

# Empowering Women for Viksit Bharat 2047: Challenges, Strategies, and Impact

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## Abstract

'GYAN' Garib, Yuva, Annadata, Nari are the four pillars of Viksit Bharat 2047. Empowering one of the four is crucial for Viksit Bharat's vision by 2047, but India faces entrenched challenges. Because of structural obstacles and societal norms, there persists disparities between genders between academic achievement and workforce contribution. It is important that we execute strategic interventions that emphasize education, healthcare availability, financial freedom, and policy reforms aimed at sustaining gender equality. Substantial societal benefits, such as higher efficiency, enhanced neighbourhoods, and more inclusive governance, will be provided by empowering women politically and economically. Prioritizing women's empowerment may assist India get near to its 2047 aim of becoming an enriched and just democracy.

**Keywords:** Women's Empowerment, Viksit Bharat, Challenges, Strategies, Policy Reforms, Workforce Participation

## Introduction

The year 2024 witnessed a dramatic election process and was witnessed with much anticipation by the rest of the world. In tune with the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Amrit Kaal' i.e. the golden period. It is anticipated that with a plethora of changes in almost all sectors, the country will witness a quantum leap and the trajectory of India will change from 'developing' to 'developed.' One of the main aims of the country is to turn into a \$ 30-trillion economy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of "Developed India," or Viksit Bharat, is more than simply a catchphrase; it is a comprehensive plan for the nation's growth. India will use this vision as a compass during its Amrit Kaal. Prime Minister Modi wants to improve India's standing internationally by combining social, technological, and economic reforms. This vision encompasses a wide range of ideas, including embracing technological innovation, inclusive development, and economic progress.

A key objective of Viksit Bharat is to enable every citizen to participate in the economy. The economy that PM Modi envisions is strong, inclusive, and full of job and entrepreneurial opportunities. This entails implementing policies to encourage investment, advance economic growth, and foster innovation across various industries. The government's dedication to creating an environment favourable for business expansion and employment generation is demonstrated by the focus on programmes such as Made in India, Digital India, and Startup India. With the support of digitisation, homegrown manufacturing, and a thriving

startup community, Prime Minister Modi hopes to raise millions out of poverty and realise the nation's full economic potential. Creating world-class infrastructure to support sustainable growth and raise everyone's level of living is another essential part of Viksit Bharat's mission. The government is initiating massive projects ranging from building top-notch roads, railroads, and ports to boosting internet connectivity and modernizing urban infrastructure in an effort to overcome infrastructural gaps across the nation. Initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission, Bharat Mala, Sagar Mala, and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana demonstrate the government's dedication to creating liveable, sustainable cities, improving connectivity, and providing everyone with affordable housing. The UDAN initiative, Vande Bharat trains, has simplified travel for ordinary residents. A seamless travel experience within cities has also been guaranteed by the growth of metro trains.

Viksit Bharat prioritises inclusive development and social welfare to ensure everyone benefits from economic progress. The administration has launched several landmark initiatives to support disadvantaged populations, empower marginalised communities, and expand social security, healthcare, and education. Programmes such as Ayushman Bharat, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana indicate the government's dedication to enhancing healthcare, financial inclusion, gender parity, and sanitation. PM Modi wants to build a more inclusive and equal society where all people can prosper, and he accomplishes this by placing greater importance on social welfare. Initiatives such as Jan Aushandu Kendras were able to save 30,000 crore rupees for individuals from poor and middle-class families by providing medicines at an 80% discount rate. Concerning environmental sustainability, Viksit Bharat aims to make India greener and cleaner. The government has started programmes to encourage renewable energy use, water conservation, and cleanliness, including the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Jal Jeevan Mission, and National Solar Mission. On a global level, PM Modi has endorsed sustainable development principles and the International Solar Alliance. The government aims to reduce environmental problems and create a sustainable future for future generations; thus, it supports conservation initiatives, climate-resilient infrastructure, and renewable energy. India is dedicated to upholding internationally acknowledged environmental standards and aims to achieve approximately fifty per cent of its installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

