

# Women Empowerment in Relation to Indian Economy

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## ABSTRACT

While the Indian government left no stone unturned in overhauling the economy and providing the much-needed impetus to MSMEs, we read stories of both the resilience and the struggle of women entrepreneurs wading through a sea of problems and yet refusing to give up. Therefore, it is our social and moral obligation to facilitate an enabling environment for women desirous of entering the workforce by rendering them equal opportunities and opening up new avenues for them to thrive. Despite India's general progress in terms of the number of women entrepreneurs in the country, there still remains a considerable gender gap that needs to be closed. Currently, women only account for 13.56 per cent in the entrepreneurial space and have a significantly disproportionate presence in the labour force. Though the government has been making continuous efforts to empower women in India, they continue to be, by and large, hobbled by disempowerment, financial dependency and inequalities. As per the India SDG Index, India has secured a score of 42 on a scale of 100 on the indicator of "Gender Equality". The figures from the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey also lay bare the vast gender inequality: An abysmal 19.7 per cent rural women and 16.1 per cent of women in urban areas were found to be in the labour force. To plug these gaps and work towards an inclusive society, every stakeholder has to do more.

**KEYWORDS:** *government, women empowerment, Indian economy, financial, gender equality, society, entrepreneurs*

## INTRODUCTION

While breaching traditional barriers, women in today's India are raring to leave their mark in varied sectors and make an impact in diverse set-ups. This has been well-supported and facilitated by various government policies and initiatives. Innovations and government schemes like Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Mahila e-Haat and TREAD have resulted in an increasing number of women venturing into entrepreneurship and breaking financial and social barriers. There should not be any let-up in such efforts. The relationship between women's empowerment and economic development is bidirectional: while development itself could bring down inequality, achieving gender equality is a prerequisite to achieving the other Millennium Development Goals including eliminating poverty and achieving overall development.[1,2]

Eliminating gender barriers and empowering women to be financially independent will not only have a profound bearing on the health, education and overall

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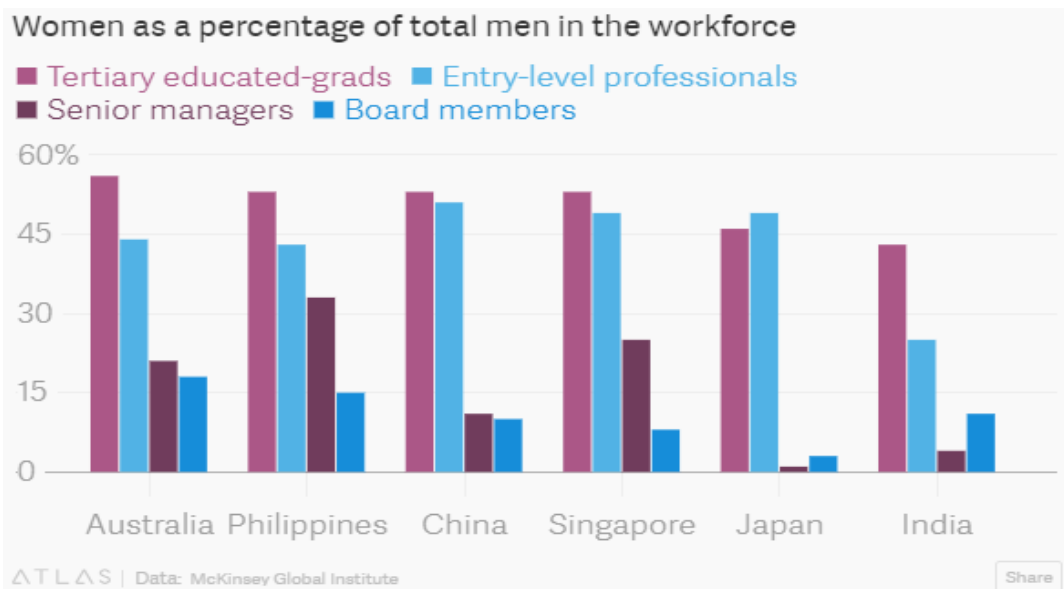


well-being of women but will also lead to improvement in these areas for their children. Financial incapacity and allied stress have been found to have a negative influence on the ability of a person to parent effectively. This may be further exacerbated in cases where mothers have to battle with a society where the marginalisation of women is rampant.

