



WOMEN

EMPOWERMENT AND STATUS



ARE THEY REALLY COMPLICATED?

Murdering someone in the womb
they call it a treason
Even after birth, they live in a prison



Living in four walls of the room,
they are taught to think of groom
Covering their body,
covering their aspirations
Living a life full of desperation

Marrying someone by giving plethora of money
Nurturing each and every relationship
with care and harmony

Bearing all turmoil and tantrum,
they look firm and venturesome
Capable of giving life to someone,
they think of shielding their daughter or son

Cultivating their children
for good upbringing,
they seem like a attached string

From birth till death,
they remain the epitome of selflessness
They are the warriors of their life,
not a complicated daughter mother or wife.

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“PREFACE”

I was encouraged by Prime Minister Modi’s speech on 15th August 2022, where he addressed the Nation for women's empowerment.

“No struggle can ever succeed women without participation side-by-side with men. There are two powers in the world. One is the sword, One is the pen. There is a third power, stronger than both, that of women” - Malala Yousafzai.

For the overall growth of any country, the f-word is very important. And by the f- word mean feminism. As mentioned in the above quote, with the participation of men and women together, any problem can be easily solved, Indian women have been treated differently since ancient India. Today however the time is changing, and this book throws some light on how Indian women are overcoming all the odds and emerging supreme.

This book is a tribute to millions of women across the world who have been struggling and overcoming the odds of life in their recurring quest for empowerment and equality, firmly resolving to preserve their dignity and identity in a patriarchal milieu. Women who have raised their voices against oppression and discrimination are constantly striving to reclaim their rights by overcoming the challenges encountered in life. They are trailblazing influencers inspiring humanity to strike a holistic gender balance leading to sustainable development where both genders take an equal and active part in leading happy lives. What is the status quo on gender equality? Why are crimes against women increasing? Can gender sensitization solve the inequality issue? These are some of the paradigms that are dealt with in the book. The journey of true empowerment is difficult, but the resolute strength to obliterate the gender gap is unbeatable... The motto is to achieve women's empowerment through gender equality & gender sensitization.

In recent years especially the past six or seven decades the movement towards the empowerment of women has gained strength and momentum. With the emerging nature of new society under the impact of global forces and liberalization and the educational and technological revolutions, women have gradually developed consciousness for their rights, dignity and identity. Today there is a growing realization among them to have confidence in themselves and to develop their individuality. The issue of empowerment is of tremendous significance for them because they strongly feel that it alone can lay the durable foundations of a just or harmonious society, based on the twin principles of gender equality and social justice. A woman can attain her full potential in a just society. She can participate as equal partners in all spheres of life and can influence the process of social change.

Women are leaders everywhere you look, from CEOs to housewives that hold together a home. Our country was built by women who stand alone. Empowered women can exert power to shape their families, communities and countries, women should be respected as well as their needs and aspirations as they can only give their best to society.

I salute the women of ISRO who work behind the curtain for Chandrayaan-3.

I give my sincere thanks to the Parliament who have passed the “Women Vandan Adhiniyam Bill”.

“Yatra naryastu pujoyante ramante tatra Devata
Yatraitaastu na pujoyante sarvaastatrafalaah Kriyaah”

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“WOMEN EMPOWERMENT”

1. PRIME MINISTER SPEECH



Addressing the nation for the ninth time from the historic ramparts of Red Fort on the occasion of Independence Day, Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi called for a "Change in the mentality" towards the women.

Prime Minister Modi said the respect for women is an important pillar of India's growth and stressed the need to extend support to "Nari-Shakti" and appealed to change the mentality towards women in everyday life.

"I have one request for every Indian. Can we change the mentality towards our women in everyday life. Pride of "Nari Shakti" will play a vital role in fulfilling the dream of India. Respect for women is an important pillar for India's growth. We need to support our "Nari Shakti" said Prime Minister Modi.

He added "A distortion has crept in our conduct and we at times insult women. Can we take a pledge to get rid of this in our behaviour". Prime Minister Modi urged the people to take a pledge to get rid of everything that humiliates women in everyday life.

"It is important that in speech and conduct, we do nothing that lowers the dignity of women" said Prime Minister Modi in his speech.

Prime Minister Modi said "The more opportunities we give to women and to our daughters, the more we will reap the benefits from their contribution" leading the women of the country for coming at the forefront in varied sectors from sports to the military, Prime Minister Modi said "In the coming 25 years, I see a large contribution of the women of the country. I urge everyone to ensure the further empowerment of women.

Be it education or science women of the country are at top Be it sports or battlefield, India's women are stepping forward with a new capability and confidence. I see immense contribution by women in 25 years to come, much more than that in the 75 years journey.

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2. MEANING OF THE WORD EMPOWERMENT

The breakup of the word empowerment is empowerment which has 's' prefix power is a noun combining adjectives and suffixes the word empowered is made, its sound meaning is dynamism (speed) with power. Empowerment is a development process. An ongoing process of becoming strong from the week. A fully empowered person is one who is completely independent in making decisions related to his life, in social contexts in which matters related to marriage, child birth and occupation etc., are discussed at home or social level in some way. Don't be pressured. Thus, the concept of empowerment becomes very important in the context of women.



In Indian society women has been given equal right as men since ancient times. He has been given full right to preserve the dignity of his life and lead a dignified life. Even in the field of education and knowledge - science, women have been given complete freedom to show and express their talents. This condition of women declined after Mahabharata period. The fundamental right to education was taken away from her. Gradually the condition of women became pathetic and worrying. In the present context, with the passage of time, there is a vast change in the conditions of women. Time is turning. Women are becoming aware by becoming free from oppression, oppression and oppression. Today women are moving towards development. She is making a unique identity in every field working side by side with men. This is the nature of women of the modern age.

DEFINITION OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

According to Bina Agarwal (Economist) women empowerment is defined as a process by which the capacity of vulnerable and marginalized group of people is increased. So that women can do their favour by changing the existing power relations that put themselves in low economic, social and political status. Women empowerment means making women self-reliant. Women have to give equality in the society. According to DR. Digvijay Singh, the meaning of women empowerment is the participation of women in power establishments. Decision making is a great measure of empowerment. In this way women empowerment means equal opportunity in challenging the current system and methods of society. Participation in political and economic policy making, equal pay for equal work protection under law, right of reproduction etc. Empowerment refers to a process by which the powerless get better opportunities to control the circumstances of their life. This not only means better control over resources but it also means increased self-confidence and ability to make decisions on an equal basis with men. For the empowerment of women, it is necessary that the male society should became aware of the discrimination against women.

Women empowerment is made up of two words women and empowerment. Empowerment means to give power or authority to someone, so women empowerment means power in the hands of women. It signifies that women should be given equal opportunity in every field, irrespective of any discrimination. In this article on women empowerment, we will discuss the need for women empowerment and the way through which can be achieved.

Male and female, the two basic components of our human society depend upon each other and each one of them constitutes about half of the population. Over years sociologists and other scholars have tried to assess the problems faced by women and study changes in their status around the globe in general and in Indian society in particular. We find the man and woman had been established as the two wheels of a chariot.

Our society comprises men and women. In earlier times, men were considered to be the leading members of a family. They were responsible for earning the livelihood and were the decision taker of the family. On the other hand, women were responsible for doing house hold work and upbringing of the children. So, the roles were mainly based on gender. There was no involvement of women in decision making. If we assess our entire sector, then research says the women's issues are either focused on her reproductive role and her body or on her economic role as a worker.

WOMEN HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN FURTHERING THE PROGRESS OF THE SOCIETY:-



The full development of society is possible only when there is equal development both men and women. Both should have practically equal rights. The development of only one class will only create imbalance in the society. For this, it is necessary that there should be a coordinated organized effort to increase literary awareness, self-reliance among women, because the reality is that even today most women do not have sufficient knowledge of their constitutional rights and government and non-government schemes made for their development.

Women have suffered a lot through the years at the hands of men. In earlier centuries, they were treated as almost non-existent. As if all the right belonged to men even something as basic as voting. Almost every country, no matter how progressive has a history of ill- treating women. In other words, women from all over the world have been rebellious to reach the status they have today while the western countries like India still lack behind in women empowerment.

In India, women empowerment is needed more than ever. India is amongst the countries which are not safe for women. There are various reasons for this. Firstly, women in India are in danger of honour killings. Their family thinks its right to take their lives if they bring shame to the reputation of their legacy. In addition, domestic violence is a major problem in India. The men beat up their wife and abuse them as they think women are their property. More so because women are afraid to speak up. Similarly, the women who do actually work get paid less than their male counterparts. It is downright unfair and sexist to pay someone less for the same work because of their gender.

History says that women were ill-treated. The Sati Pratha in the ancient times to the girl child abortion in the present scenario, women continue facing such violence. Not only these heinous crimes against women such as rape, acid-attack, dowry system, honour killing, domestic violence etc. ----- are still happening in India.

Out of the total population 50% of the population should consist of women. However, due to female feticide practices, girl child numbers are decreasing sharply in India. It has also impacted the sex ratio in India. The literacy rate in girls is very low. Most of the girls are not even provided with primary education. Moreover, they are married early and made to raise children and shoulder only house hold work. They are not allowed to go out and are dominated by their husbands. Women are taken for granted by men as they are considered their property.

Women empowerment refers to making women powerful to make them capable of deciding for themselves. Women have suffered a lot through the year at the hands of men. As women were not allowed to make decisions for them, women empowerment came in like a breath of fresh air. It made them aware of their rights and how they must make their own place in society rather than depending on a man. It recognized the fact that things cannot simply work in some one's favor because of their gender. However, we still have a long way to go when we talk about the reasons why we need it.

Gender equality is, first and foremost, a human right. A woman is entitled to live in dignity and freedom. Empowering women is also an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities and improved prospects for the next generation.

Empowerment is a process through which a person becomes able and independent to make decisions about himself through awareness, action, efforts for better control. From this point of view, empowerment of women is an all-round and multi-dimensional approach. It believes in adequate and active participation of women in the mainstream of nation building.

All-round and harmonious development of a nation is only when women are given their due place and position in the society. They should be considered as partners of development along with men. Under empowerment, women, gain access and control over various factors necessary for their economic independence, political participation and social development. They are aware of their strengths and possibilities abilities and rights and responsibilities.

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 programme pertaining to women's prestige revealed the mass media enable her husband to behave reward her wife with loads of honour 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 the 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 a rural part 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 and infanticide by prohibiting the sex determination of child that is yet to take birth via the Regulation and 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 and equality in society. They need to work vigorously for the entire elimination of poverty, dowry- ills, illiteracy, and productive implementation of all programme and laws related to women.

Women 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.

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3. EFFORTS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA



Coordinated efforts at the national level for women empowerment in India were made only after Independence. Pandit Nehru said "Gender inequality whether it is economic, social, political or in any other field, it is necessary to remove it for the establishment of human dignity". Nehru Ji believed that there should be no discrimination against women on the basis of gender. Nishant Meenakashi in his article Vikas v/s Empowerment has told "women empowerment means empowering women, providing women with the entire tool with the help of which half the world can progress. The biggest obstacle in the direction of women empowerment is

handy job. There is lack of education and awareness among women. If women are made educated then they will become aware of their social and political rights and then it will not be possible for anyone to suppress such aware women".

