

Gender Equality And Empowerment For Women

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Abstract

When women have more control over their own life and the decisions that have an impact on them, this indicates that they have been empowered. Giving women a larger say in the political, medical, and legal decisions that have an effect on their life is one technique that may be used to encourage women to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. Some of the potential advantages of empowering women include improvements in economic growth and development, improvements in health and well-being, and advancements toward gender equality. The independence of women has long been seen as an important cultural ideal in Indian society. In spite of the strides that have been achieved in the last several years, India is still a very long way from being a society that is balanced between the sexes. The issues of sexual assault, unfair pay, and sexism in the workplace are all included in this category of difficulties. Women's empowerment has been related to several positive outcomes, including but not limited to increased economic development, more personal rights, increased political participation, and gender equality. In theory, poverty might be lessened if more women were able to find and maintain jobs that paid enough for their work. It has been shown via research that providing women with the information and resources necessary to make their own decisions about their health, well-being, and future prospects is directly correlated with an improvement in both their mental and physical states of health. The more the political influence that women possess, the greater the likelihood that their demands as well as the requirements of girls will be taken into consideration when laws and policies are formulated.

Keywords: Economic growth, gender equality, attribute empowerment, and economic disparity

Introduction

In economics, society, and culture, the term "gender" is used to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of being a man or a woman in certain situations. In the office, for instance. A person's gender is determined by more than just their appearance or how they were born in today's society. We examine the causes that have led to the promotion of gender equality as one of the central goals of the feminist movement and the liberation of women. Equal rights for all individuals, regardless of gender, is the ultimate goal of the struggle for gender equality and women's rights. When women's rights are protected and promoted, gender equality is more likely to be achieved. Both are difficult to use effectively separately, but when used together, the outcomes may be somewhat unpredictable. On their own, they're both quite useless. Multiple studies conducted over the course of several decades have shown that promoting women's rights and gender parity is crucial to the growth of a thriving society and economy. Women face more obstacles than males in several areas, including access to economic and educational resources, personal safety, and political participation. In order to get a fuller understanding of the issue, this research examines the present epidemic landscape in India from a gendered viewpoint. The significance of women acquiring political and economic independence, reaching gender parity, and incorporating concerns of gender into mainstream political and social debate is emphasised alongside the conditions under which development occurs. The primary purpose of this research is to analyse how far India has come in

its pursuit of gender parity and women's empowerment. Information from several sources will be compiled to achieve this goal. The findings suggest that promoting gender equality in the workplace has a positive effect on output across the board, not only for women. Whichever gender makes up the workforce, this holds true. **(Kabeer 2005)**

Global Bank data shows that women make up around 70% of the population in countries with low per capita incomes. Women make up more than 67 percent of the global workforce over the full workweek, yet they only contribute around 10 percent of global revenue and less than one percent of global wealth. Access to physical, financial, and other services, as well as political, economic, social, cultural, educational, and intellectual opportunities, is still severely limited in many parts of the world. To rephrase, sexism is an enormous barrier to success at any stage of life. Women's participation in the labour market and education increases human capital and improves women's capacity to care for their homes and children, hence decreasing the possibility that future generations would be compelled to live in poverty. There is some evidence that reducing gender inequality may be aided by economic development, and that empowering women can help this process along. To achieve either goal — economic growth or women's emancipation — would be a monumental feat in and of itself. **(Mosedale 2005)**

It is imperative that economic growth and women's liberation go hand in hand. Aside from being a natural consequence of growth, women's empowerment may really drive future progress by influencing public policy choices. As a byproduct of development, we now have the potential to steer future growth. Despite the administration's lofty rhetoric about women's rights, it's unclear whether any progress will be realised. However, even if some government officials have made such grand claims, this is not the reality. There is a virtuous cycle at work here, with increased economic prosperity and gender parity being the result of efforts to better the lives of women. Economic growth and improved gender equality are two direct outcomes of women's empowerment and progress in their communities. If such were the case, the development plan would centre on empowering women to realise their full potential as a method of propelling the effort ahead. Reducing gender disparities has positive effects on economic growth and long-term development. This is due to the fact that discrimination against women harms society as a whole **(Bayeh 2016)**.

