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GENDER DISPARITY AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract

The status of women measured through different variables. Females in Indian society have faced the many challenges. Women sex ratio is declined as comparisons to male from several previous decades. The literacy rate of female also not equal to male, death rate of girl child is also high, dropout ratio from school girls is also high as well as unemployment rate for women as compared to men is also higher. In present era the status of women is also remained questionable, however more than seven decades has been completed for independence and formation of Indian constitution. Present article will be review the status of the women in early Indian society and also examine the factors responsible for disappointment of women participation. In ancient history to modern time a several up and down takes place in women positions. Now at till present time many factors are responsible for disappointment of women participation like as illiteracy, economic dependency, caste restrictions, religious prohibition, lack of leadership qualities, male dominance society, rape, dowry practices, trafficking of the girl child, prostitution, domestic violence and sexual harassment. The paper will be identifying the various initiatives setup by government for women empowerment.

Key words: Domestic violence, Participation, Position, Women Empowerment.

The women in Indian society play an important role to nourishing her family, as a successful household as well as supported and created the economic, political and social environment of the family. But women's social, economic and political status remains worse than that of men in many countries including India. The constructive role of the women always remained under the veil. To identify the position of women in Indian society, it is necessary to investigate the status and observe their service in their family life, her relationship among the relatives; assisted surrounding environment and life partner in different fields like agricultural, household activities, business are likely to be influenced by family culture. Women's contribution towards family and community is highly significant but they herself usually victimized domestic violence, problems related to poverty, health issues even under the roof of homes they face many problems. The history of women remains full of struggles and male dominated. Some crucial reasons are responsible for disappointment of women empowerment. Purposed article find out those barriers which generate interruption in the path of women empowerment.

Objectives of the article:

1. To know the status of the women in early Indian society.
2. To examine the factors responsible for disappointment of women empowerment.
3. To identify the initiatives operated by government for women empowerment.

Research Methodology: The existing work based on the secondary sources and this article has been made an attempt to evaluate the status of the women in early Indian society. The present study is purely meaningful and enhances the knowledge and understanding of factors responsible for disappointment of women participation. Researcher reviewed different study related literature like as documents, research reports, data, speeches, books, articles, research papers, research journals, magazines for exploring problems and solutions of proposed analysis.

Status of the women in early Indian society:

The status of women in India has been subjected to great changes over the past years. The status of women-social, economic, political and common sphere in India today is much higher than in ancient and medieval periods. Though the status of women has been raised in the eyes of law, but they are still much far from equality with males (Mainwal, 2014).¹The ancient Indian society was a noble and respectful position of women. There were references in the ancient literature that they had given counsel to men in their society. To respect women as Goddesses by saying that “*Yatra Naryastu Pujyanta Ramante Tatra Devatha*” means where women are held in respect, there dwells the goddess (Satisfaction and Happiness) (Narayanan, 2016).²

During the Vedic Period women used to participate actively in public life. They enjoyed freedom as they could move in the company of her husband or lovers. They usually had an important position in social gathering. In this way, women had liberty of all kinds during the Vedic Period. A woman was equal to man in the religious, public and educational fields. Study of the Vedas, singing, playing music and dance were not prohibited for women. She was not deprived of education. She would be married in her adulthood with her consent. Women from good and eminent families took education of various branches during this period. They possessed property, they took share in sacrifices and religious duties; they attended great assemblies and state occasions; they also distinguished themselves in science and learning (Salawade, 2012).³ During the later periods of Indian history, some of the beliefs and rituals relating to salvation had already given priority to a son over a daughter. A daughter could only hold a right to private property in the absence of a son. It was the son and not the daughter who could perform the last rites (cremation) of his dead parents and could perform *shraddh* and *Pinddan* required for the salvation of his parents. It must be noted that these performances were prohibited in Vedas and the *Shrimad Bhagwat Gita* but can be seen in *Puranas*. *Garuda Purana* says, “there is no salvation for a man without a son” This is the one of the common traditional practices based on gender discrimination with girl child birth and female sex ratio remains always very low. If the girl born otherwise they were killed otherwise live a derogatory life (Dilip, 2004).⁴

During the first Muslim invasion in the eighth century and the second invasion in the eleventh century, there was a gradual decline of social, political, economic, and cultural life of women, particularly Hindu women. Mohammad Ghazni conquered India in the eleventh century and from this period till the eighteenth century,

¹ Mainwal, Sujata (2014, April). Changing status of women in modern India: A sociological study. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research*, Vandana Publications, 4(2), 288-290.

² Narayanan, Selvaraj (2016). Historical background of gender equality and Succession Right of Hindu women’s right of property in Tamil Nadu. *Intellectual Property Rights: Open Access*, 4 (2), 1-14.

³ Salawade, S. N. (2012, September 8). Status of women in ancient India: The Vedic period. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 2 (8), 1-3.

⁴Dilip Sinhji, KS. (2004). *Kutch: in Festival and Custom*. HarAnand Publications: New Delhi.

