



# India At 75: The Status Of Women In Independent India

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper, I have examined the status of Indian women when India celebrates its 75th independence anniversary. India gained independence from Great Britain in 1947; however, not all the population gained equality. Women in a newly independent India continue to be subjects of subservient and domestic roles, and this social role continues into the 21st century. Women of India got the right to vote, and gradually improvements were made in various areas that led to the well-being of women within the society. The formulation of many programs and schemes aimed to bring progress to women. The main aspects that promote women's empowerment are encouraging them to acquire education and participate in employment. However, despite these initiatives, some rural communities still regard women as subordinate to men, which is subject to analysis. This paper stresses the need for sustained efforts to increase the involvement of women to remove socio-cultural barriers, stereotypical attitudes, and violence against women for creating a gender-balanced society.

**Keywords:** *Women, Empowerment, Independence, Status, Right to Vote.*

## INTRODUCTION:

India is a the female element is predominant, a land where goddesses are worshipped and women revered as goddesses. Its patriots speak of "the Motherland" and "the whole cultural life is permeated with the idea of the female ideal, the Mother Goddess, and the awe of her representatives, the Indian mothers. So as Indian culture is the heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems, political systems and artifacts; that originated in or are associated with the ethno-linguistically diverse India. The Indian independence movement, that was a series of historic events with the ultimate aim of ending British rule in India, lasting from 1857-1947. Indian women played a pivotal role in achieving India's independence. There have been cases of women who participated in the independence movement against British rule.

After Independence numerous women continued to contribute to the movement through military leadership, political leadership, and social activism. The Constitution of India makes provision of equality, liberty and right to life to all the citizens of the country. The citizens of the country are also required to give up the customs and practices that imposed unfavourable effects upon the status of women. From 1950, with the introduction of democratic constitution, it has granted equal social and political rights to women to enhance women status. Indian women have the right to free speech and expression and to get an education and choose career.

Now each state has been imposed with an obligation to maintain law and order and justice to women. But after that Indian women face many issues in independent India. They face gender-specific violence on a daily basis, and women in rural areas are more likely to suffer than those in urban areas. Government of India

specially prime minister Mr. Narendra Modi is focussing to uplift the status of Women so that different rules, policy, schemes are making in India that is women empowerment friendly.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- An attempt to highlight status of women after independence.
- Focus on the relevance of the contribution of women
- To find and get involved in the mainstream of the nation.
- To motivate others to do work for women's empowerment.
- To know the women status in reality.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

As the research topic is very close to social science, the paper depends on secondary data collected from the internet, government documents, newspapers, books, various conferences and meetings, etc. Then the data was analysed, evaluated and concluded.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION:**

The research finds that women's status in India after independence have lots of changes. Women of India played a great role at the time of independence. But before independence some reforms in the state of law were carried out by the British rulers at the instance of the Indian social reformers, like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidhya Sagar etc. The concept of women, that they should not undergo any form of mistreatment, should be given equal rights and opportunities and should be treated with respect and courtesy were the major concerns.

#### **Cultural Status**

India is cooled Bharat Mata, mata means Mother. Still women has a high respect in country. . In Rig Vedic era, women were admitted to full religious rights and were also having complete educational opportunities for the development of their personality. In middle era conditions changed but in modern India specially during the national independence movement women came out from their houses and played important role. As a result the social respect and values are differenced and favours the male. Women are perceived as devalued social group in India. This devaluation has its own religious driven socio-cultural explanations and inherited patriarchal family system.

#### **Legal Status**

Women's legal status is very strong. The Indian Constitution attempts to provide equal opportunities to women, protect their rights and ensure justice to them through the several articles like 14, 15(1), 16, 42 and 243 D (3). The constitution protects women against exploitation and ensures that they are been given equal rights and opportunities being it any field. There are a legislation provision for women's upliftment and safeguarding their interests like; The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Children Act 1954, Special Marriage Act, 1954, The Hindu Marriage Act 1955, The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, The Orphanage and Widow Home Act 1960 ,Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 etc to protects women from exploitation.

