

## A Study on Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment in India

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to break down Indian women's empowerment status and addresses women's empowerment problems and challenges. Today, women's empowerment has ended up being one of the most pressing concerns of the 21st century. However, Woman Empowerment is still essentially a deception of reality. Woman Empowerment, the key tool for expanding women's empowerment ability, is essentially the procedure for elevating women's economic, social and political status in the general public. It is the way to protect them from all sorts of viciousness. The analysis is entirely dependent on optional sources. The study reveals that Indian women are typically disempowered and enjoy lower status to some degree than men, irrespective of the various efforts of the government. It was found that women are still gaining acceptance for unfair gender roles in the society. The study concludes with a view that access to education, jobs and change in social structure are the needed components for empowerment of women

**Key Words:** *Women Empowerment, Education, Health, Socio-Economic Status.*

### Introduction

Women constitute half of the humanity, contributing two-thirds of world's work hours, but earns only one-third of the total income and owns less than one-tenth of the world's resources. The economic status of women is pathetic all over the world and more so in a country like India. Among total Indian population of 1027.10 million, women constitute

495.73 million. Thus, in India “women constitute nearly 50 per cent of population, perform two-thirds of the work and produce 50 per cent of food commodities consumed by the country. They earn one third of remuneration and own 10 per cent of the property or wealth of the country” (Reddy et al., 1994). Swami Vivekananda one of the leading Social reformer in India, quoted that, “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved; It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.” The inclusion of “Women Empowerment’, as one of the prime goals in the Eight Millennium Development Goals, underscores the significance of this fact. Thus, in order to achieve the status of a developed country, India needs to transform its colossal women force into an effective human resource and this is possible only through the empowerment of women.

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable women or group of women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life (Surekha Rao and Rajamanamma, 1999). It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives, or to have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free from shocks imposed on them by custom, belief and practice. Generally development with justice is expected to generate the forces that lead to empowerment of various sections of population in a country and to raise their status especially in case of women.

Empowerment includes the action of raising the status of women through education, raising awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society. The various components of women empowerment are:

**Societal empowerment** - It is understood as the process of developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses that exclude poor people and keep them in poverty.

**Monetary empowerment** - It is thought to allow poor people to think beyond immediate daily survival and to exercise greater control over both their resources and life choices. It can also strengthen vulnerable groups’ participation in the decision-making. The evidence also suggests that economic power is often easily ‘converted’ into increased social status or decision-making power.

**Prime Decision maker-** It is very much important as it increases their bargaining power and promotes economic empowerment. If women were empowered, they would be able to participate in the planning, decision-making tasks, and contribute to the development programmes and activities independently.

**Delicate Independence-**It facilitates access to material resources such as food, land, income and other forms of wealth, and social resources such as knowledge, power, prestige within the family and community. Women's autonomy in health-care decision-making is extremely important for better maternal and child health outcomes, and as an indicator of women's empowerment. Gender-based power inequalities can restrict open communication between partners about reproductive health decisions as well as women's access to reproductive health services.

Since independence policies and programmes exist at the panchayat level, state level and national levels in many sectors to boost women's status. Yet there remain more substantial disparity between policy innovation and its actual use at the general public level. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to building stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families, and communities.

## Review of Literature

The literature survey of women empowerment has covered a wide range of vantage points like, autonomy (Dyson & Moore 1983; Kabeer, 2001; Jeebhoy & Sathar 2001), agency and status (Jain et al. 2003, Kumar, 2011), women's land rights (Quisumbing et al., 1999), process of gaining control over self and resources (Verma, 2009, Samanta, 2009), domestic economic power (Handy, et al. 2004), bargaining power (Beegle et al., 1998; Quisumbing & de la Briere 2000), power (Agarwal, 1997; Beegle et al., 1998), patriarchy (Malhotra et al., 1997), gender equality (World Bank, 2001 & 2012). Often there is not any clear demarcation in the meanings of these terms for women's empowerment. A few studies have attempted to develop the index for women's empowerment. Many studies examined the impact of different socio-economic-demographic factors on women's empowerment. A wing of studies has tried to examine the impact of empowerment on several dimensions of family and child welfare. The present study focuses on identifying the various crimes against women, the existing governmental schemes for women empowerment, hindrances to women

empowerment, apps available for women safety and suggests suitable remedies for tackling women empowerment.