The key factor that makes women's entrepreneurship an imperative investment for a government is the outcome it bears in addition to the tangible outcomes of the enterprises themselves. The success of these women entrepreneurs could motivate other women to participate in the entrepreneurial space. They, in turn, could provide employment to other women in their community, and the nation. These small strides come together to contribute towards a larger goal of economic development — increasing access to livelihood, working towards eliminating poverty and propelling economic growth.

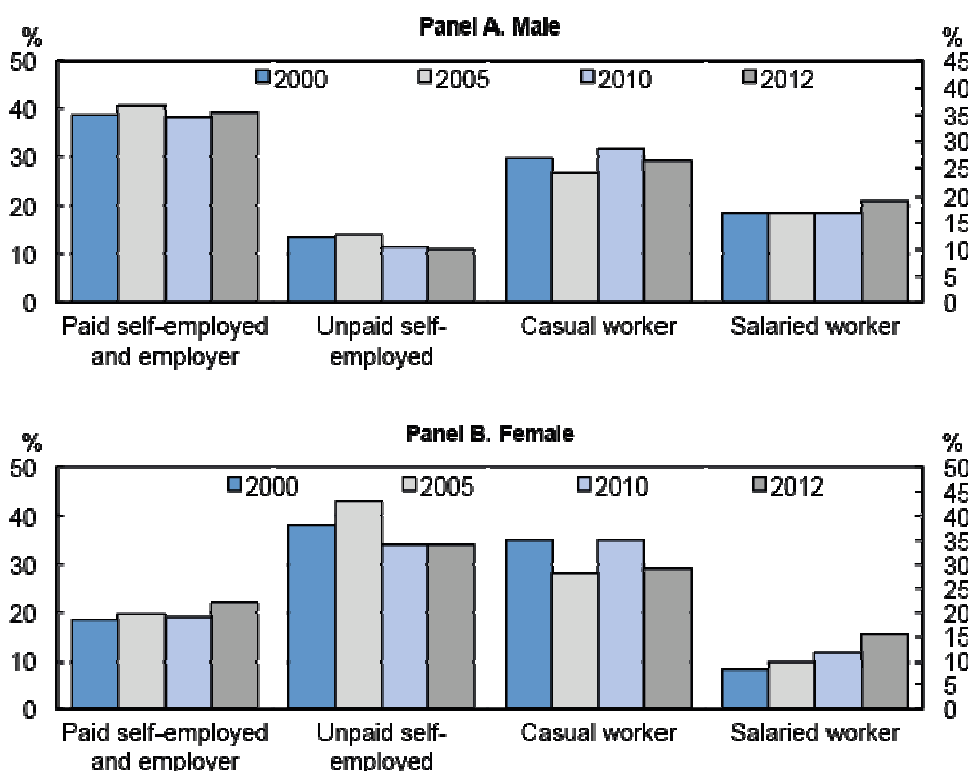
Large-scale targeted campaigns like StreeShakti, Raising Her to Lead, and the most recent UdyamStree campaign have a decisive role in shaping the future

narrative. Programmes such as these require our collective support.



Women empowerment in India is the most effective tool for development as these days; women across the world are actively working as a leader and surpassing others in all the spheres of life. As the entire world is claspng its breath and praying every single day for an incredible escape from the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is the women governors and nations steered by these amazing figures who are taking over the responsibility and marching ahead in the battle alone wherever required. Women empowerment in India is dependent up to a great extent on numerous different variables that encompass geographical setting (urban/rural), social status (caste and class), educational status, and age factor. Actions on the women empowerment exist at the state, local (panchayat), and national levels. However, women encounter differentiation in most sectors like education, economic opportunities, health and medical assistance, and political participation, which demonstrates that there are substantial gaps between strategy advancements and real exercise at the community level.[3,4]

Crafting and execution of a concrete policy framework, dispersing civic awareness, and education concerning the empowerment of women can usher to accomplishing the desired missions in eradicating the plight of women in the society of India. The realm of women empowerment in India is limited to granting balanced rights to women. Still, it is also about assuring that they are ingrained and rightful partners in the workforce.