ACCORDING TO UNIFEM, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MEANS: -

- Women empowerment can understand the relationship between man and woman and understand the ways that can change it.
- Developing decision making ability to understanding one's own value.
- By believing in your own ability, you can take all the decisions of your life on your own.
- To develop the ability to understand and organize the direction of social change towards building social and economic order at nation and international level.

EMPOWERMENT AIMS TO DEVELOP THE FOLLOWING CAPABILITIES: -

- Ability to make own decisions and identify adequate resources for the same.
- The ability to change the views of others through democratic means.
- Ability to participate in change and development.
- Ability to mobilize women in collective decision making.
- Not only has to have positive thinking in the above directions, but also sufficient skill.

Factors Affecting women's Empowerment in India: - 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.

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4. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

In society, women have been assumed to be a weaker gender for many centuries. Breaking this barrier and getting access to men can be called women empowerment. Women empowerment is a movement that strives to eliminate the social, economic, and political divide between men and women. The term women empowerment only came into existence in the 19th century.



Empowerment itself means "giving power out". Women have been considered a weaker gender worldwide for thousands of years. Although India gained Independence, women were still not given equal socio-economic status. Therefore, the government of India and other non-government bodies work toward the overall development of women in our society.

It has been years since the time “Women empowerment” has been a routine in our conversations. But it must be noted, that while we all were busy trying to empower women in the fields of society, economy, politics, education etc., we forget how important it is for us to empower women psychologically. We completely forget how empower the brains and minds of women first in order to make them fully self-sufficient, and in literal terms empowered.

Women empowerment means the freedom to make her choices, to have the opportunity to follow her dreams, to develop the power to fall and rise without losing self-worth in the journey forward, to enjoy equal privilege as her male counterparts at home or at work, to be respected as a human being rather than being looked down upon as a woman, to feel comfortable in her own skin without the pressure and compulsion of perfect in every aspect just to prove her worth, to be loved for the person she is irrespective of the gender belongs to be able to accept her role in the family or at work based on her inner instincts instead of following the stereo type passed down from generation. A societal mind shift, expected to be just as gradual as we saw above, is of paramount importance. This will have a double advantage-one, the fight will get easier for the women, as society starts to accept the changes. Second, society will gain immensely from the positive effects of women’s empowerment.

Having said that, there remain more enemies to be defected in this fight. Victories that will liberate the woman from within so that she can enjoy the external aspects of empowerment to the fullest. To help her come out of the clutches of age-old misconceptions and the ill effects of social conditioning. Every enemy in this battle needs a special mention.

Now as we all know that empowerment takes place where there is disempowerment. Therefore, as women are always seen as species who are disempowered in front of men, it becomes our duty to make women realise on their own that they are worth so much more. Of course, there are no in-room classes which could make women realise their true worth, but as humans, the least we could do is provide women with appropriate external support and intervention.

So, in order to empower women psychologically, it must be noted that reverse psychology could play a very significant role here. This means, once we start making women realise about their capabilities, they would eventually start believing in themselves, and that is how their self-confidence would go up.

At the same time, if proper steps are taken to ensure that women take part in programmes, discussions, and sessions, which revolve around how they (women) make the best of any society, then this could lead to an increase in self-esteem and self-worth.

It must be noted that women who are empowered psychologically are automatically empowered in other fields, too. This is because when women start believing in themselves, which happens when they are psychologically sound, they get an insight of who they are; they get aware of what is undesirable about their situation; and they realise what is in their reach and what could they do to improve themselves.

Therefore, psychological empowerment of women could act as a magic bean which could open door for a number of possibilities. And hence this is what we should focus on because only through complete enlightenment of the brain and mind, could women think, decide and work for themselves.

The main objective behind this book is neither to favour the prevalence of feminism nor to be criticizing about the chauvinism. The focal point of this book is to promote equality. In today's scenario the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century.

But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. We observe in our day today life how women become victimized by various social evils. Women empowerment is the vital instrument to expand women's ability to have resources and to make strategic life choices. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. Women empowerment is giving legitimate power or authority to perform the tasks.



People of India used to say this country as "Bharat-Mata" however never realized the true meaning of it. "Bharat-Mata" means a mother of every Indian whom we have to save and respect. Reflecting into Veda's Purana of Indian culture, women is being worship such as Laxmi Maa, goddess of wealth, Saraswati Maa for wisdom & education and Durga Maa for power.

Women empowerment is essential for the betterment of any country's future as they play dual responsibilities of managing their families while simultaneously juggling to earn to contribute in fulfilling their family needs.

No one can never ignore the importance of the role of a mother, sister, or a daughter in their families. At the same time women have also established themselves as equal contributors in managing the financial requirement of their homes. On International level as well, women have successfully created their unbeatable position, but they are just a handful in comparison to their counterparts.

Women empowerment is not limited to urban and even women in remote towns and villages are now increasingly making their voice heard loud and clear in the society. While it is true that women, to a large extent, do not face discrimination in society today. Unfortunately, many of them face exploitation and harassment which can be of diverse type: emotional, physical, mental and sexual. They are often subjected to rape, abuse and other forms of physical and intellectual violence.

Even the girls getting good education seems problematic to some patriarchal views in the society. Girls look at the stars, they have dreams and ambition, but the path to the sky is difficult for the women in our society.

For getting good marks in school, her teacher harasses her and when she goes for a job interview, the boss does the same to her. Unfortunately, some people consider this as the fate of the women, but it is not. Women are supposed to create their own fate, not the one that this patriarchal society decides for them.

A woman is a person who initiates a family life. She also raises a family and therefore a nation too. Without women being empowered our country cannot flourish to the fullest. A woman bears all the responsibilities of meeting the basic needs of the family and uplifting the family. Unfortunately, our society, which is still a male dominated one does not consider the work of a woman equally important. Apart from the rights and resources they are also denied the basic freedom to do anything for themselves. A woman's status can only be enhanced through strategically planned steps. We make an effort to make the women self-sustainable by enhancing their skills so that she can survive without being dependent on anyone.

Ill-treatment for women has been a ritual for men, for centuries this unjustified treatment is going on, and women are not allowed to have property, they will have no share in their own parents' properties and they never enjoyed their rights to vote and there was absolutely no freedom to choose their own way of lifestyle or job and so on.

Now women's empowerment means exercising their power and their own actions. Which means having control over your own material assets, intellectual resources and your own ideologies.

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 socioeconomic restraints of reliance. Women comprise around 50% of the country's population and a bulk of them stay's economically dependent on each other without employment. In this 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 mother, loving daughter, and capable colleagues. The best part is that they fit the bill perfectly in every role. Nonetheless they have also stood as a neglected bunch of society in different parts of the world. Women have been residing under the shackles of enslavement for centuries now that impedes them from attaining professional as well as personal heights. Being an NGO for women empowerment in India Shradha has designed a dynamic and transformation - oriented programme in such a manner that the grooming of impoverished young girls will uplift the condition of the nation.

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5. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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 other in all the spheres of life.

Women empowerment in India is dependent up to a great extent on numerous different variables that encompass geographical settling (urban /rural) social status (caste and class) educational status, and age factor. Action 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 advancement and real exercise at the community level.



Naturally, when we talk about women's empowerment in India we refer that women must need to be aware of their rights like the right to vote, property rights, freedom of movement, their legal rights and many more, which means, empowering women is making women realize their self-worth their abilities to determine their own choice and shaping the society. Where women can enjoy their respect and rights just like other humans. Women's empowerment is an essential factor that work for the betterment and development of society, community and country.

Comparatively the western part of the world is very liberal about women's empowerment but women's empowerment in India is the least concern of society, because of gender biasness. It is believed that the problem with literacy, population, and health issues won't solve until there is any solution for the gender biasness so that women can take a part in building a society and a community where every one's rights and demands will be paid attention to. If we pay more attention to how women's empowerment in India got momentum throughout the years from the ancient to the modern period. Overtime Indian society has witnessed many uprisings and downfalls when it comes to empowering women.

Making sure that women get educated, employed and independent does not define women's empowerment in its entirety. Employment needn't necessarily be her choice. She may be doing it out of need more than want. If after a long day of hard work, she returns home to serve her husband who gets to relax after office, then this is just another subtle form of dominance. She is "allowed to go out to work" is not a definition of equality.

In recent times, everybody is pointing on the empowerment of the women. It is right to say that women 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.

Now-a-days women are increasingly gaining control over their life's and are actively taking their own decisions with regard to their education, career, profession and lifestyle. Women have demanded equality with men in matters of education and employment, inheritance, marriage and politics and recently in the field of religion also to serve as priest. Also, women need to be given equal opportunities for education and employment without any sense of discrimination.

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6. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN VEDAS



The Vedas say, man himself (aatmanah) is only half or incomplete (ardha), as long as (yaavat) he does not obtain a wife. According to Vedic teaching and ancient Aryan Scriptures, women have been placed at a higher status than man. She has been given preference to man in every field, so much so that when giving boy a joint name of a god and goddess the name of the goddess is always placed before the god. For example: In the name "Sita Rama" Sita is wife of Rama. In "Radhe Shyama" Radha is the beloved of Shyama (Krishna). Again in "Gauri-Shankar" Gauri is Lord Shiva's wife. We called our Country Mother land; mother is superior to father. We are taught to be more indebted to mother than father - "Maat Devobhava" before "Pita Devebhava".

In our country (India) there is a festival to worship womanhood as early as when they are little girls, called "Kanya Poojan" on the eighth or Ninth day of the moon or the Asthami or Navami. On this day all the men call their neighbouring girls to their homes. The girls with great affection to their neighbours, properly dressed and bedecked. The men first wash the feet of the girls as a token of great respect. They feed them sweets and other food prepared by the lady of the house for the girls (This is now the Kanya Poojan take place). Respect of womanhood starts at that age.



Women stand paramount in Vedic culture. We go as far as saying that if one wants to understand culture and civilization of a nation, one has only to observe how that nation treats its women folk. She is the symbol of culture.

In the field of education women were given equal opportunities. They had their own Gurukulas - convents - where they studied and acquired knowledge of science and arts. There were highly educated and wise women. There have been great women like Shila Bhattaari Kaa, Maarutee, Morikaa and Subhadra etc. Vijayaanganaa is counted next to Kalidasa as a dramatist.

The Gita says that a woman should have the keen desire and capability to give shelter and support to others, have a good memory (smriti) to remember her duties, deep thinking power and good intuition, the courage and boldness to face odd times and the kindness to pardon others.

In Vedas, the bride-to-be, is called Kanya and it is she who has the birth right of choice and of obtaining a matrimonial partner. The word Kanya is a derivative, which mean's to shine or to be illustrious or to illuminate.