A survey of 21,980 companies in 91 countries found that establishments with a greater ratio of female executives also had better profits. Through examination of the data we gathered from those establishments, we came to this conclusion. There might be a lot of causes for this association, but one explanation could be that a more diverse workforce yields more creative solutions to problems. The options don't end here; this is only one of them. Girls' mathematical aptitude, the lack of patriarchal views towards female CEOs, and the availability of paternity leave are positively correlated with firm size, location, and other characteristics. This link is also present between other variables, such as the size of enterprises and their geographic regions. Additionally, there seems to be a causal link between the size of a corporation and its location. Gender quotas established by the board will remain unchanged regardless of the outcome. This is a quite broad finding, but it suggests that policies that encourage more women to enter the workforce could have a positive effect. **(Lopez 2013)**

Literature Review

Ashraf, Field, and Lee (2010) prove beyond a reasonable doubt that incidents like this one are common in Zambia. In a trial conducted in Lusaka, Zambia, 836 married women were given vouchers for a private consultation with a family-planning nurse, during which they would have quick, free, and unrestricted access to a range of highly effective modern contraceptives. Some of the women received the voucher behind closed doors, while their husbands watched from the foyer. When women's spouses weren't around, they were 38% more likely to seek out a family planning nurse, 57% less likely to disclose an unplanned pregnancy 9-14 months later, and 38% more likely to seek out a form of contraception that was relatively easy to hide, such as injectables or implants. Don't let this fool you into thinking it's a good idea to encourage women keep quiet about using contraception, which is an integral element of any responsible family planning strategy. After realising they have choices, spouses may start to doubt one another. For instance, they might put people off going to the doctor, postponing necessary care. But the numbers show that there is a distinction. Thinking about things like priorities and the ability to hide information is essential for comprehending household decision-making.

Panda (2014) microfinance loan recipients in India reported increased financial security and decreased likelihood of experiencing domestic violence. Evidence abounds that points to the possibility of a third option, one that is neither ruled by a dictator nor tormented by endless war. It's a given that different family members will prioritise different things and have different opinions on how to effectively spend the family's resources (such the number of children), and that their input will be given different weight in the final choice based on their standing in the family. Women routinely report preferring fewer families than men do in demographic and health research (DHS).

The McKinsey Global Institute (2015) Incorporating women into the global labour force is predicted to increase total productivity by about 25% compared to business as usual.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this work are to

1. To study the significance of achieving gender parity in terms of economic progress.
2. To determine the considerations made with regard to females Participation in the fight against the Covid-19 epidemic.
3. To identify the most important problems and obstacles facing efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Importance of Gender Equality

Long-term prosperity requires the realisation of fundamental universal respect for human rights, which is made possible by gender equality. Gender equality is a necessary step in advancing women's empowerment. For proponents of gender parity, success means establishing a society in which men and women hold leadership positions on equal footing. We will have achieved gender equality when men and women have equal access to educational and employment opportunities, when they take equal responsibility for the upbringing of the household's children, and when they are safe from sexual or other forms of physical or mental harassment or assault. (**Gupta and Yesudian 2009**)

Initiatives to better population and development must incorporate gender equality since all people, not only couples and children, need access to sexual and reproductive health care. It's possible that if women and men were on equal footing, they'd make more mature choices regarding marriage, parenthood, contraception, and the improper expression of femininity. When discrimination against women is widespread, women either have no say in policymaking or face severe barriers to economic and social advancement. Achieving gender parity also requires giving women more control over their daily lives and addressing existing power disparities. This will hopefully lead to better sexual and reproductive health among them. When we talk about men and women having equal opportunities in life, we don't imply that they should be

treated similarly; rather, we mean that neither should be held back because of their gender. **(Corcoran 2000)**

