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## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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### Abstract:

*This paper deals with the different aspect of women empowerment and mainly about the requirement of women empowerment in the present era. This paper explains some challenges to the path of women empowerment such as economic development that how lack of development in the society especially in infrastructure facilities including schools, colleges and health centres can create bottlenecks for the empowerment of the women, without development of the economy we can nor fulfil the dream of women empowerment because only development of the economy can make women capable to be a empowered women. Outdated social set up, culture and traditions also contribute to it with the help of some case studies. This paper emphasizes that women are one of the biggest challenge to realize the dream of women empowerment.*

### KEY WORDS:

Economic Development, Crimes, Self Confidence, Awareness.

### INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment is one of the Millennium Development Goals guided by United Nations. Although Every year March 8th celebrated as international women day to solve all the issues regarding women yet still now sex ratio, literacy rate of women, inequality and discrimination against women, low rate of participation at different level, increasing graph of crime against women, domestic violence, sexual harassment at work place, inaccessibility of women to toilets, health issues such as anaemia, unsafe deliveries, high rate of maternal mortality rate and unequal reservation for them such issues vehemently seized the society.

### NEED FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women empowerment can play very important role to tackle many social, political and economic issues. With the help of women empowerment we can solve many problems related with environment such sustainability of natural resources such as forest and energy. Many studied have proved that women are very efficient managers to manage all the resources. Energy sustainability can be attained by women empowerment. Women are directly related with the consumption of such natural resources number of movement such as Chipko movement also one of the finest example. The problem of food security and inclusive growth of agriculture also can be attained by women empowerment. Women empowerment means control over increasing population and controlled rate of population means more development less

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problems.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Jesani(1990) studied that merely increasing work participation is not an adequate measure for women empowerment. The labour market favours men over women and the division of labour within the occupation is highly sex biased for instance in the agriculture. The tasks like seeding transplanting, weeding, threshing etc , are done by women within a given occupation is considered inferior and subordinate accordingly women's overall earning from the job is less than men.Sen (1992) argues that public policy can make a change in the matter of the sex ratio when addressing the issues of discrimination. He states that when a woman is less dependent of others, she is able to express her opinion more and increase her status within the family and affect decisions made about her children. He also argues that women's education and economic rights are important to enhance her decision-making power within the family.Neidell (1998) examined how women's empowerment amassed public attention by government throughout the world and from United Nations. The emphasis on women empowerment by the international organisations opens the door for the women. Jejeebhoy(1998) propounded that women are defined as inferior, husband are assumed to own women and to have the right to dominate them including through force. Domestic violence is thus deeply embedded in patriarchal norms and attitude about gender relations in India. These attitudes are reinforced by the lack of government attention, either directly through the protection of victims of domestic violence and prosecution of violent husband or indirectly, upholding laws on minimum age at marriage and inheritance. This combination of factors serves to both legitimise and perpetuate violence.Beteille(1999) stated that Empowerment through the expansion of the civil, political and social right of citizenship is a laborious and unexcited process. The focus on empowerment has given a new emphasis to the building of economic and social capabilities among individual's classes and communities.Sen (2000) suggested that the promotion of female literacy, female employment opportunities and family planning methods, as well as open and informed public discussion of women's place in society can enhance the voice and decisional role of women.Kabeer(2001)defined empowerment as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.Eswaran(2002) found that an increase in female autonomy translating into an increase in the relative bargaining power or the treat point utility of mother is shown to reduce fertility and also reduce child mortality rates. Paradoxically the increase in female autonomy within a household may increase in female autonomy within a household may increase the disadvantage suffered by female children in that household with respect to survival.Galab and Rao (2003) discussed the impact of Self Help Groups on women empowerment that SHGs made women more confident and more independent to interact with the officials. It also improved their control on reproductive choice. Datta(2003) analyzed Self-Employment Women's Association(SEWA) in India, a trade union for self employed women since 1972. Its model transmits a fundamental but simple message; women have to find suitable strategies for themselves. This is possible if they if they being at grassroots level and work their way up, confronting and overcoming obstacles.Kudva(2003) induced that empowerment of women through increased participation in the political system has been mixed results. It has made women more visible, decrease levels of corruption in panchant raj institutions and increased self efficiency of women representatives. The consequences of increased woman's representatives for gender equity are nuanced and multihued. Mason et al (2003) look at women's empowerment and social context in five Asian Countries. In regard to empowerment they look at women's say in household economic decisions, their say in family-size decisions, and women's freedom of movement, and their exposure to coercive controls by the husband. Their findings show that community can explain more variation in women's empowerment than their personal and household characteristics. Within countries, they find that two thirds or more of the variation in women's empowerment between communities can be explained by gender norms. They also establish that female empowerment is Multidimensional, where women can be empowered in some. Mehrotra(2004) found that historically Haryana has been notorious in term of high rates of female infanticide and late term misuse of sex selection technologies leading to large number of foeticides. Clinics performing such tests and consequence abortions are mushrooming in Haryana. Women largely remain unwanted as evidenced by the skewed sex ratio. Rao(2005) discussed that to make women more empower and for gender equality through women's control over land and some identified policy options can prove helpful to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Devi and Lakshmi(2005) found that although Indian constitution provisions of equality gave women political rights by legitimizing their roles for participation in public life, within the formal and legal framework. Despite this relatively a few women have been able to reach top executive posts or decision making positions in legislature. Indian women's record as political office holder is dismal and well below what their numerical strength. Political participation is a major path to women's