Mughals ruled in India. In this period, several gender inequalities had surfaced the Indian society. Practices like *PudahPratha*, *Sati Pratha*, Child marriage, polygamy, female feticides etc, were the biggest social evils of the post-Vedic period (Saxena & Sharma, 2018).⁵

Later the downfall of Mugal Empire, the British established their supremacy over the Indian people. During British rule, lots of changes were made in the economic and social structures of our society. Though the quality of life of women during this period remained more or less the same, some substantial progress was achieved in eliminating inequalities between men and women. Social evils such a child marriage, *Sati Pratha*, *devdasi* system, *Pardahpratha*, prohibition of widow remarriage etc. which were great hurdles in the path of women's progress, were either controlled by the efforts of reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and VidyaSagar or removed by suitable legislations. Many women reformers such as Pandita Ramabai also fight for the tribulations of women. Women like Bhikaji Cama, Dr. Annie Besant, Vijaya lakshmi Pandit, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kriplani etc. played an important role in India's independence struggle. Sarojini Naidu, a poet and freedom fighter, was the first Indian women to become president of the Indian National Congress and the first women to become the governor of a state in India (Mainwal, 2014).⁶

The Factors Responsible for Disappointment of Women Empowerment:

The socio-economic and political factors responsible for disappointment of women participation be fond of illiteracy, economic dependency, caste restrictions, religious barriers (especially in Islamic society), child marriages and rape, biological and physical capacity, psychological and emotional factor, less control over resources, authorization, conventional practices, lack of leadership qualities, sexual harassment on workplace, patriarchal social order, economic dependency and poverty, dowry system, victimization of trafficking and prostitution, domestic violence and high tendency of crime against women described as following:

Illiteracy: Illiteracy and poor levels of educational system shows the inability of our government to utilize programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and National literacy mission. It is very hard to digest that the land of the Vedas is one of the countries with the highest illiteracy. Even countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Vietnam and the like have achieved, in lesser time, a much better percentage of literacy. Literacy in India is a key for social economic progress. Literacy of girls is vital not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation. Level of literacy and educational attainment are important indicators of development of any given society. Spread and diffusion of literacy is generally associated with essential trait of today's civilization such as modernization, communication and commerce. High level of literacy and educational achievements leads to greater development, awareness and empowerment of women and girls. Education leads to greater control over their lives and choice. World Bank studies have established the direct and functional relationship between literacy and productivity on the one hand and literacy and the overall quality of human life on the other (Singh, 2015).⁷

Economic Dependency: Women economic dependency is one of the key indicators of her status in society, defining the degree of her individual freedom in public and private life. By the same indication economic dependency excludes the women from society most important resources, so that she has bound to access to right and opportunities. One of the social transformations of the twentieth century for women to achieve

⁵Saxena, Govind Kumar, & Sharma, Praveen Kumar (2018, July). Position of women in vedic, post-vedic, british, and contemporary India. *International Journal of Legal Developments and Allied Issues*, The Law Brigade (Publishing) Group, 4 (4), 372-380

⁶Mainwal, Sujata (2014, April). Changing status of women in modern India: A sociological study. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research*, Vandana Publications, 4(2), 288-290.

⁷ Singh, Chandan Kumar (2015, July-August). Women's Literacy in India-Issues and Challenges. *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary social sciences*, Global Institute of Research, 4 (4), 41-44.

economic independence, yet at the same time it revealed the depth of the culturally conditioned gender inequality that continues to perpetuate their dependency in public and private life. Relations of power and dependency come into being when the provider holds a monopoly over the resources that are vitally necessary for the dependent (Balabanova, 2007).⁸ One of the economic discrepancy is associated with a excluding unpaid care work for women, in particular a reduction in the physically and time intensive tasks of unpaid care work (such as collecting water or fuel), leaving women with more time for paid work and study as well as leisure and personal care (2019).⁹ The impact of economic growth on gender equality can vary significantly including in relation to employment, well-being and broader indicators of gender equality. The positive changes in employment associated with changes in growth have been larger for women than for men. Economic growth influences the standard of women life and determined impact on women's life expectancy and women's participation in economic and political decision-making. Gender-responsive budget initiatives can be instrumental in promoting change in budget policies, allocation and outcomes to ensure that resources are allocated to the implementation of commitments on gender equality (Zukang, 2009).¹⁰

Caste Restrictions: When scheduled castes in general are treated in such a contemptuous manner then the women of the scheduled caste community are naturally more vulnerable. That is why it has been argued that scheduled caste women are triply exploited that is on the basis of caste, class and gender (Kumar, 2009).¹¹ High caste members have the right to demand deference from low caste members both as an acknowledgement of superior position and to increase personal self-esteem (Freeman, 1971).¹² In the administration of justice, police, prosecutors and judges fail to properly pursue justice against the discriminatory acts. That is evident the high rate of cases acquittals and the large number of cases involving atrocities offences against scheduled caste still pending before the courts. Scheduled caste women in particular lack sufficient redress for the crimes committed against them due to the caste and gender biases of India's law enforcement machinery (Narula & Huckerby, 2007).¹³ The interface between caste, patriarchy, and gender is a subject matter that needs to understand the nature and causes of the caste and gender exploitation of scheduled caste women (Sabharwal & Sonalkar, 2015).¹⁴

Religious Barriers: The status of women in society is an outcome of the wrong interpretation of religious texts and of the cultural and institutional set-up of religious communities. The role of religion is, obviously, complex and it varies across time and space (Klingorova & Havlicek, 2015).¹⁵ The effect of patriarchy, religious laws and social compulsion in the social realm violates women's realization of her rights. Thus

⁸Balabanova, E.S. (2007, March-April). Women's Economic dependency. *Sociological Research*, M.E. Sharpe Inc, 46 (2), 5-21

⁹Ferrant, Gaelle, & Thim, Annelise (February, 2019). Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Time Use Data and Gender Inequality. *OECD Development publishing*. P.4

¹⁰Zukang, Sha (2009, October). Women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance. *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations New York, p.6

¹¹Kumar, Vivek (2009, March). Locating dalit women in the Indian caste system, media and women's movement. *Social Change*, 39 (1), 64-84.

