

# A Study of Women's Empowerment: Social, Economic, and Political Problems

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**Abstract – Empowerment has been a common buzzword among activists and academics, as well as among legislators, health care providers, and educators, social workers, and managers, not to mention disadvantaged communities, a community, state, or nation cannot function effectively without the participation and empowerment of women. In a child's early years, a woman has the most influence. Women play a crucial role in our culture. Education as a tool for women's empowerment might result in a shift in attitudes. Hence, it is critical for India's socio-economic and political development. And the study which disused about social issues, Economic issues, Political issues, Political participation**

**Keyword – Women's Empowerment, Political, Participation**

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## INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment may represent a variety of things, including equal position, financial security, and the ability to pursue her interests, empowerment, and the emphasis is on preparing women to be financially independent, self-sufficient, and to have good self-esteem so they can confront any tough scenario, and they should be able to participate in the decision-making process. Human trafficking, forced labor, and the reserving of elected offices for women are all prohibited by the Indian Constitution, which aims to eliminate gender inequities. A growing desire for equal rights has led to an increase in female participation in political parties. Despite constitutional protections for gender equality, only a small number of women have held elected office. Since ancient times, Indian women have had less authority and prestige than their male counterparts. Women's political engagement in India isn't as high as it is for males. This is a common occurrence in the majority of nations throughout the world. However, the current level of female political engagement is positive when seen in the context of the past. It's still going strong today. However, in India, women who hold decision-making positions in UN agencies are almost exclusively drawn from urban and affluent backgrounds. There is still a long way to go when it comes to the representation of women in the Indian parliament today. Women are clamoring for more room in government. Politics and political affairs go hand in hand, with political involvement being the most important feature of every political system. As a result of political engagement, citizens have a voice in whether their government grants or denies their wishes. Political empowerment not only gives women

more influence, but also enables men and women to exchange ideas, suggestions, and opinions, and to show mutual respect for one another in the process. Increasing women's political awareness via political empowerment is essential in today's world. By doing so, women are given the confidence to take part in elections as voters or candidates and are given tools to address a variety of issues. A person's interest in politics frequently correlates with their willingness to engage in politics. Women's engagement in political parties may be shaped significantly by their leadership roles. Nationally and internationally, women's political engagement has been a major issue. Engaging women in politics helps to ensure gender equality for all women.

For political empowerment, involvement in the political process is essential. It is possible to quantify women's political engagement on three different levels: as a voter, elected official, and in the actual decision-making process. Since the first general election, their involvement as a voter and as an elected representative has been measured by the electoral commission. There is a high degree of female representation at the municipal level due of the reserved seats for women, but there are serious worries that males have actually been governing by employing women as proxies. A slew of causes are to blame for the current predicament. Women were active participants in Indian nationalist movements before to independence, but their numbers dwindled as a result. Women's actual political empowerment has been hindered by society's perceptions about women's gender roles. Traditional division of labour, illiteracy, economic constraints, and the kind of