The world improves when women and men have equal access to resources. The establishment of more egalitarian relationships requires a reevaluation of traditional gender roles in the family, the workplace, and society at large. As a result, men's social identities that don't include their gender are inadequate. This is a fact that is frequently overlooked because of the cultural norming of traditionally masculine characteristics and the relative scarcity of traditionally feminine ones. But prejudice based on gender affects men, too. Cultural standards and expectations for "masculinity" and men's responsibilities as leaders, fathers, and sons make males vulnerable to peer pressure and other forms of social influence. Nowadays, males are expected to put their work ahead of their family responsibilities. Peer pressure, media stereotypes, and parental encouragement to take chances all play a role in encouraging young males to act recklessly. Due to the social expectations for how men and boys should behave, men are at a higher risk of being sick and dying than women. Threats may arise from a variety of sources, including physical harm, emotional abuse, and drug abuse.

That men can and should take on more nurturing responsibilities has to be acknowledged. But men are ultimately accountable for the health of their families, which includes the sexual and reproductive well-being of their partners and children. In order to fulfil these rights and obligations, it is crucial to address the unique health issues that men face and to provide them with the nurturing environments that they deserve. **(Abramovitz 2006)**

Equality of sexes and the promotion of women's leadership.

In a society where men and women have equal opportunities in all spheres of life, inequality between the sexes does not exist. Gender equality occurs when men and women have equal access to starting enterprises, earning a living, attending college, and advancing in their chosen industries. Eliminating power disparities and providing women with more autonomy are crucial steps toward achieving gender parity. A more balanced distribution of power between the sexes is necessary for increased long-term prosperity and the safeguarding of everyone's basic rights. In civilizations where women have less economic and social chances, larger families face more difficulties.

Population and growth programmes, as well as reproductive health care, are more likely to be successful if women have equal opportunities to get an education, a sense of worth, and a voice in society. It's better for everyone when both parents can contribute financially to the household. Cultural and societal expectations of how men and women should behave vary by time and place, but there is no biological difference between the sexes. Although these beliefs may have their origins in common cultural and religious traditions, the extent to which they are still held by modern societies varies considerably across time and space. **(Mehra 1997)**

COVID-19 and Women's Economic Empowerment

Everyone, regardless of gender, is feeling the impacts of the current crisis caused by COVID-19. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic due to a variety of factors, including caregiving responsibilities, lower income and education, restricted access to healthcare and other basics, the risk of losing land and property, and the gender pay and digital divide. These effects may have a disproportionately negative impact on low-income women, making it more challenging for them to afford necessities like food and healthcare.

Aspirations and ambitions of millions of women and men to provide control to every woman on Earth have been put on hold because to the present outbreak of Coronavirus illness, or COVID-19, which has infected over 3 million individuals globally in the previous five months. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the rate at which women are affected by this epidemic is three times that of men. Now since both parents and the husband need to work, it falls mostly on women to ensure that their children get a good education. Due to the worldwide COVID-19

outbreak, many women are experiencing "triple shift," or three times their typical levels of stress. **(Erbaugh 2006)**

Young girls are more vulnerable to child marriage and other types of sexual exploitation if they are forced to drop out of school because of a lack of access to technology. According to the findings of a recent research by UNWomen, 743 million people are no longer in school, and young women are particularly vulnerable to experiencing gender-based violence. The Smile Foundation has been investing in women's lives for over a decade, helping to improve families and communities. Swabhiman is a subset of Smile that promotes education on menstruation, pregnancy, and financial stability as a means to better the lives of women and their families. Providing high-achieving girls with yearly scholarships until they graduate from college is one strategy to encourage their families to put their daughters' education ahead of social duties and housekeeping.