## Objectives

- ❖ To study the various crimes against women
- ❖ To study the various government schemes for women empowerment
- ❖ To identify the hindrance in the path of women empowerment
- ❖ To understand various apps available for women safety
- ❖ To give useful suggestions in the light of findings

## Research Methodology

In general, this paper is descriptive and logical. The attempt was made in this paper to examine women's empowerment in India. Depending on the need of this research, the data is exclusively from secondary sources.

## Crime against Women

The violations against women fly specifically against coordinating Women Empowerment in India. There are various crimes that is been taking place against women which is being a problem for Women Empowerment namely Dowry, Domestic Violence, Rapes, Acid Attack, etc. National Crime Records Bureau 2018 has listed out the following crimes against women in India.

**Table 1: Crime against Women in India in 2018**

S. No	Crimes	No. of Incidence
1	Cruelty by Husband's or his relatives	103272
2	Kidnapping	72751
3	Rape	33356
4	Kidnapping and compulsion for marriage	33354
5	Dowry Deaths	7166
6	Abetment of Suicide of Women	5037
7	Sexual Harassment	1651
8	Miscarriage	213
9	Acid Attack	131
	Total IPC Crimes	323345

	Total SLL Crimes	54932
	<b>Total crimes</b>	<b>378277</b>

Source: Crime Statistics of India, 2018

According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report 2018, majority of cases out of total IPC crimes against women were registered under ‘cruelty by husband’s or his relatives’ (31.9%), ‘Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty’ (27.6%), ‘kidnapping & Abduction of women’ (22.5%), ‘Rape’ (10.3%) and so on. The crime rate per lakh women population is 58.8% in 2018 in comparison with 27.9% in 2017.

## Crimes against Women

The worldwide survey conducted by Thomson Reuters opines that India is the fourth most unsafe and worst country in the world for women to live in amongst G20 countries. In India, there is harassment and stalking at work place and in educational organizations, outright trafficking and forced prostitution. Twelve million girls were aborted over the last 3 decades in India - an estimate. According to UN Population Fund, there were 50,000 maternal deaths, which are highest in the world in 2013. As per National Crime Records Bureau, a total number of 3, 22,949 incidents of crime against women (both under SLL and IPC) were reported during the year 2016. In the last five years, these crimes have increased continuously.

## Dowry deaths

A dowry death is the murder or suicide of a married woman caused by a dispute over her dowry. In some cases, husbands and in-laws will attempt to extort a greater dowry through continuous harassment and torture, which sometimes results in the wife committing suicide, or the exchange of gifts, money, or property upon marriage of a family's daughter. In 2018, still as many as 5,000 dowry deaths are recorded each year.

## Honour killings

An honour killing is a murder of a family member who has been considered to have brought dishonour and shame upon the family. Examples of reasons for honour killings include the refusal to enter an arranged marriage, committing adultery, choosing a partner that the family disapproves of, and becoming a victim of rape. Village caste councils or *khappanchayats* in certain regions of India regularly pass death sentences for persons who do not follow their diktats on caste or gothra. The volunteer group known as Love Commandos from Delhi runs a helpline dedicated to rescuing couples who are afraid of violence for marrying outside of caste lines.

## Female infanticide and sex-selective abortion

Female infanticide is the elected killing of a newborn female child or the termination of a female foetus through sex-selective abortion. In India, there is incentive to have a son, because they offer security to the family in old age and are able to conduct rituals for deceased parents and ancestors. In contrast, daughters are considered to be a social and economic burden. An example of this is dowry. The fear of not being able to pay an acceptable dowry and becoming socially ostracised can lead to female infanticide in poorer families.

## Rape

The map shows the comparative rate of violence against women in Indian States and Union Territories in 2012, based on crimes reported to the police. Crime rate data per 100,000 women in this map is the broadest definition of crime against women under Indian law. It includes rape, sexual assault, insult to modesty, kidnapping, abduction, cruelty by intimate partner or relatives, trafficking, persecution for dowry, dowry deaths, indecency, and all other crimes listed in Indian Penal Code.

India is considered the world's most dangerous country for sexual violence against women. Rape is one of the most common crimes in India. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 defines rape as penile and non-penile penetration in bodily orifices of a woman by a man, without the consent of the woman. According to the National Crime Records Bureau,

one woman is raped every 20 minutes in India. Incidents of reported rape increased 3% from 2011 to 2012. Incidents of reported incest rape increased 46.8% from 268 cases in 2011 to 392 cases in 2012. Despite its prevalence, rape accounted for 10.9% of reported cases of violence against women in 2016.