election system have hindered women from participating in politics. In addition, the expense of running for office is quite high. Women are unable to afford the significant sums of money needed to compete in elections because they lack the financial resources. Women have been held back by a centralized power structure and a culture of corruption. Political parties' gender prejudices are stumbling barriers for women in leadership roles. Without a political party to support them, women have a hard time gaining a footing in politics. The parties acknowledge the support of family and husbands for women. A lack of attention is paid to veteran female legislators. Efforts are not made to organize women as a political force. It is critical to quantify women's engagement in politics in order to devise policy interventions to increase it. There has been a noticeable rise in the number of women elected officials at the municipal level since the Act was passed. There are several reasons why gauging the political engagement of women in India is difficult. Their husbands' wives may at times just serve as proxies for their husbands. Qualitative data on their decision-making acumen, on the other hand, can't be quantified as simply as quantitative data on their participation in the decision-making process. There are a variety of methods that may be used to provide a strong framework for measuring the political engagement of women in India.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Bijoy Prasad Das (2021)** To be empowered, one must undergo a process of internal transformation or gain power inside oneself, or increase one's ability to mobilize a group of people, such as a group of women and men when feasible. Empowerment, therefore, is a capacity-building process that results in increased involvement and decision-making authority, as well as the ability to make informed, revolutionary action. Empowerment may be defined as a process that aids individuals in taking charge of the variables that have an impact on their daily life. For women to be empowered, they must become more self-aware, politically engaged, economically productive, and independent, and they must be able to engage in thoughtful debate about issues that concern them. The concept of "political engagement" is quite broad. However, it is not only about the "Right to Vote," but also about taking part in the decision-making process, being politically active, and having a strong political awareness. Indian women vote, seek public posts and belong to political parties at lower levels than their male counterparts. Women are most active in politics when they become involved in activism and voting. The Indian government has implemented seat reservations for women in local governments to tackle gender disparity in politics. Women made up 65.63 percent of the electorate in India's 2014 general elections, while males made up 67.09 percent of the electorate. Women have served as president and prime minister of India, as well as chief ministers of numerous states, making India the 20th most female-dominated country in the world. India's people have

elected women for many decades to several state legislatures and the national parliament. An attempt is being made in this article to describe and analyze the political engagement of women in India, as well as numerous government efforts aimed at empowering women by looking at India's position on the Gender Inequality Index.

**Vijeta Shrivastava (2019)** Women are a fundamental element of society, and their role is essential. Without the empowerment of women, society would not be able to progress. Whether it's social or economic or political, women's self-determination requires a journey through society. A variety of methods may be used to empower women in politics. As part of an effort to strengthen local government and empower women, the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment acts were passed in 2013. Before the administration could achieve its goal in full, there were significant setbacks. To mention a few: systemic failure, red tape, and chinks in the infrastructure necessary to achieve stated goals. It is equally vital for the government and society to break out of the cocoon of the psycho-social barrier and place women at the forefront of social change. Political empowerment of women may be achieved through the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

**M. Ameen Nisha (2018)** the political empowerment of women is a social process crucial to development and progress. The status of women is measured internationally by the participation of women in politics and their empowerment. Women remain seriously underrepresented in decision-making positions. The objective of this paper is to study the challenges, statistical data, comparison with other countries and empowerment of women political participation in India. The research paper uses the descriptive method of study. The finding of the study shows that different causal factors such as; economic, religious, social and cultural factors contributed to women's poor political participation in the country. According to the statistics on women participation in politics women participation in politics is gradually increasing but not drastically as we see women participation in politics from 1952 to 2014 in India. But still awareness should be created among women to participate in politics with courage. The findings on participation of women in politics are increasing. There is significant in the study on political empowerment and participation of women in politics. To secure women's rightful place in society and to enable them to decide their own destiny and for the growth of genuine and sustainable democracy, women's participation in politics is essential. This will not only uplift their personality but will open the way for their social and economic empowerment. Their participation in public life will solve many problems of society.

**Zakir Hussain Naik (2017)** A democratic system is characterized by active engagement in the political process. Democracy is only as effective as its citizens are given the opportunity to participate. In

India, women make up roughly half of the population, and they deserve a seat at the table in the political arena. Citizens' active participation in political affairs strengthens the democratic fabric. Since women's presence is seemed to be low in Indian politics, it is the necessary to make women aware of their rights and motivate them for participation in mainstream politics. The constitution of India under Articles 325 and 326 guarantee equal right to participate in political activities effectively. However, lack of space for participation in political process has not only resulted in their absence in numbers of decision making bodies but also neglect their common issues and problems. For strong and effective democratic system, the participation of women is essential. There cannot be any real democracy if the voices and issues of women are ignored or sidelined. This paper analyzes the participation of women in politics and also analyzes whether or not women's voices and demands are articulated to the public as matters of importance.

