

## Developments And Enlargement Of Women In The Society

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### ABSTRACT

The decade after independence of India has seen tremendous historical changes in the status of women in Indian society. Since 1950's, academicians have concentrated more on Women's Studies, and different studies by different disciplines have given to it a new interpretation. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the India Constitution. However, the government sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women, and women are facing gender discrimination in many fields. Women entrepreneurship must be moulded properly with entrepreneurial traits and skills to meet the changes and trends; it should challenge global markets and also be competitor enough to sustain and strive for excellence in the entrepreneurial area. The year 2001 was celebrated as women's empowerment year. During this year various activities and programmes were taken up on different themes pertaining to women's social, political and economic empowerment.

### Key Words

Women- academics- politics-administration-legal rights-entrepreneurs-empowerment-sati-child marriage-constitution-five year plans-builder-moulder-nation destiny-industries-poverty-discrimination-development

## Introduction

Women are described as the better half of men. But in reality women in the developing countries are very often not placed in this position. Women have to play a dual role, as house wife as well as an income generator. Women are the perfect home maker in the world. With their unique quality of calmness and soft disposition, they are accustomed to handle the toughest situation. Presently, women perform exceedingly well in different spheres of activities like academics, politics, administration etc., and they are actively participating in social work too. Women are considered an important human resource for the nation and every state should try to utilize their services for the economic growth and development of the society and the country as well.

Women in modern India enjoy equal status ad rights as men in many areas such as politics, economics and legal rights, though the patriarchal society and the systemic bias against women have undermined their position for a long time. Indian women are fully devoted to their families.

## Definition of Women

Rabindranath Tagore has described women in the following words: “Woman is the Builder and the Moulder, and the Nation’s Destiny “. Women’ status is a term that describes women’s situation in both absolute terms and in terms relative to men.

## Status of Women in India

The status of women depicts the social, economic and mental condition in a nation.

## Ancient Period

In ancient India, women enjoyed equal status with men in all fields of life. Ancient Indian grammarians such as Patanjali and Katyayana have said that women were educated in the early Vedic period.

## Medieval Period

The Indian women's position in the society had undergone deterioration during the medieval period. Sati, child marriages and ban on widow remarriages had become part of social life in India.

### **Modern Period**

The modern Indian society impacted by globalization and influenced by values of equality and liberty, have acknowledged a more elevated position for women.

### **Development of Women in Five Year Plans**

Development of women began with India's Independence and at the time of adoption of the Constitution, the Five Year Plan of India, mooted out in independent India by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, and launched some special programmes for the development of women.

#### **First Five Year Plan (1951 to 1956)**

The First Five Year Plan offered special significance to women's education.

#### **Second Five Year Plan (1956 to 1961)**

Indian constitution has granted justice, liberty, equality to bring changes in the status of women through legislation.

#### **Third Five Year Plan (1961 to 1966)**

The plan witnessed a progressive rise in the enrolment of girls in elementary education.

#### **Fourth Five Year Plan (1969 to 1974)**

This plan provided for some developmental programmes to augment women's welfare and it provided incentives.

#### **Fifth Five Year Plan (1974 to 1979)**

This plan emphasized the need to help women in income generation and protection.

#### **Sixth Five Year Plan (1980 to 1985)**

The plan states that the most important means of achieving improvement in the status of women would be to secure for them a fair share of employment opportunities.

### **Seventh Five Year Plan (1985 to 1990)**

This was done to provide human rights and privileges to women in the society. For the first time, women empowerment in its real sense could be meaningfully adopted in this plan.

### **Eight Five Year Plan (1992 to 1997)**

This plan was to set up a national credit fund for women, which would provide greater flexibility for women.

### **Ninth Five Year Plan (1997 to 2002)**

In the Small Scale Industries sector, the national institute of entrepreneurship and small business development organised entrepreneurship programmes for women in the ninth plan. The programme of Indira Mahila Yojana launched in 1995 was recast as Swayamsidha in 2001 to empower women by generating awareness and helping them to achieve economic strength at micro level.

### **Tenth Five Year Plan (2002 to 2007)**

This plan provides equal access to participation and decision making for women in social, political and economic life at the nation.

### **Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007 to 2012)**

The plan proposes to focus on the development of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, other Backward Classes, Minority Communities and Women, to improve the quality of life of all citizens, with special focus on women.

### **Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012 to 2017)**

This plan has emphasized on single women by providing 'quoto' in jobs.