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empowerment and participation in the decision making process or increased decision-making process that can lead women to empowerment in true sense. Chattopadhyay(2006) reported that the policies for women empowerment will be fulfilled only when it reaches the needy and deprived women. Women Empowerment not an individual benefit, this is a process of overall social upliftment because a women's life attached with number of persons so their empowerment means empowerment of society. Gupta (2006) studied that the house ownership by women as more protective than land ownership as house is more tangible and the benefits of owning the house are more visible. Women are efficient managers in every aspect of life so they should be empowered with economic rights. Nayar (2006) stated that women empowerment can be effective if women have to be treated as equal partners in decision making and implementation rather than as beneficiaries. Kelkar(2011) in her recent highly insightful essay argues that unless women are given ownership and control of land and other productive assets as well as employment opportunities, which alone will, which alone will enhance their agricultural management skills and knowledge as well as offer them technological empowerment, the process of economic development will only reinforce existing gender inequalities and increase poverty. Chowdhry (2011) tried to find out the effect of property ownership and economic independence of women on the reduction of violence, especially spousal violence in relation to rural Haryana. It seeks to analyze social and cultural norms sanctioning violence change when women acquire control over land property or assets. Economically independent women are more aware towards their rights and duties. Das(2012) studied that Self Help Groups (SHGs) have emerged as a popular method of working with common man especially uneducated people. Such groups affect the women's life a lot. Women working with SHGs are marching towards the path of empowerment their social status get improved for economic growth. Tava, Martini, Hasssan, Rischkowsky, Tibbo and Rizvi(2013) conducted their study on gender roles in agriculture and found that technological progress can become successful only when the prevailing gender roles in society and access to different livelihood opportunities are fully understood. There is growing evidence that gender plays an important role in economic growth, poverty reduction and development effectiveness. More participation of women means more production from agriculture. Women empowerment leads the path of economic development of any country. Effectiveness of any programme in agriculture depends on women participation.

### METHODOLOGY

This well as publications such as journals, newspapers, magazines, books, Internet, and from other studies taken up by government or other independent paper based on the secondary data. The secondary data will be collected from the organizations as organizations such as UNICEF, World Economic Forum, and World Health Organisation.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The objective of the paper to explain various challenges of women empowerment and to explain some aspect related with the women empowerment. This paper also stands to suggest some solutions to remove the barriers from the path of women empowerment.

### CHALLENGES TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT -ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For women empowerment first of all we need to make women capable to be empowered. Without economic development we cannot make capable to be empower. Only educated, healthy, socially and politically aware women who are aware not only about their duties but also about their rights can be empowered women. Economic development has crucial role to make women more agile more active so that they can be empowered easily. With the help of better educational institutions, health infrastructure, and accessibility of every woman to safe environment, toilets can contribute to it. Numbers of rural women do not have water and toilet facilities at their home which causes not only health problems to women but also physical assaults and battery. Lack of health facilities and also due to ignorance women face major health issues such as anaemia. More expenditure on education health infrastructure can make women empowerment task easy.

