



## Women Empowerment in India

### Description

***“There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing.”– Swami Vivekananda.***

### Need for women empowerment :-

1. Even in this 21st century, gender inequality still exists.
2. There are so many women, who are silently baring the harassment from their life partners and others because of the lack of education, lack of legal awareness and lack of empowerment.
3. When women are empowered, whole society benefits, because women constitute half of the society.
4. Educating women about health care promotes healthier families.
5. Even though women work 24/7 to raise their children and to maintain their families, they are not getting enough recognition for house chores and home maintenance. As this work is unpaid, women who choose to be home makers are not considered as working persons in Indian economy. Due to this, their self esteem tends to be low.

### Challenges for women in India :-

1. Female foeticide.
2. Female infanticide.
3. Neglect during childhood.
4. Gender Bias.
5. Eve-teasing
6. Abuse of girl children
7. Childhood marriages.
8. Gender specific specialization at work.
9. Cultural definition of appropriate gender roles.
10. Belief in the inherent superiority of males. Families are considered as a private sphere and

stays under male control.

11. Honor killings – Family honor is associated with women in general, which is an extra burden on women.
12. Limited access to education. Low literacy levels.
13. Limited access to cash and credit.
14. Limited employment opportunities.
15. Harassment a workplace.
16. Safety.
17. Dowry.
18. Domestic violence.
19. Still house chores are women's duty.
20. Restriction on widow remarriage.
21. Poverty affects women more than men.
22. India's maternal mortality is highest in South Asia.
23. Crimes against women.
24. Trafficking of women.
25. Lack of awareness about government schemes.
26. Still, status of women in India is inferior to status of men.
27. Low representation in public affairs and politics.
28. Unemployed though educated.

#### **Provisions in Indian constitution for women empowerment :-**

1. *Article 14* – Equality before law – Provides equal legal protection for women.
2. *Article 15(3)* – Special provisions for women.
3. *Article 16* – Equal opportunities for all citizens in public employment irrespective of caste, sex, religion.
4. *Article 23* – Prohibits traffic in human beings & forced labour.
5. *Article 39* – The citizen, men & women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
6. *Article 40* – 1/3 rd of seats in panchayats shall be reserved for women.
7. *Article 42* – State shall make provisions for just and humane working conditions & maternity relief.
8. *Article 44* – Uniform civil code for the citizens throughout the territory of India to safeguard women from laws of religion.
9. *Article 51 A (e)* – One of the duties of every citizen is to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of woman.

#### **Government Acts for women empowerment :-**

1. *Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act 1956* – Property of a female Hindu to be her absolute property.
2. *Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005* – Women get equal share in the ancestral property.
3. Dowry prohibition Act, 1961.
4. *Contract Labor Act, 1970 & Factories Act, 1948* – Women can't be employed in the night

between 9pm to 6am. – Women cannot be required to work for more than 9hrs.

5. Equal remuneration Act, 1976.
6. The indecent representation of women (prohibition) Act, 1986.
7. Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.
8. Protection of women from domestic violence Act, 2005.
9. Maternity Benefits Act, 1961.
10. Child marriage (prohibition) Act, 1929.
11. *Hindu marriage Act, 1955* – This act was passed to stop polygamy and bigamy.

### **Government Schemes and Programs to empower women :-**

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao :- To eliminate female foeticide and to promote education for girl children.
2. *STEP (Support to training cum Employment for women)* – To increase the self-reliance and autonomy of women by enhancing their productivity & enabling them to take up income generation activity.
3. *SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan)* – For girl child education. It lead to increase in the Gender Parity Index (GPI).
4. *The National literacy Mission or Saakshar Bharat* – Literacy of women. Literacy is the critical instrument of women's empowerment.
5. *National Rural Health Mission* – Educating women on health care. It has resulted in the decline in fertility rates, Maternal mortality rates (MMR), Infant mortality rates (IMR).
6. *SHG (Self Help Groups)* – For economic development in women by giving micro finances.
7. *GB (Gender budgeting)* – Identifying the felt needs of women and re-prioritizing and increasing expenditure to meet these needs.
8. *NMEW (National Mission for Empowerment of Women)* – To ensure economic & social empowerment of women.
9. *Swayamsidha scheme* – To ensures total development of women.
10. *Swadhar scheme* – Basic necessities to marginalized women & girls.
11. *Kishori Shakti Yojana* – Empowerment of adolscent girls.
12. *Mahila Samridhi Yojana* – For women empowerment.
13. *Maternity Benefit Scheme* – Payment of Rs.500/- to pregnant women for the first two births only if the woman belongs to BPL (Below Poverty Line) category.
14. *Rastriya Mahila Kosh* – To provide micro loans for women.
15. *Scheme for working women hostel* – To promote availability of safe & conveniently located accommodation fro working women.
16. *Development of women & children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)*– Creation of groups of women for income generating activities on self sustaining basis.
17. *SABLA* – Empowerment of adolescent girls.

### **International efforts for women empowerment :-**

1. Year '2001' was declared as the "Women empowerment year".
2. 'Promoting gender equality and empowering women' is one of the eight 'Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs).

**What needs to be done :-**

1. First of all, women must have the will to be independent & to be the best version of themselves, then rest of everything follows.
2. Help from government and society is also needed to compensate the discrimination women face to live their life to fullest.
3. Creating legal awareness among women about their rights.
4. Educating women. Education makes them independent.
5. Providing health facilities & economic security.
6. Skill development programs.
7. Forming groups. Unity gives strength to everyone.
8. And many more little things which makes significant difference and leads to the great future.

**Best practices worldwide :-**

1. "The Women, Business and the Law, 2012" is a law in Switzerland, specifically targeting the future prospects of women seeking jobs and promotions as entrepreneurs and business workers impeding the economic involvement of their husbands.
2. Canadian Women's Foundation is an initiative taken by the citizens of Canada which involves educating girls on the grounds of science and technology, critical thinking skills, leadership tasks etc.
3. Equality Pay Act – United Kingdom: is an act which focuses on trimming down the difference between a man and a woman's average pay earned annually. This ensures gender equality by paying them as per the working hours.
4. UN Women: is the UN organization entitled for the growth of women across every little corner of the world. This mainly aims at accelerating the women empowerment and helping them follow their dreams and aspirations.

**Conclusion :-**

We have come so far in women empowerment. Now many women are working in diverse careers and are financially independent. But still we have a long way to go. We need to totally eliminate gender inequality. The Government and we, the people have responsibility towards women empowerment. And we can achieve this 'Millennium Development Goal' definitely. One day will come, when gender inequality will only be present in the history books.

**Afterwords :-** What is your opinion on this topic? Do you think women are more empowered now than ever before? Express your thoughts in the comment section below. Subscribe to our blog to read answers to trending GD topics.

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