### **Women Entrepreneurship**

Women Entrepreneurship plays an imperative role in the growth of any society. Entrepreneurial skills are essential for industrialization and for relief from unemployment and poverty. Women are known to possess a strong work ethic and will power. Women possess a positive outlook on life, and they model civility. They are renowned as lifelong learners.

Women Entrepreneurs should be regarded as individuals who take up roles in which they would like to regulate their family and society, initiate economic performance and accomplish personal requirements. It is to be remembered that “Emancipation of women is an essential prerequisite for economic development and social progress of the nations”.

Majority of self-employed women were engaged in the unorganised sector like agriculture handicrafts, handloom and cottage industries. The number of women entrepreneur has increased especially during the year 2000. Women’s income is becoming very essential to households of all types in the wake of globalization and the changing economic structures. In recent years there was a significant growth in the realm of industry and technology.

### **Women and Economy**

Women’s perspectives will be included in designing and implementing macro-economic and social policies by institutionalizing their participation in such processes. Their contribution to socio-economic development as producers and workers will be recognized in the formal and informal sectors, including home based workers.

### **Economic Empowerment of Women**

Providing an easy and equal access to free education for women and girls at all levels and in the field of technical and vocational education and training is upcoming for job oriented entrepreneurs. By the end of the 1980s women had been starting business in increasing numbers but for the most part they intended to choose traditionally female industry sector and aspired to smaller than average business size.

### **Poverty Eradication**

Since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macro- economic policies and poverty eradication programmes will

specifically address the needs and problems of such women. There will be improved implementation of programmes which are already women-oriented with special targets for women.

### **Access to Income and Assets**

When women have a source of income, they are on the path to becoming a healthy empowered economy sector.

### **Control of Benefit from Economic gains**

Women who are able to decide where, when and how to spend their income see improvements in their social and economic status and the level of resources devoted to their children.

### **Power to make Decision**

Decision making is a core expression of agency and refer to the capacity of the women to take purposeful action which pursue goals free from the threat of violence or retribution. We also believe that women's empowerment in economics is beneficial not only for individual women but also for their children, family, child morality, household, and the entire community.

### **Women and Agriculture**

In the view of critical role of women in the agriculture sectors and various training programmes, the programmes for training women in environmental protection, soil conservation, forest maintenance, dairy development and other occupations allied to agriculture like horticulture, livestock including small animal husbandry, poultry fisheries etc. will be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.

### **Women and Industry**

The important role played by women in electronics, information technology, food processing and agro-industry has been crucial to the development of these sectors. They would be given comprehensive support in terms of labour legislation, along with social and political aspects.

## Micro Credit

In order to enhance women's access to credit for consumption and production, establishment of new enterprises and strengthening of existing micro-credit mechanisms and micro-finance institutions will be undertaken so that the outreach of credit is enhanced. Other supportive measures would also be taken to ensure adequate flow of credit through existent financial institutions and bank, so that all women below poverty line have easy access to credit.

## Women Development and Enlargement

Development of women's life situation through economic, political, medical and educational interventions has now become an essential perspective of modern development and enlargement of social life. From development perspective it is assumed that if women are given access to the many income generating activities outside their homes in modern education, necessary medical facilities and political power in public domain, they would be able to enjoy a higher quality of life and living in the society.

Nowadays women are well-educated with technical and professional qualifications. Many of them have acquired academic education with degrees and diplomas in medical, engineering, management and similar fields; many have entered their family business as equal partners. Many women are in the process of establishing industries, both small and large, and set up their own clinic or nursing homes, small boutiques, small manufacturing enterprises and are engaged in exports too. They have their own personal choices and initiatives, and the courage to undertake new ventures.

## Conclusion

Many women still believe in the efficiency of fighting the battle all alone. But more and more women are realising that only collective strength and action would allow them to be free to fight for their rights and for the kind of society that basic humans need. It is now widely accepted that if national development and women's development have to be purposeful and relevant, women have to be considered for full-fledged participation in social and economic activities, which is now emerging as a universal phenomenon. This in short can be termed as women empowerment. Society has now changed its stand and the way it looks

at women, due to the progress achieved by women in their lives. Men too are more understanding towards women in their lives, though harassment of women still persists at the global level. However, it is remarkable that women have survived all such onslaughts and discomfiture in life and are coming up triumphantly to take up a significant place in the society.

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