Although more than a third of the world's population has been quarantined due to the COVID-19 catastrophe, Swabhiman officials and community mobilizers are still trying to better the lives of women in low-income neighbourhoods. Migrant and daily wage workers are especially vulnerable during a lockdown since they cannot earn money to buy food or other essentials while they are stranded. Since women are more likely to put the needs of others before their own, they are more susceptible to its negative repercussions. Community mobilizers from the Swabhiman organisation have been crucial in delivering dry food to these ladies and managing their healthcare needs at a time when everyone's attention is focused on combating the illness. Beneficiaries have been receiving regular phone calls and texts from mobilizers who are trying to help them deal with the situation and ensure they have access to the services they need. These mobilizers have helped four pregnant women give birth in hospitals over the last three weeks by providing them with transit information and information on the signs and symptoms of labour.

Indian Women's Economic Independence

Several women's movements have taken place in India during the last half-century, resulting in substantial advancements toward making women's empowerment a key topic in governmental talks. Women's Empowerment movements have helped women make strides in a number of areas, including education. Improvements in maternal health, longer life expectancy, and slower population growth have also resulted from a concentration on reproductive health. In many countries, the economy has benefitted from the increased participation of women in the workforce. However, owing to low rates of female labour force participation, economic inequality is particularly severe for women in India.

The challenge arises all throughout the process of establishing economic policies since women are seldom taken into consideration at this stage. This stage accounts for the majority of the procedure. Despite this, it is a well-known and well-established truth that women have always played a significant role in the growth and development of economies all over the globe. This has been the case regardless of whether or whether women participated in official labour force participation, engaged in self-employment, did unpaid labour in family enterprises or farms, or provided unpaid caregiving. Because of this, the contributions that women make to the economy are undervalued because they are not appropriately recognised, and even when they are, they are overrepresented at the bottom of the economic pyramid, where they receive low salaries and have restricted access to the occupations that pay the least. As a result of this, the contributions that women make to the

economy are undervalued, and as a consequence of this, the contributions that women make to the economy are undervalued. In light of the present condition of circumstances, the next stage of the women's movement and the design of new policies need to centre on the promotion of greater economic autonomy for women. This must be the primary focus of these efforts. **(Gutierrez and Lewis 2004)**

The Importance of Financial Security

Especially for the oppressed and women, economic empowerment is a key to realising one's full potential and asserting one's rights. As a result of this liberty, people will go out of their way to learn about other ways of doing things and seeing the world, leading to a greater diversity of thought and experience. A person's freedom and independence improve as they develop their full abilities. Economic empowerment seeks to end oppression, improve people's standard of living, and advance a country's economic standing. **(Abramovitz, 2006)**

The Contribution of Women to the Economic Growth of India

Over the course of many decades, women have shown not just expertise, dedication, enthusiasm, and excitement, but also incredible care and endurance on the job. Their initiatives likely contributed significantly to India's current economic prosperity. Of India's 432 million women of working age, 343 million are now employed. The vast majority of these women are involved in illegal trade. India's GDP might grow by US\$770 billion by 2025 if women were given equal opportunity, despite the fact that they now contribute just 18 percent. India's startup industry ranks third worldwide in terms of the number of "Unicorn" enterprises with annual revenues of over \$1 billion. Only 10% of these companies were created by women. Providing women business entrepreneurs with tools like assistance and capital is more crucial than ever. The increasing number of women in leadership roles and business ownership is a welcome development of recent times. A 4.3 percentage point worsening of the gender gap may be attributed to the pandemic's impact on career and economic options for women in India. The effects of the pandemic crisis on the black market have only lately begun to subside. **(Kabeer, 2011)**

Statistics Relating to the Economic Empowerment of Women in India

Women have shown tremendous care and endurance in the workplace during the last many decades, in addition to skill, devotion, excitement, and love of one's profession. Their efforts likely contributed significantly to India's thriving economy today. 432 million American women are of working age, yet only 343 million are really employed. Most of these women work in the unofficial economy. Equal rights for women in India might add US\$770 billion to the country's GDP by 2025. Women only account for 18% of the labour force in India today.

