

## EMPOWERING WOMEN: AN ECONOMIC GAME CHANGER

---

Dr. Anuja Jain\*

### ABSTRACT

*Promoting women's self-worth, their freedom to make decisions and their right to have an impact on societal change for both themselves and other people is referred to as women's empowerment. The roots of socio-economic development will be shaken if one neglects the need of elevating the role of women. Across the globe, women are seen as more powerful when they are given leadership positions. Women's careers are on the rise in India, but there are still many challenges to overcome. Women's leadership roles need to be increased, and gender stereotypes need to be broken. By offering women-specific education and skills-building programs, we can create an equal and inclusive workforce. The comprehensive paper, which draws from secondary data found in a variety of research papers, books and magazines, offers in-depth details on a wide range of topics related to women empowerment, economic growth and future possibilities.*

**Keywords:** *Self-Worth, Freedom, Change, Empowerment, Development.*

---

### Introduction

Broadly speaking, Empowerment is 'a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives'. It is described as a social process that fosters power in people, their communities and in their society. (Page and Czuba, 1999). The word "Empowerment" refers to authority, or the power given to women, so they may exercise their rights just like men. There have been efforts throughout the last many centuries to raise the position of women in society. But the rights and position enjoyed by women vary from society to society and from generation to generation. Therefore, the empowerment of women is a major concern for women everywhere, especially in developing countries.

The issue of women's empowerment is a monumental endeavor that has seen several efforts throughout Indian history. Women's empowerment is a worldwide issue, not just one that is exclusive to India. Women's empowerment efforts and levels vary from century to century, from culture to culture, and from country to country.

In ancient times, people in India used to marry their daughters at an early age. However, this situation was strange and unusual for them as daughters have the right to select their own husbands. On the other hand, they were forced to practice sati. The British introduced several improvements and modifications linked to the equality of gender roles with the passage of time. In 1848 Savitribai Phule became the first woman educator in India. This provided women the confidence to exceed the threshold of clearly defined social and cultural limits and escape from a variety of limitations.

Women's empowerment was the top priority for many social reformers during the battle for freedom. To mention a few, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and Mahatma Gandhi all supported women's education, campaigned tirelessly to end sati, forbade child marriage, and other social reforms. The Sati Abolition Act 1829, The Hindu Marriage Act 1955, The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act 1856, The Hindu Maintenance and Adoption Act 1956, The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, and many other reforms were put into place as a result of this, country's uprising to protect women from social injustice and gender inequality (Pagare, 2017). However, despite the numerous reformatory measures that aim to grant women a variety of rights, the need for reformation still exists. Violet Alva correctly states that "We need revolution within us for our evaluation in society, and unless that revolution comes about within, social legislation, even though it expands in every field, will not achieve results" in this context (Kovuru, 2000).

---

\* Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

This is accurate in terms of women's independence and entitlement. There has been little legislative progress made in the area of women's empowerment, and it has been patchy. There is still much work to be done. Women's empowerment is a long road to travel, and it may take us years and miles to get to the point where women and men are on equal footing.

The greatest laws and regulations must be carefully created and implemented in order to promote women's empowerment. When a facilitator works to assist women in becoming empowered, questions like "why is empowerment important?" and "is it even necessary?" will inevitably arise. However, the reason why women need to be empowered remains a mystery. And what significance does empowerment have? A thorough investigation and debate of the significance of women's empowerment are required. Everyone these days emphasizes the empowerment of women. It is accurate to argue that it has evolved into a requirement through time. Given the rise of women over the past few decades, discrimination based on gender is futile and of no use. The main determining element in decision-making is one's uniqueness and freedom to express it. We need to go back in time to understand how different socio-cultural restrictions, many of which have strong theological and mythical underpinnings, have been used to deny women independence inside the home. Man feels comparatively more free to leave the house at anytime and anywhere without having to give an explanation, but a woman is not expected to do so. This is an apparent truth that indicates the preservation of this conservatism trait. She is unable to stay out late and can't come home at weird times. She feels restrained by her actions. Even men's work-related commitments are typically tolerated as a result of their incapacity to carry out certain family responsibilities. In the case of women, this is not the case. Women's empowerment in India is so necessary to address these issues and promote women's independence in society. Their rights to make contributions to society, economics, education, and politics should be proportionate. In this piece, an effort has been made to comprehend the relationship between economic growth and women's empowerment, the reasons for this requirement, and the potential outcomes.

#### **Economic Empowerment for Women**

Economic growth and women's empowerment are intertwined; development may significantly reduce gender disparity in one direction while empowering women may contribute to development in the other. Gender equality, the eradication of poverty, and inclusive economic growth may all be directly achieved by investing in the economic empowerment of women. Economic Empowerment increases women's access to economic sources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skill development and market information. Whether in business, on farms, as entrepreneurs or workers, or by providing unpaid care at home, women significantly contribute to economies. However, they continue to be disproportionately impacted by exploitation, prejudice, and poverty. Also, women's economic role was simply not acknowledged due to gender discrimination, women frequently find themselves in low-paying, insecure employment and make up a small percentage of those in high positions. It restricts access to financial resources like loans and real estate. It restricts one's ability to influence social and economic politics. Additionally, because of their involvement in household duties, women sometimes lack the time to explore employment prospects.

#### **Why Women Need Development?**

Women are disproportionately represented among the poor, and the number of women in poverty is growing faster than the number of men. New projections on global poverty, UNDP and the Pardee Center for International Futures estimate that globally, 338 million women and girls will be living in extreme poverty in 2022 (compared to 372 million men and boys).