¹²Freeman, Jo (1971). The legal basis of the sexual caste system. *Symposium on Women and the Law The Legal Basis of the Sexual Caste System*, *Valparaiso University Law*, 5 (2), 203-236

¹³Narula, Smita, & Huckerby, Jayne (2007, February). Caste discrimination against dalit's, presented at the seventieth session of the committee on the elimination of racial discrimination. Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, Human Rights Watch, Center of human rights and global justice, New York University, school of law.

¹⁴Sabharwal, Nidhi Sadana, & Sonalkar, Wandana (2015, July) Dalit women in india: at the crossroads of gender, caste, and class. *Global justice: Theory practice rhetoric*, (8) 2015.

¹⁵Klingorova, Kamila, & Havlicek, Tomas (2015). Religion and gender inequality: The status of women in the societies of world religions. *Moravian Geographical Reports*, 23 (2), 2-11.

social barriers faced by women that without their entry into the socio-politics sphere cause of patriarchal society. She lives in the orthodox portraying of women in the social customs and moral irrespective of their caste, class and religious background makes women submissive in the male dominated society (THE HINDU, 2013).¹⁶ Muslim women are one of the most deprived sections have poorest health, live poorest living standard, have the highest unemployment rates and faced multiple levels of discrimination because of their gender, culture, ethnicity and religion. In addition to all this, their bodies have become battle-grounds for extremists on both sides, on one side you have a rise in religious extremism and conservative Muslims are criticizing women for dressing, too westernized, too integrated and are bad Muslim women. There are many conventions in Muslim religion they produce huddles in the path of women empowerment (Chowdhury & Rashed, 2018).¹⁷ The evidence is echoed in studies of Muslim women's education and positional achievement. The numerous secular feminists describe adherence to Islamic norms as a barrier to women's advancement. These views suggest that socialization under Islamic norms ingrains patriarchal values as an inherent attribute of Muslim identity (Welzel & Alexander, 2011).¹⁸

Child Marriages and Rape: Child marriage in India has been practiced for centuries, the problem of child marriage in India remains rooted in a complex medium of ancient traditions, social practices, economic factors and deeply rooted prejudices. Regardless of its roots, child marriage constitutes a gross violation of human rights, leaving physical, psychological and emotional scars for life. Sexual activity starts soon after marriage, and pregnancy and childbirth at an early age can lead to maternal as well as infant mortality. Moreover, women who marry younger are more likely to experience domestic violence within the home (Lal, 2013).¹⁹ Undoubtedly, child marriage continues to thrive in India. In 2007-2008, as many as 42.9 percent of the surveyed segment of women were married before eighteen. A surprising number of 23 million women in were married before they attained their eighteenth birthdays. Shocking percentage that India contributes as many as 40 percent of world's child brides (Abbhi, 2013).²⁰ The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) findings further revealed that 16 percent of women, aged 15 – 19 years, were already mothers or pregnant at the time of survey. It was also found out that more than half of Indian women were married before the legal minimum age of 18 years as compared to 16 percent men, aged 20 - 49 years, who were married by age of 18 years. The NFHS findings did not compile data on girls, who were married below the age of 15 years, possibly blissfully assuming that girls are never married off prior to attaining the age of 15 years (NFHS-3, 2005- 06).²¹

Biological and physical capacity Psychological and emotional factor: Although health, biology and genetics are key determinants of women's status. The evidence suggests that most of the time other factors related to gender-influenced roles and status are more important in determining the health and well-being of

¹⁶Komath, Rajesh (18, November) Religion as a barrier in women empowerment, THE HINDU, Retrieved From <https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/religion-as-a-barrier-in-womens-empowerment/article5364865.ece>. 2013.

¹⁷ Chowdhury, Saeyd, & Rashed, Hasan (2018, February 21). Empowerment of women in muslim communities, a practical observation: a case study on the republic of Turkey. In Rahmat Ullah & Sabbir Hasan (Eds.) Contemporary world policy, politics and international relations, Iksad Publishing House, Bangladesh. 2-21.

¹⁸Welzel, Christian & Alexander, Amy (2011, July 3). Islam and patriarchy: how robust is Muslim support for patriarchal, *International Review of Sociology*, Revue Internationale de Sociologie, CIRS, 21 (2), 249-275.

¹⁹Lal, B. Suresh (2013). Child marriage in India: Factors and problems. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 4 (4), 2993-2998.

