



## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

**M. Shanthi<sup>1</sup> and Dr. K. Elizabeth Lavanya Pappy<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of History, Govt. Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant professor in History, Department of History, Govt. Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

### ABSTRACT :

*Gender equality is an individual right which qualifies all persons regardless of their gender to live with dignity and freedom. Gender equality is also prerequisite for all round development and curtailing the state of poor. Empowered women make extremely useful donation to the improvement of good physical conditions and educational status and efficiency of whole family and society in order to make better prospects for the people born and live at the same period. The Millennium Development Goal also gives special importance on gender equality and empowerment of women.*

*It is now broadly believed that gender equality and women empowerment are basic foundation for getting development outcomes keeping the status of women empowerment and its determinants in India. An attempt is made to present some of our nation. So as to have thought about to what extent the women are empowered.*



**KEYWORDS :** Gender Equality, Empowerment, Women Participation.

### INTRODUCTION :

Gender equality will be attained only when both sex enjoy the same opportunities, rights and commitments in all domains of life. This denotes sharing equally power and influence and having equal chances in economics and social spheres. Equal claim on education and career prospects will make women to realize their personal ambitions. Gender equality demands the empowerment of women with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. When women are empowered the whole and these benefits often have wavelet effect on the future generations.

According to the 2011 census, India has reached the population of 1210 millions, of which 586469174 (48.5%) were women. The population of India was 17.5% of the total population of world and occupied second place. The sex ratio was 930 in 1971 and increased to 940 as per census of 2011. The women literary rate increased from 18.3% in 1961 to 74.0% in 2011 and a decrease in male-female literacy gap from 26.6% in 1981 to 16.7% in 2011. Women empowerment in India is mostly depend on so many variables that include location (urban and rural) educational status, social status (caste and class) and age. Policies on women empowerment found at natural, state and local levels in many sectors including health, education economic opportunities sex based violence and political participation. The scope and coverage of

the schemes launched has been expanding that include initiatives for economic and social empowerment of women and for securing sex equality.

The following systematic plans at present are aiming at women empowerment and gender equality in India.

- Integrated child development 1975
- Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls 2010
- Rajiv Gandhi National crèche scheme for children of working mothers
- Integrated Child Protection Scheme 2009-10
- Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women
- Dhanalakshmi 2008
- Short stay Homes
- Swadhar
- Ujjawala 2007
- Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan)
- National Mission for Empowerment of women
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh 1993

In spite of the effective executing of all above schemes and programmes, there are significant gaps between policy achievements and actual practice at community level. The global gender Gap Index (2016) observed that India is simply not doing enough for its women. The ranking of the country has fallen from 105 out of 135 countries in 2012 to 87 out of 144 countries in 2016.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To trace the level of equality between boys and girls at primary, secondary and higher education level.
- To trace the gender equality and share of women in economic participation and opportunity.
- To identify the gender and women accessibility resources.
- To examine the gender equality and women empowerment in political field.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data has been collected from secondary sources like Journals, magazines including the reports and documents of MHRD, Govt. of India, National Family Health Survey Reports etc. and various other publications.

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

#### Gender Equality in Primary, Secondary Education, Territory Education

Education is the single most important factor to ensure gender equality and empowerment. Enrolment of girls in primary education, survival and transition to higher level of education lead to achieve gender parity in education. During 2010-14 to 2018 substantial growth has been achieved towards gender Parity as revealed by some important indicators.

#### Gender Parity Index

The gender Parity index is the ratio of the number of female students enrolled at Primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Education to the corresponding number of male students in each level. Thus the GPI which is free from the effect of the population structure of the appropriate age group Provide the picture of gender equality in education. During 2014-15 to 2018-19 substantial progress has been achieved towards gender Parity education as shown in the following table.

**Table 1: Gender Parity Index**

Year	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education
2014-15	1.03	1.01	0.92
2015-16	1.03	1.02	0.92
2016-17	1.16	0.96	0.94
2017-18	1.15	1.00	0.92
2018-19	1.03	1.01	0.92

**Source:** Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, Website.

It may be noticed from the above table, the enrolment is favourable towards female since GPI has reached the level in respect of primary education. A rapid growth has been noticed during towards gender parity.

**Level wise Enrolment of Girls**

Indicator	Level of Education	2014-15	2018-19
Enrolment of girls as percentage of total enrolment	Primary Education(I to v)	47	48
	Upper Primary Education (class vi)	47	59
	Secondary (ix, x) and Higher secondary education(xi to xii)	44	47
Number of girls per 100 boys enrolled	Primary Education (I to v )	92	93
	Upper Primary Education	89	95
	Secondary Education	82	90
	Senior Secondary Education (xi, xii)	79	89
	Higher Education	77	84

**Source:** Educational statistics at a glance 2018, Ministry of Human Resources, Govt of India.

The literacy rate in terms of number of girls per100 boys enrolled shows that during study period from 2014-15 to 2018 -19, a remarkable growth has been seen at all levels of education. It can be said that 8 to 10% growth is recorded in Upper Primary, Secondary and higher education during the study period.

### Gender Equality and Share of Women in Economic Participation and Opportunity

Women's Participation in employment is seen as a signal of reducing discrimination and increasing empowerment of women. It is also seen that Feminization of the work force is also a mark of improvement of women's opportunities and rank in society. Share of women in employment measures the degree to which labour markets are open to women in industry and service sectors which affects efficiency through flexibility in the labour market and reflect economic factors in social empowerment of women.