The term women empowerment is all about authority, or the power embarked on women sharing indistinguishable rights. The term refers to the liberation of women from socio-economic restraints of reliance. Women comprise around 50% of the country's population, and a bulk of them stays economically dependent on each other without employment. In the age of feminism, a small portion of women in India are freed and can employ their free will and are permitted to carve out their lives the way they want. But there is a considerable division of the women in this nation who require optimistic support. In most Indian villages and semi-urban cities, women are still denied fundamental education and are never authorized to continue higher education despite amassing the understanding required.

Women are known for delivering multiple roles effortlessly per day, and thus, they are considered the backbone of every society. Living in male-dominating societies, women play a wide range of roles, such as caring mothers, loving daughters, and capable colleagues. The best part is that they fit the bill perfectly in every role. Nonetheless, they've also stood as a neglected bunch of society in different parts of the world. In turn, it has resulted in women surviving the brunt of unevenness, financial trustworthiness, oppression, and distinct social evils. Women have been residing under the shackles of enslavement for centuries now that impedes them from attaining professional as well as personal highs. Being an NGO for women empowerment in India, Hindrise Foundation has designed our dynamic and transformation-oriented programs in such a manner that the grooming of impoverished young girls will uplift the condition of the nation.

## Discussion

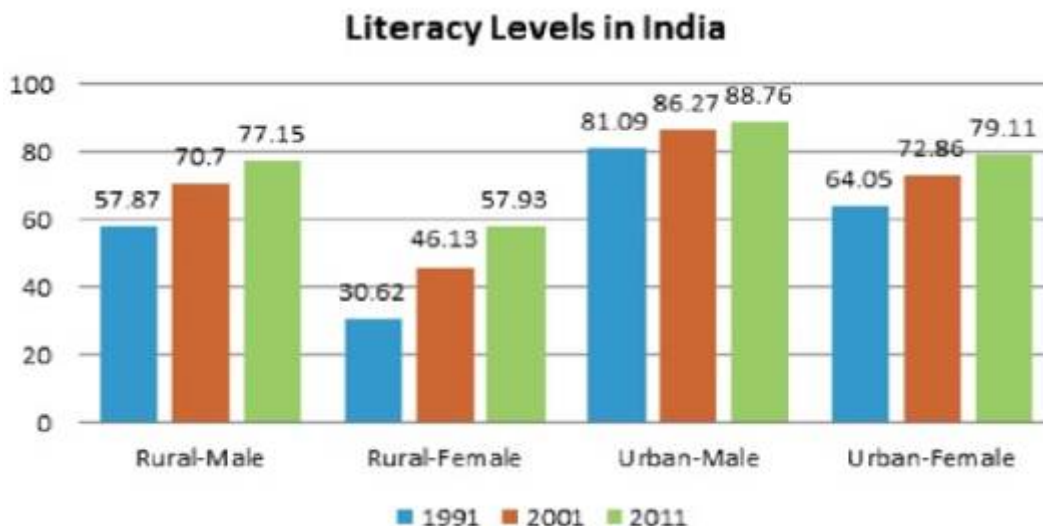
Given below are the factors affecting women's empowerment-

1. Gender Discrimination must be Checked- The problem of gender discrimination has affected the pace of women empowerment in India. Gender discrimination in all realms of action must be checked. Women must be furnished with a resort to take an active part in decision making at every level and direction procedures to attain the motive of empowering women. They need to get due admiration and prominence, which they rightfully earn on merit basis in society to accomplish their fate.
2. Educational Factor- Education is the most vibrant factor of advancement and growth. It is the only significant tool for anticipating women empowerment in India & human resource development. It gives light to the possibilities for access to employment and making a livelihood, which in twirl revivify economic empowerment to women. In order to join the community of developed countries, people should understand the value and importance of women's education and, thereby, put combined efforts to make India on the progressive track. Education makes the individual conscientious, enabling them to comprehend, interpret, criticize, and eventually transform their atmosphere. It results in the accession of abundances of skills that heighten a person's enthusiasm and her proficiency to shape life in a better form. [5,6]

Education is the initial line of defense for women who withstand life-imperiling circumstances that traditional lifestyle perpetuates. It motivates a sense of supervision over personal fortune. In addition to this, it unlocks the door to preferences that are not confined by tradition. With a meaningful education, the women's status strides beyond the restrictions of motherliness. Advancement of education of women and girls allots to the postponement of their marriage timing and the ensuing constriction in the volume of their families.

