women are the victims of social, religious, political and economic inferiority and poverty in Indian society. Also they are treated unequally and cannot involve in democratic activities equally with men. Democracy becomes meaningless and paralyzed unless fifty per-cent of its population participates in the democratic decision making processes and joins in the social, economical and political activities. Thus, to make democracy sustainable it is necessary that both women and men should take part in the development activities because without the active participation of females democracy becomes meaningless.

**Origin of the Term Empowerment:** It is very interesting to observed that most of the dictionaries only shows a pre- twentieth century definition of the verb empower meaning 'to

empower' or 'to give power to'. The word was first used in the seventeenth century and has meanings like authorize, delegate, or enable. The term empowerment, as a result, is a complicated idea. However, it indicates the transfer of power in an active way over a period of time. Empowerment seems to be a modern idea that would not have been possible 200 years ago when the idea of democracy and government of the people, for the people, by the people was something to fight and die for. In the twentieth century we saw many examples of political empowerment in various countries in the world led by political leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. From the viewpoint of the members of low-powered group, empowerment refers to efforts to elaborate their base of power. The matter of 'women empowerment' is now a global phenomenon. It took about twenty five years for the United Nations to reveal the year 2001 as the "International Year for Women's Empowerment" after declaring the "Women's Decade" in 1975. India also declared the year 2001 as the "Women's Empowerment Year". (Manda, 2013.)

### Importance of Women's Empowerment in Societies

Entire nations, businesses, communities and groups can benefit from the implementation of programs and policies that adopt the plan of empowerment. It is one of the main procedural examine when addressing human rights and development. Women empowerment is a necessity for the development of a society; since it enhance both the quantity and the quality of human resources available for development as gender equity is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. Many world leaders and scholars have argued that continual development is impossible without gender equity and women's empowerment. Sustainable development accepts environmental control, social, economic development, and cultural development. The world cannot be developed without women's empowerment. Women wouldn't feel equally important to the procedure of development as men. There are four forms of empowerment:

- **Economic empowerment:** Economic empowerment means increasing women's agency, access to formal government programs, activity outside the home, economic independence, and buying power. Policy makers are suggested to support job training to assistance in entrance in the formal markets. One recommendation is to provide good formal education opportunities for women that would permit for higher bargaining power in the home. They would have more access to higher wages outside the house, and as a result, make it easier for women to get a job in the market. This would allow them better means of asset accumulation, capital, and bargaining power needed to address gender inequalities. Competition has a big impact on women's empowerment in areas such as employment. Employment can help create empowerment for women. Notably examining how opportunities are structured by gender, race, and class can happen social change. Work opportunities and the work environment can make empowerment for women.

Women's economic empowerment is central to realizing women's rights and gender equality. It includes women's ability to participate equally in existing markets; their access to decent work, control over productive resources, access to decent work, control over their own time, lives and bodies; and increased voice, agency and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions. When more women work, economic grow. Women's economic equality is good for business. By establishing a business like papad, achar and murabba they can earn money and can give employment to other needed women. Pink is the color of economic survey of 2017-18 it is for supporting women empowerment and against violence. The economic independence and increased standing with the family were the benefits of higher education. It also enabled the women to impact the discriminatory practices.

- **Political empowerment:** Political empowerment supports creating policies that would best support gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private sectors. Further recommendations have been to increase women's right to vote, voice opinions and the ability to work for office with a fair chance of being elected. Because women are typically associated with child care and domestic work in the home, they have less time dedicated to entering the labour market and running their business. Policies that can increase their bargaining power in the households would include policies that account for cases of divorce, policies for better welfare for women and policies that give women control over resources (such as property rights). However, participation is not limited to the kingdom of politics. It can include participation in the households in schools and the ability to make choices for one self.
- **Technological Empowerment:** Poverty and illiteracy are twist with one another. Poor people are mostly illiterate or lowly educated. This mass of illiterate people feels one kind of powerlessness. They feel some invisible forces from outside are empowering their lives. This powerless and inferior attitude creates a sense of frightening. They began to depend on fortune, luck, destiny and above all God or supernatural elements. With the help of education and knowledge women can overcome these problems.
- **Social Empowerment:** Social Empowerment mention to the accredit force that empowers women's social relations. Social empowerment directs the social discriminations existing in the world based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion or gender. Empowerment as a methodology is often associated with feminism.