One of the key pillars of PM Modi's Viksit Bharat rests on harnessing technology to enhance efficiency and transparency in governance. Through platforms like Aadhaar and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), the government has streamlined the distribution of subsidies and welfare benefits, reduced leakages, and ensured that assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries directly. DBT helped the government eliminate ten crore fraudulent entries and successfully curbed financial leakages. DBT has saved nearly 3 lakh crore rupees from falling into the wrong hands in the country. Additionally, schemes like Ayushman Bharat have utilised technology to create a digital health infrastructure, enabling citizens easy and hassle-free access to healthcare services. Overall, the government's emphasis on leveraging technology for welfare purposes underscores its commitment to inclusive development and empowerment of all citizens. Inspired by PM Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat, India is making remarkable progress in every sector. Whether being the first nation to land on the moon's south pole or poised to become the world's third-largest economy, India is undeniably ascending on the path of development. The increasing cultural revival through programs such as the PRASHAD scheme and the Swadesh Darshan scheme ensures that Indian culture has garnered widespread popularity on the global stage. PM Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat is based on an ambitious and groundbreaking plan to achieve India's full potential and propel the country to unprecedented development and prosperity. To establish a more resilient and inclusive society where Janbhagidari is the

basis of the nation's success story. In addition, the government focuses on infrastructural development, social welfare, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

***“Men and women have equal rights. However, their duties may be different.” - Rig Veda***

A very crucial aspect of Viksit Bharat is gender equality. It is not merely a slogan but a fundamental principle that underpins the holistic development of a nation. In the vision of Viksit Bharat, where India aspires to achieve comprehensive development across economic, social, and cultural dimensions, gender equality emerges as a non-negotiable aspect. The empowerment of women and the elimination of gender-based discrimination are pivotal to realising the full potential of the nation. The purpose of this paper is three-fold:

- to understand the impact of ‘Viksit Bharat’ on women.
- ii) to identify the challenges before women in the current scenario.
- to suggest strategies to overcome the challenges

### Review of literature

**Aruna Deshpande and Puvvada Viswanadha Gupta (2024):** The aim of this study is to explore into the transformative impact of lifelong learning on women in Viksit Bharat, as they break stereotypes in traditionally male-dominated industries. Their journey showcases resilience, skill development, and societal evolution, emphasizing the integration of life education beyond formal settings. Through professional growth and empowerment, these women contribute significantly to their families and communities, challenging outdated norms and paving the way for a more inclusive workforce.

**Sanjeev Kumar and Disha Sirohi (2024):** This paper examines the positive trends in Female Labor Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) but addresses ongoing gender disparities, emphasising India's progress against sub-continental peers. Noteworthy increases in financial inclusion for Indian women, as evidenced by account holdings, mutual fund participation, and a spike in Demat account openings during the pandemic, signal progress. Bridging the gender investment gap requires tailored financial education initiatives and targeted financial products, aligning with India's vision for Viksit Bharat 2047.

**Rajesh Arora (2024)** The paper focuses on women empowerment in India encapsulates a transformative journey aimed at addressing historical gender disparities and promoting a society where women enjoy equal opportunities and rights. This multifaceted approach spans social, economic, and political dimensions, challenging entrenched norms and stereotypes. Initiatives such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, and Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana exemplify efforts to combat issues like female foeticide, promote education, and enhance economic independence among women. Economic empowerment is pivotal, supported by programs focusing on skill development and entrepreneurship, which not only foster financial stability but also contribute to overall community development. These efforts underscore a commitment to advancing women's empowerment across various facets of Indian society.

**E Shireesha (2021)** This study examines various women empowerment schemes, their benefits, and concludes that women should be empowered to make independent decisions for their own autonomy.

**Vineetha Nair (2024):** This paper examines the rise and rise of spiritual tourism in India, the relationship between spiritual tourism and cultural economy, the impact they have on each other, (using secondary data) and the role of Spiritual Tourism towards attainment of Viksit Bharat. The paper focuses on domestic spiritual tourism.

**L. Prathiba (2017)** This study explores the necessity of women's empowerment, reviews various empowerment schemes, and advocates for heightened awareness and rigorous implementation of program

and laws to counter male dominance in society.