The women at home are mahaabhaagaah or the source of great fortune. They are poojaarhaah or worthy to be worshiped, they are the lights, who by their behaviour brighten the whole family atmosphere. It is they who

are gracefully good to give us our progeny. In the family or at home, there is no difference between (Shree) the wealth and the fortune of the family and (Striyah) the ladies at home, that is they are the emblem of prosperity and good fortune.

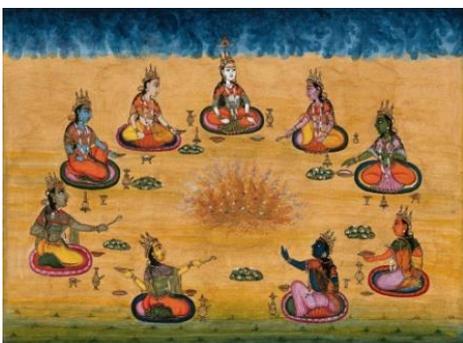
It is also said that if a husband, in his family, protects and provides well his wife, actually he protects his family prestige traditions, his progeny and the social laws: much depends on the wife. A man without a wife cannot even perform any ritual or ceremony according to the Vedas.

The status of Hindu women in India has been fluctuating. It has gone through several changes during various historical stages. Historically speaking, women in India have passed through two phases of their life the period of subjugation and the period of liberation. At times she has been suppressed and oppressed and at times she is regarded as the deity of the home. From the Vedic age till today, her status and position have been changing with the passing of time. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the status of Hindu women in the various ages to assess her real position today.

The Rig-Vedic society was a free society. The Aryans evidently preferred male child to female child. However, females were as free as their male counterparts. Education was equally open for boys and girls. Girls studied the Veda and fine arts. Women never observed purdha in the Vedic period. They enjoyed freedom in selection their mates. But divorce was not permissible to them. In the family they enjoyed complete freedom and were treated as “Ardhanginis”.

In domestic life women were considered to be supreme and enjoyed freedom. Home was the place of production. Spinning and weaving of cloths was done at home. Women helped their husbands in agricultural pursuits also husband used to consult his wife on financial matters.

The Vedic Time Period: -



The Vedas offer a fairly liberal stance of the role of a woman. The access to the power for women during Vedic time period is evaluated by the perception of women education, freedom, marriage rituals and economic freedom, as depicted by the Rig-Veda, the first Vedic scripture.

To evaluate the portrayal of women in the Vedic scriptures, it is important to contrast it with the portrayal of men "O man, the woman deserves your respect and reverence and love because she remains a generous and graceful accomplisher in the home in spite of man's want to piety and success." (Rig-Veda 5.61.6) In this verse men are told to respect women. Men are shown as generous and graceful.

Let's look at another verse: - " O Agni, fire of home yajna, gracious lady of the house, honey sweets are your tongue like the beautiful flame of light which radiates intelligence and wisdom far and wide and wins admiration among the noblest people. With this sweetness and light of speech and grace of manner, bring in on the Vedi of home yajna all the sagely souls worthy of reverence and let them drink of the nectar sweets of blessed home" (Rig Veda 3.58.5). The world - choice of this verse associates' women with light and intelligence.

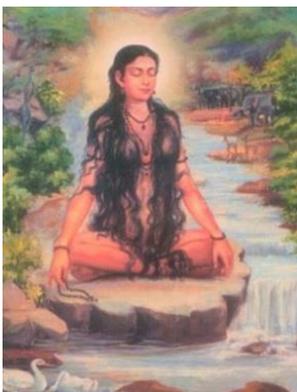


Moreover, throughout the Rig Veda words such as independent, loving, happy, tolerant preserver of truth, scholar, learned and glorious are used to describe women. From a spirituality lens measuring of woman's portrayal to its proximity to that of an enlightened person, it is evident that the Vedic scripture places respect for women higher than for men. During this time period the spiritual essence of the preceding tantric individualist society is still preserved, while there are hits towards men indulging in materialistic behaviours.

This idea of an enlightened woman exists beyond the ideological realm, and also bears fruit in the physical realm. To start off there are prayers for a scholarly daughter in the Vedas. Young girls were given the choice to be initiated into Vedic studies.

Overall, women had two paths they could follow: that of a Brahmavadini or that of a Sadyovaha. Brahmavadini's studied philosophy and theology for their whole lives. Whereas, Sadyovahas were students until they married.

Many women specialized in Mimamasa the study of epistemology and metaphysic. Women scholars who picked up this field referred to as "Kasa-Kritsnas". The coining of a special word suggests that a large number of women received education. Stories from the scriptures speak of co-education. The Rig-Veda states "give the fortunate woman that superior knowledge which showers the joys of the life with golden hands of generosity" (Rig Vedas 1.116.13) providing us with more evidence that women were able to acquire education.



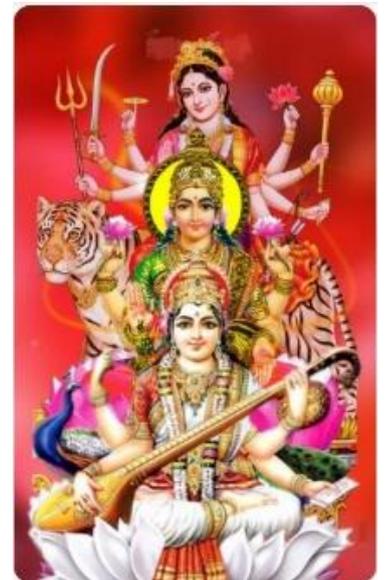
But how were women treated in the educational spheres? Where they allowed to exercise power? These questions are answered by looking at the case of Priestess Gargi Vachaknavi. Priestess Gargi participates in a philosophical debate challenging a learned man. The descriptions of the nature of her conversation does not draw any gender - oriented criticism. In fact, the king watching the debate taken aback by her discourse honours her. Rishika Gargi also contributes to the composition of the Rig-Veda. Along with her, nineteen other women contribute to the composition of Rig-Veda. The freedom of education illustrates a woman's access to ideological power within the Vedic society. The power extends beyond just sitting on the receiving end of education. Women actively exercise their power and contribute to the development of the Vedic ideology.

Michael Mana describes ideological power as the most influential form of power as it cannot be proved or disapproved.

Of course, the next logical question to ask is how did a woman's access to ideological power influence the way women were treated in mainstream society.? Let's answer this question by taking the topic of marriage as an example.

In The Vedas there is a reference to unmarried women " Amajuh one who grows old in (one's parents) house". This reference suggests that unmarried women weren't ostracized from society, but rather found a home in her parents' house, similar to how unmarried men found a home in their house. A woman's place wasn't completely defined by marriage. Moreover, men and women both took the same marriage vows. A marriage hymn from the Rig-Veda shares " both the enlightened woman and the noble husband, the people, and the noble ruler, conjoined in unison grow together for the sake of this Rashtra, the great social order of humanity, augmenting through yajna the showers of rain from heaven. Both live together and move forward, winning victories in the battle of life. Both are indispensable for the social order complementing each other like two halves of a sphere in the interest of progress and prosperity for the sake of the family and the nation" (Rig Vesa 2.27.15). This quote is evidence for a collective mentality that states men and women are both essential parts of the social order. Women are seen as noble. Marriage rituals that promote equality uphold the liberal ideology of this time period.

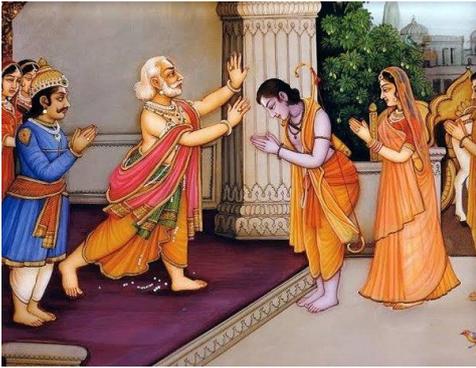
In terms of solving issues within a marriage, men were required to listen to their wives. The Rig-Veda shares "O man O woman: keep your eyes down on the earth, not upon the sky. Walk on with both the feet together (as the two wheels and the two horses draw the chariot together), let your lower feet be not bare and exposed (covered them). Let the woman be the high priest of the home yajna" (Rig Veda 8.33.19). This is a verse from hymn about dis-harmony in between a married couple. If a man was to say that his wife cannot be reasoned with, then he is wrong and the man must align with his wife's decisions. Women are politically empowered within their households.



Regarding economic freedom, women had the opportunity to take up roles such as that of teacher or earn money through weaving clothes and agriculture. However, in terms of inheritance married women were not allowed to inherit their father's property. The Rig-Veds also provides evidence of agriculturist women, " provide the expert of farming on the land and for the herds - woman growing old provide a caretaker" (Rig Veda 1.117.7). This verse depicts a normalized attitude towards working women. Moreover, in the Epic of Ramayana, Queen Kaikeyi frequently goes to war along with the King and saves his life during one of the wars by steering his chariot. Queen Kaikeyi's story is evidence that same women exercised military power.

The story of Kaikeyi follows: -

Kaikeyi as we all know was the second wife of Dasharatha. She was trained in warfare right from her childhood.



When Indra King of Gods requested Dasharatha to fight demon Samhasura, Kaikeyi accompanied him as a charioteer. In the battle Dasharatha's chariot wheel broke loose and then it was Kaikeyi who took the chariot to a safe place, changed the wheel nursed the wounded King and again went in the battlefield and they won. Dasharatha promised her two boons.

In Ramayana and Mahabharat we also see the women empowerment:-

- Janak and his wife are working in farm together.
- Sita plays with bow.
- Surpankha and Lankini are fell in rakshas category though they are women.

In Mahabharat Hidimba and Ulupi (wife of Bhim and Arjuna respectively) both are known as good warriors. A female entity etched in the heart of every proud Indian.

A land where all the main festivals revolve around the most revered female deities: - Laxmi the Goddess of wealth, Saraswati - the Goddess of wisdom, Durga - the Goddess of strength and protection, Kali - the Goddess of change and destruction, Annapurna - the Goddess of nutrition and so many more.

In a land and culture, that gave a female entity to the most essential things in life, it is perturbing that the blazing issue of women's empowerment even exist.

What transpired between the satyug of Ramayana and Mahabharata, although mythological epics to many and the present age is a query that should be deeply researched. From a point in time, when Rama waged war against the might Ravana to bring back his abducted wife, Sita and the Mahabharata war between the Pandavas and their cousins Kauravas was fought to avenge the insult of Draupadi, wife of pandavas, we reached a point where the women in our society are waging their war against the injustice, insecurity and ill treatment meted out to them daily.

The rich Indian Heritage slowly changed from a society that practiced gender equality as a way of life to a culture where a girl child is look down upon as a burden, a sister as someone who needs protection, a wife who can be exploited and a mother who is considered only as a giver. This change was so gradual that the exact timeline cannot be drafted. However, some events have influenced the social fabric over the centuries.

Status of women in Epics - Epic age in the history of female freedom, may be regarded as a golden age. Women had been accorded an honorable status in the society. Most of the female characters of Ramayana and Mahabharata were well educated. The Ramayana illustrates the Hindu ideal women of India. In Mahabharata

we find instances where women gave counsel and advice to men on social and religious issues. Women had a role in social and political life of the then society. Women had been called the root of Dharma, prosperity and enjoyment in both the epics. We find vast references of the expression of courage, strong will power and valour of women like Kaikeye, Sita, Rukmani, Satyabhama, Sabitri, Draupadi and others.

