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## The Role of Women In Socio-Economic Development

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### ABSTRACT

The women go beyond social responsibility and can have a positive impact on the economy. Women-owned firms result in increased jobs, and yield substantial sales and receipts. Women's entrepreneurial appetites are at an all-time high. Statistics show that approximately 10 million entrepreneurs will be funded by 2025, out of which 50% will be women. Women are also shut out of the formal financial system. Nearly half of India's women do not have a bank or savings accounts for their own use, and 60 percent of women have no valuable assets to their name. Women in India also face great physical insecurity. The rate of crimes against women in India stands at 53.9 percent in India. The World Bank's "Women, Business and the Law 2022" report, outlines the importance of women's economic empowerment and involvement in business.

**Key Words** : Backdrop, Literature Review, Significance, Empowerment and Role

## Backdrop

Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity”- Mahatma Gandhi. The development is defined as a state in which things are improving. But it is defined in different ways in various contexts, social, political, biological, science and technology, language and literature. In the socio-economic context, development means the improvement of people’s lifestyles through improved education, incomes, skills development and employment. It is the process of economic and social transformation based on cultural and environmental factors.

Economic development is the development of economic wealth of countries or regions for the well-being of their inhabitants. Economic growth is often assumed to indicate the level of economic development. The term “economic growth” refers to the increase (or growth) of a specific measures such as real national income, gross domestic product, or per capita income. The term economic development on the other hand, implies much more. It is the process by which a nation improves the economic, political, and social wellbeing of its people.

Social development is a process which results in the transformation of social institutions in a manner which improves the capacity of the society to fulfill its aspirations. It implies a qualitative change in the way the society shapes itself and carries out its activities, such as through more progressive attitudes and behavior by the population, the adoption of more effective processes or more advanced technology. As you see in the illustration below, there is a close relation among environments, ways of living and technology.

The various aspects of significant issues related to four concepts: development, socio-economic development, human development and sustainable development. Based on our appreciation of these, let us now try to understand the socio-economic development taking place in India. Although various efforts have been made for the development of the country right from the day the country became independent, it is since 1990 that India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies in the developing world. It is said that the economy of India is the twelfth largest in the world by market exchange rates and the fourth largest in the world by GDP, measured on purchasing power parity (PPP) basis.

There are also social benefits to empowering women. Women spend 90 percent of their income on their families, and economically empowered women boost demand, have healthier and better-educated children, and raise human development levels. Women's economic participation promotes agricultural productivity, enterprise development at the micro, small, and medium enterprise levels, as well as enhances business management and returns on investment. Societal norms and expectations have shifted, allowing women to

pursue careers and break the traditional gender roles that previously defined their roles in society. Women are now being seen as equals to men, and their contributions to society are being recognized and valued. The present contribution of women to the GDP remains at 18%, however, simply by offering equal opportunities to women, India could add US\$ 770 billion to its GDP by 2025.

## Literature Review

Rama Devi (2017) found that, "Gender equality is a human right which entitles all persons irrespective of their gender to live with dignity and with freedom. Gender equality is also a precondition for all round development and reducing poverty. Empowered women make invaluable contribution to the improvement of health conditions and educational status and productivity of whole families and communities, which in turn improve prospects for the next generation. The Millennium Development Goal also puts emphasis on gender equality and empowerment of women. It is now widely accepted that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental cornerstones for achieving development results. Keeping the status of women empowerment and its determinants in India, in this paper an attempt is made to present some of the key determinants of inequalities that exist in our country so as to have an idea about to what extent the women are empowered".

Rajeshwari M. Shettar (2015)- in her paper entitled „A Study on Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment in India“ attempts to analyse the “status of Women Empowerment in India and highlights the Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment. Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. We observe in our day-to-day life how women become victimized by various social evils. Women Empowerment is the vital instrument to expand women’s ability to have resources and to make strategic life choices. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. The study is based on purely from secondary sources. The study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by Government. It is found that acceptance of unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. The study concludes by an observation that access to Education, Employment and Change in Social Structure are only the enabling factors to Women Empowerment”.

Bhutta, R.N.and Haider, J.(2013), This study was conducted to know the effects of economic dependency on decision making power of rural women. The researcher found that majority of rural women were not participating in decisions regarding family affairs and other affairs of their life due to economics dependency.