**Rajalaxmi V (2017)** The aim of this study is to analyze the empowerment of women, the associated issues and challenges, and the impact of the MGNREGA scheme in India from 2005 to 2015. The study finds that economically empowering women through the MGNREGA scheme fosters greater independence and enhances self-esteem. It is identified as a significant catalyst in the empowerment of rural women, substantially improving their quality of life and economic circumstances.

**V. Darling Selvi (2018)** This paper explores the multifaceted concept of women's empowerment, encompassing its types, necessity, and specific focus on India. It delves into the historical background of women's empowerment in the country, examining its evolution alongside the Constitution of India and dedicated legislation. The paper discusses various governmental policies and schemes aimed at advancing women's empowerment, highlighting changes in women's societal roles. It identifies key characteristics of empowerment, promotional initiatives tailored for women in India, and assesses their impact.

**N. Ritikumar Singh (2024):** This paper analyses various welfare schemes and initiatives taken up by the government with a vision to make the country inclusively developed by 2047, the 100th year of its independence.

**Salman Dokadia (2024):** The aim of this study is to explore into the technical complexities underpinning the pursuit of a 5 trillion-dollar economy. It underscores the role of cutting-edge technologies in ushering India into a new era of economic prominence, shaping a narrative that extends beyond conventional economic boundaries. This paper aims to unravel the intricacies of India's economic aspirations, providing insights into the multifaceted dimensions that define its journey towards global economic leadership.

## Challenges

Empowering women in Viksit Bharat faces challenges such as deeply entrenched societal norms and gender stereotypes that restrict their access to education and economic opportunities. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure and safety concerns hinder women's full participation in the workforce and public life. Overcoming these barriers requires concerted efforts in policy reform, cultural change, and targeted interventions to ensure equitable opportunities for women's empowerment.

### 1. Individual Level Challenges

- **Social Norms and Cultural Barriers-** Traditional gender roles and societal expectations in India significantly impact women's lives. These norms often dictate women's roles within the family and society, affecting their access to opportunities in education, employment, and decision-making. Despite advancements, deep-rooted cultural beliefs can perpetuate inequalities and limit women's autonomy and agency.
- **Educational Attainment-** Disparities in access to education persist for girls in India, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Factors such as poverty, social norms favoring boys' education, and concerns about safety contribute to higher dropout rates among girls. Barriers to higher education include inadequate infrastructure, lack of female teachers as role models, and limited opportunities beyond primary schooling.
- **Healthcare Disparities-** Women in India face challenges accessing healthcare services due to factors such as geographical barriers, economic constraints, and cultural taboos. Gender-specific health issues such as maternal mortality, reproductive health, and diseases like breast cancer may not receive adequate attention or resources. Cultural taboos around women's health often lead to delayed treatment and poorer health outcomes.

- **Violence Against Women-** India grapples with various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry-related violence, and gender-based violence in public spaces. Despite legal frameworks such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and stringent laws against sexual offenses, enforcement remains uneven. Societal attitudes that blame victims or normalize violence contribute to underreporting and perpetuation of these crimes.

## 2. Organizational Level Challenges

- **Gender Pay Gap:** The gender pay gap in India persists due to several factors. Women often receive lower wages than their male counterparts for similar work, influenced by occupational segregation, discrimination, and biases in hiring and promotion practices. Additionally, societal expectations and traditional gender roles contribute to women being steered towards lower-paying sectors or positions. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, India ranks 140th out of 156 countries in terms of gender wage equality. On average, women in India earn 19% less than men in similar roles. This disparity underscores the need for greater transparency in pay scales and promotions to ensure equity in compensation practices.

- **Glass Ceiling:** Women in India face significant barriers to career progression, often encountering a "glass ceiling" that limits their advancement to senior leadership roles. Factors such as unconscious bias, lack of mentorship opportunities, and workplace cultures that favor male leadership styles contribute to this phenomenon. The representation of women in top leadership positions remains disproportionately low across sectors.

As of 2020, women held only 7.3% of board seats in NSE-listed companies in India, highlighting the stark underrepresentation in corporate governance. This underrepresentation underscores the need for targeted initiatives to break the glass ceiling, including leadership development programs and policies that promote gender diversity in decision-making roles.