**Rouf Ahmad Bhat (2015)** the government and civil society in India are particularly concerned with women's education, since well-educated women may play a vital role in the country's growth. Education is a key milestone in women's empowerment because it gives them the ability to face their societal expectations, react to problems, and transform their lives for the better. As a result, education is critical to the empowerment of women and India's ascent to superpower status. The most effective way to alter women's social status is via education. Education for women has long been a pressing issue in India since it is the cornerstone of a woman's empowerment effort. Education also reduces inequities and serves as a tool for enhancing a person's standing within the family, as well as helping to foster the idea of active engagement. Involvement is a key component of education and empowerment.

**D. Syamala Devi and G Lakshmi (2015)** Women's political engagement via empowerment has been studied by the authors of "Political Empowerment of Women in Indian Legislature: A Study". Women may participate in decision-making when they are empowered. Despite being the world's biggest democracy, women are disproportionately underrepresented in decision-making roles, and their representation in politics reflects this. To begin, a democracy must have an equal number of men and women participating in decision-making processes, as well as taking into consideration the needs and interests of the whole population. If progress is to be genuine, it must include women in all areas. Low female involvement has long been a source of concern in a variety of settings. The quotations that were provided to the ladies are useful instruments for increasing the number of women in politics. Organizing networks of channels by women will let them exert power in decision-making.

## OBJECTIVES

- To study the relationship between empowerment and many societal, political, and economic variables.
- To study women's empowerment: social, economic, and political problems
- To investigate the power differential between privileged and non-privileged women.
- To examine whether women's empowerment has helped to develop and advance in social, political, and economic spheres and activities.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The term "empowerment" refers to the process of enhancing an individual's or group's financial, political, social, educational, gender, or spiritual position. As a means of helping the poor and needy, empowerment relies on mobilizing one's self. Since the previous several decades, the issue of women's empowerment has been a hot-button topic around the world, especially in India. All around the world, there have been longstanding concerns of gender inequality and discrimination against women. Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It strengthens the ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience. Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individuals to think take action and control work in an autonomous way.

### Social Issues

People across the world revere India's ancient traditions, which include veneration of a wide range of female deities, saints, and poets. The world's largest democracy is India. Women's backwardness is also evident in Indian society because of the societal concerns, challenges and limits that women face. In general, women from lower-class families are more affected than those from higher-class families. Female infanticide, dowry system, and sex discrimination are some of the issues that women in Indian society confront on a daily basis.

**Sexual Harassments:** It is the form of sexual exploitation of a girl child at home, streets, public places, transport, offices etc. by the family members, neighbors, friends or relatives.

**Domestic Violence:** It's like an illness that affects practically all of India's female population, with almost 70% of those affected. Women's and children's ministries agree that a spouse or other

family member is to blame. In society, women are not afforded the same rights as men.

**Economic Issues**

The economic empowerment refers to programmes aiming directly raising people’s income. Women’s economic empowerment that is, their capacity to bring about economic change for themselves, as it is increasingly observed that the most important contributing factor to achieving equality between women and men, But economically strengthening women-who are half the world’s workforce – is not only a means by which to spur economic growth, but also a matter of advancing women’s human rights. To increase their economic opportunities, women need access to more and better jobs, a business climate the supports them in starting and doing business, a financial sector that gives them financial support to their needs and greater livelihood security in times of food and fuel crisis. Women’s economic empowerment is a prerequisite for sustainable development, pro-poor growth and the achievement of all the MDGs.

**Political Issues**

The term political participation has a very wide meaning. It is not only related to “Right to Vote”, but simultaneously relates to participation in decision making process, political activism, political consciousness, etc. Women in India participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties at lower levels. Political activism and voting are the strongest areas of women’s political participation. To remove the gender inequalities in politics, the Indian Government has instituted reservations for seats in local government.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

Increasing an entity's financial, political, social, and spiritual clout is one way to empower it. Since the previous several decades, the issue of women's empowerment has been divisive across the globe, especially in India.