Broadly we can say that the term empowerment is defined as "a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gaining control over their own lives. It is a process that promotes power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society by acting on issues they define as important"

### Women Empowerment Schemes

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme
- One Stop Centre Scheme
- Women Helpline Scheme
- UJJAWALA: A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- Working Women Hostel
- Ministry approves new projects under Ujjawala Scheme and continues existing projects
- SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances)
- Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)
- NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR
- Awardees of Stree Shakti Puruskar, 2014 & Awardees of Nari Shakti Puruskar
- Awardees of Rajya Mahila Samman & Zila Mahila Samman
- Mahila police Volunteers
- Mahila E-Haat
- Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)
- NIRBHAYA

(Anonymous)

### Indicators of women's empowerment

1. **Economic participation and opportunity:** The financial involvement of women in household is being noted as a symbol of status in society. Women who contribute monetarily are recognized to be necessary member of family by general public though the



fact may be distinguish within the family structure where her status among other family members may not be treated to be as high as in society. It cannot thus be assumed that contribution in household income will always lead to higher status and further to empowerment. But, in some families, women enjoy equal status irrespective of their monetary contribution; in some others, the situation may be reverse such that despite making monetary contribution, women may not enjoy equal status. It depends on the psychology of the family members.

2. **Economic freedom:** The objective of women joining professional careers is generally assumed to be the improvement in their monitorial status, which may lead to freedom of completing their own shopping desires like buying jewellery, clothing, going on holiday, trips, etc. and their wishes in terms of family-including electronic devices, furniture, property, etc. It is also assumed generally that the women have full freedom to spend their income as per their own wishes, but in reality, those earnings may usually be handed over to their senior member of family. The right to spend their money as per their wishes does not necessarily come with the women making financial contributions to the family.
3. **Household management and decision-making:** This parameter attempts an important role of women where empowerment and decision-making at household matters go hand in hand. In the countries where women are usually the homemakers for their families, they consider the decision-making freedom regarding household management as their prime right. There is different evidence on the household freedom to women in nuclear and joint families. In most of the nuclear families women enjoy equal right to take decisions on household expenditure, whereas it is limited in the case of joint family system where the women may not even be consulted on major decisions irrespective of her economic contribution to the family.
4. **Perceived status within the household:** The woman working out has to face many challenges both at household and professional level. It requires women to be multi-talented if they choose for professional careers since they need to balance their work life and family life comes along. It is commonly observed that the work of women outside the home should not interfere with their proper duties of her family life. The women play dual responsibility to take care of the family with respect to cooking food, child education, taking care of elders, guest's hospitality and other duties.
5. **Education and educational freedom:** Education empowers each and every woman to achieve best in their social, career, economic and family lives. We all know that men and women have a similar distribution of inner abilities. Gender disparity in education leads to less opportunities getting provided to no less able (than men) women. This may lead to lower the productivity of the human capital in the economy and thus lower economic growth. When we educate a woman we educate the next generation.
6. **Health:** We also observed that women live longer than men and have lesser mortality rate in comparison to men at any stage of life but that does not mean that women are healthier or better able to access health-care resources. Mortality rate reveals that extreme damages to health, large health differences between men and women. In addition, women usually prepare repast for family members and take care of children. Women have to face different environmental issues than men because of their greater participation in domestic work inside the house. Generally, one of women's main responsibilities is water collection for daily use at home. Subjection to air pollutants (like, tobacco smoke and air particles from using solid fuels to heat and other pollutants) can lead to chronic health hazards. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that women must be fit so that she can complete all her duties. We can easily understand the strength of a woman by this fact that she can give birth to a man. Women is a truemwarier because she is capable of handling pain more than a man.

7. **Media:** Media plays an important role in shaping women's importance in the world. To decrease gender equality, media can play an important role in empowering women. Women can access communication systems such as media but it does not guarantee that their opinions will be expressed equally or that their participation in the media will be recognized. Stereotyping and detachment of women by the media still exist in the society.