- **Workplace Harassment:** Despite legislative measures like the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, workplace harassment continues to be a pervasive issue in India. Implementation of these policies varies, with many organizations lacking effective mechanisms for reporting and redressal. Cultural attitudes that normalize or minimize harassment further complicate efforts to create safe and inclusive work environments.

According to a survey by the Indian National Bar Association in 2020, nearly 70% of working women in India have experienced sexual harassment in some form or another. This statistic underscores the urgent need for organizations to strengthen their policies and foster a culture of zero tolerance towards harassment through awareness campaigns, training, and robust grievance mechanisms.

- **Work-Life Balance:** Balancing career aspirations with family responsibilities remains a significant challenge for women in India. Traditional gender roles place the burden of caregiving disproportionately on women, impacting their career progression and overall well-being. Limited access to affordable childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements further exacerbate these challenges.

A study by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) highlighted that women in urban India spend nearly six hours a day on unpaid care work, compared to less than an hour for men. This disparity underscores the critical need for organizations to implement policies that support work-life balance, such as parental leave policies, flexible working hours, and remote work options. Addressing these organizational level challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, employers, and society

at large to create inclusive workplaces where women can thrive professionally without compromising their personal responsibilities.

### 3. Industry Level Challenges

- **Sectoral Segregation:** Women in India are often concentrated in certain sectors such as education and healthcare, where they form a majority of the workforce. However, they are significantly underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields and manufacturing industries. This sectoral segregation perpetuates gender stereotypes and limits women's access to higher-paying and traditionally male-dominated sectors.

As of 2020, women constitute only about 14% of the total STEM workforce in India, reflecting the significant gender gap in these critical fields. In contrast, sectors like education and healthcare employ a larger percentage of women, highlighting the occupational segregation based on gender roles and societal expectations.

- **Entrepreneurship and Access to Resources:** Women entrepreneurs in India face numerous barriers, including limited access to finance, networks, and mentorship opportunities. Despite the government's initiatives to promote women entrepreneurship through schemes like the Stand-Up India and Mudra Yojana, accessing credit remains a challenge due to stringent collateral requirements and biased lending practices.

According to a report by Bain & Company and Google, women-led startups in India receive only about 2% of the total venture capital funding. This stark disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve access to capital and support networks for women entrepreneurs, fostering an ecosystem conducive to their growth and success.

- **Policy and Regulatory Environment:** While India has implemented policies aimed at promoting gender diversity in workplaces, their effectiveness varies due to gaps in compliance and enforcement mechanisms. The Companies Act, 2013 mandates certain disclosures regarding gender diversity on corporate boards, but the actual representation of women in leadership positions remains low.