²⁰Abbhi, Ashay & kumar, Kirthi Jaya (December 2013). Child marriages in India an insight into law and policy. Final Report of the Red Elephant Foundation On submission to the OHCHR. P7

²¹ National Family Health Survey of 2005-06 (NFHS-3), Retrieved from: <http://www.nfhsindia.org> (last visited on March. 5, 2021). International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and Macro International. Volume I. Mumbai: IIPS

women at midlife and older ages. It has been estimated that only 20-25 percent of variability in the age at death is explained by genetic factors. This must include age and gender-sensitive services geared to the prevention and management of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and Alzheimer disease (Kalache & Hoskins, 2007).²² As mentioned in the previous section, gender differentials in exposure and vulnerability to health risks can arise either through the combined influences of biological sex and gendered social bias or through gendered social bias alone. Where biological sex differences interact with social determinants to define different needs for women and men in health, policy efforts must address these different needs (Sen. & Ostlin, 2007).²³ Women and men are biologically different from each other, and usually culture and society shape and strengthen gender roles. The traditional role of men is to support their family and the role of women is to take care of children and home. Traditionally, men are considered to be more aggressive and women nurturing (Lahti, 2013).²⁴ The emotional sensitivity theory states that women are more sensitive to subtle cues, which implies that they perceive the intended emotion as more intense, but only when the cues are subtle or low intense. Some time they are not express their emotion related to general or menstruation problems and emotionally high intensity of expressions denotes that unstable in decision making (Chaplin, 2015).²⁵

Less Control Over Resources: Empowerment is defines the degree of control over material, human, intellectual, and financial resources exercised by different sections of society. Power is dynamic, exercised in the social, economic, and political relations between individuals and groups, and can be used for both positive and negative ends. Gender inequality remains pervasive and is a barrier to growth and poverty reduction. Gender disparities tend to be greater in low income rural households and communities and developing countries. Men always have an upper hand in access and control over the resources (Milcah & Radha, 2017).²⁶ Resources can be material, social or human. In other words, they refer not only to conventional economic resources, such as land, equipment, finance, working capital etc. but also to the various human and social resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice. Human resources are embodied in the individual and encompass his or her knowledge, skills, creativity, and imagination. Social resources, on the other hand, are made up of the claims, obligations and expectations which inhere in the relationships, networks and connections which prevail in different spheres of life and which enable people to improve their situation and life chances beyond what would be possible through their individual efforts alone (Sisask, 2011).²⁷ Women's lower levels of access to and control of such resources, coupled with unequal opportunities to enhance their human potential, may in part explain the gender discrepancies that, with few exceptions, prevail globally. To these constraints should be added restrictive social norms, cultural traditions and a

²²Kalache, Alexandre & Hoskins, Irene (2007). Women, Ageing and Health: A Framework for Action, World Health Organization, WHO Press, 20 Avenue Appia, Geneva, Switzerland, p 23.

²³ Sen, Gita and Ostlin, Pirooska (2007, September) Final Report to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health. *Women and Gender Equity Knowledge Network*, karolinska institute, p51.

²⁴Lahti, Elsi(2013). Women and leadership: factors that influence women's career success, Lahti University of Applied Sciences,Lahti University of Applied Sciences Degree Programme in International Business. Havis Amanda Junior Chamber – Helsinki, p.14. https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/66172/Lahti_Elsi.pdf

²⁵Chaplin, Tara M. (2015, January 1). Gender and Emotion Expression: A Developmental Contextual Perspective. *Emotion review sage publication*, London, 7 (1), 14-21.

²⁶Milcah, Paul, M., & Radha, Rani P. (2017, August). Gender Differences in Access to and Control Over Resources, *International Journal of Research in Applied, Natural and Social Sciences*, 5 (8), 71-74.

²⁷Sisask, Anne (2001). Discussing Women's Empowerment – Theory and Practice. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) *Sidastudies*, Stockhol: Sweden.p.20

stereotyped gender division of roles, all of which combine to hinder the empowerment of women (Chemali, 2009).²⁸

Conventional Practices: Social structures are the rules and conventions that people make and remake through their everyday interactions. They include formal-informal rules, such as statutory laws, and also unwritten rules and beliefs, such as social conventions and cognitive schemas. Gender hierarchies, and the patriarchal socio-cultural norms that strengthen them, are an important structural cause of women's lack of power and meaningful choice. It is therefore impossible to talk about women gaining greater freedom and choice without reference to the structures that mediate both women's access to resources and their control and use of them. Social structures frame people's choices, but they are not fixed through their shared actions, women and men can alter the structures that lead to women's subordination and exclusion. At the same time, attempts to change gender norms are contested and tend to be protracted, precisely because they are about the distribution of power and resources, changes which create losers as well as winners (Neil et al, 2014).²⁹

Inactive in Leadership: When talking about working women and women in leadership, the concept glass ceiling often comes up. In this context, glass ceiling refers to a barrier which women face, or have faced, in the business world. A glass ceiling comes across in an organization at the top of the hierarchy and prevents women from achieving the same positions as men (Lahti, 2013).³⁰ Ways of talking associated with leadership and authority tend to be masculine, which places females at a disadvantage. Women are responsible for domestic labour and childcare. Divided role especially on the issues of power, advocacy and management are not justified (Hejase & Haddad, 2013).³¹ Women are much less likely than men to be considered leaders. In the world only five percent of the women have managing director (Hejase, 2016).³² Women have not freedom to be able to develop their open beliefs and ideas. This lack of freedom has served as an obstacle for the emergence of women with the same qualities and potential as many male leaders. 'Power' belonged to men, and they took advantage of their power and freedom to implement their thoughts and ideas (Rincon et al, 2017).³³