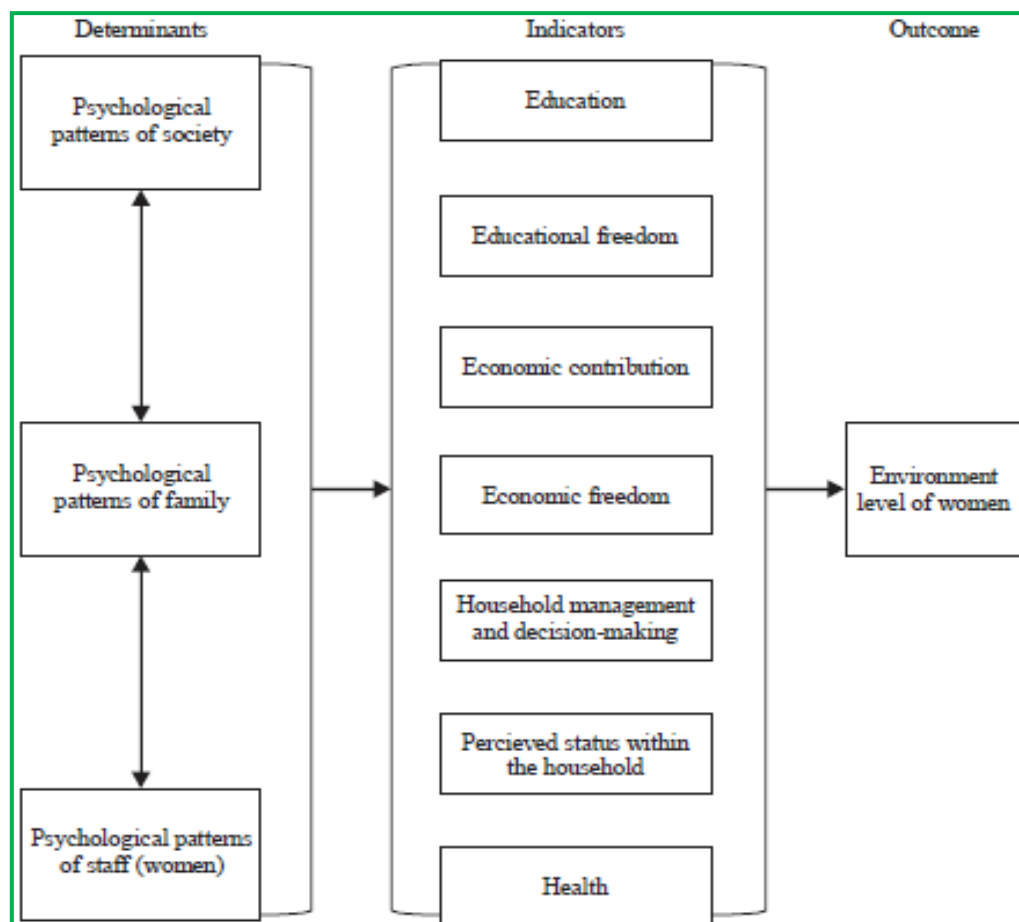


Fig. Determinants, Indicators and Outcome of Women Empowerment

### Barriers to Women's Empowerment

Many of the barriers to women's empowerment and equality lies in cultural norms. Many women feel these pressures, while others have become adaptive to being treated inferior to men. Increasing access to the internet can also result in an increased misuse of women. Types of victimization include harassment, cyber stalking, flaming, online pornography etc. Sexual harassment in particular is a large barrier for women in the world. It appears in almost all the industries. Women face more barriers involve sexual harassment, unequal pay, career progression and unfair hiring practices. Such barriers make it difficult for women to advance in their workplace or receive fair compensation for the work they provide. The huge majority of the world's impoverished population is women. Around the world educated, healthy, employed and empowered women break penury cycles not only for themselves, but for their next generation. Two-third of the world's illiterate population is female. The girls are not sent to schools by their parents. Availability of toilets is not appropriate. The difference between male and female literacy percentage is very high. AIDS is now times become a female disease. Female are suffering this because of cheater men. The best way to fight AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is through "AIDS", where 'A' stands for Awareness, 'I' for Information, 'D' for Determination and 'S' for Support. The words are self-explanatory and only by following what they say can we tackle the killer disease.

**Measurements and assessment:** Women empowerment can be measured through the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which shows women's participation in a given nation, both economically and politically. GEM is calculated by tracking the share of seats in parliament held by women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female profession and technical workers; and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence. A more qualitative form of assessing women's empowerment is to identify constraints to action. This allows for the identification of power relations between genders. Because this is a participatory process, it facilitates conversation on gender discrimination.

### Conclusion

We can empower women by helping increase her confidence in many ways. If she is good in academics, we should motivate her for singing, dancing and anything that interests her. We should respect her by doing small changes in our lifestyle by following 'ladies first' culture. We should not bind her in any mean. On the name of protecting her; the man of her life should not stop her from flying or to accomplish her dreams. By starting this from family level we can make an incentive. We should teach our sons to respect women and make her feel equal. By changing our psychology we can make her empowered.

Women's Empowerment - depicts a unified force. The necessary thought of building a just and fairer nation is possible only with meaningful partnerships between men and women. To move the chariot of our country forward both the wheels – men and women have to be strong and have to move ahead jointly.

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