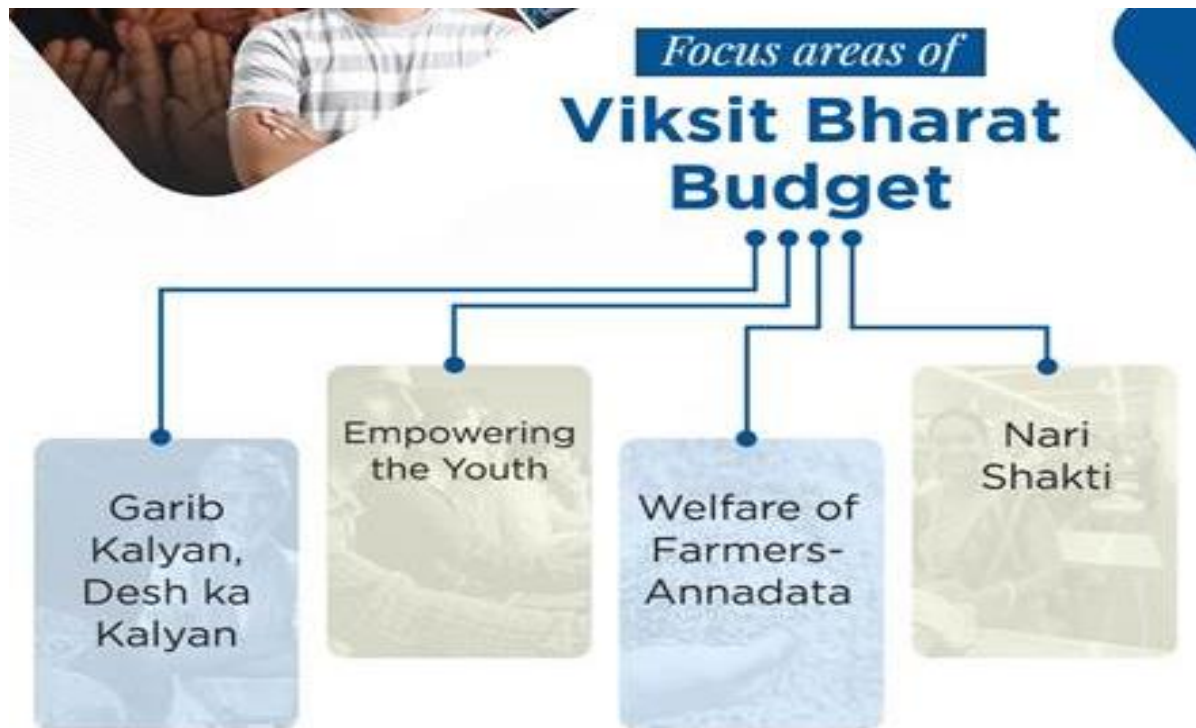
According to a study by Catalyst, women held only about 17% of board seats in NSE-listed companies in 2020. This indicates a need for stricter enforcement of existing regulations and proactive measures by companies to enhance gender diversity in decision-making roles. Strengthening policies and ensuring their effective implementation is crucial for creating inclusive work environments where women can thrive and contribute meaningfully. Addressing these industry level challenges requires collaborative efforts from policymakers, financial institutions, businesses, and civil society to dismantle barriers, promote gender equality, and empower women across all sectors of the economy.

### Strategies

A multifaceted strategy is being implemented to empower women by addressing their health, safety, education, employment and entrepreneurship--the full spectrum. These initiatives aim to ensure gender justice, equality and the full participation of women in shaping India's socio-economic, political and cultural landscape. Some of the strategies to cope up are:

- Robust network of 759 one-stop centers provides integrated support and assistance, benefiting over 8.3 lakh women.
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao program, which targets the root causes to prevent female feticide, results in an improved sex ratio at birth from 918 to 933 females per 1000 males.

- Education system promotes gender sensitive curriculum and need based education through the new education policy, resulting in parity in the gross enrollment ratio for girls and boys in higher education.
- India boasts one of the highest proportions of women enrolled in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines globally, at 43 per cent.
- India promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth through initiatives like the JAM Trinity and financial inclusion targets.
- Women hold over 55 per cent of accounts opened under the Prime Minister's Jandhan Yojna.
- Underscoring the Pradhan Mantri Grameen Digital Saksharta Abhyan by recognising the importance of digital literacy, over 52 per cent women have enrolled in the abhyan.
- Self-help groups connect around 100 million women, transforming the rural economic landscape and over four crore houses have been built for the poorest, with benefits availed only if they are in a woman's name or, at the very least, in joint names.
- Highlighting the budgeting allocation for this financial year exceeding \$37.3 billion.
- Maternal health remains a priority, with a significant decline in India currently in the maternal mortality ratio from 167 to 97. Frontline health care through the Asha program and the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana supports expectant mothers with financial support provided to over 3.31 crore mothers.
- Mudra Yojana under collateral-free loans through the Yojna support women entrepreneurs with one out of five non-farm businesses and 45 per cent of manufacturing enterprises led by women.
- The Stand Up India and Startup India schemes have benefited women entrepreneurs, with 10 per cent of funds reserved for women-led startups.
- India has also provided access to clean cooking fuel for ten crore households, safe tap water for 14 crore households and constructed over 13 crore household toilets, reducing time, poverty and the care burden on women.
- Sanitary napkins are now 100 per cent tax exempt in India and is being sold through government stores at rupees one per pad, enhancing accessibility.
- India boasts over 14 lakh elected women representatives, making up 46 per cent of the total number of representatives in panchayats and municipal corporations.
- The women's reservation bill 2023, reserves one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, empowering women leaders from panchayats, which are at the grassroots level, to the parliament at the center.
- India has 15 per cent women pilots in civil aviation, which is significantly higher than the global average of 5 per cent.