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**Case study 1**

Sarita a woman from a village named Bahel district Bhiwani state Haryana (India), who is illiterate unable to teach her four children. She cannot teach her children the proper way safe and healthy life. Her husband never takes her consent on any matter of finance of family as she unable to give any opinion ideas. Sarita tells because there was no school nearby her home that's why her parents did not allow her for schooling.

**Case study 2**

Monika has not so much stamina to go even vegetables market as she has very little amount of haemoglobin. Her mother was anaemic during her birth due to lack of proper health care facilities and precautions. Primary health centre of her village was very retarded and lack of basic requirement. This case is noticed from a village named Mithi of Bhiwani District (Haryana).

**Outdated Social Set-Up Customary Practices**

Many times customs traditions in the culture seem misogyny. Populace always show majority in favour of son child. Traditions and social set up is so outdated that there is still discrimination against women. The decreasing sex ratio especially in a country where people follow couture and traditions, enough to prove that outdated set up of the society also one of the biggest challenge to women empowerment. Customs and traditions assume that without a son child life is meaningless. In every ritual of the family male member is must.

**Sex ratio in India {Table-1}**

Year	Sex Ratio Per 1000
1901	972
1911	964
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	946
1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933
2011	940

Source: Census of India

**Case Study-3**

Sunman Devi from District Hisar (Haryana), India. She had three daughters as she had no boy baby till the birth of her third daughter so her mother-in-law pressurized her to born one more baby for the sake of boy baby. Her mother-in-law assumed that family name and fame cannot progress without a son child.

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### Case Study-4

Shanti Devi from District Bhiwani believed that girls should not be given as freedom as a boy child because she assumes more freedom to girl make them out of control and there can be problem of marriage of such girls. She is not in favour of girl child because lot of dowry and other expenses bring with them. She had eight granddaughters but she loves more to her two grandsons' comparison to them.

### Increasing Crime Graph against Women

One of the challenges to the path of women empowerment is increasing crime graph against women. Dowry cases, Domestic violence cases, sexual assaults at workplaces rape cases and many other crimes are noticed every day against women. Unsafe women cannot be empowered.

### Reported crime incidents against women

Year	Cases
2007	185312
2008	195856
2009	203804
2010	213585
2011	228650

Source: Parliamentary Library and Reference Documentation and Information Service.

### Case Study-5

Poonam Devi studied to secondary level. Due to increasing incidents of rapes and eve teasing her father denied sending her a college which was near to their village. This case was reported from village named Dhansu, District Hisar.

## WOMEN ITSELF

The biggest challenge to women empowerment is women itself. Women have Lack of awareness regarding their rights and social problems which creates barriers to their path of empowerment. They also lack of confidence which is the most important challenge to way of empowerment. They are not aware about their rights for example in India there is provision of fifty percent reservation for women but there are not as much women representatives at Gram Panchayat level as it should be. The women who are working as sarpanchs in their own village they have not accessibility to resources whatever it's natural or financial. In fact real role of sarpanch played by the male member of their family. Socially increasing rates of female foeticides incidents the main role behind this major crime also played by the women some time senior women in family pressurize other women in the family for female foeticide. In case of study when institutions is not near to their home town women lay down their confidence as a result they have to sacrifice their study. Women lack of strong determination this is also contributes to it. They do not protest against their rights

### Case Study-6

Misri Devi from Daultabad, Haryana not raised a single question regarding her parental property to her brothers and they did not give any share to her from the property. Some women suggested that she should not to demand any share of property because it would make her image negative in their family. Due to lack of self confidence and determination power she lost a major share or her parental property.

### SOLUTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Women empowerment Women Empowerment is the key for the development of the economy. The development can achieve through social, political and economic empowerment of the women. In a society where women can access equal participation and opportunities, economy can grow speedier. More expenditure on economic development especially on infrastructure such as schools, colleges and other educational institutions, health centres, is very important so that women can become capable to be empowered. Their awareness regarding all social, political issues should be enhanced. Safe and healthy environment should be provided to women new ideas new adventures can be bring out by women when they feel safe and secure. So there should be more security for women, strict actions should be taken against criminals. Equal right to property and in every aspect of life should be practically implemented. Such programmes which provide training to women should organise time to time. The most important and crucial solution for this problem is women itself. Women should be confident at every stage of life. They should present strong determination for their decisions.

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