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## EMERGING CHALLENGES TO WOMEN DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

POOJA VARYANI

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**Abstract:** “A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.” Hindu Vedas glorified women as the mother, the creator one who gives life and worshipped her as ‘Devi’ or goddess. An Indian woman is depicted as the embodiment of beauty, wealth, wisdom, virtues, love, peace, patience etc. Indian constitution also provides equal status women. However, the life of women has been confined to the four walls of her household; still women’s are struggling for their rights. In recent times Women empowerment has emerged as an important issue in our society. Empowerment of women is being regarded as sine-qua-non of progress for the country... as rightly said by Nehru “Once she is on the move, the household moves, the village moves and the country moves...” Nowadays women are becoming more conscious of their rights, society as a whole has began to respond, more and more women are adopting careers contributing for the development of economy, but still the position of women in the society is not satisfactory. Women still remain under privileged, under-valued and exploited and various kinds of discriminations continue to persist against them. This paper try to analyze the importance of women empowerment for social, economic, political, and administrative development of the economy along with challenges and suggestions to it

**Keywords** Development of economy Goddess, gender discrimination, right to equality, women empowerment,.

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**Introduction:** Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individual to think, take action, and control work in an autonomous way. Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant, have positive esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and strengthening them to participate in decision making and towards development activities. India is a developing economy with 58, 74, 47,730 of women population, and sex ratio of 943 female among 100 male, as a result India has shown disproportionate sex ratio whereby female’s population has been comparatively lower than males. Gender disabilities and discriminations are the main issue which is still prevalent in India. The paradoxical situation is such that sometimes she is considered as ‘Goddess’ and at the other times merely as a ‘slave’.

**Women empowerment in India :** Vedas glorified women as the mother, the creator one who gives life and worshipped her as ‘Devi’ or goddess, but since from ancient-times gender inequality can be traced back in Mahabharata when draupadi was put on the dice by her husband as a commodity. Medieval period further showed the declining status of women in Indian society, she was considered to be inferior to man customs of pardha, Sati, child marriages, restrictions on widow marriage etc were the major concerns. Gradually the efforts were made for removing discrimination against women, Mahatma Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, were few leaders who led importance on social reforms and laid stress on women’s education, prevention of child marriage, withdrawal of sati system, removal of polygamy etc. Now the women in India enjoy a unique status of equality with the men as per constitutional and legal provisions but still the status of women is sort of a paradox. On one hand she is at the peak of ladder of success, for e.g. India Gandhi, pratibha patil, sushma swaraj etc and on the other hand she is mutely suffering the violence afflicted on her. As compared with past women in modern times have achieved a lot but in reality they have to still travel a long way.

**Dimensions of women’s Empowerment:** Men and women are the two sides of the same coin, i.e. both are human beings first and gender later, it’s a woman who give birth to a male or female, within her is the power to create, nurture and transform. However, the fact is, simply women’s are suffering in a ‘male dominated’ society. Empowering women is very crucial these days without which the society would be in danger. For the purpose of development the UN millennium declaration, committing nations had a new global partnership which includes the following goals i.e. (i) Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty (ii) Achieve universal primary education (iii) Promote gender equality and empower women (iv) Reduce child Mortality (v) Improve Maternal Health (vi) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (vii) Ensure Environmental Sustainability (viii) Develop a Global Partnership for Development. For the overall development of nation proper implementation of these goals are very essential without it is merely not possible for any nation to achieve socio economic political and administrative development of economy.

The process of empowerment implies broader, systematic change in the way society is structured; it is necessary part and parcel of any genuine development. Women empowerment aims at changing the balance of power between the sexes so as to create a more equitable distribution of power in society. However, when we

examine this overall process of women's empowerment more closely we become aware of the economic, political, social, and legal dimensions of the process. Each of these dimensions is interlinked to the other. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself. In addition, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. The full participation and partnership of both women and men is required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household.

(i) Economic empowerment implies a better quality of material life through sustainable livelihood owned and managed by women. It sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication, and inclusive economic growth. Women have potential to change their own economic status but her contributions go unrecognized, their work undervalued and their promise unnourished. Unequal opportunities between men and women continue to hamper's the development and also creates imbalance and slow economic growth. Hence continuous efforts should be made for those women who confined to the four walls of her household through Reservation, awareness, NGO's, Government policies and programs, skill based employments i.e. digital courses based on employment opportunities, cottage based industry, women based organizations, self-help groups etc. incentives should be given to her to built her motivation so that she can also contribute towards development of economy etc.

(ii) Social empowerment means a more equitable social status for women in society women are facing threats to their lives, health and well- being as a result of being overburdened with work and of their lack of power and influence. They receive less formal education than men. The changes are required in policy formulation and program actions that will improve women's access to secure livelihoods and economic resources, alleviate their extreme responsibilities with regard to housework, remove legal impediments to their participation in public life, and raise social awareness through effective programs of education and mass communication. Apart from this any society cannot develop without changing the mindset of people, 'charity begins at home'. In addition, improving the status of women also enhances their decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life. This, in turn, is essential for the long- term success of economy.