The Ramayana is a glorious illustration for the Hindu ideal womanhood, it glorifies the value of "Pativrata" and idealises womanhood as one of most venerable aspects of our heritage. The Mahabharata also outlines the duties and the attitude of the wife to the husband.

Women during the Period of Dharmashastras and Purans: -

During the period of Dharmashastras and Purans the status of women gradually declined and underwent a major change. The girls were deprived of formal education. Daughters were regarded as second class citizens. Freedom of women was curtailed sons were given more weightage than daughters. Girls were, prevented from learning Vedas and becoming Brahmacharini.



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7. YATRA NARYASTU PUJYANTE



“Yatra naryastu pujyante ramante tatra Devata
Yatraitaastu na pujyante sarvaastatrafalaah Kriyaah”

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।
यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ॥

is a great verse that dates back to an ancient text Manusmriti.

This whole sloka highlights the importance of women in our society. It highlights the importance of how women should be treated with dignity and respect. It points toward the divinity of what women bring to our life. This means that the nations that respect women and give them their due rights are the ones who are reaching heights. And the society where women are supposed to tolerate the injustices and the uneven circumstances of men is the one that remains backward. Unfortunately, the women in our society face everything.

The rights that the modern era women are asking of men in this era have been given to us very long ago by culture and wisdom. The traditions of India have valued women and this chant is a reminder to work towards the betterment and empowerment of women.

We have always listened that there is a woman behind every successful man, and that woman could be anyone, be it your mother or your wife. The woman in the form of a mother teaches the child to make the right decisions. The woman in the form of a sister helps you, guides you, and is your partner in everything you do.

Manu, the law giver of Indian society gave the statement that women have to be under father during childhood, under her husband during youth and under her son during old age. At no stage shall she deserve freedom. However, he balanced this with the statement that a society in which the women was not honoured would be condemned to damnation.

Due to the various restrictions imposed on the freedom of women some problems started creeping in. In the social fields, pre-puberty marriage came to be practiced, widow remarriage was prohibited, husband was given

the status of God for a woman, education was totally denied to woman, custom of "Sati" became increasingly prevalent, purdha system came into vogue and practice of polygyny came to be tolerated.

The patriarchy in Indian society is quite dominant for ages and many people are still living under that old umbrella.

People who wish welfare and good vibes to their lives must respect women and give them their due rights. The real happiness and welfare of a household lie in the happiness and welfare of the women in it, keep the women happy and you will be happy.

Start the good deeds from your home, and start respecting women in your home. Human beings must respect the women who are integral parts of our lives and this beautiful creation in the forms of our mother, wife, sister, daughter, etc.

Rig Vedic Period: -

- Continued enjoying full freedom and equality with men.
- The position of wife was an honoured one in the household.
- Superior over men in religious ceremonies.

Later Vedic Period: -

- The marriage and educational rights remain same.
- Power in religious ceremonies getting lowered.
- Religious ceremonies increasingly were conducted by the priests resulting in losing her preeminent position in the household.
- This was period during which the importance of rituals increased and so did the importance of the Brahmins.
- Desire for sons continued, Sati was not prevalent.
- The position of women was not as high as it was in the Rig Vedic period.
- Female workers were involved in dyeing, embroidery and basket making.



Upanishads Period: -

Marriage between the male of a higher caste and female of a lower caste prevailed during this period. The rules of Panini regarding Abhi - Vadana (Salutation as a mark of respect to elderly persons in the house) shows that the presence of wives of the lower caste in a house and their association with ladies of a higher caste brought down the general level of womanly culture and led to a deterioration in their status.

During Sutras and Epics: -

- The women were allowed to sing, dance and enjoy life.
- Sati was not generally prevalent.
- Widow Re-Marriage was allowed under certain circumstances.
- The Apastamba imposes several penalties on a husband who unjustly for sakes his on the other hand, a wife who for sakes her husband has to only perform penance.

Evidence from Epics: -

The Ramayana along with the Mahabharata and the Puranas constitute the epic literature in India. During this period, a woman was considered to be a living commodity which could be kept on bet and could be sold or purchased. Example is Pandavas bid of Droupathi ; But we also get quite contrary views from Ramayana and Mahabharata.

- Bhishma says that during this period women were respected.
- Sita is regarded as one of five ideal and revered women in India, the other four being Ahalya, Draupati, Tara and Mandodari.
- There are references in Mahabharata which reflects that women used to guide men on religious and social questions.
- A woman was considered unfit for independence at any time as she required protection throughout her life.

During Maurva Empire: -

- The important documental evidence is Arthshastra by Kautilya, a brahman Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya.
- States that women had property rights to the stridhan, which was the gift made to a woman at the time of her marriage by her parents and afterwards augmented by her husband.
- Stridhan was usually in the form of jewellery which among many cultural groups was a convenient way of carrying surplus wealth, but could include certain rights to immovable property.
- Marriage was both a secular and sacred institution.
- Widows could remarry. When they did so, they lost rights to any property inherited from their deceased husbands.
- There is little information on lower class women other than some comments on labouring women and the need to give works as spinners to such disadvantaged women as widows and " defective girls ".



During Gupta Dynasty: -



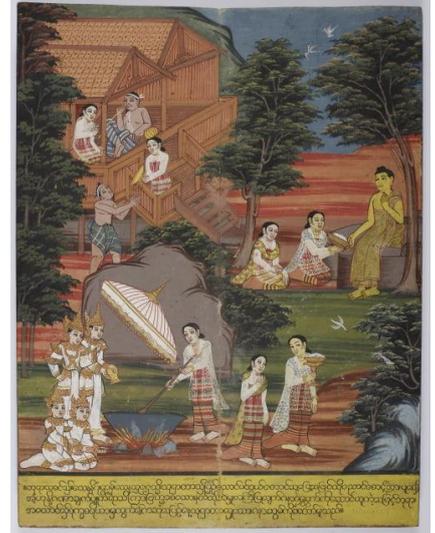
The Gupta Empire is seen as the classical age of Indian culture because of its literary and artistic accomplishments. Some information on roles for elite comes from the Kamasutra, a manual about the many ways to acquire pleasure, a legitimate goal for Hindu men in the householder, or second stage, of their lives.

- Women were expected to be educated, to give and to receive sexual pleasure, and to be faithful wives.
- Courtesans were trained in poetry and music as well as the skills of sexual pleasure and were esteemed members of society.
- Courtesans were the one category of women who were likely to be educated and sometimes were known to have spoken Sanskrit.

Women in Buddhist Period - The status of women improved a little during the Buddhist Period though there was no tremendous change. Some of the rigidities and restrictions imposed by the caste system were relaxed. Buddha preached equality and he tried to improve the cultural, educational and religious statuses of women. During the benevolent rule of the famous Buddhist King such as Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, Sri Harsha and others, women regained a part of their lost freedom and status due to the relatively broadminded Buddhist philosophy.

Women were not only confined to domestic work but also they could resort to an educational career if they so desired. In the religious field women came to occupy a distinctly superior place. Women were permitted to become "Sanyasis". Many women took a leading role in Buddhist monastic-life, women had their Sangha called the "Bhikshuni Sangha" which was and guided by the same rules and regulations as these of the monks. The Sangha opened to them avenues of cultural activities, social service and ample opportunities for public life. Their political and economic status however remained unchanged.

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8. ANCIENT INDIAN PERIOD AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



In ancient Indian culture women were treated as equal to men and there was no discrimination on the bases of gender, instead of that women were honoured by society, and society at the time considered women as janani which means mother, even in Hindu scripts women are considered as Devi. They used to enjoy their full basic rights

where they were free to receive education, at that time the wives of the rishis could willingly take part in spiritual activities with their husbands, they were also known as the Ardhangini (better half) too. During that period women got to live equal life just like men used to live. Women in Indian history have gone through two things in their life one is subjection and deliverance with the passage of time, their positions might have changed but in the Vedic era, they were a complete symbol of protector and caretaker of mortality and ideals.

The accomplishment of Gargi, Maitreyi, Sita, Draupadi and Alapa turns out to be the most ideal role for women of this era. These women were competitive with men in many fields and also received and enjoyed their rights and equality, there were no restrictions on them, and they possessed great wealth and property. Along with that they even had a very strong say when it came to guiding their offspring.

In the ancient text of the Vedas, the concept of human is a bedrock for society, in taittiriya samhita women and men were considered as two-wheels of a cart. These lessons given by the Vedas to society were good examples of equality between men and women.

Here is Lime line of Women in Ancient India: -

- Worship of mother Goddess highlights the respect to women as mother.
- Given equal honour along with men in society.
- Women enjoyed full freedom treated pretty well.



Women's empowerment in India in the medieval period : -

The integrity among the genders had room in the early Vedic period but somehow in the later Vedic period there was a decline in the integrity and equality among them, especially the position of the women which was equal in the Vedic period, later had a downward trend in the later Vedic period. It is believed that foreign



conquest is the main reason for the decline of women's status in that era. There was an erosion in the Rig-Vedic ideals of fairness and harmony, which deprives women to enjoy their study the Vedic recite Vedic mantras and practice Vedic rituals. Women were forced to get married and or involve in domestic life and have an indisposible devotion to their husbands. At that time parents were ashamed of the born of a

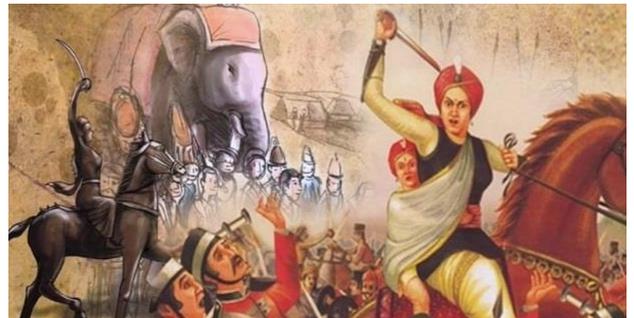
girl child.

Birth of the Girl Child: -In ancient India, the birth of a girl child was considered auspicious. It was believed to bring wealth and prosperity to the family. In some traditions followed even today, the parents seek blessing from the daughter by touching feet.

The joy of giving birth to a girl changed into sorrow when the practice of dowry seeped into society. The father would start saving for her marriage since her birth. As the dowry practice worsened with greed taking the forefront when marriage was arranged, the daughter started to be considered more as a liability than a joy, especially for people from the lower social economic bracket.

Education for the girl child: -

History hails Rani Lakshmi Bai, who refused to give into the pressures of the Britishers to surrender her kingdom after her husband - the King- died, as the epitome of bravery and courage. Just as we proudly remember the wars she single-handedly fought against the British, we very conveniently forget to acknowledge her upbringing and the archery skills and lessons in political science that she learnt in her childhood.



Girl education became of secondary importance in Indian society when the girl child future began to be endorsed by a singular identity-that of a housewife. It became more important to teach the girl to become an efficient house wife and little preference was given to education as it was an additional financial burden.

