



BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, - CDOE

Tiruchirappalli - 620 024, Tamil Nadu, India

TWO DAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES OF DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR THE MARGINALIZED LEARNERS

19th & 20th December 2024



Organized
By

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Tiruchirappalli - 24

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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA IN 2024

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment in India has been a significant topic of discussion in recent years. As of 2024, India still faces various challenges in achieving true women empowerment and gender parity. As India aspires to become a 'developed' nation by 2047, empowering women lies at the heart of this vision. Women empowerment and socio-economic development go hand in hand, as development alone cannot address gender inequalities. Amartya Sen coined the term "missing women" to highlight ongoing disparities globally. With women lagging behind on several parameters of well-being, India must adopt policies to propel the country towards gender parity in socio-economic outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

India, a country rich in diversity and culture, has made notable strides in women empowerment over the decades. As we stand in 2024, the journey towards gender equality continues to evolve, with significant achievements and persistent challenges shaping the landscape. This article delves into the current state of women empowerment in India, highlighting the progress made, the hurdles that remain, and the efforts undertaken to forge a path toward a more inclusive future.

Current Status of Women Empowerment in India

Despite some progress, women in India continue to face discrimination and are denied equal opportunities. The overall sex ratio in India is 1020 females per 1000 males, but the sex ratio at birth remains low at 940.

Constitutional Provisions for Women Empowerment

The Indian Constitution has several provisions that support women's empowerment, including Article 14, which guarantees equality before the law, and Article 15(1), which prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex.

Government Schemes for Women Empowerment

The government has launched several schemes to promote women's empowerment, including the Pradhan Mantri Matru Sahakari Yojana (PMMSY), which aims to improve the sex ratio and promote education among girls.

Challenges to Women Empowerment

Despite these efforts, women in India still face several challenges, including patriarchy, illiteracy, and wage gap. The wage gap between men and women is also significant, with women earning 21% less than men on average. Overall, while there have been some improvements in women's empowerment in India, there is still much work to be done to achieve true equality.

Achievements and Progress of Women Empowerment

Economic Empowerment

The economic landscape for women in India is transforming rapidly. Women entrepreneurs are emerging as significant contributors to the economy, supported by various government initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, which provides micro-financing to women entrepreneurs. The rise of self-help groups (SHGs) has also been instrumental in empowering rural women, providing them with financial independence and a platform to develop entrepreneurial skills.

Education and Skills Development

Education remains a critical factor in women empowerment. India has made significant progress in increasing female literacy rates, with various schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao aimed at improving

education of girl children. The emphasis on STEM education for girls is gaining momentum, ensuring that more women are equipped with the skills necessary for high-paying and influential careers in technology and science.

Bridging the Economic Gap

The gender pay gap and unequal access to employment opportunities are significant challenges. Women, especially in rural areas, often face barriers to employment and fair wages. Policies aimed at promoting equal pay, providing affordable childcare, and supporting work-life balance are essential. Initiatives like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provide employment opportunities for rural women, contributing to their economic empowerment.

Changing Social Norms

Traditional gender roles and societal expectations continue to influence the lives of women in India. Challenging these norms requires a multifaceted approach involving education, media representation, and grassroots advocacy. Programs that promote gender sensitivity in schools and communities are essential in fostering an environment where women can pursue their aspirations without societal constraints.

The Role of Technology

Technology plays a pivotal role in advancing women empowerment in India. Digital platforms provide women with opportunities for entrepreneurship, access to information, and a means to connect and mobilize for change. E-commerce platforms enable women to start and grow businesses with minimal capital investment, contributing significantly to their economic independence.

Women's Socio-economic Empowerment:

Constitutional Measures:

- ❖ **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.
- ❖ **Article 15(3):** Allows the State to make special provisions for women and children.
- ❖ **Article 16:** Provides equal opportunities in matters of public employment.
- ❖ **Article 39(d):** Calls for equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- ❖ **Article 42:** Directs the State to make provisions for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Government Initiatives:

- ❖ **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana:** Provides access to affordable credit for women entrepreneurs and self-help groups.
- ❖ **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** Focuses on generating awareness and improving women's welfare through education.
- ❖ **Mahila E-Haat:** An online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs and self-help groups.
- ❖ **Mahila Shakti Kendra:** Facilitates empowerment programs and resources at the village level for skill development and entrepreneurship.
- ❖ **Working Women Hostel:** Supports safe and affordable accommodation for working women in urban areas.
- ❖ **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:** It ensures housing under women's names.
- ❖ **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017:** Increased paid maternity leave to 26 weeks and mandated crèche facilities.

Conclusion

Women empowerment in India in 2024 is marked by substantial achievements and ongoing challenges. Indian women are breaking barriers and shaping their futures with resilience and determination. As we look ahead, it is vital to continue supporting and amplifying women's voices, ensuring that the progress made today lays the foundation for a more inclusive and equitable India tomorrow. By addressing persistent challenges and leveraging the power of technology and education, India can accelerate its journey towards true gender equality.

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