Sexual Harassment on Workplace: No doubt sexual harassment is such a cruel offence that women have experienced it at some point of instance, may be either in office or on their way to work. Every affected woman who has faced is never let too loud the incident in public if they do so they are subject to worst crimes like assault, rape, acid attack etc. these incidents led to the devaluation of women and domination of men. In India Sexual harassment at the workplace is still very much in existence today. Dominance of men at workplace should be put under stack by giving women an extra edge for promotions and other privileges and it bring down the number of cases reported each year but most of cases are not reported reason behind social defamation and other pressure on women. Male domination, inferior job position, aggressive masculine trait

²⁸Chemali, Khalaf, Mona (2009, August 31). Women's Control over Economic Resources and Access to Financial Resources. Economic and Social Commission For Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations New York, 2009. P.1

²⁹Neil, Tam O', Domingo, Pilar and Valters, Craig (2014, November). Progress on women's empowerment. *Development Progress Working Paper*. P,2 retrieved from: developmentprogress.org

³⁰Lahti, Elsi (2013). Women and leadership: factors that influence women's career success, Lahti University of Applied Sciences, *Lahti University of Applied Sciences Degree Programme in International Business*. Havis Amanda Junior Chamber, Helsinki, p.14. https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/66172/Lahti_Elsi.pdf

³¹Hejase, Hussin, & Haddad, Ziad (2013, March). Female leadership: An exploratory research from Lebanon. *American Journal of Scientific Research*, issue 86, pp.28-52 p.34

³² Hallman, Linda D. (2016, March). Barriers and Bias: The status of women in leadership, *The American Association of University Women (AAUW)*, Washington: DC, p.1.

³³ Rincon, Virginia, Gonzalez, Miguel, & Barrero Karle (2017). Women and leadership: Gender barriers to senior management positions. *Network of Scientific Journals from Latin America*, Ominia science, Intangible Capital, 13(2): 319-386

of male gender, misperception about the friendly nature of women, higher academic profile and lesser job opportunity are also reason for sexual harassment (Bhat, 2017).³⁴

Patriarchal social order: Patriarchy refers to the male domination both in public and private spheres. Feminists mainly use the term ‘patriarchy’ to describe the power relationship between men and women. Thus, patriarchy is more than just a term, feminists use it like a concept, and like all other concepts it is a tool to help us understand women’s realities. Patriarchy, which pre-supposes the natural superiority of male over female, upholds women’s dependence on, and subordination to man in all spheres of life. Consequently, all the power and authority within the family, the society and the state remain entirely in the hands of men. So, due to patriarchy, women were deprived of their legal rights and opportunities patriarchal values restrict women’s mobility, infringement of their freedom over themselves as well as their property (Sultana, 2010).³⁵

Dowry System: Problems faced by the women in our society, dowry becomes most common as a social challenge. A dowry is a transfer of parental property, gifts or money at the marriage of a daughter. The custom of dowry is most common in cultures that are strongly materialistic. Disputes related to dowry sometimes result in acts of violence against women, including killings and acid attacks. Now the impact of dowry system is cause of gender imbalance, promotes domestic violence and crime, economic disturbance of female’s family, becomes the symbol of social status, and suffers at the hands of her groom’s family leading to social imbalance and emotional breakdown, loss of self-esteem. Education, making women self-dependent, mass media campaigning, legal punishment, social awareness campaigns has the preventive measures of dowry system (Uddin, 2019).³⁶

Victimization of Trafficking and Forced Prostitution: It is difficult to find solid and reliable figures for sex trafficking, whether on a national, continental or worldwide level. Some refer to very high numbers; whilst others contest this and believe that sex trafficking is a minor phenomenon. The risk of denying women’s self-determination, assuming that trafficking exists in situations of aid to illegal immigration or voluntary prostitution. The second runs the risk of not helping women who really are in danger (Boaventura, 2010).³⁷ Sex trafficking is more than an issue of crime or migration; it is an issue of human rights, a manifestation of persistent gender inequality and the subordinate status of women globally. Around the world most trafficked people are women and children of low socio-economic status, and the primary trafficking. The demand aspect of sex trafficking remains the least visible. When demand is not analyzed, or is mentioned rarely, it becomes easy to forget that people are trafficked into the sex industry to satisfy not the demand of the traffickers, but that of the purchasers, who are mostly men. The insatiable demand for women and children in massage parlors, strip shows, escort services, brothels, pornography and street prostitution is what makes the trafficking trade so profitable (2018).³⁸

Domestic Violence: The United Nations defines violence against women. It could be verbal or physical. There are many forms of violence against women, including sexual, physical, or emotional abuse by an intimate partner, physical or sexual abuse by family members or others, sexual harassment and abuse by

³⁴Bhat, Rouf Ahmad, & Deshpande, Anita (2017, July). An overview of sexual harassment of women at workplace in India: An analytical study. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology*, 6 (7), 14361-14369

³⁵Sultana, Abeda (2010, June-July) Patriarchy and women’s subordination: A theoretical analysis, *he Arts Faculty Journal*, P.6-7 Retrieved from the Arts Faculty Journal, July 2010-June 2011, University of Dhaka.

³⁶Uddin, Nomik, Marzana Akter Hamna, Ehsan Talukder, Rayhan Ahmed (2019, November). Comparative study on dowry system. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, 6 (11), 5724-5730.

