



## ROLE OF NGO IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE IN WEST BENGAL

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*“Empowerment may mean equal status to women and provide opportunity and freedom to develop them. Man should control the pleasure of senses and not to consider to women just a sex object, sensual pleasure have not know bound.”.....Mahatma Gandhi.*

### ABSTRACT

*Before independent in India, the women education is very slow and limited to upper strata of society but after independence it was tremendously increased. So the empowerment is one of the most important issues in the process of development not only in west Bengal but all over India. Empowerment of women can help improve women’s position in society. Empowerment of women is a holistic concept. It is a multi dimensional approach and it covers social, political and economic aspect. Women empowerment can be achieved through the provision of adequate education facilities, political support and effective legislation system for women. This paper has deals with the roles of NGOs in women empowerment with special reference in the state of West Bengal. This study has used secondary sources of data, such as different NGOs journal, news paper, annual report etc. NGOs play a vital role of women empowerment. These agencies will provide basic education, vocational training, and training for self-employment and self awareness programme to women.*



**KEY WORD:** Women Empowerment, NGOs, Gender, Self-Employment.

### INTRODUCTION

India is the most diversified and second largest populated country in the world, next to china. Here is a different type of caste, religion, race, language. Indian constitution guarantees equal rights to men and women. Article 14, 15 and 16 of part 3 of our constitution guarantee right to equality, but this constitution and articles only bookies not practical (**Meta, Biswas & Pandey 2017**). In India we found women are deprived and confined within the narrow four-walls of the different areas in different causes in ancient period to modern period. Women play a vital role in the society and family, but in important areas of life women are normally at a significant disadvantage as a compare to men, such as education, income, decision making, partner choice, community choice, business, politics etc (**Margaret & kala 2013**). Women are an essential and helpful worker in national economy. Feel good, socio-economic development, and good governance is not likely without participation in women empowerment (**Kour 2017**). In India and several developing countries women play a very significant role in the upliftment of the nation in all the aspects such as social, economical, political and legal ( **Ahamad, Hemlata & Narayana 2015**). So women and their problems are being given much importance in our social setting. In recent times, the emerged and most important issues in our society are the empowerment of women. Through the empowerment of women is not a new phenomena in all societies throughout the world, but the concept is measured as new for its

increasingly discussion and occupation of a place of fame in public due to its having been shifted and reshaped from women welfare to their overall development.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study is designed to achieve the following objectives.

- To know the concept of empowerment and women empowerment.
- To know the available facilities of NGOs for women education.
- To study strategic roles of the NGOs perform which help women to access information for their development.

### CONCEPT OF EMPOWERMENT:

The term 'Empowerment' was first used in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and its meaning is 'delegate', authorized or enables. The term empowerment is an intricate idea. But in the 20th century we saw many examples of political empowerment in different countries in the world lead by people like as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther. From the viewpoint of the members empowerment refers to efforts to expand their base of power (**Mandal 2013**). At present the term 'empowerment' has replaced the previous the term 'development'. Through the term 'empowerment' had become a 'buzzword' in the sixties; it was not discussed so broadly in literature until the eighties. Empowerment is basically a process having multiple dimensions, which are interrelated and interdependent, implying that action promoting one dimension reinforces the values of other dimensions (**Nawaz 2000**). Empowerment is a process of positive changes that improves women's feedback position and bargaining power within a patriarchal structure, and identifies different casual pathways of change; cognitive, material, perceptual and rational. Empowerment in its simplest form means 'manifestation of relocation of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and the male power'. Empowerments indicate a process of acquiring and providing the resources and the means the access to and control over such means and resources. This implies that the individual has the potential to acquire power upon her own plan or that another party could make it possible for her to have power (**Kour 2017**). Empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International Women's Conference in **1985 at Nairobi**. The conference defines empowerment as reorganization of social power and control of resources in favors in women. The different parameters of empowerment are...

- Enhance self esteem and self confidence in women.
- Develop in them an ability to think critically and rationally.
- Foster decision making and action through collective process.
- Ensure equal participation in developing process.
- Provide information, knowledge and skill for economic independence.
- Everyone in the group is valued and encouraged to make personal contributions.