Priority should be plopped on enrolment along with retention of the girl child in basic formal schooling and non-formal education via incentive methods like a supply of textbooks free of cost, midday meals, school bags, science kits, uniform, scholarship, residential and hostel facilities as well as the expulsion of gender discrimination in the curriculum. Education will go an extended way in making women familiar with their legal and personal rights and make them battle for their privileges, which will direct to protecting their rights mentioned in the Constitution.

- Mass Media is Bringing the Transformation- The mass media is responsible for playing a significant function to project and propagate associated issues, most specifically about women empowerment in India.



The numerous programmes pertaining to women's prestige revealed the mass media enable her husband to behave toward her wife with loads of honor and respect. He can remake his attitude and assist her in the domestic domain to reduce stress and anxiety. The mass media performs a crucial role in repairing the attitude and way of conversation of husband and other family members towards women.

- Steps Regarding Implementation of Women Development Programme along with Numerous Acts- Training programme based on action at the village or in rural parts of India along with vocational programmes and the growth-oriented entrepreneurship development programmes must be organized to make women self-reliant after becoming self-employed by enhancing their efficiency and capacities in making prompt decisions. It's extremely important to check cases related to female feticide & infanticide by prohibiting the sex determination of child that is yet to take birth via the Regulation & Prevention of Misuse Act 1994 as well as PNT ACT (Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act) other rulings correlating to marriage, succession, divorce, adoption, dowry and moral safety or protection against sexual harassment needs to be implemented for serving the goal of women empowerment in India.
- Changes in Women's Attitude- Women should empower themselves by becoming to be aware of their oppression, indicating initiative, and confiscating chances to bring a shift in their status. Empowerment must come from within the soul. Women need to empower themselves by bringing a major change in their attitude.

Women must know that opportunities will not reach their laps. They would have to determine ways to create them. They should fight back to rebuild their prominent position in Indian communities and societies. They must flourish hard to carry out their rights and maintain justice & equality in society. They need to work vigorously for the entire elimination of poverty, dowry-ills, illiteracy, and productive implementation of all programmes and laws related to women.

Women's empowerment is valuable for the development and advancement of the family, community as well as the nation. Hence, it must be a leading concern of the Indian Government to bring women into the fore of the development strategy by empowering them via numerous development-oriented schemes.[7,8]

- Organization for Awareness Programmes- State and National level commissions for women, Non-Governmental Organisations, ICDS Programmes, must undertake e- awareness, the Taskforce for women & children Development DWACRA (Concerning Development of Women & Child in Rural Areas), women's rights, human rights, a campaign about legal rights, education about saving schemes, population education, environmental education, rehabilitation programmes with all integrity and solemnity.

### **Importance of Women Empowerment**

In recent times, everyone is pointing on the empowerment of women. It's right to say that women's empowerment has become the necessity of the time. Women should possess liberty, faith, and self-worth to opt for their needs and demands. Discrimination based on gender is useless and is having zero worth by looking at the growth of women in the last few decades. Women are paid less and are treated as a cook and slave in families, and their real potential fails to get highlighted. Women empowerment in India is required to overcome situations of such types and to provide them with their independent role in Indian society. Empowering women is a necessary right of women. They should have proportional rights to contribute to society, economics,

education, and politics. They are approved to gain higher education and receive a similar treatment as men are receiving.