Marriage of the Girl Child: -

In ancient India, the man and the wife were always considered equals. The roles of men and women were predefined. The man was bread winner and the woman was the bread maker. However, both roles had equal importance.

As invasions disturbed the peace of the society and invaders took women hostage for rape and sex slavery, the men became more productive of their women. The purdah system in which the woman would cover her head and face came into practice. Women were not allowed to go out of their houses. They were deterred from going to school. Getting her married early was considered as security for the girl child.

All these factors collectively influenced the psyche of the men and women in different ways. Men started regarding women as their possessions. Possessions that are weaker than them and also dependent on them. The male ego swelled giving the man every excuse to dominate the woman in his life, which may be his mother, wife, sister, or daughter. The domination made the already deteriorated self - worth of the women take a battering leaving them feeling weak and alone.

Though scenarios are changing now, a majority of women are still forced into marrying a groom of not their own but the family's choice. She has no say regarding her preferences and is not even asked about her readiness to get married.



While it is an illegal and punishable offence, child marriage is still rampant in rural and poor populations of India. The girl child is brought up since childhood with a conditioned to not question her elders, do not voice her feelings and to accept any kind of treatment meted out to her in her in-law's home as a normal practice.

A woman who is not allowed to take such important decisions in her life and is also treated as a slave in her husband's house slowly starts to lose her ability to think for herself. She begins to prioritise the happiness and comfort of her family above her own. Her dependency allows others to abuse her. Unable to distinguish between love and abuse, she loses the ability to make simple decisions too.

Motherhood for the Girl Child: -

History gives glorious examples of how a mother can change the future of her children and impact Society too. In recent history, we come across Jijabai, the mother of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who played a highly significant role in moulding her son into a brave fighter, a righteous ruler and a powerful administrator of the Maratha empire.



Jijabai was well educated in administration, politics and also warfare. She single-handedly passed on her education to her son and also her grandson Sambhaji.



She instilled the values of Swarajya (self -governance) into young Shivaji by narrating to him the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. Abiding by her teaching Shivaji went on to build an army of Marathas to fight the atrocious Mughals and built and expand his empire in all directions of the Indian subcontinent.

Women's life was full of hardship. They were mostly confined to the house of their father, and later their husband. Their education was neglected only a few exceptional women achieved progress in literacy, administration and battle skills. Customs like child marriage, unequal marriage, widowhood keshwapan, sati, polygamy had imposed harsh restrictions on the way women lived.

Ahilyabai Holkar is a feminist figure who devoted her life to defeating patriarchal aggression and establishing women's rights at a time when women were confined to the four walls of their houses. Ahilyabai was the hereditary, noble Queen of the Maratha Empire, who created history by establishing an ideal leadership of her kingdom during her three-decade reign over Malwa. During her reign, the region flourished and reached new heights. Not only was Holkar a prudent ruler, but also a bastion of women empowerment.



A recent historical verdict by the Supreme Court of India grants women in the Indian Armed Forces the power to held command positions. This is considered a win in the constant battle against stereotypes and patriarchy.

As a result, we can now see brave women serving protecting our country better, and being inspiration to millions of little girls all around the world.



However, it is important to note that women in India, have been fighting for decades. Women have made formidable warriors since the age of kings and queens, and have served and protected their kingdoms with bravery, wit and courage. From Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi to the Rani of Kittur, these warrior women have shown us that courage goes a long way, and that gender has never been an obstacle in women fighting for what is right.

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9. WOMEN'S STATUS IN THE HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION

Women in the Indus Valley Civilization: -The Indus Valley Civilization is symbolized as the plethora of Goddesses during the Vedic period, where men and women in Harappan Civilization occupied dignified position. Indus valley civilization is primarily symbolized as the ancient civilization of India, where it is depicted that the women had a respectable position in the society. In the time of the Vedic period, men and women in Harappan Civilization respected the Pandora of the Goddess for their civilization assumption. As per the basis of the Vedic society, women initially participated in tribal assemblies and various types of religious assemblies. In the Vedic period, women initially created an important role in the history of civilized India. As per the basis of historical study, it is scripturally indicated that the Indian women were comparatively gaining high status and more respect during the time of early Vedic period of Indus valley civilization.



Welfare of Women in the Harappan Civilization: -Since time immemorial, women have primarily created an important role in shaping Indian history. As per the basis of Indian history different types of scripture indicate that the Indian women initially enjoyed high status and comparatively more privilege during the time of the early Vedic period. Women from Indus valley civilization were gaining more surpassing, in comparison to other contemporary civilization, such as Rome and Greece. In the Indus valley civilization, the actual evidence of the female clay figures initially highlights the cultural and social role of females in the Indus valley civilization. In Harappan Civilization, women were primarily worshipped in prakrity, which is considered the mother of the Goddess, and occupied the most prestigious position in society. In context to the social position and welfare of men and women in Harappan Civilization, women were not mistreated; rather they were given the freedom to live the life of their free will.



Men and Women in Harappan Civilization: -Women played a crucial role in shaping the history of India. In context to the social status of men and women in Harappan Civilization women enjoyed similar status as the men in every aspect. However, the important opportunities such as decision-making and economic participation were also equally conducted by the women. The above-mentioned accessible way primarily entails the actual concept that both men and women were making their own preferences without any difficulties and limitations. However, after the time of the Vedic period, 50% of total world's population was women. After the time of Vedic Period, the ratio of the women decreased due to the unequal social status of men and women.

In the predominant society of the Indus valley civilization, women were initially expected to work in their own houses. Men of the Indus valley civilization were involved with farming to support their own families. However, men were considered to be the only bread earners of the family while the women of the Harappan Civilization were getting an intense level of respect from different types of other societies. In Harappan society women work gaining the highest amount of respect, which was considered not shown in any other

society and culture. Women were most of the time treated as superior to the men because they were in charge of the household work. Men were in charge of the functionality of a Harappan Civilization's Government and Society were women too played a vital role.

Women's status in the Harappan Civilization: -

- In the Harappan Civilization, women were initially getting more respect and high status compared to the others different societies.
- Women in Harappan Civilization initially were free to develop their abilities and personal choices without any restrictions and boundaries.
- Historical sculptures discovered from the Indus valley civilization highlighted the significant role played by women during the ancient period.
- Women were not considered as property; they were even not on par with their male counterparts.
- Bull riding was one of the primary transportations mean in Gangetic valley performed by women.

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10. DIFFERENT CUSTOMS

There was a tradition in ancient Indian culture of sati pratha, nagarvadhu system, dowry system, sexual violence, domestic violence, female infanticide, pardapratha, wife burning, work place sexual harassment, child marriage, child labour, devadasi paratha, etc. All these kinds of evil practices are attributable to society's dynamic male superiority and patriarchal structure.

There came a time when women have to adopt the "pardah" a veil that covers the body in a way it affects their freedom. This is the reason it gave birth to many other evils in the society which made women's life more difficult to live. There were many restrictions like sati, jauhar, and no education for girls, widow remarriage, child marriage and many more.

Question arises what is Sati?-

The concept of Sati is when a woman's husband dies then the woman had to sit on the burning fire with her husband and burn herself to death. It is said it was her



solemn duty towards her husband. In old Hindu scripts, it was believed that when a woman's dies as a "Sati", the door of heaven opens up for her straight. Now what is "Jauhar"? In today's world, if we try to understand what is Jauhar, we get to know that it is just a mass suicide, but in the medieval period, this was a Rajput custom. Where the Rajput woman sacrificed their lives for their husbands when they were about to lose a battle.



At that time birth of a girl child was a matter of shame for the parents, they were considered a burden for the family, so parents used to marry them off as soon as possible. Another reason for child marriage is, it was a belief that grown-up girls were more tend to do scandals, which is why their parents tie the knot at a very tender age and the girls stay at their parents' home and move out when they hit puberty. At that time men used to think that a woman is nothing more than marriage material, they were treated like material. This is the reason why there was an increasing birth rate, women suffered from very poor health which is also a reason for the increase in high mortality rate in women and babies too. **In Some Part of India there was no "Sati Pratha"**

No access to widow-re-marriage-

Treating women as the material was common in the medieval period. In the medieval period widows were considered cursed, it was believed that when a woman becomes a widow she inflicts depredation and brings ill luck, after being a widow that woman have to pronounce every comfort of home which was promised by her husband at the marriage, there is a no place for widows in any holy or sacred to remarry. There will be no choice given to her so that she can live a peaceful life, she always wears faded white clothes and to eat very specific food which was only eaten by widows.

No education for women-

There is evidence available that in the past women had access to education, but the scenario totally changed in the later Vedic period, the dimension of their education changed and they were all the domestic tasks, on the other hand in the Muslim



religion they were given classes on fine art. Yet the suffering of women never gets easier in this period of time.

Educational Factor: - Education is the most vibrant factor of advancement and growth. It is the only significant tool for anticipating women empowerment in India and human resource development. It gives light to the possibilities for access to employment and making a livelihood, which is twirl revivify economic empowerment to women. In order to join the community of developed counties, 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. Education is the initial line of defense for women who with stand life-imperiling circumstances that traditional life style 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 in the education of women and girls leads to the postponement of their marriage and consequently to a reduction in the size 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, mid-day meals, school begs, 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.

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11. INFLUENCE OF OLD BELIEF SYSTEMS

1. **Gender Biased culture:** - The smallest of instances like picking up doll and kitchen sets for girls and mechanic set or a car or gun for boys as gift send subtle messages to both genders regarding what their future roles or choices should be. A better option will be to let them choose their toys.

Even the simple act of tying rakhi to the brother seeking protection in return for Raksha Bandhan can imply that she is weaker. Instead of doing away with these traditions, there need to be a change in the message.

The practice of giving dowry to the groom makes him feel that he is doing a favour to the bride's family by marrying the girl. This could be replaced by investing money in the girl's name to secure her future on investing in her education and career to make her financially independent. This way she will also feel empowered.

If one is more observant and aware he/she can point out many more instances in daily life where rituals and practices could be tweaked to prove that women are equal to men and both do not feel any difference other than the physical one that nature has bestowed upon them.



2. **Influence of old Belief Systems:** -

A woman at every stage of life is fed with orthodox ideologies encompassing the roles of both gender in a family setting and society. It is so deeply ingrained in their psyches for ages that even thinking otherwise seems illogical and unethical to them. This, as discussed earlier has given rise to many vices. Breaking free from these misconceptions can seem to be herculean task, but once accomplished, with prove to be very liberating.

Notions such as women need to give birth to complete her being. It is only her duty to look after every family members needs and happiness even if she is pursuing her career, her children need her undivided attention till they are grownups, she should be available and ready for any social or familial obligation even if it means that she has to miss her work deadlines, and so on, only imply that women can do what they want only if they are capable of fulfilling these criteria.

Such is the impact of these beliefs on her, and she starts feeling guilty if she falls in any of them. Normalizing the failure farther mean that she is being irresponsible. A better alternative would be to delegate and divide the duties and responsibilities within the family, manage with hired help, make use of modern-day amenities or come up with solutions jointly as a couple or a family.