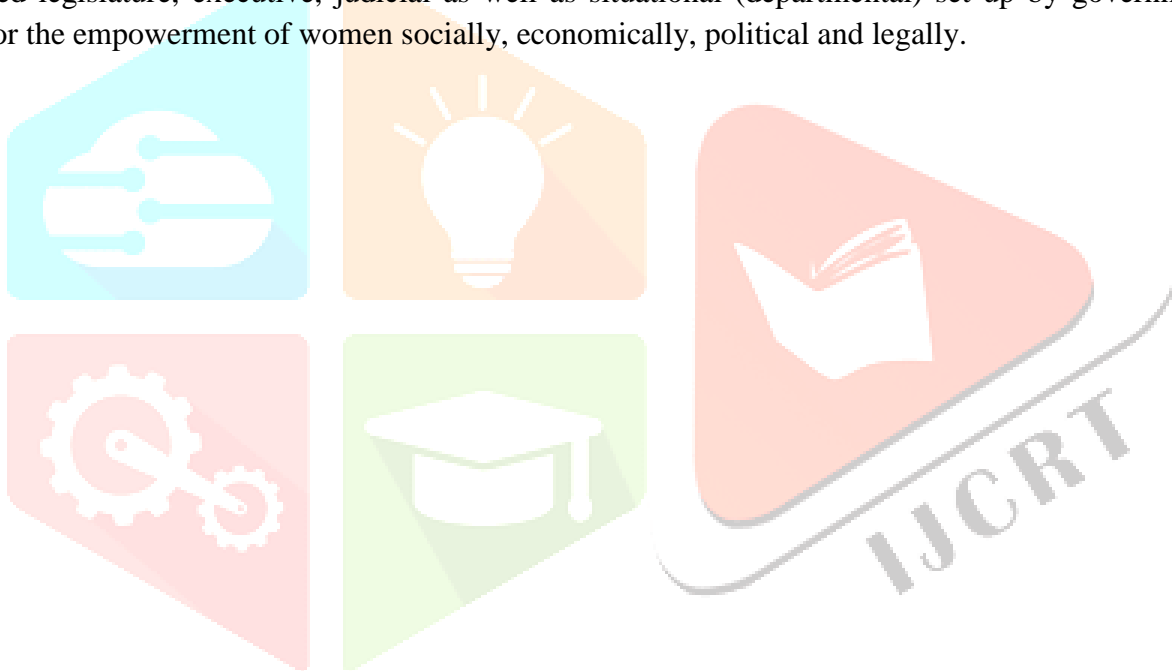
³⁷Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2010, October 2). The Sexual trafficking of Women: Representations of illegality and victimisation, *RCCS Annual Review*, (2) 2, 167-179.

³⁸Phinney, Alison (2018). Trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation in the Americas. Retrieved from <https://www.paho.org/english/hdp/hdw/TraffickingPaper.pdf>

authority figures (such as teachers, police officers or employers); trafficking for forced labour or sex; and such traditional practices as forced or child marriages, dowry-related violence; and honour killings when, women are murdered in the name of family honour. Since the past two or three decades, there are lot of efforts made by the NGO's, social activist and time to time by the Government to curb domestic violence against women and safe guard her constitutional rights, but still there is a rise in domestic violence (Kadam, 2011).³⁹ Although different studies on domestic violence report different risk factors, such as younger age, being unmarried, lower education, violence experienced during childhood and alcohol or drug abuse of the partner otherwise the victim herself (Flury, 2010).⁴⁰

The Initiatives Setup by Government for Women Empowerment

The women empowerment of is significant outlook against the discrimination with women from beginning of the history. Time to time in Indian history government has been made an important attempt that moves women forward beyond the social limitations towards empowerment and recognize women as agents of sustained socio-economic growth. Ministries of social justice and empowerment and many of the departments, NGOs have planned and launched a number of programmes and schemes to empower women. Government included legislature, executive, judicial as well as situational (departmental) set up by government time to time for the empowerment of women socially, economically, political and legally.



³⁹Kadam, Sunil S., & Chaudhari Vinod A. (2011, July-September). Domestic Violence against Woman: Past, Present, Future. *Indian Acad Forensic Med.*, Vol. 33 (3). 261-266.

⁴⁰Flury, Marianne, & Nyberg, Elisabeth (2010, September 2). Domestic violence against women: definitions, epidemiology, risk factors and consequences. *The European Journal of Medical Science*, Swiss Medical Weekly, 1-6.

Table -1. Schemes/ Programmes Sponsored by the Government

Sr. No.	Schemes/ Programmes	Advantage and Implementation of Programmes
1.	Mahila Samakhyia Programme	Mahila Samakhyia was launched in 1988 in pursuance of the goal of New Education Policy 1986 for education for empowerment of marginalized women in rural areas was implemented in about 9000 villages. ⁴¹
2.	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act-2005 (MGNREGA)	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act aims at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage-employment in a financial year to the unskilled worker, especially women's in rural areas are mostly benefited. ⁴²
3.	Scheme for Gender Budgeting.	11 th Five Year Plan drafted gender budgeting. ⁴³
4.	SIDBI's MahilaUdyam Nidhi MahilaVikas Nidhi (MSMEs partly launched in 2006 and Re-launched in 2020)	Scheme offered under Small industrial Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to encourage and empower women entrepreneurs and promote women Entrepreneurship by providing financial assistance at concessional interest rates. The funding provided by Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme can be used by Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to undertake service, manufacturing and production related activities.
5.	National Mission for Empowerment of Women. (Launched by the Government of India on International Women's Day in 2010)	The aim to strengthen overall processes that promote all-round development of women. The Mission has been named Mission Purna Shakti, implying a vision for holistic empowerment of women.
6.	Rastria Mahila Kosh (RMK) (Estb. 1992-1993 under the supervision of women and child care development ministry.	Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) registered under the society registration act 1860. RMK provides micro-credit to poor section women for income generated activities at low level interest.
7.	Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (Launched 2010-12 in 200 Districts).	The scheme offers a package of benefits to girls between the age group of 10 to 19. It offers a variety of services to help young women become self-reliant, including nutritional supplementation and education, health education and services, and life skills and vocational training
8.	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas	Goal of the programme is to provide income generating skills and activities to poor women in rural areas, thereby