### COMPONENTS OF EMPOWERMENT:

The basic components of empowerment are given below.

- Women's and men's good judgment of internal strength and confidence to face life.
- The write to make own choice.
- The power to control their own lives inside and outside home.
- The capacity to influence the way of social change towards the construction of a more just social and economic instructions nationally and internationally.

### CONCEPT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

The word Women empowerment basically means that the women capacity or power to control their day to day lives in the social, political and economic conditions- a power which enables them to shift from the margin to the middle stage. The concept of women empowerment is the effect of many important

critiques and debates generated by women's movement throughout the world, mainly by the third world feminist. Empowerment enables women to make choices and as a result of having such choices, she gain influence and bringing power. Empowerment makes women capable to choose and capable to demand. Empowerment of women is absolutely important for societal, familiar, national and global development and progress. Empowering the women in social, political, economical and legal aspects is necessary to convert the idle society into self sustainable society (**Ahamad, Hemlata & Narayana 2015**). The eventual goal of empowering women is to provide an increased awareness of their rights and duties, equal participation almost all spheres with men including opportunities and freedom to develop her and ending violence committed against them. Women's empowerment is the process and the outcome of the process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of society (**Batliwala, 1994**). The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNDFW) includes the following factors in its definition of women empowerment (**Mokta 2014**):

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the way in which these relations may be changed.
- Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.

#### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA:

The Indian constitution in its fundamental rights has provision for equality, social justice and protection to women. These goals are yet to be realized. Women still continue to be discriminated against, oppressed and uncovered to in equalities at various levels. So the concept of empowerment as a goal of development project and programmed has been gaining wider acceptance. In India the MHRD and NCW (National commission for women) have been worked to maintain the right and legal right of women. The Indian constitution 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1993) have provide some special power to women that for reservation of seats 33% and the new Panchayati raj is the part of the effort to empower women at least at village level (**Hazarika 2011**).

The government of India has ratified different international conventions and human right instruments committing to protected equal rights to women. These are the Mexico plan of action (1975), the Nairobi forward looking strategies (1985), CEDAW (1993) and the Beijing declaration for action (1995). The year 2001 was observed as the year of women empowerment. During this year's, an indicator document has been adopted, 'the National policy for the empowerment of women'. For the beneficiary of women, the government of India has been starts different programme and scheme, such as the National credit fund for women (1993) and Food and Nutrition Board.

Committee of the empowerment of women (1997) was constituted to improve the status of women. It consisted in Indian parliament women's are 20 member of Lok sabha and 10 member of Rajya sabha. The function of this committee include to examining the measures to protected women's equality, status and self-respect in all matters and taking into consideration the report of National commission for women (**Kour 2017**).

The most constructive development in last few years has been the growing participation of women in Panchayati Raj institution. There are many elected women representatives women at village council level. But at the central and state levels too women are gradually making a difference.

#### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FIVE YEARS PLANS IN INDIA:

The planning commission's "Plans and Prospects for social welfare in India 1951 – 1961" spells out social welfare services as intending to provide to the special needs of persons and groups who, by the cause of same handicap-social, economic, physical or mental are unable to avail or are traditionally denied the facilities and services provided by community (**Sankar**). The planning commission defined three major areas

in which they had paid to special attention to women's development such as Education, Social welfare and Health.

**First plan:** The first five years plan (1951-56) has contemplated welfare measures for women. To apply welfare measures for the benefits of poor women, the central social welfare board was established to deal with the problems of women.

**Second plan:** The second five years plan (1956-61) has confidentially concentrated overall intensive agricultural development; however the welfare approach to women's issues was determined recognizing women as worker.

**Third plan:** The third five years plan (1961-66) genuinely reorganized the better importance of education for women, which has been a major welfare strategy for women.

**Forth plan:** The emphasized on women education was continued during the fourth five years plan (1969-74) also the basic policy was to encourage women's welfare as the base of operation. The outlay on family planning was stepped up to decrease the birth rate through education.