**Table-2**

Year	Labour Force Participation Rate	Share of regular wages and salaried workers
2014 -15	42.0	8.2
2015-16	42.7	8.4
2016-17	32.6	10.2
2017-18	31.2	12.8
2018-19	31.1	12.1

**Source:** National Health Survey-4

The labour force participation rate of women is less and a sizable gender gap exists. Moreover when women work they tend to end up in marginal jobs. One of the most intensive debates in recent periods has

centred on the declining labour force participation rate of women in India which dropped from 42.7% to 31.1% during the years 2014-15 to 2018-19. In the share of regular wage and salaried workers female share is increased from 8.2% to 12.1% during study period.

### **MOBILITY AND DECISION MAKING**

Other than educational and economic empowerment changes in women's mobility and social interaction, participation in decision making are also necessary. As per the estimates of NSS, the proportion of female headed household in rural and urban areas was 11.5% and 12.4% respectively. Even today a very little percentage of women have freedom in decision making, visiting their families, and relatives and going outside home. Besides, in most of the Indian communities, women do not have the freedom to spend her spouse's earnings and even her own earnings as per her choice and need.

### **Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Social and Political Fields**

Greater involvement of women in social and political spheres is important to make the social and political institutions more representative. It serves as a tool for empowerment of women and contributes to gender sensitive decision making. Women have poor representation in politics. A total of 78 women have been elected in the general election 2019 which is 17% share in the Lok shaba while in Rajya Shaba only 42 are women at present. Similarly women representatives in the state assemblies and councils are also very poor. At present there are 3 sitting female judges out of the total 34 judges (including chief justice). According to the report by the Association of Democratic Reformer (ADR) and National Election Watch (NEW) the state representation of women in the country's decision making process countries to be dismal, with only 9% of women MLA's and MP's across the country in 2019

Over the years, issues around women's right and empowerment, varying from Triple talaq to Beti Bachao Beti Padhao are regular topics of debate in political circles, however, not much effort is put into enable them to share power with men. There are 73 women judges working in different high courts as on 2018 which in percentage terms is 10.89% of the working strength.

### **Gender Equality and Women Access to Resources**

Access to resources is important for economic freedom of movement is linked with their economic independence and also in fuses with power and expands agency. The National Family Health Survey-3 has identified 5 major variables namely

- Knowledge of loan programme
- Get loan
- Having Bank Account
- Higher Educational attainment
- Working outside as a measure of economic independence.

### **Issues to be Tackled for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality**

In India women are discriminated marginalised at every stage of the society whether it is social participation, political participation, economic opportunity and economic participation, access to education or access to resources etc. Most of the women in India are poor, illiterates and inadequately trained. They often end up in the daily struggle of managing an ill equipped family and are not in a position to move out themselves of the oppressive and regressive socio-economic conditions. Although lot of things are happenings and large amount of resources are being spent in the name of women empowerment in India, the actual situation, however just remains the same and in many instances worsens further. The following are some of the important issues to be tackled for women's empowerment.

- Removing gender differences in access to education and educational attainment are key elements on path to attaining gender equality and reducing the disempowerment of women.

- Higher education of women is the key enablers of democratic change, family welfare and better health and nutrition of women and their families.
- Special measures should be taken to create gender sensitive educational systems, increase enrolment and retention rate of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life long training as well as development of employment/vocation/technical skills by women.
- Child marriage is still prevalent in our society, it must be stopped. Women who marry at an early age is an indicator of the low status of women in society and also restricts women's entry to school.
- A woman needs to be physically healthy so that she can take challenges of equality. Women must have access to complete, affordable and quality health care.
- Training programmes should be conducted in agriculture and other related occupations for women workers in the agricultural sector.
- Employment can empower women by providing financial independence. Women should be provided with proper wages and work at par with men in order to raise their status in the society.
- Violence against women must be eradicated from the society. It can be tackled through a change in attitude that needs to take place in the family, in the society and family members of the society as well. Gender training and gender sensitivity programmes are also important.
- Women's representation in politics and in the legislature is very poor. Hence necessary steps should be taken to increase women's representation in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Assemblies, and State Councils. In order to increase the women's empowerment, they should come together and decide to self empower themselves. Women should join together as a unifying force and self empowering actions at the ground level.

## CONCLUSION

As women form almost one half of India's Population without their engagement and empowerment rapid economic growth is out of the question. For economic growth to be really incorporating, women empowerment is of immense value. It is very important to achieve long lasting economic development of our country and ever beyond. Even a large number of women do not have adequate freedom regarding value choices for their own life. The data revealed that there is a need to look beyond economic resources or material prosperity which is playing an important role in shaping the women's freedom and empowerment. Along with government, local bodies and all other collaborators must come forward and take part in the empowerment process is need for the hour.

## REFERENCES

1. Manoj Varghese. (2016). Women empowerment and its role in Indian economy. *International Journal of Recent Trends in Engineering*, Vol. 2, No. 11.
2. Neha Elizabeth. (2015). Empowering women through education with reference to Indian economy. *International Journal of Research in Management & Technology*, Vol. 5, No. 1.
3. Muktaur Rahman Kazi. (2015). Status of women in India. *IOSR journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 20, No. 4.
4. Nagaraja, B. (2013). Empowerment of women of India: A critical study. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 9, No. 2.
5. Wilson, P. (1996). Empowerment: community economic development from the inside out. *Urban Studies*, 33(4-5), 617-630.
6. Sunitha Kishor & Kamala Gupta. (2009). Gender equality & women empowerment in India.
7. Govt. of India, Human Development Report 2018.
8. Govt. of India, National Family Health Survey-4, Ministry of Health and Family welfare, New Delhi.