#### **Economic Status**

The number of working women has also steadily increased. Women have been recruited in all posts such as teachers, doctors, nurses, advocates, police officers, bank employees in all major cities of India. Since 1991 women have been recruited into 3 wings of armed forces that are military, air force and naval force. India ranks

120 among 131 countries in female labour force participation rates and rates of gender-based violence remain unacceptably high. It's hard to develop in an inclusive and sustainable way when half of the population is not fully participating in the economy. At 17% of GDP, the economic contribution of Indian women is less than half the global. but still the economic empowerment of women of India is continue to enhance the status of women.

### **Political Status**

Political status of Indian women is not only related to 'Right to Vote', but simultaneously relates to participation in: decision-making process, political activism, political consciousness, etc. In present scenario women participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties at lower levels more than men. Indian women turnout during India's parliamentary general elections was 65.63%, compared to 67.09% turnout for men. India ranks 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in Parliament. Women have held the posts of president and prime minister in India, as well as chief ministers of various states. Indian voters have elected women to numerous state legislative assemblies and national. India has a federal form of government, with devolved powers. The electorate votes to elect a national parliament as well as state assemblies. In 2012, India had a minimal percentage of 10.9% women elected representatives in the national parliament, which is, but relatively higher than Hungary (8.8%), Brazil (9.6%), China (9.1%), and Malaysia (9.8%). To combat gender inequality in politics, the Indian Government has instituted reservations for seats in local governments. The 73rd amendment has made an effort to provide women with some special powers in all the 3 tiers of Panchayati Raj. As per the act,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of seats are reserved for women in addition to the seats reserved for SCs and STs. It was indeed a bold step. The rural women will also be now able to exercise some political power and play a role in decision making for village affairs.

### **Social Status**

The status of women in the independence India underwent transformations. In the discussion of their status within the society, there are two main aspects that need to be taken into consideration, first is extent of actual control of women over their own living conditions and the extent to which they possess the decision making authority and perform their tasks and activities in a well-organized manner. Women constituted half of the population within the Indian society. They have been rendering a significant contribution in the development of human resources. The National Policy on the Empowerment of Women in India, 2001, is regarded as one of the important strategies in the development process and led to changes within the socio-economic environment.

### **Educational Status**

After Independence, the educational rights of women were promoted and they were made aware of the value of education. The ratio of women pursuing higher studies and taking education improved gradually since then. The government provided several benefits to women such as scholarship, loan facilities, hostel facilities etc. who wished to go out to pursue higher education. By getting such benefits a large number of women are able to pursue higher education today. Separate schools and universities have been also established for them. girls obtaining merit ranks in education and section list of higher services. however, India still has one of the lowest female literacy rates in Asia. In 1991, less than 40 percent of the 330 million women aged 7 and over were literate, which means today there are over 200 million illiterate women in India. So there is a need to provides them with a great quality of education and help in enhancing their careers.

## CONCLUSION:

In the present existence, It can be concluded from the above discussion that women's status in Indian society has radically changed since Independence. Government after realising the situations of women and their worse position in the society took huge initiatives to bring about a change and improve the social, economic and political conditions of women. Now Indian women are rendering an important contribution in social, political, cultural, economic and religious fields. Women are getting enrolled in educational institutions and pursuing higher education. They are attaining Bachelors, Masters and doctoral degrees and are acquiring employment opportunities. Women are employed in reputed educational institutions, organizations and other areas. They are doctors, researchers, educationists, managers, administrators, directors, politicians, lawyers, engineers and so forth. The status of women in the society is regarded as the most notable and this is primarily because of the changing values.

But still the individuals, primarily belonging to rural communities, who possess traditional viewpoints and perspectives, still long for a male child and regard females as burdens. In India, the behaviour of men is deeply rooted within the society. They possess the viewpoint that they are more capable and superior as compared to women and have the right to exercise control, authority and make important decisions. Hence, it is vital need to encourage them to have faith on herself. Transformations will take place when women be active and aware in participating in the decision making processes, acquiring educational opportunities, getting engaged in employment and sustaining their livelihoods in an enhanced manner. **33% of seats** must be reserved for women in order to obtain effective participation in the field of politics. It could help to update women overall status in India. With these changes, transformations also came about in the status of women. Its create an environment to make India a powerful country.

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