(iii) Constitutional and Legal empowerment is the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women's empowerment. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties, and directive principles the constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women, within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plan and programs have aimed at women advancement in different spheres. This is considered to be the first step for providing equal opportunities, rights to people.

(iv) Political empowerment there is low representation of women at all levels of political institutions. Women still face major obstacles in seeking higher positions in society. Political participation is a human right, recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women are poorly represented at different levels of political life and decision-making. However in India, the process of politically empowering through reservation in the local bodies has helped in the wider mobilization.<sup>73<sup>rd</sup></sup> and 74 Constitutional amendment act provides 1/3 reservation for women. The Women's Reservation Bill providing for 33% reservation of seats for women in Lok Sabah and state Assemblies are the few initiatives taken for women empowerment. Hence these entire dimensions are interconnected, interdependent and interlinked to each other and implementation of all these parameters in a proper manner will only lead to the development of administration with efficiency, effectiveness and economy, this will lead to the development of economy.

#### **Challenges along with suggestions for women empowerment**

(i) Gender inequalities are basically related to social and economic dimensions; as a result, women education, health and productive resources are inadequate. Consequently, they remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded. There are various issues which poses myriads of challenges towards the vision of Women Empowerment. Literacy rate among women is very less. This is the major cause. Despite the concept of Gender Budgeting and various special provisions for women in *Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan*, i.e., National Literacy Mission, the ground reality has not changed much. This is one of the foremost reasons for women not taking active participation in mainstream economic activities thus making half of Indian Population nearly impotent from economic point of view.

(ii) Women are suppressed domestically and do not enjoy respectable position. They are not regarded as intelligent and powerful enough as men. Although the woman's are progressing but still the Indian mentality, the mindset of the people still believe that women are equally capable as men, for that first and foremost we need to change ourselves charity begin at home.. It is a women who give birth to she is a stage ahead than him, this mindset will only work in bringing gender equality.

(iii) Politically women's hardly participate and even when they do as voter or representative, mostly they are used as rubber-stamps in the hands of their male relative. They are generally devoted to household work in India's patriarchal society. Such underprivileged conditions of women led them to face domestic violence, sexual abuse both at home and work place and improper opportunities for progress in every area of life. For this matter reservation policies should be strictly followed in the system so that, other woman's got motivated and fight against the injustice which is taking place in the society.

(iv) Globalization has presented new challenges for the realization of the goal of women's equality, the gender impact of which has not been systematically evaluated fully. From the studies that were commissioned by the Dept. of Women and Child Development, it is evident that there is a need for reframing of policies for access to employment and quality of employment. Benefits of growing global economy have been unevenly distributed leading to widening of economic disparities leading to feminization of poverty, increased gender inequality, often deteriorating working conditions and unsafe working environment especially in the informal economy and rural areas.

(v) Working women i.e., those who are in paid employment, face problems at the workplace just by virtue of their being women. Social attitude to the role of women lags much behind the law. The attitude which considers women fit for certain jobs and not others, causes prejudice in those who recruit employees. It often happens in certain sections of society woman's are paid comparably less than male by saying that women are inefficient in performing physical task and etc, for that efforts should be made that one lady should be appointed who should perform a quasi judicial work in each formal and informal organization which should look after the women related issues i.e. salary, injustice, to solve the problems of women in organizations.

(vi) Trafficking in women and children is the most an abominable violation of human rights. It is an obscene affront to their dignity and rights, including the very right to life, liberty, human dignity and security of person, the right to freedom from torture or cruelty, inhumane or degrading treatment, the right to a home and family, the right to education and proper employment, the right to health care and everything that makes for a life with dignity. Trafficking in its widest sense include the exploitation girls by pushing them into prostitution, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery and the trade in human organs. In the case of children who have been trafficked or have become victims of child marriages, it violates their right to education, employment and self-determination.

**Conclusion :** In a country like India where on the one side women are worshipped these activities bring out hell on this earth, strict actions should be taken against such activities, fast track court etc. measures should be taken death penalty should be given to the people who are involved in such activities, if you don't respect a women, who is the reason for his existence on this earth you don't have right to stay on this earth... On way side women need to change their mindsets, it is somehow the fault of women as well why since from ancient times she is consideration herself inferior to man, who give her right to do that? if we analyze women is a biggest enemy of women... it is a mother who gives birth to a girl or guy than why to discriminate between a girl or a guy, being a girl when she get married to guy she wants her husband to help her in household chores, but that same lady when she gives birth to a male child she don't want her child to do household works... a serious note should be taken on changing the mindset of women , and this cannot be done without collective efforts ... Now it is getting hike of everything, if we want to sustain on this planet equality between man and women must be treated equally ,collective actions should be taken along with equal distribution of wealth, this only is going to help us for sustainable development of economy...

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Name: - Pooja Varyani

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Address: - D-23, Ambica Duplex opposite radha swami society ,I.T.I Road, Kubernagar Ahemdabad-382340  
Gujarat

Designation: - Student (pursuing Masters in Public Administration) from Pandit Deendayal petroleum  
University, School of Liberal Studies,Gandhingar, Gujarat

Email Id: - varyanipooja@gmail.com.