



*Journal of Advances and  
Scholarly Researches in  
Allied Education*

*Vol. VIII, Issue No. XVI,  
Oct-2014, ISSN 2230-7540*

## **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS**

AN  
INTERNATIONALLY  
INDEXED PEER  
REVIEWED &  
REFEREED JOURNAL

# Women's Empowerment: A Conceptual Analysis

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**Abstract – Women's Empowerment educates and empowers women, who are homeless, with the skills and confidence necessary to secure a job, create a healthy lifestyle, and regain a home for themselves and their children.**

*The entry of women into a specific trade signaled a downgrading of the trade. With industrialization, women still earned one-third to one-half of men's wages. New occupations were added for women over time, but these for the most part were ones previously filled by males, but downgraded in status and pay for women. These jobs included secretaries and typists in businesses, store clerks in the new department stores, and teaching. Increased demarcation in the industrial economy was the strict delineation between men's and women's work.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Women's socio-economic empowerment is related to gender equality, the decrease of all kinds of violence against women [Abdin, 2008:1], their access to adequate income as a way to achieve long term bargaining capacity at home, in community and at the work place [Mosedale, 2005: 247]. Absar [2002], in her article titled Women Garment workers in Bangladesh, showed that female workers do not receive job contract papers during their recruitment process. Ahmed [2004] in her article The Rise of the Bangladesh Garment Industry: Globalization, Women Workers, and Voice, shows to what extent female garment workers have been able to express their voices at home and at work. Her study found that women workers have very limited voices at home because of patriarchy. Female workers have limited voices at the work place because they are not unionized through labor organizations [Ahmed, 2004].

The pattern of employment of women is very different among different countries: In developed countries, most of the women are employed in white collar jobs or as semiskilled operatives in manufacturing industries. In USA in 1975, there were 37 million women workers [46.3% of all women] and in 1995 this figure is around 60%. In India on the other hand, according to 1981 census, workforce participation by females was barely 15% [main workers] as against 51.6% amongst males. According to the 1991 census, the participation of female workers has increased to 16.03 % [main workers] In addition, 6.24% of females have been shown as marginal workers and the remaining women [305.2 million] are shown as a non-working population [Indian Labor Statistics, 1994, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Shimla [1996]. The

1991 census also shows that of these 16.03% main women workers, 80.8% are employed in agriculture, 3.5 % in house hold industries, 4% in other industries, 0.3% in mining and quarrying, 0.6 % as construction workers and only 10.8% in other services.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE;

India today is at the cusp of a paradigm change in its growth and its position in the world. We (both men and women) must act decisively to capture this opportunity. We need to think big and scale up rapidly in each and every area, be it education, infrastructure, industry, financial services or equality of both genders. For around two centuries, social reformers and missionaries in India have endeavored to bring women out of confines in which centuries of traditions had kept them. According to the 2001 Census, the percentage of female literacy in the country is 54% up from 9% 1951 [7].

The changes are beneficial which come gradually. Our country is changing politically, economically and socially, at a swift speed. The condition of woman is also gradually changing. They have begun to take their due place in free India as is evident from the following facts [8].

**Social and economic factors can contribute to women's empowerment: review of Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project in India [5-6]**

The completion evaluation of the IFAD-supported Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project in India took place in late 1999. The project had aimed to bring about the social and economic betterment of women. The core mechanism was the women's self-

help groups, which were set up with both financial (saving and lending) and community action objectives. At the time of the evaluation, a total of 5 207 of these groups had been formed, almost double the established target. The evaluation noted that, at least in the latter phases, the project acted not as just "a credit-cum-subsidy project, but as a genuine process of empowerment." The evaluation concluded that such *empowerment lay in the interaction between the social and economic aspects of the project.*

Four of the main processes that could lead to women's empowerment, as defined by the IFAD evaluation, were:

- Changes in women's mobility and social interaction;
- Changes in women's labour patterns;
- Changes in women's access to and control over resources; and
- Changes in women's control over decision-making.

## CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the efforts of Union Government in opening new opportunities for women in employment sector by allowing night shifts for women employees is really a bold step and worth applaudable. It would empower the State Governments for allowing the necessary flexibility in employment of women during night shifts in factories. The State Government or any person authorized by it would be allowing employment of women during night only after consulting workers or their representative organizations and concerned employers or their representatives. State Governments may also frame their own rules for giving such permissions. Also the amendment would result in optimal utilization of the installed capacity, promotion of exports and generation of employment opportunities for women.

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