

# Women Empowerment in India: An Analysis

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**Abstract - Women empowerment is one of the important concepts in the present scenario. Empowerment of women leads to the socio-economic development of the society and bringing women into the mainstream. It makes improvement of women in social, economic and political empowerment, which leads to women in equal participation in politics and decision-making process and makes active participation of women in all levels of development. It involves power to, power with and power within. It guides women into capacity building and leading to greater participation, effective decision-making power and control leading to transformative action. The Central and State Government has launched various schemes for the growth and development of women status. The present study is an attempt to examine the conceptual meaning of women empowerment and various Government Schemes initiated by the government of India for upliftment of women.**

**Index Terms - The conceptual meaning, ways of women empowerment and Government Schemes for upliftment of women empowerment in India.**

## INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment is the process of empowering women. The word empowerment can be defined in various ways; empowerment means accepting and including the people who are not empowering, make them empowering in various fields, outside in decision-making process into it. Women empowerment is one of the most important concepts for overall development of the nation 1. Empowerment is the process that enables the power of the individuals over their own lives, communities and society. People could empower if they have an equal access to opportunities without any restrictions or limitations such as in education, business or profession or in their way of life. Feeling entitled to make your own decisions creates a sense of empowerment 2. Women Empowerment comprises the action for

upliftment of the conditions of women through education; literacy, raising training and awareness program, and give them to training that makes empowered them. Women's empowerment is all about accepting and allowing women to stand take self-decisions in the society 3.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is an attempt to examine the women empowerment in India. The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To examine the conceptual meaning and ways of women empowerment.
2. To examine the various schemes launched by the Government for upliftment of women status.
3. To examine the goals and objectives of Government Schemes for upliftment of women empowerment.

## METHODOLOGY

The data for the study has been collected from secondary sources, official report, records, articles and any published and unpublished materials, wherever is relevant. Non-participant observation method has been employed. The area of study has covered all over India.

## CONCEPTUAL MEANING OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The conceptual meaning of women empowerment is the ability or capacity to participate as equal partners in social, economic, political and cultural systems in the society. Now the world is becoming more developed in various fields like world economy, science and technology. World economy has changed into global economy, in spite of that in world both the developed and developing countries the status of

women needs to improve in various fields and they have suppressed in all walks of life for generations. The women empowerment is said very far easier what than done. Due to all these reasons many women organization in the world demands a revolutionary change for the status of women and existing the socio cultural norms of the society 4. In many developed countries the education, economy, business and health sector of a woman is much developed in various fields and develop comparatively higher than the developing countries. But still the gender discrimination is playing a leading role for the obstacles of growth and development of women empowerment in worldwide. In same case also exists in India, in spite of various constitutional laws made by the central and various state governments to protect women rights and to prevent the gender inequalities, but the gender bias are still exist 5. Women Empowerment refers to complete the freedom of women from socio-economic and cultural hindrance of dependency and deprivations in the society 6. Empowerment of women means to supporting and encouraging women to be self-reliant, have positive self-esteem, economically independent and generate self confidence to face with courage in any challenging situation and encourage to active participation in various socio-economic and political development in the society 7. Various scholars and prominent persons define the concept of empowerment/ women empowerment in different ways: “Allowing every individual to make free choices and achieve the full of their capacities. “IGNACIO SOCIAS 8. Empowerment means that those who become empowered have the ability to take control of their lives and fortunes with the help of government and civil society. In order to be empowered, both men and women must have the same rights and privileges and the same opportunities, especially in employment and decent work. “MARYANN TARANTULA 9.“ Empowerment is supporting people in such a way as to enable them to accomplish goals that will improve life for all”. EVA BOONE 10. “Women’s empowerment is, basically, giving power to women in space of society where they didn’t have it. It is a process of making them part of the decision process in a certain area where they didn’t have it. They have to be disempowered in this field as a prerequisite. We talk about empowerment because it enables women to have power over their own life 11”.

“In the field of economic development women empowerment is defined as the process through which women acquire the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them 12”.

Women empowerment is a process of personal and social change through which they gain power, meaningful choices and control over their lives 13.

Empowerment of women is basically the process of upliftment of women in the status of social, economic and political fields and the traditionally who is underprivileged in the society and it is the process of safe guards them against all forms of discrimination and violence prevailed in the society 14.

