



**Journal of Social Sciences
and
Management Research**



**A Study on Women Empowerment and Social Change in
India - An Overview
*Kalpana Suryakant Zubre**

Abstract:

This paper makes an attempt to study on women empowerment and social change in rural India. In rural India, women face a host of social barriers to work, including ingrained notions of what women can do. One project brings together NGOs, corporations and the government to help women smash gender biases and join the workforce. Rural women are the key indicators for development. They play a predominant role towards achievement of transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face. These are further aggravated by the global food and economic crises and climate change. The inclusion of a Millennium Development Goal oriented towards the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women demonstrates that gender equality is placed high on the development agenda. This study adopted secondary data sources from journals, magazines, articles. The purpose of the present study is to deliver the overview of women empowerment and social change in rural India.

Keywords: Women, Empowerment, rural, development.

*** Kalpana Suryakant Zubre,**
Research Scholar,
Advance Centre for Women's Studies,
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

Introduction:

In rural India, women face a host of social barriers to work, including ingrained notions of what women can do. One project brings together NGOs, corporations and the government to help women smash gender biases and join the workforce. Women's are the key indicators of social change as well, and because of social change there is tremendous change in the lives of women. These women are not only the beneficiaries of change they are the key agents for change. Throughout India's long struggle for independence, women stood shoulder to shoulder with men. The Freedom Movement was their (women) movement, and the battles were their (women) battles. In fact, it was a woman- Rani of Jhansi who fired the first shot that began the freedom struggle in 1857.

Child Labour and Gender in India:

Child labour is one of the major problems in contract farming, and this is the case throughout the developing world. However, no data on its global or regional magnitude are available because contract farming is practiced in small pockets in each developing country. Similarly, there are no

estimates of the magnitude of child labour in contract farming in India.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated there were 250 million working children in the world in the age group of 5-14 years in 1996 (cited in Nielsen and Dubey, 2002). The work participation rate of children between the ages of 10 and 14 years was as high as 14%, and in some parts of the world, such as central Africa, it was more than 32%. India.

Objectives:

- To understand the basic concepts of women empowerment and social change.
- To study about the role of education which leads to women empowerment.

Methodology:

Being an explanatory research, this study is only based on secondary data where the researcher collected several information, data, related to women empowerment and social change from articles in reputed journals, magazines, government reports, Gender parity index, Gender Development Index.

Women's empowerment in India:

Women empowerment is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what it is that they can be, do, and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied. Alternatively, it is the process for women to redefine gender roles that allows for them to acquire the ability to choose between known alternatives whom have otherwise been restricted from such an ability. There are several principles defining women's empowerment such as, for one to be empowered, they must come from a position of disempowerment. Furthermore, one must acquire empowerment themselves rather than have it given to them by an external party. Other studies have found that empowerment definitions entail people having the capability to make important decisions in their lives while also being able to act on them.

Economic Empowerment:

Economic empowerment increases women's agency, access to formal government programs, economic independence, purchasing power and mobility outside the home. Policy makers are suggested to support job training to aid

in entrance in the formal markets. One recommendation is to provide more formal education opportunities for women that would allow for higher bargaining power in the home. They would have more access to higher wages outside the home; and as a result, make it easier for women to get a job in the market.

Women's access to property inheritance and land rights is another method used to economically empower women. This would allow them better means of asset accumulation, capital, and bargaining power needed to address gender inequalities. Often, women in developing and underdeveloped nations are legally restricted from their land on the sole basis of gender. Having a right to their land gives women a sort of bargaining power that they wouldn't normally have; in turn, they gain more opportunities for economic independence and formal financial institutions. Another popular method for women's economic development also includes micro credit. Micro finance institutions aims to empower women in their community by giving them access to loans that have low interest rates without the requirements of collateral. More

specifically, they aim to give microcredit to women who want to be entrepreneurs.

Role of Education in Women Empowerment:

Education as a means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. It is therefore, crucial for the socioeconomic and political progress of India. The Constitution of India empowers the state to adopt affirmative measures for promoting ways and means to empower women. Education significantly makes difference in the lives of women.³ Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political rights are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide.

Political Empowerment:

Political empowerment supports creating policies that would best support gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private spheres. Popular methods that have been suggested are to create affirmative action policies that have a quota for the number of women in policy making and parliament positions. As of

2017, the global average of women whom hold lower and single house parliament positions is 23.6 percent. Further recommendations have been to increase women's rights to vote, voice opinions, and the ability to run for office with a fair chance of being elected. Because women are typically associated with child care and domestic responsibilities in the home, they have less time dedicated to entering the labour market and running their business. Policies that increase their bargaining power in the household would include policies that account for cases of divorce, policies for better welfare for women, and policies that give women control over resources.

Economic Survey 2018 Emphasis on Women Empowerment:

According to the 2017-18 Economic Survey, India's score in 14 out of 17 indicators which relate to the agency, attitude and outcomes have improved over time. Out of seven indicators, there has been such consistent progress that India's performance is better than or at par with other countries. There has been notable progress in the agency dimension for women, who now have an active decision-

making power regarding household purchases and visiting family and relatives. There has also been a decline in physical and sexual violence against women, according to the Survey. Moreover, education levels have also improved. The percentage of educated women have gone up from 59.4 percent in 2005-06 to 72.5 percent in 2015-16.

Conclusion:

Women empowerment has the power to change many things in the society and country. They are much better than men to deal with certain problems in the society. They are fully able to handle the economic conditions of the family and country through proper family planning. They can better understand the disadvantages of the overpopulation for their family and country. Women are capable enough to handle any impulsive violence in comparison to the men whether in the family or society. Educated women now feel that there is more to life than marriage. They can get most of the things they want (income, status, identity) without marriage, while they find it harder to find a suitable accomplished mate. Through women

empowerment, it can be possible to change the male dominated country into the equally dominated country of rich economy.

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