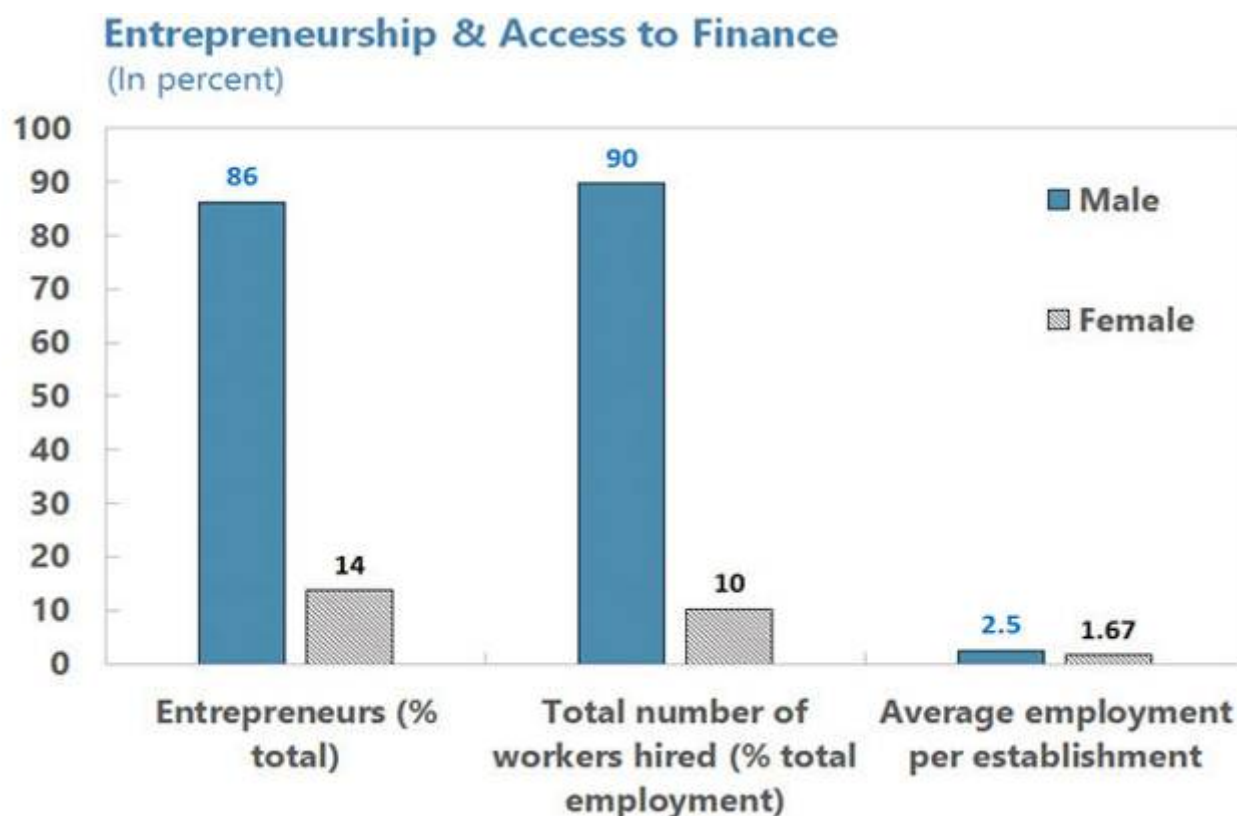
### Ensures Holistic Development of Society

Women empowerment in India is one of the principal terms for society's overall development. There is nothing erroneous in participating in the development of society. In the world of corporates, women are playing numerous roles in meadows such as medical, engineering, and so on. Apart from taking part in the sphere of technology, they are energetically partaking in security services such as police, navy, military, etc. All these before-mentioned services are taking the community to another level.

### Determine their Intelligence Level

Over the preceding decades, there has been a uniform increase in women's empowerment. Women must possess self-worth, confidence, and freedom to choose their needs and requirements. Classifying the people based on gender is unreasonable, and it has no worth. Still, women are paid less, expected to cook, and restricted by their family members. To overcome these situations and to have an independent role in society, women's empowerment is needed.[9,10]

Empowering women is the fundamental right of women. They can have equal rights to participate in education, society, economics, and politics. They are allowed to have higher education and treated in the way like men. In this article, you will know about the importance of women's empowerment.



### Able to solve unemployment

Unemployment is one of the common problems that can be seen in the developing society. The research says that half of the population consists of women. The unemployment of women and unequal opportunities in the workplace can be eradicated with the help of women empowerment in India. Whenever women are facing unemployment, their true potential is left without any use. To make use of the strength and potential of the women, they must be provided with equal opportunities. You can motivate them by providing any special gifts. The best time to honor women is women's day. You can honor them with women's day gifts.

### Know about their intelligence

It is unthinkable to understand and analyze the way of living of women by peeking at them. You can foresee their level of intelligence by way of moving toward the problems and in the solution-finding. In the contemporary era, women are nicely versed in unraveling technical troubles. Women's empowerment plays a vital role in these cases. Without women empowerment in India, you won't be able to determine and understand the intelligence of women. Therefore, making existence in work is particularly important and an advantageous one. You can present any gift to give recognition to their work.