But the outlook could be far worse. There are numerous factors responsible behind this poverty such as economic recession, natural disasters, civil strife etc.

In addition to this, women dominate the informal economy. Within the informal employment, their wages are lower than men's. The type of informal work women do as market or Street vendors, hawkers or homemakers, expose them to risks to their physical safety and health. Much of the work women do goes unrecorded because it takes place in the informal sector. Estimating women's participation in the informal sector, however is difficult. Data are hard to obtain because they are not generally collected by census bureaus and other official statisticians. Women make for only 23 percent of those employed in India's informal sector, but upto 91 percent of Indian women in paid jobs are in the informal sector, according to the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy - Institute of Social Studies Trust report (Shalini Singh, 2021). Thus, much of the development support women need is outside the formal economy, where they engage in activities such as petty trade,

household help food processing, garment manufacturing and agriculture. Hence, Women's empowerment is valuable and important for the development and advancement of the family, community as well as the nation.

### Future Prospects

Women in India can emancipate through meaning work that allows them to balance their household responsibilities with opportunities for social and economic empowerment. A review of SRUJNA NGO working for empowerment of women is instructive in highlighting successful strategies for the future. This NGO has demonstrated (We envision an India "where every woman and every girl, who wants to earn, gets the opportunities to do so.")

For the thousands of stifled women in low-income communities across the country, Srujna is the key to unlocking their power! Srujna touches their lives, by transforming the many groups that work with grassroots women – helping create powerful, enterprising women that produce and sell hand-made products. Together, they provide livelihood opportunities to these low-income women – empowering them to become role models and change makers in their families and communities. Srujna builds the capabilities of grassroots organizations and the women they work with. By investing in organization building, injecting business acumen, upgrading quality and production infrastructure and providing market linkages, they generate livelihoods, create women entrepreneurs and build enterprises.

### Conclusion

Economic growth and the empowerment of women are intimately intertwined. While development itself will bring about women's empowerment, empowering women will bring about change's indecision-making, which will have a direct impact on development. Only through maintaining policy acts that favour women at the expense of males, potentially for a very long period, is equity between men and women likely to be attained. Although this could have some ancillary advantages, they might not be enough. In order to cover the price of the distortions caused by such redistribution the perspectives of policymakers on both sides of the development/empowerment argument need to be moderated by this level of reality. Although it might not be the most reassuring message to convey, it can be vital to do so in order to avoid the negative attention that failed miraculous cures typically receive. Concludingly it can be said that, Empowering women is not only justice, but also a prerequisite for a just and prosperous society. By empowering women, we unlock their potential to participate in all walks of life, contribute to development and create a more inclusive world for all. Let's work together to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes and protect the rights and aspirations of women, because empowering them is the key to unlocking the world and its true potential.

### References

1. Page, N., & Czuba, C.E. (1999). Empowerment: What is it? *Journal of Extension*, 37 (5), 24-32.
2. Pagare, Rahul. 2017. "women's empowerment: History and policy," <https://www.roundtableindia.co.in/progress-of-society-progress-of-women/>
3. Devi, Kovuru. 2000. "Women's equality in India: A Myth or Reality", [https://books.google.co.in/books?id=LS8wJlfjUcUC&pg=PA152&lpg=PA152&dq=Violet+Alva+correctly+states+%22We+need+a+revolution+within+us+for+an+evolution+in+society,&source=bl&ots=i3DO\\_KQ9GZ&sig=ACfU3U0tq8MUIHU7ebkTD1nfhCkCgl\\_daw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwigvLzw9CDAXUvSWwGHXt5BfgQ6AF6BAGWEAM#v=onepage&q=Violet%20Alva%20correctly%20states%20%22We%20need%20a%20revolution%20within%20us%20for%20an%20evolution%20in%20society%2C&f=false](https://books.google.co.in/books?id=LS8wJlfjUcUC&pg=PA152&lpg=PA152&dq=Violet+Alva+correctly+states+%22We+need+a+revolution+within+us+for+an+evolution+in+society,&source=bl&ots=i3DO_KQ9GZ&sig=ACfU3U0tq8MUIHU7ebkTD1nfhCkCgl_daw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwigvLzw9CDAXUvSWwGHXt5BfgQ6AF6BAGWEAM#v=onepage&q=Violet%20Alva%20correctly%20states%20%22We%20need%20a%20revolution%20within%20us%20for%20an%20evolution%20in%20society%2C&f=false)
4. Setty E.D. and Moorthy P.Krishna. 2007. "Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship Development", New Delhi
5. <https://data.unwomen.org/features/poverty-deepens-women-and-girls-according-latest-projections>
6. <https://scroll.in/article/990984/in-indias-informal-economy-crores-of-women-face-gender-bias-and-insecurity#:~:text=Women%20make%20for%20only%202023,of%20Social%20Studies%20Trust%20report.>
7. [https://srujna.org/donations/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA-vOsBhAAEiwAIWR0Ta40lk2Cc-MQFwzp1Ojf3hWeLd7oNj41nQY8aBiUqKHbTNhjHxtiehoCwE4QAvD\\_BwE.](https://srujna.org/donations/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA-vOsBhAAEiwAIWR0Ta40lk2Cc-MQFwzp1Ojf3hWeLd7oNj41nQY8aBiUqKHbTNhjHxtiehoCwE4QAvD_BwE.)