**Fifth plan:** Need for training women in respect of income generating activities and their defense was stressed in the Fifth Five Year Plan. Further, the fifth plan also recommended that the strategic programmed of functional literacy to provide women with skills and knowledge to perform the functions as a good housewife.

**Sixth plan:** The sixth five years plan stressed the need of economic independence educational advances and access to healthcare and family planning as vital for women development.

**Seventh plan:** The Seventh five years plan Sought to generate awareness among women about their rights and privileges. Under the plan, women's new scheme, "Women Developing Co-operation" has been taken up for promoting employment generating activities by supporting schemes for women's group and women form proper section of society.

**Eight plans:** The approach of eight five years plan was to ensure that the benefits of development from many sectors did not by pass women. The main objectives of this plan were to enlarge the reach of service to women both qualitatively and quantitatively.

**Ninth plan:** The ninth five years plan came into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1997. In this plan the main focus was laid on empowerment of women and people's involvement in planning and implementation strategies. The 9th Five Year Plan is an attempt to bring in women's issues within the policy making spheres.

**Tenth plan:** The Tenth five years plan aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted 'National Policy for Empowerment of Women' (2001) into action and ensuring 'survival' protection and development of children through rights based approach.

**Eleventh Plan:** The Eleventh Plan aimed to raise the sex ratio for the age group 0 – 6 to 935 by 2011 – 12 and to 950 by 2016 – 17. Further, this plan intends to ensure 33 percent of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children. It also proposes to ensure that all children enjoy a safe childhood without any compulsion to work.

**Twelfth Plan:** Twelfth plan year plan entitled as "Faster, Sustainable and More Inclusive growth". This plan the center would implement an umbrella scheme for protection and empowerment of women at an estimated expenditure of rupees 1800 corer.

### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN WEST BENGAL:

Women education and employment play a significant role in empowering women through the collective effort of women with favourable institutional support that can encourage the empowerment process. Women empowerment is naturally discussed in relation to and resources that limited women's goal and capacity to achieve them. West Bengal is the most valuable state in India. There are 23 districts, 347 blocks, 909 towns and 40204 villages now. The total population in this state is 91,276,115 of which male are 46,809,027 and female 44,467,088 respectively (**census 2011**). The gender ratio in this state is 947 per 1000 males. The state is bordered by the Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh and the Indian state Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Assam and Sikkim. In this state woman are vital role play in all area and equally opportunity in all

level. At present the government starts different schemes such as Kenya shree, Rupashree, Sabuj sathi project etc to develop the women education and increasing the enrolment of women in school.

**METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:**

We have used the secondary source of data for the purpose of research paper. The main source of this data is NGO’s manual, annual report, news paper, different NGOs related research paper and websites.

**NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION (NGO):**

The organizations which are autonomous bodies and are engaged in providing financial and non-financial service to the community are called non-governmental organization (NGO). The NGOs have been an essential part of the historical heritage of the development of women’s in India. The NGOs in India came to importance after independence, mainly after 1970s (**Sodhganga**). NGOs are any non-profit, voluntary citizen group which is prepared in local, national and international level. Task oriented and determined by people with a common interest. NGOs perform a mixture of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information (**Ahamad, Hemlata & Narayana 2015**). They provide investigation and expertise, serve as early caution mechanism and help monitor and put into practice international agreement. The vision of this agency is to supply a safe palace and network to empower women and girls is difficult situation to discover the real purpose of their existence and create new possibilities for themselves without fear. The approaches and strategies adopted by NGOs to address women issues include empowerment, linking gender issues to development programs, and promoting a rights-based approach to social inclusion (**Srivastava & Austin**). Its aims to enlarge the efforts to improving the health, economic and social status of women’s and girls’ and are doing so can decrease violence against women’s and girls’ to its barest minimum.

