

# Women Empowerment in India: A Sociological Perspective

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**Abstract – This paper aims to examine the position of women in India by utilizing specific metrics focused on secondary evidence. The survey indicate that India's women have considerable disempowerment and, given several attempts made by the government, have a much lower rank than that of men. Access to schooling and jobs is an important part of gender divide. Their sex, employment and work status differ considerably in terms of household decision taking authority and women's freedom of movement. It is observed that women often reign in the society's embrace of patriarchal gender norms. More than half of people believe that a woman beating for one reason or the other is acceptable. Fewer women tell how to invest their money. With age, schooling and place of residence, regulation of cash income is rising. Women are often less prone to media than males. Rural women are more likely than urban women to witness domestic abuse. Public engagement still has a wide gender disparity. The research concludes by noting that the only potential reasons for motivating access to education and jobs are achievement against the target, but that their approach to gender equality depends to a large degree.**

**Key Words: Employment, Gender, Empowerment**

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## INTRODUCTION

In India women's empowerment depends greatly on several specific factors, including spatial (urban / rural), economic, social (caste and class), and age. Women's empowerment programs occur in a variety of fields, including wellness, schooling, economic development, gender-based abuse and political engagement, at the regional, state and local (Panchayat) levels. There are, however, substantial differences between legislative changes and current neighborhood action. The overwhelmingly patriarchal system that rules the society and homes in much of India is one of the main reasons for the weakness in enforcing laws and policies to tackle inequality, economic inequalities, and violence against women at Community level. Women and girls therefore have reduced autonomy, access to schooling, access to health services and fewer decision-making capacities, and more crime. Political involvement is also hampered, given current reservations on the part of women, at the Panchayat (local governing bodies) level and national and State levels<sup>2</sup> in rural and urban India, though the effect is far less evident in rural and urban India than in urban areas. This is especially concerning as, given the fast pace of urbanization and growth in the towns, most of India is rural. Rural women are facing discrimination at much higher levels in all aspects of life than people in urban environments. Urban and in particular young educated

women have comparatively greater exposure, less domestic abuse, to economic resources, safety and schooling. Women (both in urban and rural areas) who have such educational degrees have expanded family and group decision-making capacity. In fact, the standard of schooling for women has a significant impact on maternal mortality and nutrition and children's health indicators<sup>3</sup>.

Further differences among rural women are hindering the empowerment of women. The most noteworthy are rates of schooling, caste and gender. Lower caste women (planned castes, other retrograde castes and tribal communities) are especially susceptible to mortality in mothers and infants. Sometimes they cannot access health and education, lose decision taking authority, and risk heightened abuse. They are unable to access health and education. In lower-class women a certain degree of schooling has demonstrated that it has a significant influence on indicators of women's empowerment<sup>4</sup>. Social differences in metropolitan women have a similar effect on indicators of empowerment. Higher-level women and trained people have greater exposure to health, jobs and economic opportunity, while in metropolitan settings; lower-level people are slightly less trained. As the urbanization in other sections of the world is rapid and economic prospects are scarce, cities often contain broad slum areas. Informal slums and

infrastructure such as drinking water, sanitation and health treatment are still missing. In addition, the slum inhabitants operate primarily in unorganized and informal sectors and are prone to state attacks, workplace violence, and other types of insecurity. The most victims to violence and harassment are women and children in slums, who are stripped to their fundamental human rights.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There have been many surveys in the world and in India on women's empowerment. Some work struggled with qualitative problems, others with observational testing, and some with motivational steps and instruments. In this segment we have addressed several big studies at the international stage, accompanied by other studies in India. Moser (1993) has concentrated on gender-development interrelationship, gender policy design and gender plans and activities implementation. The study of Shields (1995) offered a structure for examining empowerment from a theoretical and realistic viewpoint, with a emphasis on the female understanding of the significances of empowerment in their lives. A test of gender discrimination was attempted by Anand and Sen (1995). The technique of construction, structure and determinant of the GEM has been stressed primarily by Pillarisetti and Gillivray (1998). In critical review of GDI and GEM, Bardhan and Klasen (1999) argued that there are significant methodological and analytical difficulties in both measures and proposed improvements in practice, including a revision of the earned income portion of GDI. Therefore UNDP updated the GDI measurement protocol after 1999, without noting that it was distinct from the method of the previous year (Bardhan and Klasen, 2000) on the basis of their suggestions. In the same manner, the GDI principles were evaluated by Dijkstra and Hanmer (2000) and how it suffered from different constraints. According to these, GDI contrasts relative equality of gender with actual human development rates and thus does not include details on gender disparity between nations. They further developed a Relative Women's Status Index using GDI and agreed that the RSW is not an optimal indicator of gender discrimination either. In addition, the article offers a philosophical basis for an appropriate assessment of sexual discrimination. Whilst opposing the two steps, Dijkstra (2002) defined the positives and shortcomings of each and suggested a new initiative, called the Uniform Index for the Equality of Gender (SIGE), which aims to accept any conceivable gender equity aspect and to escape GDI and GEM's philosophical and methodological problems. He also said SIGE might have such a general index with a first approximation. Malhotra et al (2002) stressed in their paper the analytical challenges in women's empowerment assessment and study. Dijkstra claimed in 2006 that UNDP is either creating a new Gender Equality Database, or designing a updated GDI and GEM. On the basis of a quick review of alternatives proposed in the literature,