Being able to tackle problems without the feeling of being in capable of carrying out the responsibilities herself, enhances her confidence and helps her in recognizing and maintaining her boundaries.

3. Aversion to Vulnerability

Women have always been bestowed with the baggage of being the caregiver and also a multi-tasker who can perform with perfection. These stereotypes encourage women to put everyone and everything else above themselves. They also require her to be utterly selfless while she carries out her duties and responsibilities giving in to all the pressure of being perfect in doing so too.



In this journey, she gets accustomed to overlooking her physical, mental and emotional needs. These needs when not attended to, accumulate over time and resurface in different forms like deficiencies, physical and mental disorders, memory issues, hysteria, over thinking, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and many more. She may be aware of the changes and discomfort she experiences, but may not openly speak about them for fear of being rejected, being termed as inadequate or incapable or being shamed. The idea of being labelled as "weak" can shut her to silence as she is already feeling weak from within. She would rather hold the crumbling fort than risk opening the gates to unknown threats.

This emotional vulnerability needs to be perceived as a call for helping and healing rather than as a show of a person's weakness. Bottling up feelings and emotions for maintaining peace is a skill that women learn early in life. Expression of emotion that is met with empathy, kindness, love and understanding in a healthy manner goes a long way in making the person feel validated in turn helps in faster healing. A lot of physical, psychological and relationship problems stemming from the lack of venting of emotions can be avoided or mitigated with the change in the response to vulnerability. Platforms such as social media, films, music, theatre etc now are being optimized to spread awareness and help find solutions to this problem. The effectiveness of therapy and counselling also are being emphasised for getting better results.

A healed woman will take care that others around her do not go through the same turmoil by changing the way she passes on her belief systems. The ripple effect will become very evident when we see the ease, confidence and comfort with which women are able to openly express their feelings, their fears and their shortcomings in the near future.

4. Bettered self-respect



In a scenario where, for generations, women have been portrayed as weak and depended, incapable of taking decisions for themselves and others, have been kept away from the experiences of the outside world under the false pretext of being sheltered from society's evils, kept financially dependent, dominated for selfish reasons, along with her self-worth and self-esteem, her self-respect too gets diminished.

Macro - level facilities like employment quotas, tax benefits, and loans will surely empower her financially. But the value of self-respect needs to be identified and nurtured by her at the micro level. Small instances that trigger conflict within herself to the tune of feeling oppressed and dominated hurting her confidence and pride should be isolated and dealt with in a manner that brings out the dignity and honour she values. This exercise will help her regain her self-respect and feel empowered from within.

Women should also learn to set boundaries and make every effort to respect them and make others respect them too. This does not imply that she be rigid and intolerant. Respecting others is a value that is indispensable, but not at the cost of your self-respect. The best time to imbibe self-respect is at an early age when children are developing their values. This can be achieved by including them in decision making discussions and asking their opinion on matters they can comprehend.

The self-respect of a woman who has been in a toxic-relationship suffers the worst blow. She has to give extra effort in earning back her self-respect starting from understanding the concept of self-respect to practising it daily. Interacting with new people, observing how people respect boundaries, and how they practice self-love are some of the ways of learning self-respect from others. Trusted people who want to help in the healing procedure also can do their bit by lending a patient ear and helping in analysing the victim's emotional trauma. Instead of trying to be your own teacher, it is advisable to talk to your own friends and family who are ready to help. Counselling also plays a very important role in healing. Sometimes it just becomes easier to trust a person who is trained in this field and can give unbiased advice. **Let Us make it Happen. It's long way to go. But if everyone right from the grassroots level makes conscious efforts, we will reach these faster. Point to be remembered by all; "traditions do not need to be done away with. Only the narratives need to change".**

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12. "SILENT REVOLUTION"

Culturally and Mythologically, women have enjoyed an elevated status in India. For example, it is mentioned in the Kena Upanishad that it was the Goddess Uma who enlightened the three powerful but ignorant Gods, Indra, Vayu and Agni to the profound mystery of Brahman. Despite the recognition of women's power in ancient texts and thought, the experience of women in the modern era has been from ideal. They have faced discrimination in the house hold and at jobs, and for a long time, they were victims of political indifference and neglect. However, in recent decades "Nari Shakti" has been reasserted through micro and silent revolutions. Here I wish to lend a voice to some of the silent women-led changes transforming our society politically and economically and also highlight the challenge that remain in women fulfilling their true potential as modern nation-builders of India. At present, micro and silent revolutions are reasserting the power of Nari Shakti.

Increase in Voter turnout - Private research on women voters using historical data has revealed that since 2010 the gender gap in voter turnout has diminished significantly and the recent trends show women voter turnout often exceed male voter turnout. This is even witnessed in less developed regions of the country also. The significance of this silent revolution is -



- Women voters can no longer be marginalised or neglected,
- Women voters demand respect and command attention.
- This is visible from recent poverty reduction programmes that are based on amenities such as cooking, fuel, sanitation, water and electricity and Compelled political entrepreneurs and grounded leaders to design policies addressing issues that women care about.
- Compelled political parties to make law and order a critical political issue in the less developed regions.
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The significance of this revolution is it creates a bottom-up revolution in India and holds lessons for other countries.

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13. NARI SHAKTI

What are the Challenges faced by Nari Shakti ?



Women Empowerment : - According to world Bank data, the female labour force participation rate has declined from 32% in 2005 to 19% in 2022. Further, the data does not consider unpaid domestic services. Working women also face double burdens from work and domestic work.

Rising Population and its burden on Nari Shakti – Fertility rates have declined dramatically below the replacement rate; the share of the ageing population has increased and there is an alarming increase in the percentage of kinless elderly. The care industry is labour - intensive and therefore subject to Baumol cost disease, implying that the cost providing care without keep rising over time.

What should be done to improve the contribution of Nari Shakti?

Account domestic Services: - A private study reveals that women in the age group of 25 to 59 years spend approximately seven hours daily in unpaid domestic services. If this is accounted then: - The level of India's GDP would be significantly higher, and a Truer picture of women's economic contribution would emerge.

Care industry lessons for India from advanced economics :- India should encourage men to share the burden of unpaid domestic services. This would require a break from tradition and the creation of new modern narratives and myths.

Women empowerment is not limited to urban and even women in remote towns and villages are now increasingly making their voices heard loud and clear in society. While it is true that women, to a large extent do not face discrimination in society today. Unfortunately, many of them face exploitation and harassment which can be of diverse types :- emotional, physical, mental and sexual. They are often subjected to rape, abuse and other forms of physical and intellectual violence.

Women are now claiming the socio-political rights (right to education, right to work, right to decide etc.) for them. The Parliament of India too has passed various legislations to save women from various forms of injustice and discrimination.

More recently, in the wake of Nirbhaya case involving the rape and brutal murder of paramedical student in Delhi, the government has passed the Juvenile Justice (care and protection of children) Bill 2015. This Act

makes a significant departure from the earlier Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000, as the Juvenile age inviting punishment for offence now stands reduced from 18 to 16 years.

The most famous pearl of wisdom said by the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is to awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, village moves, the nation moves. In India, to empower the women first it needs to kill all the demons killing women's rights and values in the society such as dowry system, illiteracy, sexual harassment inequality female infanticide and domestic violence against women rape, prostitution, illegal trafficking and other issues.



Gender discrimination in the nation brings cultural, social, economic and educational differences which push country back. The most effective remedy to kill such devils is making women empowered by ensuring the right to equality mentioned in the article 14 Constitution of India.

According to the provisions of the constitution of India, it is a legal point to grant equality to women in the society in all spheres just like male have. The women are given a top place in India from the ancient time however they were not given empowerment to participate in all areas. They need to be strong, aware and alert every moment for their growth and development. Empowering women is the main motto of the development department because an empowered mother with child makes the bright future of any nation.

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14. "GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN"



This Independence Day, we take a look at various schemes initiated by the government for women's empowerment in India. These range from community engagement and welfare of the girl child to women's safety and more.

Women empowerment is gaining momentum at a fast rate and why not? Nothing has been discovered so far which a women cannot accomplish. From being a perfect home maker to running huge business, women have the power to overcome every challenge. The Government of India has also taken a lot of steps to empower women. The launch of various schemes and measures have definitely helped women greatly to spark their talent and build their identity.

For an Indian woman and citizen, freedom does not just mean those guaranteed under the Constitution. It also means more jobs, opportunities for entrepreneurship, increased safety, ease in day-to-day living and protection of the girl child. In short, the road to women's empowerment has several factors dotting its path.

To ensure women are empowered, the government and the public sector need to play important roles to enable their welfare in various sector. Whether it's providing free cooking gas and education schemes or enabling women to leverage technology, a slew of schemes has been launched in recent years to empower women to be independent in their lives.

Here are a few that are breaking new ground and improving the lives of women, and encouraging them to think big, both in urban and rural areas.

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana: - Launched on January 22, 2015, in Panipat Haryana. It is being implemented through a national and focussed multi-sectoral action in 100 selected districts low in CSR, covering all states and UTs.



2. Mahila-e-Haat :- Under the preview of ministry of women and child development the government launched Mahila-e-Haat in 2016. Among the many services provided by Mahila-e-Haat is facilitating direct contact between the vendors and buyers, sensitisation, advocacy, training, packing and soft intervention workshop and offering a web-based approach.

3. Mahila Shakti Kendra: - The government launched the "Mahila Shakti Kendra" in 2017 to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment digital literacy, health and nutrition.





4. Working Women Hostel: - The government launched the working women hostel to ensure availability of safe convenient accommodation for working family, along with daycare facilities for their children, wherever possible in urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

5. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP): - The step scheme was setup to provide skills to women so that they can take up gainful employment. It also provides the right competencies and training for women to become entrepreneurs. Open to every woman above the age of 16 years. It is run through a grant given to an institution/organisation including NGOs directly.



6. Sukanya Samridhi Yojana: - Falling under the ambit of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme, the Sukanya Samridhi Yojana is a government backed saving scheme for girl children. The account can be opened at any India Post Office or a branch of an authorised commercial bank anytime between the birth of the girl child and till the age of 10 years by a parents or guardian.

Gone are the days when women needed permission even to step out of the house. In the 21st century, women are multitasking and excelling in managing their work-life balance. Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi once said " No country can progress if it's women are not full partners in the development process". The Government of India has taken various steps towards women empowerment and safety. With each passing day, we are getting more and more of women entrepreneurs which is not limited to the urban areas but from villages also. Women of this era do not want to sit behind the four walls of their home. Women are the pillars of society and when women are empowered, the whole world is empowered.

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15. "TRIBUTE TO NARI SHAKTI"

"If you do not raise the women, who are the living embodiment of the Divine Mother, don't think that you have any other way to rise" - Swami Vivekananda.



On the occasion of international Women's Day, I remembered this wise word of Swami Vivekananda. Women power is nothing but an incarnation of Shakti, who is Goddess of power. Once we are bestowed with her blessings our strengths will increase manifold.