Handaragama, S.,Rathnayake, H. and Uluwaduge, P.(2013), This study focused to analysis of women's economic participation with special focus on women's changing gender roles in the context of rural development. Yet, there is need to develop technological and educational oppurtunities as well as infrastructure in order to uplift their economic contribution.

Vennila, G and K.Shobha, (2012) As a result, women are regularly limited to less paid and casual segments of the labour market.In India, women comprise nearly 48% of the population but their contribution in economic activity is only 25.7% (Census, 2001). Besides, theirwork in the construction of goods and services for the market do not get compounded in the market leaning concepts of income and employment due to its being seasonal, irregular, casual and contributory to their household work.

Behara and Niranjan (2012) intended to find out various Problems, motivating and demotivating factors of women entrepreneurship. They also suggest the way of eliminating and reducing hurdles of the women entrepreneurship development in Indian Context.

Bhardwaj, Parashar, Pandey and Sahu (2012) intended to find out various motivating and demotivating internal and external factors of women entrepreneurship. They attempt to quantify some for nonparametric factors to give the sense of ranking these factors.

Nimbalkar, M.R.,(2011)this study stated that Personality adjectives are intelligent, calm, social emotional, short-tempered. He selected 42 working women which are working as a teacher in Arts, commerce and science college and also B.Ed., D.Ed. college. The random sampling method is used by researcher.The result shows that mental stress of both types are fluctuate appreciably.

Dhanbhakyam,M., and Anitha, V.,(2011), revealed that working women faced stress in both side which is also related with personal life management and work management. By sampling method they selected 300 working women of Coimbatore District.

Sarbapriya and Ishita (2011) focus on woman entrepreneur in India and also they talk about the status of woman entrepreneurs and the problems faced by them when they set up and manage their own businesses in the competitive world of business environment.

Goyal and Parkash (2011) endeavour to study the concept of women entrepreneur, reasons because of which women become entrepreneurs, reasons for slow progress of women entrepreneurs in developing nation like India, suggestions for the growth of women entrepreneurs schemes for promoting women & development of women entrepreneurship in India.

Mehta and Mehta (2011) discuss various challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs and some suggestions for effective development of women entrepreneurs.

Jamali (2009) examines the reciprocation of constraints and opportunities affecting female entrepreneurship in developing countries.

Kiamba, J.M. (2008), The paper deals with challenges faced by women in taking leadership positions with specific reference to African women. Included in the paper are the barriers related to culture and cultural expectations, the choice and/or balance between work and family and women's own fear of success.

Darrene, Harpel and Mayer, (2008) performed a study on finding the relationship between elements of human capital and self employment among women.

Becker (1991) mentions that "If the household head effectively altruistic and spends some of his income on his wife rather than his own consumption..". Punam Kumari (1998) found that although women were consulted for decisions their role was confined to the decisions regarding petty issues of the family. They ended up as initiators in the process of major decisions of the family and final decision were being taken by the male members of the family.

### **Significance of Women in Development**

Over the past few decades, women working professionals have worked assiduously, with their talent, dedication and enthusiasm. They contribute massively towards India's economic growth and prosperity. At present, there are 432 million women of working-age in India, out of which 343 million are employed in the unorganized sector. A report by McKinsey Global Institute has estimated that just by offering equal opportunities to women, India could add US\$ 770 billion to its GDP by 2025. Yet, the present contribution of women to the GDP remains at 18%.

Even in rural India, women have been achieving new milestones everyday. Despite social and familial exclusion, women have asserted their right to financial independence, built businesses from the scratch and inspired those around them. In the panchayat system, 50% reservation is offered to women while many national programmes, such as 'National Rural

Livelihood Mission', are providing leadership opportunities to them at the grassroots level. Government initiatives like the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' and 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act' has provided women workforce with supervisory job opportunities.

Today, India is the 3rd largest ecosystem in terms of Startups in the world and also, the 3rd largest in the Unicorn community. However, only 10% of them have been led by women founders. The need of the hour is to mobilize more support – mentally and financially – for women entrepreneurs and help them kickstart their journey. Fortunately, the last few years have seen a paradigm shift in the entire process of women becoming business leaders and founding companies. Today, the median female share of the global workforce is 45.4 percent. Women's formal and informal labor can transform a community from a relatively autonomous society to a participant in the national economy. Despite significant obstacles, women's small businesses in rural developing communities not only can be an extended family's lifeline, but can form a networked economic foundation for future generations. The role of women in the urban and rural workforce has expanded exponentially in recent decades.

today's world, women play an important role in a variety of fields, from scientific development and literature to financing and fierce competition in the social and economic fabric of dependency and poverty. Effective women empowerment includes a much larger set of rules, including effective participation in different development programs, and encouraging them to be independent and self-confident, to meet the challenges of living in a patriarchal society with courage and self-respect. Individual reinforcement can only be achieved if the individual has the ability to make decisions alone.