When ranked by the number of Unicorn companies, India's startup industry comes in at #3 globally. Women only started 10% of these companies. Female entrepreneurs now more than ever need support in the form of mentoring, education, and funding. More and more women are becoming business owners and executives, which is encouraging to see. In India, the pandemic is responsible for 4.3% of the gender gap since it hinders women's participation in the formal labour market and

economic prospects. The aftermath of the pandemic catastrophe is still being felt in the underground job market. **(Gupta, and Yesudian 2006)**

The Efforts of the Government

The Indian government has established several programmes and efforts to increase citizens' engagement in the country's economic, social, and political life. Government programmes like Samagra Shiksha, the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme, the Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna, the Swacch Vidyalaya Mission, etc. have ensured that schools, especially those serving the most marginalised members of society, are safe and well-equipped to meet the needs of their female students. The National Education Policy (NEP) aims to provide all children, regardless of their family's income level or the colour of their skin, a high-quality education by the year 2020. (SEDGs). Among the many government initiatives geared at helping women into the workforce are the Skill India Mission and a system of Women's Industrial Training Institutes, National Vocational Training Institutes, and Regional Vocational Training Institutes. To achieve this objective, a system of vocational schools would be set up throughout the nation. Skillful execution of the Skill India Program is crucial to the success of the mission. (Lopez, 2013)

In an effort to increase GDP, the National Skill Development Policy places a high priority on women's employment. The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Kendra has made recruiting more female trainers, developing more gender-inclusive training settings, and increasing the proportion of female trainers a priorities. The four new labour codes—the Code on Wages (2019), the Code on Industrial Relations (2020), the Code on Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions (2020), and the Code on Social Security (2020)—include provisions aimed at enhancing workplace safety for women and boosting the proportion of women in management positions. In order to make it simpler for women to obtain and hold occupations, a variety of regulations were put into place. In order to achieve gender equality in the workplace, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 requires that at least 20% of newly generated positions be held by women and that at least 35% of all newly established employment take place in rural regions (MGNREGA). Because to the government's progressive policies, women may now serve as fighter pilots in the Indian Air Force, join the Commandos or the Central Police Services, attend Sainik Schools, and work in a number of other positions within the armed forces. **(Beaman, et al. 2009)**

The Road Ahead

While increasing the number of jobs open to women is important, reducing the stress associated with doing two jobs is even more important since it prevents many women from achieving financial independence. Policymakers should take into account, decrease, and redistribute (3Rs) the unpaid care work performed by women. There are advantages to having more female personnel in the public health care system. By dedicating only 2% of India's GDP to the care sector, 11 million new jobs might be created, and as more women join the formal labour market, their economic and social status would also improve. Adoption of rules, the offering of tax incentives, and the beginning of sizable programmes to ease women's access to financial services are the most important steps that can be done to encourage women in India to establish their own businesses. The National Committee on Women Empowerment was established by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to advance gender equality and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. The CII's annual Woman Exemplar Award is given to a woman who has made outstanding contributions to

development initiatives in the fields of health, microenterprises, or education and literacy. Both existing and prospective female company owners are part of the target market. **(Babcock and Sara 2003)**

Conclusion

Insisting on women's equal involvement in society highlights the fact that every person deserves respect and protection of their inherent worth and liberties. Harassment of women, in which their very presence is devalued, dates back to the beginning of time. As long as there have been males, there has also been sexual harassment of women. There are still pockets of women who haven't had the spotlight shone on them, but as society has progressed and women have gained more agency, the number of women in this category has steadily declined. It is our responsibility as human beings to assist others in realising enlightenment and to rescue them from any dogmatic way of thinking that impedes the progress of civilization. When that day comes, and only then, will we have a shot at a more civilised society, right? In order for our young people, and especially our young women, to continue the traditions of our country and make significant contributions to its future growth and prosperity, we must ensure that they have access to quality education.

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