On this day, let us resolve to make women equal stakeholders in the decision-making processes and economic growth of the state as well as the nation. Till this happens we cannot say that true women empowerment has been achieved.

In the past many months, there have been shocking incidents that have aroused the conscience of the entire nation. On International Day, let us affirm our commitment to eradicate any form of injustice against women and ensure that what the nation saw in the last few months does not happen ever again. A civilized society, etched in liberal democratic values has no place for those who disrespect women.

"I pay my tributes to the power of Nari Shakti – Let us walk shoulder to shoulder to further create a society where women are integral partners of our development journey!" said by Prime Minister.

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16. POSITION AND STATUS OF WOMEN

The position and status of women all over the world has risen extraordinarily in the 20th century. We find that it has been very low in the past centuries in India and hence they were treated like “objects” that can be bought and sold. For a long time, women in India remained within the four walls of their house hold. They totally depend on menfolk.

In India, the customs of purdha, female infanticide, child marriage, sati system, dowry system and the state of permanent widowhood were totally removed. It would help the innumerable women in the country who get neglected by their husbands and have no means of proving their marital status. It would also help check child marriages, bigamy and polygamy, enable women to seek maintenance and custody of their children and widows can claim inheritance rights. The Act is applicable on all women irrespective of caste, creed or religion. It truly helps to empower Indian women to exercise their right.

Benefits of Women Empowerment

Women empowerment raises confidence of women in their ability to lead meaningful and purposeful lives. It eliminates their dependence on others and makes them individuals in their own right. They are able to lead their lives with dignity and freedom which increase their self-esteem and give them a unique identity. They are able to gain recognition and form a meaningful contribution to the well-being of society.



Women act as capable citizens to make the country to achieve and boost Gross-Domestic Product (GDP) growth as they are financially independent they are able to spend on all their needs and desire and they also get fair and equitable access to resources of the country

Necessity of women Empowerment



Without women empowerment, we cannot remove injustice and gender bias and inequalities. If women are not empowered, they deprived from enjoying security and protection in life. It also provides them a secure working environment. Empowerment act as a powerful tool against exploitation and harassment of women. It is a great means to get adequate legal protection for women

If not socially and economically empowered, women cannot blossom their own identity in society and if they are not employed, the global economy will be adversely affected as women constitute a large extent of the world's population. As women are highly creative and intelligent this makes it mandatory to receive their contributions in socio-economic activities. For just and progressive society, women need to be provided equal opportunities for work.

The challenges/barriers of women empowerment are the following

Because of the inherent dominance among the males, they often don't allow their female counterpart to raise as high as them. Women are bound to high level of domestic responsibilities and they are also restricted to participate in social, economic and religious activities. In our society, preference for male child still exist and priority for education and healthy diet given to the boy child over girl child.

To overcome barriers

Education through mass communication is very important. Both women and men should have aware of their responsibilities for promoting and practicing gender-equality. Accumulate national data and identify the areas where occurrence of violence and gender inequality is on peak. This data can be used by government, NGOs and field workers to increase the status of women.



The society should be made aware that both boy child and girl child are equally treated, and they both should have equal access to available resources. A person may be said as powerful, where he/she may have the right of particular things and also have control on a large particular portion of power resources such as knowledge, education, social status, capabilities of mobilisation personal wealth leadership training etc.

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17. “INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY”



Women are strong, powerful and invincible. With thousands of mantras encouraging women’s existence every day, a special day is indeed a necessity to celebrate women’s achievement in all aspects of life. Whether she is a teacher, homemaker, economist, engineer or pioneer, women have been making the world a better place with their infinite strength, determination and belief. With power enough to shatter the shackles of patriarchy, women are raising above societal hurdles every single day, making them a strong force to reckon with, in modern times.

International Women’s Day has been observed since the early 1900s. That was a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that witnessed booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies.

It was during 1908 that there was an ongoing critical debate amongst women regarding their oppression and inequality. Women in Russia observed their first Women’s Day on Feb 23. Later, it was decided that March 08 can be globally accepted day to celebrate IWD. International Women’s Day was celebrated for the first time by United Nations in 1975.

Colours of International Women’s Day

Did you know there are also colours for the day? The three colours are purple, Green and white. Purple signifies justice and dignity. Green symbolizes hope and white represents purity, which was slightly married by controversy.

Purple, green, pink, and magenta are the classic colours for International Women's Day. The colour palette composed of these colours is gentle and durable. Purple was historically a symbol of dignity, and green is a symbol of hope. Today, purple is the representative colour of International Women's Day, and combined with green represents the feminist movement. Pink and Magenta contain passion and power while representing gentleness and kindness.

The Day belongs to women everywhere. Let’s us identified, celebrate and increase the visibility of women’s achievement! There is a dire need for increase awareness through meaningful narratives, resources and activities to combat gender bias and discrimination.

We cannot be complacent. We all should play our part in bringing gender party and we wish a very Happy Women’s Day to all the ladies out there.



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18. THE ICON OF INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY (WOMEN EMPOWERMENT) 2023

The Icon of India's Republic Day 2023

The theme of 74 Republic Day 2023 was women empowerment. Women empowerment leads Republic Day celebration in India. Women empowerment takes center stage

- Mahila police pipe band



- Navy and the marching contingent lead by women officers.

- All women CRPF contingent march. Even the Tableau Depicts Nari Shakti.





- Nari Shakti leads Republic Day celebration in India.

- Women empowerment takes center stage.



- All the state's tableau depicts women empowerment.

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19. G20 INDIA 2023 NARI SHAKTI

As a nation, India has been making waves in the world of women's rights, especially in recent years. A centre for globe development study found that India's policies have helped empower women and reduce gender inequality. India is fast moving from the paradigm of women's development to women-led development. Women's economic empowerment remains at the heart of India's G20 agenda. It has been well encapsulated in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remark at the G20 summit in Bali that "Global



development is not possible without women's participation". Empowering women is not just a choice, but a necessity. Because it is about improving outcomes, investing in healthier communities and stronger economies. The principle of general equality is enshrined within the Constitution of India, and the government has always been committed to promoting gender equality in all sectors and levels of governance. Financing for gender equality is central to mitigating gender inequalities. Gender budgeting is a critical strategy in this endeavour.

Under India's G20 presidency, we endeavour to show case India's initiatives, measures and on-ground action being implemented for women's economic empowerment by both the government and private sector for replicability by G20 nations.

Over the decades our government and civic bodies have put a lot of effort into empowering and giving equal opportunities to women in the country. There are various policies that India has made that empower women to improve their livelihood.

The country's Nari Shakti scheme, which funds women entrepreneurs by providing soft loans, the Women in Engineering, Science and Technology (WEST) programme to encourage women pursuing education in STEM subjects, and the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), a unified access portal that brings together an ecosystem for women have all contributed significantly towards enabling women India to realise their entrepreneurial aspirations.

The position of women in corporate enterprises in the country has evolved tremendously, especially in the service sector. Women entrepreneurs are not far behind in India, women are estimated to own and run over 12 million micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) units. India has more women owned enterprises than many other countries. Women are also dominating grassroots-level enterprises.

Women- led growth has been identified as the harbinger of progress across the globe. Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi said "we cannot achieve success if 50% of our population being women are locked at home", -taking measures along these lines, India under its G20 Presidency has put Nari Shakti at the forefront of the country's development journey. International Women's Day 2023 observed on 8th March 2023 is being celebrated on the theme " Digital Innovation and Technology for gender equality". From computing to virtual

reality and artificial intelligence, women have made untold contribution to the digital world. Still, a persistent gender gap in digital access keeps women from unlocking technology's full potential.

This comes either in the form of cyber threats in the digital ecosystem or its restricted reach to women altogether. While ensuring the empowerment of women through their social educational, economic and political uplifting, the Government of India is implementing several schemes to bridge the gendered digital gap.

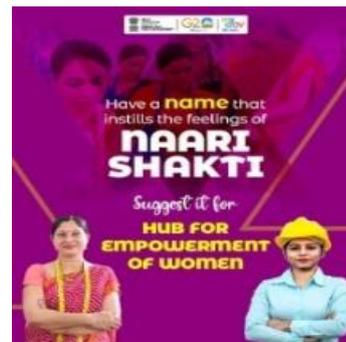
They are as follows: -

1. Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan



2. Mission Shakti "Sambal"

3. Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW)



4. Digital Shakti Campaign etc.

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20. NARI SHAKTI IN CHANDRAYAAN-3

Last but not the least, I want to bring your kind attention to the Chandrayaan-3. In Chandrayaan-3 women empowerment or "Nari Shakti" work for this mission. ISRO has made history with the success full launch of Chandrayaan-3, India's third lunar mission. Behind the record set by Chandrayaan-3 and ISRO, many Indian women have also made significant contributions. Their brilliance and knowledge have captivated the world. Unfortunately, only a few among us may know about them.



Ritu Karidhal - ISRO's scientist, Ritu is the Director of the Chandrayaan-3 mission. She previously served as the Deputy operations Director for the Mars Orbiter Mission. She is also known as the "Rocket Woman of India", and manages her role as a mother of two alongside her responsibilities at home and ISRO. Her multitasking abilities are commendable, and she has authored several research papers as a space scientist

Anuradha T.K. - She was appointed as the Director of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)-12 in 2011. She led a group of 20 members and archive several technical successes. Anuradha, with her logical thinking, became an inspiration for other females' scientist at ISRO. She has received prestigious honour such as the "Suman Sharma Award".



N. Valarmathi - She represented India as a Chief of the Indigenous Radar Imaging Satellite (RISAT) Mission and holds the records for being the Chief of the Remote Sensing Satellite Mission.

Mangala Mani - Mangala Mani a 56 year old, was the part of the 23 members, Indian Research team in Antarctica in 2016. She was the only woman in the team and spend more than 403 days there, facing unique challenges.



Moumita Datta - Moumita Datta, an M. tech graduate in Experimental Physics from Kolkata University, worked as Project Manager for Mangalyaan Mission and actively participates in the "Make in India" campaign.

Nandini Harinath - Nandini realized her dream of becoming a scientist at a young age and She started her carrier with ISRO. She served as the Deputy Director of ISRO and remained active in the and Mangalyaan Mission.



Meenakshi Sampurneshwari - Meenakshi Sampurneshwari as an ISRO system Engineer, has led a team of nearly 500 Scientist. Her name came to the forefront after the success of Mangalyaan Mission.



Kinte Faujdar - Kirti Faujdar is known as a computer Scientist at ISRO. She excels in setting Satellites in their Correct Orbits and is part of the team that keeps a close eye on Satellites and other missions.

Tessy Thomas - Tessy Thomas played a crucial role in the success of Agni-4 and Agni-5 Missiles. She works not for ISRO but for DRDO. Her contribution earned India a special place among countries with ICBMs and Tessy often Called the “Agni Putri” (Daughter of Agni).



These women are just like ordinary women around us but their strong determination and desire to active something extra ordinary have taken them to great heights, even reaching for the sky.