## Capable Enough to Solve the Issues of Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the widespread problems that can be glimpsed in societies in the developing stage. The study says that around half of the population comprises women. The unemployment of women & unbalanced opportunities in the working place can be eliminated with the assistance of women empowerment in India. Whenever women are confronting unemployment issues, their true capability is left without any intention. To make use of the courage and capacity of the women, they should be empowered with an equal number of opportunities. [11]

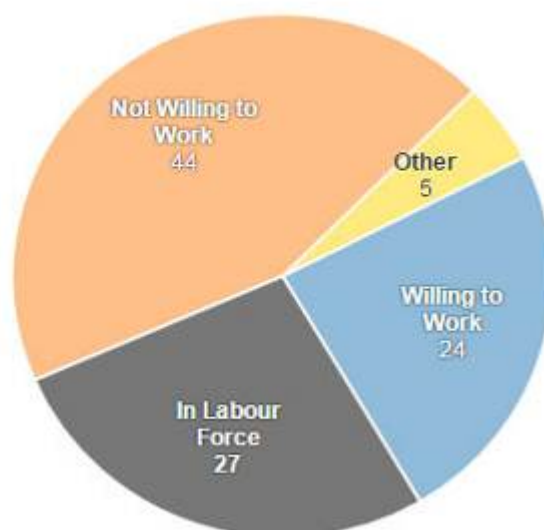
### Results

Investing in women's economic empowerment is intrinsic to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication, and inclusive economic growth. Yet despite the important progress that has been made in these areas, large gender gaps in economic opportunities and outcomes still remain across all countries and regions. Therefore, in the context of the 2030 Agenda, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the first-ever High-Level Panel for Women's Economic Empowerment. The Panel, comprised of influential leaders from various fields of government, business, academia, and civil society, made action-oriented recommendations on how to improve economic outcomes for women in the context of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development, promoting women's leadership in driving economic growth, and galvanizing political will power.

Post the UN Women's Executive Director's consultation with the representatives of various informal sector constituencies in 2019 in India, an Expert Working Group (EWG) on Women's Economic Empowerment was constituted to develop a National Roadmap to contextualize the recommendations of the Report of the High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment to the Indian context. Chaired by the Self Employment Women's Association (SEWA) Bharat and co-chaired by UN Women's Office for India, the EWG came up with the contextualized recommendations identifying key advocacy and programmatic priorities for strengthening the rights of women workers in the informal sector in India.[12]

Although women constitute half of world's population, they are the largest group excluded from the benefits of social and economic development. Women constitute a strong labor force which needs to be mobilized and encouraged. In India, the work participation rate of women is less than half that of men. Despite efforts made towards economic empowerment of women, a majority of the active female population continues to be confined to micro, small-scale enterprises and the informal sector. Special attention needs to be given to increasing employment opportunities and productive resources of women through special financial intermediaries, building women's competitiveness, and increasing economic exchanges among women entrepreneurs. India: Economic Empowerment of Women focuses on this great awakening. It consists of 33 scholarly articles and is replete with concepts and practices which will appeal to researchers, legislators, government officials, and non-governmental organizations engaged in ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of half of the human race.

### India: Women In The Workforce



Over 48% of India's rural population comprises of the female gender. They play an essential role in the rural economy by working as farmers, daily wage workers, traditional knowledge disseminators, entrepreneurs etc.

They often also serve a significant role in managing household work, childcare, elderly care, taking care of ill ones and providing healthy food to the family members. About 80% of economically active women work in the agricultural sector, with 48% working as self-employed farmers and 33% as agricultural labour. Despite all this, women are often discriminated against and deprived of equal access to education, health, work, freedom, and lifestyle. Even after getting employed, women usually get paid much lesser wages than male workers. While 85% of rural women work in agriculture, only 13% have land ownership rights.