**NATURE OF NGOS:**

NGOs directed towards improving the socio-economic situations of people with whom they work. Bhoose (2003) presented the essential characteristic of NGOs:

- **Voluntary:** NGOs are created willingly/ voluntarily and are built upon the obligation of a few persons.
- **Independent:** NGOs are autonomous/ independent in planning and implementation of their programmed.
- **Flexible:** NGOs are flexible in interventions. They are not bound by red-tapism and bureaucratic obstacles.
- **Freedom in work:** NGOs workers enjoy freedom in their field work, in organizing the community and carrying out the development schemes.
- **Quicker in Decision Making:** NGOs take immediate decision in response to the needs of the community. As decision are speedily, their service and delivery timely to the people.
- **Catalytic:** NGOs facilitate the communities towards social action but they do not dilute and distort themselves in the process of interventions.

**LIST OF NGOS IN WEST BENGAL:**

In the state West Bengal the number of total NGOs is 43. But in the 43 NGOs out of 25 NGOs are work for the development of women life and Women empowerment. Name of some NGOs are given below ([wbcs.gov.in/ngo/table.htm](http://wbcs.gov.in/ngo/table.htm)).

Sl. No	Name of the NGOs	Field of Work	Area of Work
1.	Alakendu Bodh Niketan	Special School for handicapped children and vocational training	i) Kakurgachi Kolkata

		under DDR scheme in women.	ii) Murshidabad iii) Medinipur iv) College Street Kolkata
2.	All Bengal Women's Union	Shelter Home under JJAct, SWADHAR, Cottage and Capitation Scheme, VTC for women including canteen. Also working in the field of anti trafficking dowry and legal aid.	Kolkata
3.	Association for Social Health in India	Shelter Home under Short Stay Home Scheme for women in moral danger and Working Women's Hostel and VTC for women. Also working in the field of anti trafficking dowry and legal aid. Running canteen and old age home for women, family counseling centre for women in need	i) Tollygunje, Kolkata ii) Burdwan iii) 24 pgs (S) iv) Birbhum
4.	Child-in-Need Institute (CINI ASHA)	Shelter home for girls, adolescent and street children and working in the field of anti trafficking and abuse of different kind on women	1) Kolkata ii) 24 pgs (S) iii) Different districts of North Bengal
5.	Gana Unnayan Parshad (GUP)	Short Stay Home for women in moral danger, street children project and working in the field of anti-trafficking and welfare of the women and children. Help line for women in need.	i) Kolkata, ii) Rajarhat iii) 24 pgs (N)
6.	Institute of Social Work (ISN)	They are providing legal aid to destitute women and run vocational training centres for needy women. Counselling services to women in distress	i) Kolkata ii) 24 pgs (N)
7.	Liberal Association for Movement of People (LAMP)	Short Stay Home, Street Children project and other welfare project for women and children	Kolkata
8.	Mahila Seva Samity.	Running SSH, VTC and providing legal aid to destitute and needy women. FCC for women.	i) Kolkata ii) 24 pgs (S)
9.	Nabadiganta.	SSH for women, destitute home for children and old age home for aged. Providing medical and hospital facilities.	Kolkata.



10.	Nari Seva Sangha	Providing shelter for working women, VTC and marketing their products for income generation	Kolkata.
11.	Society for Indian Children’s Welfare (SICW).	Shelter home for children under JJAct and placing them under In and Inter Country adoption and sponsorship programme for children in need	Kolkata.
12.	Women’s Co-ordinating Council (WCC)	Running old age home for neglected old women and various welfare schemes for women and children	Kolkata.
13.	Vivekananda Education Society.	Conducting counselling and de-addiction programme for addicts, education programme for all age group, VTC for women arranging anti-trafficking, legal aid for all sections of society. Street children project.	i) Kolkata ii) 24 pgs (S)
14.	Women’s Interlink Foundation	Working in the field of anti-trafficking and providing free legal aid. VTC for women	Kolkata
15.	Bhoruka Public Welfare Trust	Working for anti-trafficking, poverty, illiteracy and early childhood marriage.	Kolkata.
16.	Village Welfare Society	Short Stay Home, Family Counselling Centre, helpline and old age home for women. Conducting anti-trafficking, dowry prohibition, early childhood marriage awareness programme in various project areas	i) Kolkata ii) Howrah
17.	Malipukur Samaj Unnayan Samity	Shelter home under SWADHAR for trafficked women and short stay homes for women in moral danger.	Howrah.
18.	Society for Equitable Voluntary Action(SEVA)	Counselling centre for women in need, SSH for women in moral danger and helpline for women	i) Kolkata ii) 24 pgs (N)
19.	Prabuddha Bharati Sishu Tirtha	Drug De-addiction centre, Short Stay Home, Counselling centre for women, ICDS project for children	i) Bankura ii) Paschim Midnapore