he provided a thorough recommendation for both methods. Klasen (2006) recommended several changes to the legislation to fix some of the GDI and GEM problems found. Schüller (2006) looked at how academics and the press utilized these indexes. His analysis found that GDI in particular tends to be an unfinished tool. The GDI has been misinterpreted as a indicator of gender discrimination in several instances of violence. Beteta (2006) argued in his essay that GEM is an imperfect and limited index on women's empowerment and tests disparity between those who are most qualified and economically advantaged and does not provide substantial non-economic aspects of decision-making forces at both household and women's own bodies and gender.

## 33% Reservation for Women

It took 14 years since its implementation to enact the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of parliament), the women's bill in April 2010, which includes 33.3 percent quota for women in all Indian politics, at long last. The Lok Sabha (the lower chamber of parliament) is yet to be passed. This is a landmark change in India's political history as women currently occupy less than 10 per cent of the seats in the national parliaments 45. The Women's Bill also allows a significant difference in terms of class and caste disparities of woman lawmakers, particularly women from the religious and political spectrum. It would offer a route for women of the lower classes and castes (now limited to local government) to join governance at the state and national level. Applicants from the SC and ST will be women in addition to their current quotas in planned castes and designated tribes. Owing to the general confusion about who comprises OBC and the absence of current evidence on the population of OBC, the quota does not include the other Backward Class leaders. The two principal points against this bill are that they would only favor elite women (especially in politics at national level) and that Dalit, minorities (mainly Muslim people) and OBCs should have reservations. However, the backers of the bill do not believe that quotas should be established for the existing 33% female parliamentary population, since quotas for SC and ST still exist. The bill stipulate that one third of their electoral ticket will be allocated for a political group, even in quotas already mandated for SC and STs. Inadvertently, this would build space for low-caste and class people to enter politics at national and state level. The passage and introduction of this Women's Bill and its effect on established barriers to gender, classes and castes is not yet understood, but one thing is clear: India.

## Women's Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

The Global, Social and Cultural (ESCR) women's rights movement as fundamental human rights has only recently arisen in India. The campaign is meant to put women's rights within the wider system of human rights, and so only in the sense of abuse against women and reproductive freedom is

women's problems excluded from the spotlight. ESCR seeks to tackle the wider problems affecting women, such as education, accommodation, jobs, schooling, sanitation, food protection and trade. While the ESCR human rights campaign is primarily globally political, social movements are developing across the world. In the Indian context, programs such as the Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights System (PWESCR) for example establish partnerships with, and local articulations of women's rights in, the international human rights movement. PWESCR seeks to construct in India a step toward women's rights which will establish equal opportunities for women in all fields of life. ESCR calls for a wider dialogue on women's empowerment, promoting women economically and politically, from a victim-centered perspective to that that discussed many basic human right concerns.

### **Decision Making Power**

One of the significant factors for women's empowerment is decision-making capacity in households. It is reported that only 37 percent of married women currently engage in decisions on their wellbeing, major household transactions, household expenditures for everyday needs and visits to their families and relatives either individually or in tandem with their spouse. 43 percent take part in certain events, but not any, and 21 percent take no part in either. At 32.4%, the decision concerning the procurement of daily household needs is primarily made by the respondents, while decisions such as visits to her relatives are in the majority of cases made individually or together by spouses. In certain instances, choices such as major family transactions are taken together. This form of choice is taken by far fewer people alone. Roughly 27% of all respondents agree about their own health insurance. In household decision making, participation rates of women differ not only from rural to urban but also are more power-enhanced in urban married women than in rural women by their contexts, such as age, employment status, education for the child, the role of the workplace, etc. With the rising in generation, the role of women rises. Women with more experience and more jobs become more motivated. Around 46% of all women in the 40-49-year age group share in all four activities, up from 15% in the 15-19-year age group. The role of women in decision-making rises with higher spousal education level. About 21% of non-spousalized women are not interested in decision-making at all, contrasted with 17% of women with 12 or more years of marital employment. Jobs also supports women in terms of their decision-making ability. Employees are more inclined to take part in the decision-making process. Women have greater flexibility in household decision-making in an urban and nuclear family setting.