Using a survey, the researcher was able to test or support his or her hypothesis. A survey of literate, semi-literate, and non-literate women in Ahmadabad was used to gather primary data. Secondary sources, such as books, journals, and web references, were also consulted. A structured questionnaire was administered to 360 people between the ages of 16 and 75 and the sample was selected using stratified random sampling, stratified on the basis of education, income and social background. It was also discovered that 138 of the survey's 360 participants failed to provide any information on their social background, thus they were lumped together as a single group. Thus, the total of 274 respondents includes 138 respondents who did not identify their socioeconomic background, and another 31 respondents who identified themselves as belonging to a faith other than Hinduism.

**Analysis**

The following tables provide the background of the respondents:

**Table 4.1: Age Group of Respondents**

Age-group	Respondents	%
18-30	102	28
31-40	143	40
41-50	76	21
50-75	39	11

**Table 4.2: Social Background**

Age-group	Gen	SC	ST	OBC
18-30	77	08	07	10
31-40	109	06	09	19
41-50	58	04	04	10
51-75	30	03	02	04
Total	274	21	22	43

**Table 4.3: Marital Status**

Age-group	Married	Unmarried	Widow	Divorce
18-30	68	28	03	03
31-40	130	05	05	03
41-50	69	02	03	02
51-75	22	01	14	02
Total	289	36	25	10

**Table 4.4: Education Background**

Age-group	Illiterate	Up to 5th	Up to 10th	Graduate	Post Graduate/Ph.D.	Other
18-30	06	14	52	26	02	02
31-40	08	11	86	34	01	03
41-50	08	25	26	16	-	01
50-75	15	14	05	05	-	02
Total	37	64	169	79	03	08

**Table 4.5: Economic Background**

Age-group	<5000	5000-10000	10000-20000	Above 20000	Others
18-30	58	22	19	02	11
31-40	61	29	24	05	25
41-50	22	08	05	04	26
50-75	11	04	04	02	18
Total	152	63	52	13	80

**Table 4.6: Privileged and Non-privileged Economic Background Groups**

Income level	Privileged	Non-privileged	Marginal
less than 5000	Nil	152	Nil
5000 to 10000	Nil	Nil	63
10000 and above	65	Nil	Nil



Table 4.6 displays the privileged, non-privileged, and marginalized respondents in terms of their economic status. Non-privileged people are those who earn less than 5,000 per year since their money is vital for their families to meet their fundamental necessities.

**Political Participation**

In order to be a political participant, one must engage in such actions as persuasion, public education campaigns, and membership in political parties and their allied groups, all of which can affect others. One of the reasons in political engagement is the fact that women are elected representatives in urban or rural municipal authorities. It is not limited to having one-third elected representation in Panchayat or municipal administrations in terms of women's empowerment and political involvement.

**Tables 4.7: Is there a Need for Financial Independence for Political Activity?**

	Respondents	%
Yes	173	48
No	89	25
May be	98	27

Table 1 reveals that 48% of respondents feel that women who are financially independent may engage in political action, 25% believe that women who are not financially independent cannot engage in political engagement, and 27% are undecided.

**CONCLUSION**

There has been a long history of gender inequality and discrimination against women over the world. Empowerment aims to mobilize the self-help of the poor and vulnerable. Women empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth, their rights to have and to determine choices; their rights to have access to opportunities and resources; their rights to have the power to control their own lives; both within the home and outside the home. Empowerment is the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalized people, either by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to those opportunities. It also includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities; Women's empowerment can positively influence the lives not only of women themselves but also of men, and of course, those of children. Political parties cannot remain indifferent towards women who constitute 586.5 million population and nearly 48.46 per cent of the electorate. Although almost all political parties have attempted to build women organisations to secure their support and make their organisations more broad based, but in practice they have fielded much less proportion of women candidates in the elections giving them proportionately much less representation in the legislative bodies than their

actual population strength Some of the main issues in women empowerment are rooted in social and economic factors like education, social and religious customs that are considered as hindrance, the inherent limitations of a patriarchal society, and absence of economic independence. Despite several efforts and initiatives by governments at the international, national and local levels the outcome falls short of the objectives. Voluntary efforts through NGOs to complement governmental initiatives too have met with limited success. Creating awareness and women education seems to be the only enabling way for empowering women.

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