In general, the term empowerment is described as “a multi-dimensional social process that helps people to gain control over their own lives. It is processes that promote and encourage power to people for use in their own lives, their communities and society, by acting on issues they define as important 15.

Empowerment is the method that controls people's own lives, society and their communities. “Individuals are engaged when they can open up to them without hindrance and limitation such as directions, calling, and ways of life. Empowerment includes enhancing the status of women through instruction, mindfulness, education, and preparedness, in addition to providing preparation related to protecting oneself. Women's empowerment is to prepare and allow women to make life-defying choices through various issues in society”. Women empowerment and thriving gender correspondence are fundamental to our society to guarantee the sustainable growth of the nation.

## WAYS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

### Social Empowerment

Social empowerment of women is one of the important tools for development of status of women. Social empowerment of women means, women became empowered in the society and they are treated as equal as men, without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, sex and place of birth. “Social empowerment is recognize as the process of establish a sense of autonomy, self reliant, self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses that eliminate the social discrimination exists in the society 16”. Social Empowerment refers to the enabling force

that strengthens women social relations and their position in social structures. Social empowerment addresses the social discriminations existing in the society based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender 17.

#### Political Empowerment

Political empowerment of women means women get participated in the political fields and decision making processes in the government. It makes women in self-confidence and to stand in public offices. If the women are actively participated in public office and decision making processes, it could change the society and makes a strong constitutional laws for the safeguarding of women against social discrimination prevails in the society. "Participation of women in the political fields and in decision-making processes is an important instrument for women empowerment. The participation of women at all levels of governance structures is the highest need of this hour for women empowerment 18". Political participation of women is a true means of democracy and makes real empowerment of women in political fields 19. Women make crucial contributions in society to achieving and maintaining peaceful and secure communities, the full realization of human rights, and the eradication of various diseases, hunger and poverty, and the promotion of sustainable development 20. Increasing women's political participation in public office and decision-making has proven to be good for social, economic and political development of women around the world 21. Now-a-days many women are participated in local, state and national level politics and participated actively in public offices and decisions making process and showing the political empowerment of women.

#### Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is one of the important instruments for women empowerment in the fields of economic, economic empowerment means that women have the ability, capacity and resources to improve their economic and financial status and eliminate of poverty 22. Economic empowerment of women sets a direct path towards gender equality in society and it also drives in eradication of poverty and inclusive of economic growth. Women make huge contributions in economics fields, whether in farms, businesses, entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing

unpaid work at home 23. Working with women makes a good sense of business activities. When women have the rightful skills and good opportunities, they can help to grow businesses and markets welfare 24. And women those who are economically empowered could contribute more to their families, societies, national and international in economics fields 25. In India many women are working in business activities, self employment, farms, entrepreneurs and they are contributing lots of economics fields in the nation and motivating their society and other women in economic fields. Without economic empowerment the social and political empowerment of the women are unfulfilled.

#### GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR UPLIFTMENT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

To enable the status of women, the government and various NGO's and organisation plays an important role to empower to women. The Central and various State Government initiatives the many schemes for the upliftment of women empowerment, such as:

##### 1. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22nd, January 2015 at Panipat, Haryana. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao acknowledges the declining of Child Sex ratio and issues which is related to women empowerment 26. The main motives of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao is (Save the daughter and educate the daughter) which was initiated by jointly the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family welfare and the Ministry of Human Resources Development Government of India, that is focusing on spreading awareness and increase the efficiency of welfare activities for girls in the country. The campaign aims to provide that the girls are born, bring up and educated them without any discrimination and to build up empowered citizens of this country. The campaign is jointly made by National, State, District and Community level to bringing together with different stakeholders for accelerated impact 27.

##### 2. Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY)

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) is a small diposit saving scheme for the girl child. It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22nd January 2015 in Panipat, Haryana; this scheme is a part of the 'Beti

Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign. The bank accounts can be opened at any authorised commercial banks or any India Post office, the rate of interest was set at 9.1% but later it was revised to 9.2% in late March 2015 for FY2015-16 and again rate of Interest have been revised for FY 2016-17 to 8.6% 28. Currently it provides 8.1 per cent and income-tax benefit under section 80 (C) of the Income Tax Act, 1961. The account can be opened any time after the birth or till she turns 10 years, with a minimum deposit amount of Rs 250 and a maximum of Rs 1.5 lakh can be deposited in a year. The bank account will remain effective for 21 years from the date of its opening or till the marriage of the girl after she turns 18 years 29.