⁴¹ Retrieved from the government official website, www.education.gov.in

⁴² Retrieved from the government official website, Nrega.nic.in

⁴³ Yojana (October 2006). ministry of information and broadcasting, government of India. vol.50.

	(DWRCA- 1982-83)	improving their economic status.
9.	Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (Launched 1 May 2016)	To distribute 50 million LPG connections to women of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.
10.	Streeshkti Programme (2001)	Objective to empower women, especially those belonging to the economically weaker section. The project aimed mainly on the improvement of the women's health, education income generation of the rural women through the development of self-help Groups.
11.	Hostels for working women.	Scheme launched 6 th April 2007 under the supervision of Women and Child Care Development Ministry
12.	Ujjawala (2007).	Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation, Re-integration and Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation. These rehabilitative centers are given financial support for providing shelter and basic amenities such as food, clothing, medical care, legal aid; education in the case the victims are children, as well as for undertaking vocational training and income generation activities to provide the victims with alternate livelihood option. ⁴⁴
13.	Working Women's Forum (Founded in 1978 by Jaya Arunachalam in Chennai)	It works with the poor women working in the informal sector, such as street vendors, silkworm growers and silk weavers, handicraft producers, washerwomen and fisherwomen
14.	Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) 2 October, 1993	Schemes objective of providing economic security to the rural women and to encourage.
15.	Swa Shakti Group (Funded by the World Bank and IFAD)	Swa-Shakti Project (Earlier known as the Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project) in April 1999 marked a new beginning in the shaping and strengthening of women's self-help groups
16.	Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS).	Scheme community based organizations, administration & NGO and main streaming the social, cultural and economic empowerment processed for women and girls.
17.	Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY launched on 20 August 1995).	The objectives of the scheme are awareness generation among the women from rural areas and urban slums; and economic empowerment of women.
18.	Dhanalakshmi (2008).	The scheme aimed insurance cover for child girl education medical expenses and marriage. ⁴⁵
19.	SBI's Sree Shakti Scheme	Stree Shakti Loan Scheme aims to empower women entrepreneurs who own and are managed in retail trade,

⁴⁴Website Ministry of women and child development. Retrieved from [ujjawala-comprehensive-scheme-prevention-trafficking-and-rescue-rehabilitation-and-re](#)

⁴⁵Retrieved from [www.antworksmoney.com > blog > dhanalakshmi-sche](#).

	business enterprises of professional and self-employed like doctors, beauty parlor operators etc.
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Table-1 Resources: Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India. Retrieved from official website, <https://wcd.nic.in/>

Moreover programmed launched by government of Indian like as Aajeevika and the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY-1985) is now known as PMGAY (2015) government sponsored housing program that efforts to provide housing for all. Swalamban (April 1, 2015) Under the Swavalamban scheme age group of 18-40 years have been given a choice to convert to new Atal Pension Yojana launched by the Govt. of India in May 2015 which provide minimum guaranteed pension and is focused towards the poor and the under-privileged citizen of India. NPS Lite/ Swavalamban subscribers who are above 40 years of age and thus cannot migrate to APY can continue in the Swavalamban scheme till they attain the age of 60 years. If they wish, they can also exit from the scheme. Integrated women empowerment programme (IWEP) initiated in 2001 Mahila Samiti Yojana, NGO's Credit Schemes. Mahila Samiti Yojana, Women Entrepreneur Development programme given top priority in 1997-98, Day (crèches) care centre for the children of working and ailing mother, Support to training and employment programme for women (STEP), Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) (2009-2010). National banks for agriculture and rural development's schemes khadi and village industries commission, Integrated rural development programme (IRDP), Rajiv Gandhi national crèche scheme for children of working mothers, Short Stay Home, Training of rural youth for self-employment (TRYSEM).

Table – 2 Law-Legislature Made by Government

Sr. No.	Law-Legislature	Remedies for women under the legislature
1	The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955	The enforcement of the rule of monogamy is strictly effected by section 11 and section 17 of the Act and permitted Hindu widow to re-marry and so many of others provisions like divorce and conjugal rights of women. ⁴⁶
2	The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956	The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 determines the legal marriage age of girl and boy. Act also secures their property guardianship rights.
3	The Hindu Succession Act, 1956	Under this act females are granted ownership of all property acquired either before or after the adoption of the Act, eliminating the "limited owner" status. Although, it was not until the 2005 Amendment daughters were allowed equal receipt of property as with sons.
4	The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.	Prevention of Immoral women trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation or abuse of persons for commercial purposes shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment.
5	The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	Receiving or donating the dowry is an offence under the section 3 and 4 of this act.
6	The Maternity	Full paid absence from work for certain period before 6 weeks of

⁴⁶https://highcourtchd.gov.in/hclsc/subpages/pdf_files/4.pdf original copy of an act.