With the rising temperature and increasing climatic change events, women are much more vulnerable and susceptible to risk. Empowering women is a way forward towards achieving sustainability, poverty elimination, rural economic development, climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation. Nations should align Women empowerment with economic development since both are closely related. Achieving this means enhancing women's participation in education, health, politics, and industry. On the other hand, the rise in women discrimination adversely affects the economy. When assessing levels of education, women lag behind men. Safety issues, insufficient female teachers, common washrooms, caring for younger ones are some reasons women rarely get a chance even to get a basic education. Several studies suggest that the effects of climate change are different for women and men. Rural women generally don't possess the ownership rights to their property, resources, or finances. As a result, the probability of women and children losing their life is fourteen times higher than men [13]. Inaccessibility to public warnings, difficulty in getting new settlement plots, unapproachability to claim post-disaster benefits etc. Moreover, post-disaster, women are expected to do all the household clean-up work, take care of sick members, and manage the routine. All this prevents them from working outside, depending on male members for financial support.



Before going into detail about the need for women's empowerment in context with rural economy and climate change, let us first understand the meaning of women empowerment. Women empowerment includes:

- Understanding the viewpoint of women in decision making
- Giving equal access to women in terms of education, Health, Politics etc
- Ultimately enabling them to become financially independent

Women's participation as a driver of climate change mitigation and adaptation has excellent potential since women are experts in resource conservation and environmental sustainability. Unfortunately, women are under-represented and left out of key decision-making at local and national levels. Several pieces of research suggest that women have a better understanding of climate change patterns and are better at recommending ways to adapt to and mitigate climate change. Moreover, they have excellent

knowledge of crop diversification, climate-resilient cropping, and resource optimization, essential in increasing agricultural productivity. This knowledge, in turn, can help lower food insecurity, poverty and starvation.

Since rural women are associated with highly resource-dependent sectors, e.g., agriculture, women are expected to face more challenges with the changing climate. Therefore, the climate change adaptation measures should include women's participation, helping enhance and secure women's livelihoods. This could be done by providing required training to teach women about the optimum resource utilization, introducing new technologies and methods related to agriculture, promoting self-employment etc. Furthermore, research studies claim that post-disaster recovery is quicker if women are included in the disaster management and early warning system. Women are known for utilizing green and efficient climate change solutions and adapting swiftly to the changing scenario.

The success of women's empowerment to tackle and adapt to climate change can be judged by the success of Bhungroo Irrigation Technology. Bhungroo Irrigation Technology came into existence after the 2001 earthquake, which had resulted in water scarcity followed by the monsoon rains. People were having trouble adapting to these abruptly changing climatic conditions. The first step was to scrutinize the natural hydrological cycle and suggest that people store water during the monsoon and harvest the stored water in the dry season. Subsequently, Women were trained to manage the technology and tools, which improved their social skills, and were now a step closer towards controlling their natural and social environment. Consequently today, women are able to support the communities to adapt to changing climatic patterns and in charge of harvesting and storing the water [14]

The Government of India has also launched various schemes related to women empowerment including the Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP). STEP provides skills that enable women to be self-sufficient/ entrepreneurs. In addition, Nari Shakti Puruskars are national awards for honouring the institution making efforts to improve the lives of marginalized and vulnerable women, and Mahila E-Haat is an online e-marketing platform for women [6]. Overall, the measures are meant to increase women's participation in economic activities and motivate them to become entrepreneurs.

It is evident from the above discussion that women's empowerment is the need of an hour for achieving sustainable economic development. Eradication of gender inequality and encouraging women's participation as leaders, entrepreneurs, trainers, educators is required to decrease the climate change vulnerability of women. Empowering rural women is obligatory to promote sustainable agriculture, poverty alleviation, and reducing the impacts of climate change.[15]

### Conclusions

Women play a very good role in the development of economy and society. Woman is the leader, planner of the family, the trainer, supplier of labour power and playing important role in the development of agriculture, industry and service sector. But status of women is so poor and incidence of poverty is more on woman only. Empowering women is the only solution for all the problems. If woman is educated and empowered her potential power can be utilized for the economic development. Empowerment aspect visualizes the full participation of people in the decision making process that shapes their lives. The goal of inclusive growth and human development cannot be achieved without the development and

empowerment of women. This paper contains need, objectives, importance of women empowerment, role of women empowerment in India, Government schemes of women empowerment and conclusion. Key words: Women, empowerment, education, confident, self-respect "Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace".[16]

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