Source: [pib.gov.in](http://pib.gov.in)

### Impact

Women empowerment in the Indian context has profound implications across societal, economic, and political spheres. Empowering women through education, economic opportunities, and social initiatives enhances their agency and contributes to overall national development. Economically, empowered women drive growth by participating more actively in the workforce, starting businesses, and contributing to household incomes. This boosts GDP and reduces poverty rates, as seen in studies linking gender equality to economic prosperity.

Socially, empowered women challenge traditional norms, advocating for gender equality and influencing generational shifts in attitudes towards women's roles. This fosters more inclusive and supportive communities. Politically, increased female representation in governance improves decision-making, prioritizing issues such as healthcare, education, and social welfare that benefit society.

Despite progress, challenges like gender-based violence and cultural barriers persist. Continued efforts to strengthen legal protections, ensure equal access to education and healthcare, and promote women's leadership are crucial for sustained empowerment. Ultimately, women empowerment in India is not just about gender parity but about harnessing untapped potential for a more equitable and prosperous society. Empowering women in Viksit Bharat (Developed India) can have profound impacts across various dimensions of society and the economy:

- **Economic Growth:** Women's empowerment leads to increased economic productivity and growth. When women participate fully in the economy, through employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership roles, it expands the labor force and enhances overall productivity. **Poverty Reduction:** Empowered women are better equipped to generate income and contribute to household and community well-being. This can lead to poverty reduction as women invest in their families' education, health, and nutrition.



- **Health and Well-being:** Women's empowerment improves health outcomes, both for themselves and their families. Educated and empowered women are more likely to access healthcare services, leading to better maternal and child health outcomes and reduced mortality rates.
- **Education:** Empowering women increases access to education for girls and improves educational outcomes overall. Educated women are more likely to educate their children, creating a positive cycle of education and empowerment across generations.
- **Political and Social Participation:** Women's empowerment enhances their ability to participate in decision-making processes at all levels of society, including politics and community leadership. This leads to more inclusive policies and better representation of women's interests.
- **Gender Equality:** Empowering women promotes gender equality by challenging discriminatory practices and stereotypes. It fosters a society where women and men have equal opportunities and rights, contributing to social justice and harmony.
- **Innovation and Development:** Women's empowerment fosters innovation by bringing diverse perspectives and talents to the table. When women are empowered to participate in STEM fields and entrepreneurial ventures, it sparks creativity and drives technological advancements.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Women often play key roles in natural resource management and environmental conservation efforts. Empowering women enhances their ability to advocate for sustainable practices and contribute to environmental stewardship.
- **Peace and Stability:** Empowered women contribute to peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts in their communities. Their involvement promotes stability and resilience in the face of social, economic, and political challenges.
- **Cultural Transformation:** Women's empowerment challenges traditional gender roles and norms, leading to a more inclusive and progressive society. It encourages a shift towards values of equality, respect, and dignity for all individuals.

Empowering women in Viksit Bharat is not only a matter of justice and human rights but also a strategic imperative for sustainable development and prosperity. It unlocks the full potential of half the population, creating a more equitable, resilient, and thriving society by 2047 and beyond.

## Conclusion

To sum up, empowering women is vital for Viksit Bharat 2047 both from a moral and strategic point of view. It will need consistent efforts and intentional measures to eradicate enduring gender gaps in roles in making choices, education, and the workforce. India can fully use its female population if it guarantees fair economic opportunities, improves access to education, and enforces laws that support gender equality. Beyond simply economic advantages, empowering women has an advantageous impact on more inclusive governance structures and better communities. In the end, attaining gender parity makes Viksit Bharat stronger and prosperous. Prioritizing women's empowerment will be vital as India moves closer to 2047 to realize a society in which all people, regardless of gender, can make an important impact to the development and financial health of their country.

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