20.	Vivekananda Loksiksha Niketan	ICDS Project, Old Age Home, FCC, Special school for blind and MR, Working Women's Hostel and crèche for children.	Purba Midnapore.
21.	Gram Seva Sangha	Legal Aid, Counselling Centre, VTC and other welfare projects for women and children	Purulia
22.	Institute for Motivating Self Employment (IMSE)	Short Stay Home, Legal Aid, Counselling Centre, AWTC and other welfare programmes for women and children.	i) Kolkata ii) Burdwan
23.	Dulal Smriti Sangha	Short Stay Home, Swadhar Shelter Home, Home for Destitute girls, home for Mentally ill women and others.	Hoogly
24.	Ramkrishna Vivekananda Mission (RKV)	Destitute Home, Orphanage, Shishu Greh, VTC and other welfare projects for women and children.	i) Barrack pore, 24pgs (N) ii) Bankura iii) Purulia
25.	Jayprakash Institute of Social Change	Providing Shelter to women in moral danger in SSH, counseling, legal aid and skill training and educational programmes to young women.	i) Kolkata ii) 24 pgs (N) iii) Birbhum

#### ROLE OF NGOs IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

NGOs can play important role towards women and their empowerment in following ways.

##### ❖ Training and Skill Development:

In t West Bengal most of the rural areas women are casual labour in agriculture and rising informal sector. NGOs focus in these backward women. Their main aim at first is to train the backward women's and give them opportunities for self employment to get better socio and economic status.

##### ❖ Legal awareness and Property Rights:

In rural areas, girl's child marries and leaves the village; so no legacy rights exist. The government schemes also allotted to male family unit hands. An adult married son gets compensation for displacement but the adult daughter gets nothing. NGOs are working closely with women to create awareness regarding their legal rights and facilitate them to obtain land by extending loan facilities to buy land in groups.

##### ❖ Promoting People Organization:

Promoting people organization is an efficient strategy adopted by NGOs particularly towards women empowerment. Apart from NGOs do create mahila mandals, yuvathi mandals, and various village based committees with satisfactory representation of women. NGOs have formed a platform for the women to enjoy freedom by forming organizations.



#### ❖ Mobilizing Resources:

NGOs are the most powerful agencies to identify the needs and conning projects for the welfare of the disadvantage groups. They mobilize both external and internal resources. The experience of many NGOs shows that they could systematize resources for the benefit of women to state, country and outside.

#### ❖ Capacity Building:

The technical competence of the people manning the release of the cooperative support service must be improved and adopted to the exact requirements of the cooperative society. In the present state of economic liberalizations, instant necessary measures must be taken by government institutions, cooperative sector, and private sector. NGOs sufficiently provide self-employment women with knowledge, information, technology, training and managerial techniques.

#### ❖ Facilitations Roles:

NGOs can act as a change agent of various activities like micro credit, education etc. to the development of women status and women personality.

Another roles of NGOs for the development of women empowerment.

- Providing effective & efficient Training to Rural Women.
- Planning and Implementation to the development of women status.
- Promoting Technology in Rural areas.
- Formation and nurturing the Self-Help groups.

#### CONCLUSION:

There is a significant impact of NGOs for women development in the state of West Bengal. NGOs are task oriented and determined by people with a common interest. NGOs diversity of service and humanitarian function, bring citizen concern to government, advocate and supervise policies and encourage participation in the different areas. NGOs play a significant role to empower women. After joining NGOs extreme changes have seen in the life style and standard of women. Now women have become independent and self motivated. They can take their own choice in some matter and provide their suggestion in family concern.

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