## **Marital rape**

In India, marital rape is not a criminal offense. India is one of fifty countries that have not yet outlawed marital rape. About 20% of Indian men admit to forcing their wives or partners to have sex.

## **Domestic violence**

Domestic violence is abuse by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as dating, marriage, cohabitation or a familial relationship. Domestic violence is also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV). Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, verbal, economic and sexual abuse. Domestic violence can be subtle, coercive or violent. In India, 70% of women are victims of domestic violence.

## **Forced and child marriage**

Girls are vulnerable to being forced into marriage at young ages, suffering from a double vulnerability: both for being a child and for being female. Child brides often do not understand the meaning and responsibilities of marriage. Causes of such marriages include the view that girls are a burden for their parents, and the fear of girls losing their chastity before marriage.

## **Acid throwing**

Acid throwing, also called an *acid attack*, a *vitriol attack* or *vitriolage*, is a form of violent assault used against women in India. Acid throwing is the act of throwing acid or an alternative corrosive substance onto a person's body "with the intention to disfigure, maim, torture, or kill." Acid attacks are usually directed at a victim's face, which burns the skin

causing damage and often exposing or dissolving bone. Acid attacks can lead to permanent scarring, blindness, as well as social, psychological and economic difficulties.














## Need for Women Empowerment

The principle problems that were confronted by ladies in past days and still today up to some degree are Gender Discriminations, Lack of Education, Financial Constraints, Family Responsibilities, Social Status, Dowry, Child marriage, Sexual Harassments, Low Mobility, etc.

Women are deprived of – Decision Making Power, Freedom of Movement, Access to Education, Access to Employment, Exposure to Media, Domestic Violence.

## Government Schemes for Women Empowerment

The Government programs for women advancement started as ahead of schedule as 1954 in India yet the genuine investment started just in 1974. At present, the Government of India has more than 34 plans for women worked by various division and services. Some of these are as per the following;

-  Beti Padho, Beti Bacho Scheme (2015)
-  One Stop Centre Scheme
-  Women Helpline Scheme (2015)
-  Working Women's Hostel
-  Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women
-  SWADHAR Greh Scheme (2001)
-  Rajiv Gandhi national Creche Scheme (2016)
-  Pradhan Mantri Mantru Vandana Yojana (2017)
-  Mahila e-Haat
-  Mahila Police volunteers
-  National Mission for Empowerment of Women (2011)
-  Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme (2017)
-  Rastriya Mahila Kosh (1993)



- ✚ NAND-GHAR Yojana (2015)
- ✚ Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (2016)
- ✚ Meternity Benefoit Program (2017)
- ✚ Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (2015)
- ✚ eSamvad portal (2018)
- ✚ Nari Web Portal (2018)
- ✚ She-Box Portal (2018)
- ✚ New Draft National Policy (2019)

Nongovernmental associations that are assuming a similarly vital part in encouraging women empowerment, capably supplement the endeavours of government and its distinctive offices. Not with standing purposeful endeavours of governments and NGOs, there are sure holes. Obviously, we have made some amazing progress in engaging women yet the future voyage is troublesome and requesting.

## **Reasons for the Empowerment of Women**

Today we have seen the focal government's distinctive acts and schemes as well as state government to enable empowerment of India women. Whether it is social participation, political support, financial interest, access to education, moreover regenerative medicinal services, women in India are segregated and marginalized at every level of the general public. Everywhere in India, women are found to be extremely poor monetarily. A few women are involved in management and various activities. Women are in need of financial resources in order to live independently. Other hand, women are treated to be less proficiency than men by our society which is been a hindrance in their development; it is essential to treat men and woman equally. It has also seen that certain women are too fragile, making it impossible for them to function. They are investing less sustenance, but they are doing more. In this way, from the viewpoint of well-being, women are to become more rooted across individuals who are to be weaker. Another problem is women's agitation in the working environment. There are so many cases of rape, theft of the young woman, abuse of the endowment, and so on. Consequently, they require different forms of autonomy, bearing in mind the ultimate goal of ensuring them and safeguarding their immaculacy and dignity. To sum up, empowerment of women cannot be conceivable unless women accompany them and help to enable them to

become self-sufficient. There is a need to figure out decreasing feminized necessity, advancing women's education, and aversion and disposal of women's brutality.