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21. CONCLUSION

It is hardly an exaggeration to argue that women have never had such a high social status as they had during the Rigvedic Period (1500-1000 BC). Women had the same status as men. Women were the mistresses of the house and held a high position in the family.

The prestige and dignity of women declined in the later Vedic period. The birth of a son was desired, whereas the birth of a daughter was viewed as a sign of sadness. Participation in political gatherings ceased. Child marriage, the sati system, and dowry started increasing.

In ancient India, women were given recognition significance and also constraints were imposed upon them. The women belonging to upper castes and wealthy families rendered a significant contribution in improving the well-being of the family and community. They were provided with education opportunities; they were engaged in teaching professions and also developed their skills and abilities in carrying out the administrative and political functions. One of the major causes of decline in number of girls was prevalence of the practices of female infanticide and female foeticide within the course of time, these practices were regarded as criminal practices and measures and programmes were formulated that would prevent them from taking place. Women experienced number of factors that imposed detrimental effects upon their well-being. These includes illiteracy, purdah system, forced child marriage, polygamy and sati. They were not permitted to make any decision on their own and were dependent upon the male members of the family.

The Status of women in ancient India experienced positives as well as negative effects. They were provided with opportunities as well as experienced discrimination treatment.

There was connection between the status of women and their economic position. This in turn is dependent upon the rights and opportunities for rendering an effective contribution in economic activities. Majority of the population of India was employed in the agricultural sector. In addition, men and women were engaged in jobs, such as weaving, craftsmanship, pottery making and so forth. Hence, women were normally married off at an early age, they were deprived of acquiring education, they were meant to implement the household responsibilities and take care of the needs and requirement of the family members. When usually remained within the house as they primarily dedicated themselves towards the management of the household. Apart from these, they were engaged in the manufacturing and production process to supplement family income.

In the Indus valley civilization men and women were getting equal amounts of respect and social position in the society. Hence it is primarily concluded that in the Indus valley civilization women were getting more respect than in any other society in the nation. People from the Indus valley civilization, women were considered the plethora of Goddesses, which is considered to be a huge respectable position. Women's status in Harappan Civilization was considered the most prestigious position. Men and women in the Harappan civilization were getting the same amount of respect, on the basis of social, economic and cultural respect.

Women play an imperative role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. They are essential possessions of a lively humanity required for national improvement, so if we have to see a bright

future of a women in our country, giving education to them must be a pre-occupation. Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, college and universities even exclusively for women in the state. The education develops the idea of participation in government, panchayats, public matters etc. for eliminations of gender discrimination.

Today India has seen a transformation in the status of women: several laws are in place in India to protect wives from dowry cruelty and provide them maintenance. A field that still requires reformation is marital rape, which is not recognised as a punishable offence in India. Motherhood is central to the structural configuration of a family. Religious customs in India do not ensure equal rights for women. This gap is being attempted to be bridged by legislation. Females now have adoption rights, and a husband must take his wife's permission before adopting a child. The mother can hold the position of a natural guardian. In the international sphere there is the convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1976 which is described as the International Bill of heights for women.

Despite laws being in place, women continue to be subject to violence, exploitation, harassment and subjugation in a patriarchal society. There has not been much can evolution from the age of Mahabharata to present day society. The plight of the women in the 21st century is not different from that of the women in ancient times

The demand for women's empowerment makes clear that every human being must need to be treated in a way where their dignity and rights are not getting violated. For a long millennium of time women are suffering from this harassment where their very existence is just nothing more than material, but as the world has evolved and women can now fight for their own rights, there are few sections of women to whom the light has not been yet ventured. To live in a civilized world, it is our duty as a human to help people to enlighten and take them out of any dogmatic state of mentality where it harms society in moving forward. We must educate our women and children so that they can carry on the legacy to the upcoming generation and take a part in building a nation.

India's journey on women empowerment and gender equality started when it became a sovereign state in 1967. White visible gains have been made through legal reforms, human development and grassroots initiatives; New Delhi still has a long way to go in many areas of women empowerment. A more concerted effort is needed to close the urban-rural divide and ensure that women in rural areas enjoy the same access to education, employment, health care and decision-making as their urban counterparts. The hardest challenge will be to change attitudes, given that many barriers to women empowerment are attributed to patriarchal and patrilineal traditions that are deeply entrenched in many South Asian Societies.

Women empowerment is a powerful tool to create a sustainable and progressive society. Women in our country face a lot of harassment, verbal abuse, mental abuse, rapes, discrimination at work etc. However, it is

possible to help women defend themselves against these injustice with different kinds of empowerment, such as social economic, educational, political and psychological. It is our responsibility to give women the freedom and opportunity to lead dignified and fulfilling life.

Today, an Indian woman is a pilot, doctor, engineer, astronaut, millionaire entrepreneur and everything she wants to be. That's now the times have changed. Women have proved to be better than men in all fields. However, as they were treated differently for so many years and were subject to equality since ancient India today, even after so many years, there still exist gaps in the context of women's empowerment. In many parts of the country, women are still subject to inequality and gender discrimination. Many times, various schemes and policies implemented for the sake of women do not reach them. Hence there are serious concerns that need to be resolved in time.

The Empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st Century not only at the national level but also at the international level. Women empowerment helps the society and world a better place to live in and march forward on way to inclusive participation. It means increase happiness for the family and the organizations where women make a difference. Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self-decision making participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality.

Women empowerment will be real and effective. Only they are endowed income and properly, so that they stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. Let us take the oath that we want an egalitarian society where everybody whether men of women get the equal opportunity to express and uplift one's well-being about women empowerment in the true sense there is a crying need for the elimination of the male superiority and patriarchal mindset. Also, women need to be given equal opportunities for education and employment without any sense of discrimination.

WOMEN VANDAN ADHINIYAM BILL



Last but not the least women empowerment (Women Vandan Adhiniyam Bill) was passed on dated 21/09/2023 by both the house of Parliament and decided to give 33% reservation to women in Parliament and State Legislative Assembly. The Bill will be implemented soon.



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**This Book
is dedicated to
all the women
of the world**

-:By:-

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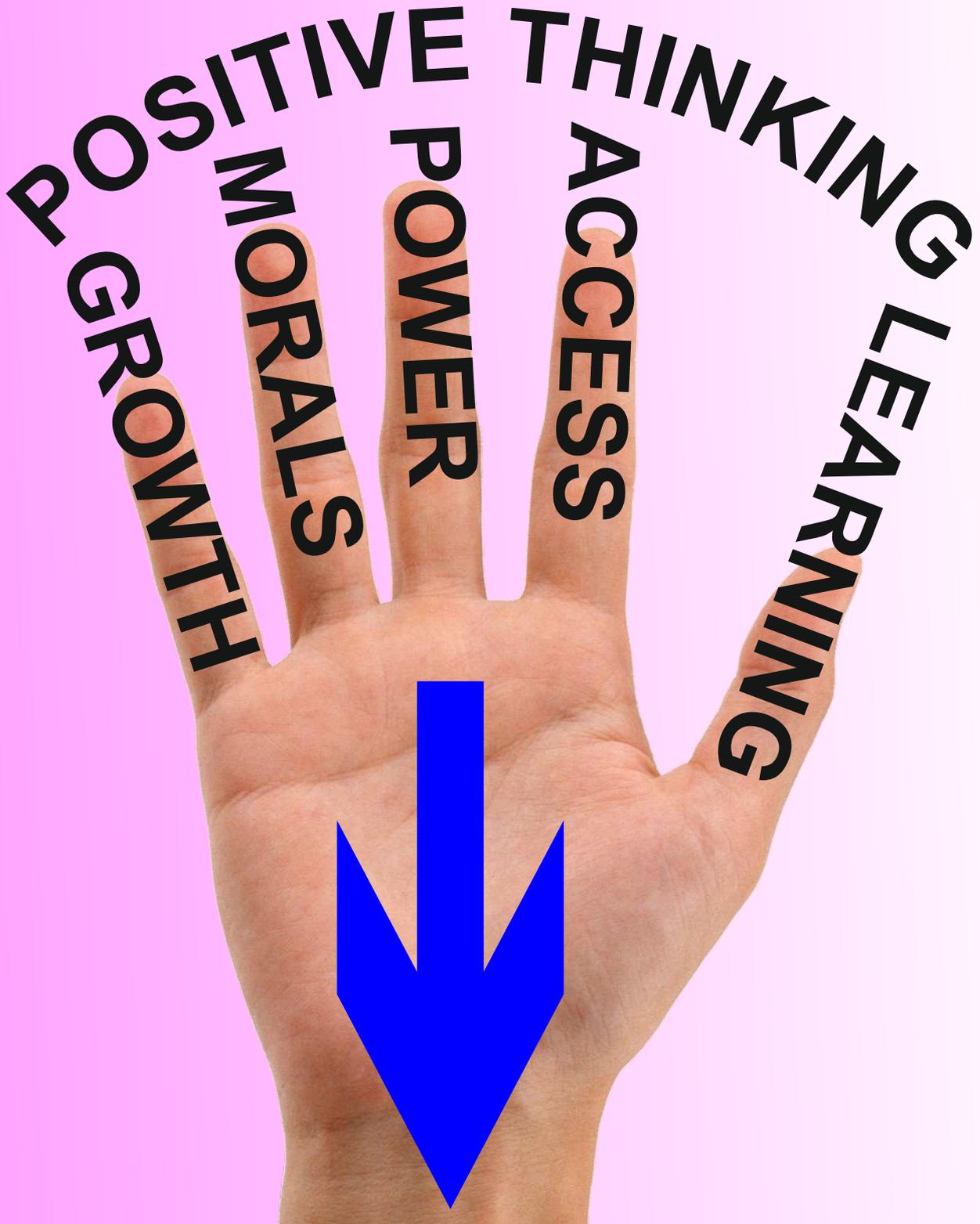
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Let's just pledge to respect women now these quotes highlight the importance of women and how they are a blessing.

- (i) Women are half of the world population, they perform nearly two-thirds of its work hours, earn one-tenth of the world's income, and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property. (This quotations is from United Nations Reports 1980)
- (ii) Educate a man and you educate an individual, educate a woman and you educate a family (A Cripps)
- (iii) It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the conditions of women is improved. A bird can't fly on only one wing. (Swami Vivekananda)
- (iv) If the world was taking care of women, women would take care of the world. (Jane Roberts)
- (v) All the nations have attained greatness by paying proper respects to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will be in the future. (Swami Vivekananda)
- (vi) I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress that women have achieved. (B.R. Ambedkar)
- (vii) The woman is the companion of the man is gifted with equal mental capacities. (Mahatma Gandhi)
- (viii) "A women is like a tea bag - You never know how strong she is untill she gets in hot water." (Eleanor Roosevelt)
- (ix) "The women who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. The women who walks alone is likely to find herself in places no one has been. before." Let us be the helping hand and let women decide whether. they want to join the Crowd or walk alone (Albert Einstein)
- (x) Lastly, as Albert Einstein has rightly said "The women who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. The women who walks alone is likely to find herself in places no one has been before", let us be the helping hand and let women decide whether they want to join the crowd or walk alone.



GOAL



EMPOWERMENT