### **Freedom of Movement**

Another measure of women's empowerment is women's equal movement. The results indicate that nearly half of people will go to the market or to the health centre. Just 38 percent will travel areas outside the village or society on their own. While not all people should travel to such locations individually, only a few can go. Rural women have fewer autonomy relative to urban people. Their history, such as age, gender, marital status, the form of family etc, is often influenced by women's mobility. Table 4 reveals that movement independence rises with age, even though it does not vary linearly with schooling. 70% of the top education women are allowed to go to the market alone compared with 49% of non-educated people. Jobs is related to improved mobility. There are only one out of five people ever married relative to around one in three married females and two out of three previously married females who are now three. More freedom of travel is often related to nuclear residence and urban environments. Urban people are freer than those in rural regions. Similarly, in non-nucleus communities, 37% of women in nucleus households had greater independence of travel relative to 29.5%.

### **Domestic Violence**

Women that have witnessed physical and sexual abuse in different ways and variations depending on identified historical characteristics. The degree of aggression is not diminished by age. It is experienced. 22.5% of women in the 15-19 age group witness physical or sexual harassment in India, compared to 39% in the 40-49 age group. For married women all forms of abuse are higher than ever. About 40% of married women were mentally or sexually assaulted, compared with 16.9% of male women. In rural regions, the level of sexual abuse is greater than in urban areas. Around 38% of rural women experienced either sexual or physical harassment contrasted with approximately 29% of urban women.

### **Political Participation**

One of the key problems in the area of feminism is women's political engagement. In standard analyzes, it includes political politics events such as electorate polls, lobbying, group conventions and competitions. Even more generally, it includes all cooperative initiatives aimed to affect public policymaking, public governance, and policy-making at all government levels. Today's women's political contributions vary from unity and good governance to protests against dowry, rape, domestic abuse, food adulteration, price hikes, etc. However, the first twelve general elections in India are addressed in this segment, examining metrics such as women voters and women elected. In the first twelve polls for independent India the voter participation of men and women. The number of women electorate at the very



first referendum was comparatively small (37%). Many people have not been adequately recorded because of their titles. However, the gender disparity in elections has steadily exacerbated the divide between men and women.

### Constraints to Women Empowerment

The empowerment cycle of women in India is governed by many constraints. The inferior role of women reflects and perpetuates societal expectations and family roles in developed countries like India. One of those expectations is that a son appears to be favored to the birth of a girl who is present in nearly all cultures and communities. The grip of this bias was not diminished but increased, with the decreasing sex ratio as its most apparent proof. In terms of schooling, housing, and other incentives, culture is more oriented toward male adolescents. It is the assumption that male children inherit the Clan in India with an exception that underlies this sort of attitude. Women also internalize their stereotypical position as normal and therefore trigger them oppression. For the vast majority of women in India, deprivation is the fact of life. This is indeed a threat to the equality of women. Girls are the biggest offenders of a deprived family; they are malnourished and refused proper schooling and other facilities. However, whether they are financially stable or have more influence of wealth, both internally and socially they show more flexibility and they are no longer victims of deprivation. Another aspect that hinders the cycle of emancipation is lack of understanding and lack of knowledge of legal and constitutional requirements. Many people have little practical understanding of their freedoms. Also people who are aware may not have the confidence to pursue civil action. The law which most affects women is their marriage and heritage condition. As with succession privileges, women do not normally seek to inherit property that their parents have left while their brothers stay. The conventional belief that land does not move outside the patriarchal family functions. Provisions in this respect have not contributed to the elimination of the activities suggested in the actions including (1) Child Marriage Resistance Act of 1930, (2) Repression of Unethical Exploitation in Women Act in 1987 and (3) the Indecent Disclosure of Women Act of 1930. The first is, in large measure, the effectiveness of limiting marriage between these three. In unethical prostitution and sexual access to minors, the bill almost collapsed. In all types of media and barely any convictions, people are portrayed indecently. Although the legal rights exist to establish an atmosphere that encourages women to be empowered, they have not been effective.

### CONCLUSION

The Indian women are fairly helpless and have fewer respect than males. They are generally helpless. The image is not acceptable at present, in spite of the tremendous efforts of the government and NGOs. Only exposure to schooling and work will only aid in

the empowerment cycle. These are the resources or factors that cause the cycle to accelerate. The mindset, however, relies mostly on achieving this goal. Women cannot take the opportunity given to them by constitutional laws, legislation, and so on, without the mindset towards the recognition by community of the unequal gender position and also the women themselves. Until then, we can't claim women in India really are empowered.

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