## Challenges

There are a few gaps in Indian women's empowerment procedure. In India, social standards and family structures reveal and retain women's subordinate status in the society. In India, women empowerment checked through several constraints namely social norms and family structure, which manifests and perpetuates the subordinate status of women. In the society, preference for boy childbirth over girl childbirth is still being a crucial problem in the women's life. The society is more biased in favour of male child in respect of education, nutrition and other opportunities. Women are bounded by various traditional concepts, which make them their role is being inferior to male, which brings an injustice among them. Often internalize the traditional concept of their role as natural thus inflicting an injustice upon them. Only through Women Empowerment, women will be able to get the justice for their life.

**Literacy:** While the nation has developed from a far cry since freedom where instruction is concerned. The hole amongst women and men is extreme. While 82.14% of grown-up men are instructed, as it were 65.46% of grown-up women are known not proficient in India. The sex inclination is in advanced education, particular expert trainings which hit women hard in business and accomplishing top authority in any field.

**Paucity:** Destitution is viewed as the best risk to peace on the planet, and annihilation of neediness ought to be a national objective as critical as the annihilation of lack of education. Because of this, women are misused as household makes a difference.

**Comfort and Security:** The wellbeing and security worry of women are foremost for the prosperity of a nation and is an imperative variable in gagging the women of empowerment in a nation. However, there are disturbing concerns where maternal social insurance is concerned.

**Skilled disparity:** This imbalance is rehearsed in occupation sand advancements. Women face innumerable debilitations in male altered and ruled environs in Government Offices and Private ventures.

**Profound quality and Inequality:** Due to sexual orientation, inclination in wellbeing and sustenance there is bizarrely high ethical quality rate in women diminishing their populace encouraged particularly in Asia, Africa and china.

**Family Inequality:** Household relations show sexual orientation inclination in imperceptibly little however huge conduct the whole way across the globe, all the more along these lines, in India e.g. sharing weight of housework, childcare and humble works by alleged division of work.

## **Apps available for women safety**

### **1. Eyewatch SOS for Women**

Eyewatch SOS for Women captures audio and video of the user's surroundings and sends it to the registered contacts along with an alert message. This app has been praised for high location accuracy, functioning without GPRS and Safety confirmation feature. On reaching the location safely the user can inform their near ones by pressing the I am Safe button. It is available on Google Play store and iTunes.

### **2. SpotnSave Feel secure**

Labelled as one of the most advanced safety application, SpotnSave Feel secure sends an alert message along with the location to the pre-selected contact in every two minutes. In case the user does not have access to phone, he can make use of the wristband, which comes with the app and press button given on the band. This works via Bluetooth in the same way the phone does. This app is available on Google Playstore and iTunes.

### **3. iGoSafely**

iGoSafely sends alert messages, emails and/or GPS position to emergency contacts on activation. The app keeps on sending messages, every minute unless the alarm is turned off using the secret disarm code. Along with the above mentioned information, iGoSafely sends a thirty-second audio recording captured by the phone's microphone. It can be activated by shaking the phone or simply by removing the headphones.

#### **4. Smart 24x7**

Safety 24X7 is an app, which helps the user to call the police by pressing the panic button. Additionally, an option of calling some pre-designated contact is available on this app. In case of non-functioning of GPRS, location is sent via SMS. Along with providing features like tracking, customer care and chat, this app also clicks photos and records audio-video of situation. It is available on Google Playstore and iTunes.

#### **5. bSafe**

bSafe is an all in one safety app for woman providing varieties of features. It has bSafe alarm which sends exact location and audio-video of the surrounding areas to the contact previously selected by you. Another feature 'Follow me' enables virtual tracking of the user via GPS tracking, until you reach the situation. Fake call feature in this app allows you to fake call to escape from some unpleasant situation and 'timer alarm' helps you to set an auto alarm to keep your guardian informed about your whereabouts. This app is available on Google Playstore and iTunes.

#### **6. Shake2Safety**

This app sends an emergency SOS message or makes a call instantly to the previously selected numbers after pressing the power button four times or after shaking the phone. Shake2Safety works without internet connection and even with the locked screen. This app is also useful for reporting cases of robbery, accident or natural disaster.