Modern women are aware of their rights and are able to make rational and educated decisions in all spheres of life. Including the continued struggle for the women empowerment in the social, political, economic and religious spheres. Because gender equality means that men and women in society have equal opportunities to reach the internationally agreed development goals. Modern women are not lost in the comfort areas of their homes. Today, women have become doctors, engineers, and scientists, and thus play an important role in society. They also enjoy the freedom of expression and expression without any restrictions. Most countries allow for a strong legal infrastructure that encourages and protects women from exploitation, such as dowry and marriage. The Government is constantly implementing legislation to raise awareness of its rights among women.

## Women Empowerment in India

The need for women's empowerment arises from the subordinate position they have been accorded for a long time. Empowerment of women needs to begin with her participation in different spheres of life. Education is a great determinant in this regard. To achieve empowerment, women have to be educated to be aware of their rights and privileges in a modern society. It is education which can bring about awareness in them related to their social status, injustice and differentiation meted out to them. Besides, economic independence is a major factor which can contribute in empowering women.

Women have always been contributing to enable the economy achieve tremendous progress. But it is the gender bias that still exists at every social stratum, even in the most educated and developed society, is unable to digest this visible contribution of women in all walks of life. In some regions, patriarchal societies diminish the role of women in important matters. This masochist thinking is, however, beginning to fade gradually with the passage of time.

Women in rural India, despite suffering from the problems like health, malnutrition, repeated childbearing, and lack of education, engage themselves in direct and allied agricultural activities, run small shops, sell by-products or handcraft products and thus generate additional income for the family. A government of India study shows that more than 40 per cent of rural women directly or indirectly contribute to the uplift of their families and thereby bringing social change. Harriet Beecher Stowe rightly said, "Women are the real architects of society".

In urban India, the lowest strata, women despite the lack of education and facing problems like shelter, have been the catering to social changes and economic development by contributing as a substantial labour force in various industries like construction of residential & commercial buildings, roads, water bodies, engaging in various domestic and community services. Every now and then, we read in newspapers that a would-be bride refuses to marry a particular groom due to his demand for dowry or for the urge of higher education.

Historically in India, women's participation in social changes, politics and decision making remained significant. Who can undermine the role and contributions of Chandbibi, Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Durgawati, Rani Rashmoni, Kittur Rani Chennamma, Jijabai, Rani Avantibai, Rani Laxmibai, Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Vijay Laxmi Pandit, Indira Gandhi, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Mahashweta Devi, Mahadevi Verma, Arundhati Roy, Sucheta Kriplani, Pratibha Patil, etc in bringing about all-round development?

The contribution of women is omnipresent and all-pervasive in every sphere of life as India seeks to march steadily towards the path of growth. All these become possible only with the active participation of women who are the catalysts of qualitative growth of future generation as well. Efforts during the post- Independence era got a shot in the arm when Mrs Indira Gandhi became the first lady Prime Minister. Women got empowered and moved to participate further in all spheres of services – financial, administrative, judicial and education to name a few. Women in India are playing an important role in the country's governance. Many women have emerged as exemplary leaders at the policy level as well as the community level. The presence of women in various decision making bodies helped develop confidence among other women, opening up possibilities for future.

It is important to note the critical role women have played in working together to forge solidarity, and unity among themselves. Together they have been able to lobby and influence the enactment of laws that protect and promote the rights of women. Women became a driving force of the socio-economic development of the country after the independence. Vast networks of women groups such as NGOs, associations and co-operatives at the grassroots level have played a pivotal role in providing empowerment initiatives which resulted in socio-economic development and income generating activities. This, in turn, paved the way for sustainable development and economic growth of the country.

In recent times, everyone is pointing on the empowerment of women. It's right to say that women's empowerment has become the necessity of the time. Women should possess liberty, faith, and self-worth to opt for their needs and demands. Discrimination based on gender is useless and is having zero worth by looking at the growth of women in the last few decades. Women are paid less and are treated as a cook and slave in families, and their real potential fails to get highlighted. Women empowerment in India is required to overcome situations of such types and to provide them with their independent role in Indian society. Empowering women is a necessary right of women. They should have proportional rights to contribute to society, economics, education, and politics. They are approved to gain higher education and receive a similar treatment as men are receiving.

