

Challenges To Women Empowerment and Gender Equality

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ABSTRACT:

This paper attempts to consider the challenges to women empowerment and gender equality in India and highlights the challenges to women empowerment and gender equality. Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. The study is based on purely from secondary sources. It is found that acceptance of inequality gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. The study concludes by an observation that access to Social Challenges Faced by Women, Economic Challenges Faced by Women, Political Challenges Faced by Women and others Challenges Faced by Women.

KEYWORDS:

Women Empowerment, Inequality, Education, Challenges.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Gender equality is a human right. Women are entitled to live with dignity and with freedom from want and from fear. It is also a precondition for advancing development and reducing poverty. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities, and improve prospects for future generations.

In China, equality of men and women has been stipulated in the Constitution since 1954. More than 100 laws and regulations have been formulated or amended to provide fundamental guarantees for promoting women's development and safeguarding women's rights and interests. Women account for half of China's poverty reduction population and more than 40 per cent of the employed population. In 2018, the net primary school enrolment rates of boys and girls were both very close to 100% and the number of female graduate students in higher education accounted for 49.6% of all graduate students. The maternal mortality ratio has significantly fallen from 89 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 16.9 per 100,000 live births in 2020. Despite progress in tackling gender unequal-

ity, gender-based violence, forms of harmful practices and discrimination persist.

In the ninth Country Programme between the Government of China and UNFPA (2021–2025), UNFPA contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by ensuring that women and girls in need of protection and care receive high-quality comprehensive preventative and response services, and by collaborating with partners to promote positive social norm change to support the realization of gender equality and women's rights.

2. MEANING OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT ANF GENDER EQUATY:

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: Women's empowerment is the process where women acquire the power and ability to control their own lives, make strategic choices, and participate equally in social, economic, and political life. This includes having equal access to education and opportunities, financial independence, freedom from discrimination and violence, and the agency to make decisions about their health and family.

GENDER EQUATY: Gender equality is the fundamental human right of individuals to have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities regardless of their gender, ensuring that interests, needs, and priorities of all genders are considered. It promotes fairness by ensuring everyone can develop their abilities and make choices without limitations imposed by gender stereotypes, fostering sustainable human-centered development and social progress Gender Equality is considered as both a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development

3. CHALLENGES TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY:

Achieving gender equality and women empowerment in India is a complex challenge that involves socio-cultural, economic, and political factors. Women empowerment is essential for achieving gender equality as some of the prominent hurdles coming its way are as follows:

1. Social Challenges Faced by Women:

- » Discriminatory Social Norms: Historical legacies mean that socio-culture norms for men and women continue to remain discrim-

inatory in many parts of India, especially in rural regions. While men are allowed to be loud, women are expected to be soft spoken, calm and quiet.

- » **Role Stereotyping:** A large section of India society still considers that women are meant to stay limited to taking household chores. All the financial responsibilities and work outside are considered exclusive for males.
- » **Low Literacy:** Traditional practices like dowry, and other factors mean that many families find it economically unviable to educate the girl child. Thus, the literacy rate of women in India, especially in rural areas, still remains poor.
- » **Safety Concerns:** Women in India continue to be silent sufferers of gender-based violence such as female feticides, domestic violence, rape, trafficking, forced prostitution, honor killings, sexual harassment at the workplace, etc.

2. Economic Challenges Faced by Women:

- » **Lesser Employment Opportunities:** Gender role stereotyping attributed to women leads to prejudice and discrimination against women in the economic sphere. For example, women may be considered to be less reliable as workers because of their child-rearing and other household responsibilities.
- » **Glass Ceiling:** The prevalence of the “Glass Ceiling Effect” means that women not only in India but across the globe face unsaid barriers, preventing them from reaching higher levels of professional success.
- » **Economic Disparities:** Lesser work opportunities as well as access to finance mean that women in India suffer from economic disparity vis-a-vis men. This remains a major barrier to making them independent.

3. Political Challenges Faced by Women:

- » **Low Political Representation:** The representation of women in different legislative bodies, including the Parliament as well as State Legislative Assemblies, remains low across India.
- » **Sarpanch Pati Culture:** The prevalence of ‘sarpanch pati’ culture across India, wherein men relatives of elected women run the office

in their place, means that even meager political representation of women is mostly nominal.

4. Other Challenges Faced by Women:

- » Inadequate Implementation of Laws: While strong legal frameworks exist for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in India, their effective implementation remains a challenge due to weak enforcement mechanisms and societal attitudes.
- » Emerging Challenges: While Globalization and Urbanization have brought new opportunities to women, they have also exposed them to new vulnerabilities like trafficking and exploitation.

3. MEASURES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY IN

INDIA:

Prevalence of gender inequality in India means that achieving gender equality and women empowerment in India requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy that covers multiple dimensions. Some of the suggested measures to achieve these goals are discussed below.

1. Social Empowerment of Women;

- » The problem has persisted despite so many legislations says that a social problem cannot be tackled only through legislation. What is required is a sustained campaign to change the social attitude.
- » Education and women empowerment have a strong link and enabling access to education is the best tool for empowering women.
- » Ensuring effective implementation of existing laws through efficient judicial systems and law enforcement will help reduce gender-based violence faced by women.

2. Economic Empowerment of Women;

- » Providing women with market-relevant skills will help them enter the labor force easily.
- » Enabling access to credit through tools such as micro-financing can enable women to participate in economic activities. This, in turn, will make them financially independent.

3. Political Empowerment of Women;

- » Women should be promoted in leadership roles so that they become

architects of India's progress and development, rather than being passive recipients of the fruits of development.

- » Leadership development programs for women to prepare them for roles in politics and civil society.

4. CONCLUSION:

Women empowerment is the process by which women gain and control over their own lives and acquires the ability to make strategic choices. Women empowerment and gender equality in India are not just goals in themselves but are fundamental to the Nation's overall development and prosperity. As India strides towards its vision of "Viksit Bharat @2047", the government, civil societies, communities, and individuals, should put their collective efforts into fostering a society where every woman has the opportunity to thrive.

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