	Benefit Act, 1961	delivery and after six week of <i>child</i> -birth woman shall be entitled to maternity benefit shall be twelve weeks
7	The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971	The MTP Act allows for termination of pregnancy up to 20 weeks of pregnancy. In case termination of pregnancy is immediately necessary to save the life of the woman, this limit does not apply under section 5 of the act.
8	The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976	Act provides for payment of equal wages for work of same and similar nature to male and female workers and for not making discrimination against female employees in the matters of transfers, training and promotion etc.
9	Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act, 1986	An Act to prohibit indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
10	National Commission for Women Act, 1990	It was established in 31 January 1992 under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, as defined in the 1990 National Commission for Women Act. The first head of the commission was Jayanti Patnaik. As of 30 November 2018, Rekha Sharma is the chairperson.
11	Prohibition of Child marriage Act, 2006	Child marriage as marriage in which either the girl or the boy is underage, i.e., the girl is under 18 years of age or the boy is younger than 21 years. Those performing, participating or abetting child marriage can be prosecuted. A woman, however, cannot be imprisoned under this Act. These harmful social practices force children into a vicious syndrome of early marriage and pregnancy and is very often cited as a prime cause for high maternal and infant mortality and inter-generational cycle of malnutrition. Child Marriage also imposes certain social and decision making roles for children who are not physically, mentally or emotionally prepared to fulfill these responsibilities.
12	Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013	Physical contact and advances; or (ii) demand or request for sexual favours; or (iii) sexually coloured remarks; or (iv) showing any pornography; or (v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal, non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature. Section 29 of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013A safe workplace is a woman's legal right. Sexual harassment constitutes a gross violation of women's right to equality and dignity. It has its roots in patriarchy and its attendant perception that men are superior to women and that some forms of violence against women are acceptable.

Table – 2 Resources: Law-Legislature Made by Government. Retrieved from official website of the Supreme Court,

Moreover, The Hindu Adaptation and Maintenance Act, 1956 guaranteed right to unmarried Hindu women can legally adopt a child.

Conclusion: Women frequently face isolation and exclusion based on the socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-politically. Patriarchal norms as well as social structure that ultimately control to access resources and empowerment process. Deprivation of the basic legal rights of participation in socio-economic activities, restriction on work outdoor from the home, deprivations of education and skills, wrong interpretations and accomplishments of personal restriction, the honor associated with the women's sexuality, domestic workloads. The lack of awareness about the basic institutions and marketplace make them dependent on their male counterparts, they are unseen the nation's mainstream process. As a result, the males get attention in every domain of life for better opportunities that include food, education, ownership, decision making, and the power of the resources and the structure formulated automatically male dominated. Empowerment of women remove inequalities and create opportunities and also work on the above mentioned barriers and set up the institutions for the assistance for women. gender and poverty, inequalities in land rights between women and men and their implications for the economic and social development of rural areas in developing countries, violence against women only the way to educate and aware them. The social and economic losses are the furthestmost when women are deprived from basic education and health facilities. Many researcher and policy manufacturer realize that for the mainstreaming of women, it is necessary to involve the women in decision making process and important step to overcome the poverty reduction, infrastructural development and social change. Male domination civilization as well as without participation of women in development process, it is not possible to achieve the developmental goal of any nation.

Relevancy of the paper: The Research article is purely meaningful and enhanced the knowledge on the subject of the policies and programmes operated by the government and law-legislature and judicial decision for the empowerment of women in India. The article explained the status of the women in early Indian society and find that the position of women in history was not remains constant. The position remains ebb and flow, good and bad and ups and down comes in her condition. In Vedic period the condition of women was excellent and all rights enjoyed by the women equal to male. Many of the restrictions imposed by the society due to the aggression of Muslim rulers and consequently originate many of the social evils which limit the women's freedom. Reforms were started after the 19th century in British period. Article also contribution the knowledge to understand of India society and also explore the factors responsible for disappointment of women empowerment. Article also investigates the judicial and legislative steps to remove the barrier in the path of women empowerment. Analysis also provides the knowledge concerning the government welfare schemes for women empowerment.

Suggestions and Remedial Measures:

1. To understand the fundamental causes of women's problems may be personal or public and must be execute the identified strategically actions for gender equality, education interrelated actions and economic- independence related.
2. Participation is the action level empowerment by build links with the larger women's formal or informal association to learn from the success of women's similar strategic action.
3. Strong management and leadership skill is the different level of empowerment where women enjoy control over resources, produce and use income, care and control the family and society and involve in the process of decision making.
4. Opportunity confers equality and freedom and provide chance to develop unlimited thinking and explore innovative contribution for the society. Another dimension of opportunity implies creation of more and various mode of livelihood for women enhance the living standard.
5. Working skill and collective efforts arrange the means of earnings for women to create or enhance their capabilities against the order of exploitations.
6. Access implies information, knowledge, involvement and economy, that the economy is providing means to bring the opportunities and capabilities together. It helps in improving their status as their accessibility increased to resources and services. In the last few decades, the concept of women empowerment has seen change from welfare oriented approach to equity approach.
7. Women's empowerment gets reflected both in external and internal qualities. The external qualities comprise health, mobility, education and awareness, status in the family, participation in the decision making, etc. The internal qualities comprise self-awareness and self-confidence.

