

Impact Factor-7.675 (SJIF)

ISSN-2278-9308

# *B.Aadhar*

Peer-Reviewed & Refereed Indexed

Multidisciplinary International Research Journal

ISSUE No- (CCXCI)291 (F)

April -2021

Women's Empowerment Issues and Challenges



Chief Editor

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Director  
Aadhar Social  
Research & Development  
Training Institute Amravati

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This Journal is indexed in :

- Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF)
- Cosmos Impact Factor (CIF)
- International Impact Factor Services (IIFS)

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### Published by -

**Prof.Virag Gawande**

**Aadhar Publication** ,Aadhar Social Research & Development Training Institute, New Hanuman Nagar,  
In Front Of Pathyapustak Mandal, Behind V.M.V. College,Amravati

( M.S ) India Pin- 444604 Email : [aadharpublication@gmail.com](mailto:aadharpublication@gmail.com)

Website : [www.aadharsocial.com](http://www.aadharsocial.com) Mobile : 9595560278 /

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## **“Women Empowerment In India”**

**Prof. Thube Shubhangi Sudhakar**

Assistance Professor, Radhabai Kale Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Ahmednagar

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Women Entrepreneur It may be defined as a woman or group of women who initiate, organise and run a business enterprise. Government of India has defined women entrepreneurs as owning and controlling an enterprise with a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women. Women Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender, or economic strength of individuals and communities of women. Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban/rural), educational status, social status (caste and class), and age.

### **DEFINITION:**

➤ “Empowerment is the process of increasing the authority and responsibility of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”.

➤ Empowerment refers to increasing in the spiritual, social, economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.

### **GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

➤ Creating an environment through positive and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.

➤ Enjoyment of all fundamental and human rights by women on equal basis with men (political, economic, social, cultural and civil).

➤ Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, employment, occupational health and safety, social security.

### **NEED FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:**

➤ Decision Making Power

➤ Freedom of Movement

➤ Access to Education

➤ Access to Employment

➤ Exposure to Media

➤ Domestic Violence

### **DECISION MAKING POWER:**

▪ Among those who have earnings, more women (1 in 5) than men (1 in 18) do not have a major say in how their own earnings are used and fewer women (about 7 in 10) than men (about 9 in 10 men) have a major say in how their spouses earnings are used.

▪ Women who earn about the same as their husbands are more likely to have a major say in the use of their husbands' earnings than both women who earn less than their husbands and who earn more than their husbands.

▪ Less than two in three currently married women participate, alone or jointly, in decisions about their own health care, large household purchases, purchases for daily need, and visits to her family and relatives.

▪ The number of decisions women make jointly varies positively with education and nonlinearly with wealth;



▪ For women, having earnings that they control is associated with greater participation in decisions; however, having earnings without a major say in their use is negatively associated with the number of decisions made jointly and, unexpectedly, positively associated with the number of Free PowerPoint Templates decisions made mainly alone.

**FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT:**

▪ Women's freedom of movement is severely curtailed: only one in three are allowed to go alone to the market, the health centre, and outside the community.

▪ Women face a large number of hurdles in accessing health care: of the eight specified hurdles, one in four among all women and 47% of women in the lowest wealth quintile face three or more hurdles.

**ACCESS TO EDUCATION:**

▪ Children's school attendance

▪ Only two-thirds of girls and three-fourths of boys age 6-17 years are attending school. The sex ratio of children attending school is 889 girls per 1,000 boys.

▪ Literacy and educational attainment among adults

▪ Forty-one percent of women age 15-49 have never been to school.

▪ Educational attainment remains very low: even among the 20-29 age group, only 27% of women have 10 or more years of education.

▪ The percentage of ever-married women with 10 or more years of education has risen very slowly from 11% in NFHS-1 to 17% in NFHS-3.

**ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT:**

▪ Women age 15-49 are about half as likely as men in the same age group to be employed: 43% vs. 87%.

▪ The relationship of employment and wealth for women suggests that, for many women, employment is largely a result of economic necessity.

▪ Even with controls for education, age, and wealth, marriage is negatively associated with a woman's likelihood of being employed and is positively associated with a man's likelihood of being employed.

▪ Most employed women work for someone else, away from home, and continuously throughout the year; about one in three women do not receive monetary compensation for their work or receive at least part of their payment in kind.

▪ Most employed women work in agriculture; only 7% work in professional, technical, or managerial occupations.

**EXPOSURE TO MEDIA:**

▪ Women have lower access to media than men in every age group.

▪ About 71 per cent of women are exposed to media as compared to 88 per cent in case of men.

▪ Twenty nine per cent of women do not have access to media regularly. Since it is an important source of empowerment, greater proportion of women without having access to media reflects the relatively disadvantageous position of women in relation to men with regards to empowerment.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**

▪ About two in five currently married women age 15-49 have experienced spousal violence in their current marriage, and among women who have ever experienced such violence, more than two in three have experienced violence in the past year.

▪ Recent experience of spousal violence varies little by marital duration, but as expected, ever experience of spousal violence increases with marital duration.

▪ Higher education and wealth consistently lower women's risk of spousal violence; and husbands' consumption of alcohol and having a mother who was beaten by her spouse significantly increase the risk.





- Although women who agree that wife beating is justified have a higher prevalence of violence, one out of three women who do not agree that wife beating is justified have also experienced violence.

**WAYS TO EMPOWER WOMEN:**

- Changes in women's mobility and social interaction
- Changes in women's labour patterns
- Changes in women's access to and control over resources
- Changes in women's control over decision-making.

**SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT:**

Political empowerment of women is only a part of the overall mainstreaming of women. Education of women means greater awareness of their role in society. Awareness of their rights, better knowledge of housekeeping and better performance of their roles as a housewife and mother. Education and training have opened up the avenues of employment and self-employment in the organized sector. As never before women are working in diverse fields as doctors, engineers, IAS officers, IPS officers, bank officials and in a wide range of sectors in the unorganized sector. In agriculture, most of the operations are run by women.

**ROLE OF NGO's:**

Non-governmental organizations are playing a significant role in the empowerment of disadvantaged women. Just a few years after Independence, the Government set up the Central Social Welfare Board, an apex body of the voluntary sector that aids more than 10,000 NGOs across the country, helping women stand on their own through such programme as socio-economic programme, vocational training and other similar programmes.

**ROLE OF GOVERNMENT:**

The Department of Women and Child Development has been implementing special programmes for the holistic development and empowerment of women with major focus to improve their socio-economic status. There has been policy shifts from time to time based on the shifts in emphasis. The year 2001 was declared as "Women's Empowerment Year" to bring greater focus on the programmes for women. A programme of Support to Training-cum-Employment for Women (STEP) was launched in 1987 to strengthen and improve the skills for employment opportunities for women below the poverty line, in traditional sectors of agriculture, small animal husbandry etc where women are employed on a large scale. Swayamsidha launched in March 2001 and the Swa-Shakti Project (earlier known as Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project), launched in October 1998.

**CONCLUSION:**

Women represent half the world's population, and gender inequality exists in every nation on the planet. Until women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform below their true potentials. The greatest need of the hour is change of social attitude to women.

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