### **Women Role for Economic and social Development in Modern Era**

growing globalization and liberalization of the economy as well as increased privatization of services, women as a whole have been left behind and not been able to partake of the fruits of success. Mainstreaming of women into the new and emerging areas of growth is imperative. This will require training and skill upgradation in emerging trades, encouraging more women to take up vocational training and employment in the boom sectors. This will



also require women to migrate to cities and metros for work. Provision of safe housing, and other gender friendly facilities at work will need to be provided.

Women workers are usually at the lowest-paid end of any sector, they are usually termed as unskilled, even though very often their work, though low-paid, requires a certain level of technique. Furthermore, many of the skills that women learn are those that are in some way connected to care and reproduction, which are often not regarded as skills at all. For example, some skills which are not recognized now, but which exist with local populations -- women in forest areas, have a skill of recognizing and using herbal plants. Often a woman's skills may not be regarded as skills at all, either by the person who is documenting the skills, or even by the women themselves.

Secondly, the potential marketability of a particular skill is never recognized. This refers to a woman's skills which currently may not be marketed but which may have a good market potential like embroidery or knowledge of herbs. Finally, the 'care' skills of the women can no longer be sidelined. These would include knowledge of child-care, care of the sick and particular skills such as mid-wifery. Only then will a measurement of a woman's skill will capture the extent of her 'specialization'. One unfortunate tendency that has been noticed in the desperate search for employment that goes on in the unorganised sector is the tendency towards deskilling. Workers lose their traditional or acquired skills when they cannot find employment with these skills.

The rationale for economically empowering women is compelling for both for its own sake (intrinsic) and for other spillover benefits (instrumental). Research indicates that economic participation of women—their presence in the workforce in quantitative terms—is important not only for lowering the disproportionate levels of poverty among women, but also as an important step toward raising household income and encouraging economic development in countries as a whole. Amartya Sen makes a compelling case for the notion that societies need to see women less as passive recipients of help, and more as dynamic promoters of social transformation, a view strongly buttressed by a body of evidence suggesting that the education, employment and ownership rights of women have a powerful influence on their ability to control their environment and contribute to economic development.

Women represent more than 70% of the world's poor due to unequal access to economic opportunities in both developed and developing countries. In OECD countries, increasing female participation in the workforce would reduce the number of people living in poverty since women and children account for most of the poor even in the richest countries. In developing countries, the failure to value women's work is a significant barrier to reducing poverty and fostering economic growth.

Ancient India was a centre of learning and noted women scholars during that time contributed to the advancement of society. Women icons in India's rural areas are few and far in between. While most are aware of the high profile lady entrepreneurs and corporate heads in urban India, women in rural areas continue to face exploitation. If women are allowed to gain access to education, they can make a huge impact in enhancing the productivity of the economy. Women can also contribute to the social welfare of the country. Noted lady activists have championed the cause of gender justice and equity. They are shining examples of what India can accomplish if lady leaders are at the helm. Women-friendly policies and laws will be framed as a result of this. This can change the way the world looks at India.

Indian women play an important role in initiating socio-economic progress of the country. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. Women should be empowered so that they can lead India to glory. Our women entrepreneurs, social welfare workers, scientists, politicians and economists are leading the way for a brighter future. Women in urban and rural areas should be given access to good opportunities so that they can bring about positive social change and contribute to the growth of the country.

### **Conclusion**

The Women are more than twice as likely than men to be contributing family workers. From the latest available data, the share of women in informal employment in developing countries was 4.6 percentage points higher than that of men, when including agricultural workers, and 7.8 percentage points higher when excluding them. The India has experienced rapid growth and development in recent years the contributors are various behind overall development of a particular country. And women now play major role in socio economic development of India, not only household but the job responsibilities also fulfill by our women very effectively .

women have been making a significant contribution to modern Indian society in various fields, including politics, education, business, social services, arts and culture, sports, aerospace, journalism and media, science and technology, literature, entertainment, philanthropy, spiritual and religious. Empowering women helps to create a more just and equitable society for everyone. Health and Well-being: Women's empowerment is also important for promoting health and well-being. When women have access to education and healthcare, they can better take care of themselves and their families

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