#### **7. Trakie**

Trakie enables you to get all the real-time information about the movement, location, battery percentage, signal strength and speed of travelling of your close ones. Along with providing all these features, the app also allows the user to chat with their contact. Registration of genuine and authentic numbers is possible through this app as it is verified through OTP and SIM serial number.

## 8. My SafetyPin

If you are stuck in a crossroad, then My SafetyPin app acts as your guide in choosing the best and safest route. On entering an unsafe location, this app gives alerts and you can invite family or friends to track you. Safety of an area is measured using various parameters like public transport, visibility, security etc. My SafetyPin app is available on Google Playstore and itunes.

## 9. CitizenCop

By using this app, any citizen can report criminal cases or illegal activity in their area anonymously. Cases of lost or stolen articles can also be reported by calling the police. CitizenCop app creates a safety zone for woman through what it calls eLakshman Rekha and provides several features like live tracking, emergency calls and SOS alerts. All android phone users and iPhone users can download this app through Google Playstore and iTunes respectively.

## 10. Chilla

A woman unable to press the button of her phone while facing some problem can activate Chilla app by shouting loudly. On activation, this app sends an alert message to the woman's guardian. Apart from this feature, Chilla app sends alert messages to pre-configured contacts on pressing the power button five times. It can be downloaded from Google Playstore and iTunes.

## Summing Up

1. Globalization, Liberalization and other Socio - Economic strengths have given some relief to an expansive extent of the populace. Notwithstanding, there are still a significant number ranges where women strengthening in India is generally deficient.
2. There should be an ocean –change in the mentality of the general population in the nation. The ladies themselves, as well as the men need to wake up to a world that is moving towards fairness and value. It is better; this is grasped sooner than later for our own great.

3. There are a few Government projects and NGOs in the Country; there is still a wide crevice that exists between those under security and those not.
4. Poverty and lack of education add to these confusions, The Empowerment of Women starts with an insurance of their wellbeing and security.
5. Empowerment of Women must be accomplished if their financial and societal position is progressed. This could be conceivable just by embracing unequivocal social and monetary arrangements with a perspective of aggregate improvement of women and to make them understand that they can possibly be solid people.
6. In request to make a maintainable world, we should start to Empower Women.

## Suggestions

1. Most importantly need ought to be given to the instruction of ladies, which is the grassroots issue. Thus, training for ladies must be given careful consideration.
2. Awareness projects should be composed for making mindfulness among women particularly having a place with weaker areas about their rights.
3. Women ought to be permitted to work and ought to be sufficiently given wellbeing and backing to work. They ought to be given legitimate wages and work at standard with men so that their status can be lifted in the general public.
4. Strict execution of Programs and Acts ought to be there to check the mal-rehearses predominant in the general public.

**Conclusion :**In this manner, the fulfilment of the situation of female empowerment in the field of pay / business and in the educational front is relatively poor by all accounts. The need of great importance is to separate certain escape clauses or restrictions that watch women's acknowledgement of equality and this activity must be initiated from the women's people themselves and, in addition, the activity taken by the state and community must be approached with even more imperative. Give us a chance to take the pledge that we need a populist society where not everyone whether men or women get the equivalent chance to

express and inspire one's prosperity a Women's empowerment is a Northern, incorporating nations idea in South, have been testing and changing sexual orientation disparities since the start of the history. Numerous men who have been insulted at shamefulness against women have additionally upheld these battles. women speak to a large portion of the total populace and sexual orientation imbalance exist given the same open doors that men are, whole social orders will be bound to perform beneath their actual possibilities. The best need of great importance is change of social disposition to women. "At the point when women push ahead the family moves, the key as their idea and their quality frameworks lead the improvement of a decent family, great society and eventually a decent country. The most ideal method for empowerment is maybe through enlisting women in the standard of advancement. Women of empowerment will be genuine and viable just when they are supplied pay and property with the goal that they may remain on their feet and develop their personality in the general public. The Empowerment of Women has gotten to be a standout amongst the most essential worries of 21st century at national level as well as at the universal level. Government activities alone would not be adequate to accomplish this objective. Society must step up with regards to make an atmosphere in which there is no sexual orientation segregation and women have full chances of self-basic leadership and taking part in social, political and financial existence of the nation with a feeling of equity.

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