



## Gandhian Vision on Women Empowerment

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**Abstract:** The empowerment of women would result in overall development of society both at micro and macro level. Active participation of women in economic activities and decisions, would contribute towards overall economic development. According to Gandhi, the three important factors that promote women empowerment are: education, employment and change in social structure. All the three components are equally important and mutually related. Simply development of education of the women would not automatically empower them.

**Key words:** empowerment, women, development

### Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi had expressed his views and had written on numerous issues that concerned the Indian Society in particular and humanity in general. This article examines the importance and relevance of his views on issues that directly or indirectly impacts the status of women in India. The following issues are being considered:

- Marriage.
- Dowry System.
- Widow Remarriage.
- Women's Honor.
- Education and Co-education.
- Birth Control.

**What is women empowerment?** Women Empowerment refers to strengthening the social, economic and educational powers of women. It refers to an environment where there is no gender bias and has equal rights in community, society and workplaces Why women empowerment is important? Women population is around 50% of the total population of the world. They have every right to be treated equally with men in

every sphere of life and society. The empowerment of women would result in overall development of society both at micro and macro level. Active participation of women in economic activities and decisions, would contribute towards overall economic development.

### Challenges of women:

The challenges/ barriers of women empowerment are the following:

- Because of the inherent superiority complex among the males, they often doesn't allow their female counter-part to rise as high as them.
- High level of domestic responsibilities.
- Restrictions to participate in social, economic and religious activities.
- In our society, the boy-child often gets preference for education and healthy diet over the girl child.
- Preference for male-child still exist among many families in the society.

### Solution:

The solutions for empowerment of women includes the following:



Education through mass communication is very important. Both women and men should be made aware of their responsibilities to promote and practice gender-equality. Gather national data and identify the areas where instances of violence and gender-inequality is the most. This data can be used by the Government, NGOs and field workers to raise the status of women. The society should be made aware that both boy-child and girl-child are equal, and they both should have equal access to resources.

**According to the provisions of the Constitution of India:**

Women empowerment is a legal point to grant equality to women in the society in all spheres just like male. The Department of Women and Child Development functions well in this field for the proper development of the women and child in India. Women are given a top place in India from the ancient time however they were not given empowerment to participate in all areas. They need to be strong, aware and alert every moment for their growth and development. Empowering women is the main motto of the development department because an empowered mother with child makes the bright future of any nation.

Without economic empowerment, the development of women is an empty promise.

Plans, policies, legislations and laws provide only the philosophical blue print for directing the progress of society. Translated into practical terms, these plans fructify only when women receive economic power in their hands. The status of women is instantly uplifted with economic independence. The fact is implementing socio-economic programs

for the economic development of rural and needy women across this area.

Women continue to participate in labour markets on an unequal basis with men. In 2013, the male employment-to-population ratio stood at 72.2 per cent, while the ratio for females was 47.1 per cent

Globally, women are paid less than men. Women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 per cent of men's wages. Contributing factors include the fact that women are more likely to be wage workers and unpaid family workers; that women are more likely to engage in low-productivity activities and to work in the informal sector, with less mobility to the formal sector than men, the view of women as economic dependents; and the likelihood that women are in unorganized sectors or not represented in unions. Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decisions for their personal dependent. Empowering women is to make them independent in all aspects from mind, thought, rights, decisions, etc by leaving all the social and family limitations. It is to bring equality in the society for both male and female in all areas.

**Gandhi Vision on Women Empowerment:**

Regarding the role of women, Gandhiji once said, "Womanhood is not restricted to the kitchen." He opined and felt that, "Only when the woman is liberated from the slavery of the kitchen that her true spirit may be discovered." It does not mean that women should not cook, but only that household responsibilities be shared among men, women and children.

According to Gandhi, the three important factors that promote women empowerment are: education,



employment and change in social structure. All the three components are equally important and mutually related. Simply development of education of the women would not automatically empower them. The case in point is Kerala. The state has hundred percent (100%) literacy but the women folk are not even today free from exploitation. This is because of the fact that the traditional keralite society is yet to be reformed to provide equal rights to the women in de facto terms.

It can be said without an idea of doubt that Mahatma Gandhi experimented in all these three fields a century ago and shown the way for the empowerment of women and the improvement of the status of women in the country. But practically we can see completely an opposite picture of the empowerment of women. It is a great regret for us that even today employment of women is still restricted. They are not allowed to enter into certain jobs, beyond doctors, nurses, teachers and clerical jobs. In the family, the women become the victim of domestic violence and in the society they are also exploited by the social evils like dowry system, prostitution, witch- hunting etc. Again twothirds of the world's illiterates are females. Of the millions of school age children not in school, the majority are girls. And today, HIV/AIDS is rapidly becoming a woman's disease. In several southern African countries more than three- quarters of all young people living with HIV are women. Again in many countries due to the current world food price crisis a significant percentage of women eat only once. These women are already suffering the effects of even more several malnutrition, which inevitably will be their children's fate as well. Studies show that when women are

supported and empowered all of society benefits. "I've never met a woman who is not strong, but sometimes they don't let it out. Then there's a tragedy, and then all of a sudden that strength comes. My message is let the strength come out before the tragedy."

"One of the most courageous things you can do is identify yourself, know who you are, what you believe in and where you want to go."

#### **Conclusion:**

Women empowerment is very necessary to make the bright future of the family, society and country. Women need fresh and more capable environment so that they can take their own right decisions in every area whether for themselves, family, society or country. In order to make the country fully developed country, women empowerment is an essential tool to get the goal of development.

Women hold up half the sky. To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don't need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself. No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." "A strong woman understands that the gifts such as logic, decisiveness, and strength are just as feminine as intuition and emotional connection. She values and uses all of her gifts." ` woman is important part of society and her empowerment is must of development. in developed countries every member of society is in equal position. But in developing nations we need to empower people who are not receiving equal treatemnt. There are many formulating strategies and initiating processes started by the government of India in order to bring women into the mainstream of development. Women constitute half



population of the whole country's population and need to be independent in every area for the holistic development of women and children.

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