### 3. Mahila-E-Haat

The government of India launched Mahila-E-Haat in 2016, under the schemes of women and Child development. Mahila E-Haat is an initiative aimed to addressing the needs and desires of women entrepreneurs. It is an online e-commerce site for women where participants can view their goods. As part of the Digital India' and 'Stand Up India' initiatives, it is an initiative for women in the country 30. This scheme promote the online phase innovation to help and understand the women in business activities, self-help groups, NGOs and their goods and services. It's open to all Indian women at the age of 18 years and above and provides a simple sign-in preparation and assisted instalment mode. Everything can be dealt with on versatility with the need for any other arbitration. It has claimed admission of 1.7 million guests since its dispatch and highlights over 2,000 items and administrations from over 18 categories across 24 states

### 4. Mahila Shakti Kendra

The Government of India has approved Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme for the period of 2017-18 up to 2019-20 to empower the rural women through community participation 31. The government encourages the Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme for improvement in business activities, efficiency, wellbeing and nutrition for women. It will work through community mobilization and harmonized volunteers within 115 people in each district. This scheme will provide for rural to get privileges through preparation and capacity building. It works at local, regional, state and national levels.

### 5. Working Women Hostel

The Government of India has initiated "Working Women Hostel Scheme" to promote the availability of reliable and conveniently accommodation for the working women who are living far away their homes and doing professional commitments 32. Under this scheme, the Government provides a grant-in-aid for the construction of new or expansion of existing buildings to advance hostel facilities in cities, towns and also in rural areas 33. Working women, who may be single, separated, divorced, widowed and married but whose husband or family does not reside in the same city/place. Particular preference may be given to women from backward sections of the society 34. Hostel facilities will be provided to those women who are entitled to gross income does not exceed Rs. 50,000/- per month in metropolitan cities, or Rs 35,000/- per month, in any other place 35.

### 6. Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP)

The Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) was launched by Central Scheme in 1986-87. The aims of the STEP programme were to make a great impact on women by upgrading skills for self and wage employment 36. The activities is envisaged to mobilizing women in improving their skills, arranging for productive assets, creating backward and forward linkage, access to wage employment, providing access to credit, improving/arranging for support services, awareness generation, sensitization of project functionaries, gender sensitization, nutrition education, etc 37. The STEP pilot was established to supply qualifications for women so that they could take productive employment. It also gives the right qualifications and prepares women to do business. Open to every woman over 16 years of age, it is run directly through an NGO given to an institution / organization.

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR UPLIFTMENT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The Central and many State governments initiatives the various programs/Schemes for the upliftment of women empowerment in India. The main goals and objectives of all these schemes are to progress,

development and strengthen for the status of women such as:

1. To create a good environment for women through financial independent and well social order for the advancement, to empower and to make them to realize their full potential power.
2. To aware about their rights, equality, duties and responsibility which is the basic norms and values of the society, and to develop their scientific temper and humanism
3. To achieve their goals and to live unity and cooperation with each other in social, political and financial independent life in the society.
4. Care for women, quality works at all levels, career and professional direction, occupation, increased compensation, break-even with women for term related goodness and safety, social security, office, and more.
5. To strengthen the legitimate framework indicated against the settlement of all sizes of segregation against women.
6. Changing the social and community environments with the dynamic cooperation and unity for both men and women in the society.
7. Mainstreaming a sex approach within advancement preparation.
8. To settle and eliminate all forms of social evils against women and girls child which is existing in the society; And.
9. To build up strong organizations in the society, especially in all women's organizations.

#### CONCLUSION

The concept of women empowerment has become one of the important concerns in the 21st century, not only at national level but also at the international level. It plays a significant role which leads to the positive change and transformation of the existing society. The Central and many state governments have done various program and schemes to enable for women empowerment in India. They ensuring gender equality and women participation in every field, but the Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. The Individuals and society must take initiatives to create a space in the equality and against gender discrimination. Women have the full rights and opportunities of self-dependent and to participate in politics and decision-making process

and participating in the social, economic and political life in the society and nation.

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