

Women Empowerment in the Globalised Era – An Analysis

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Abstract:

Women empowerment refers to the process of enabling women to gain control over their lives, make independent decisions, and access the same opportunities and rights as men in all spheres of life. It involves the removal of barriers that restrict women's social, economic, political, and educational participation, and it aims to address inequality, promote gender justice, and create an environment where women can thrive and achieve their full potential. In today's interconnected world, the concept of women empowerment has gained significant attention as a crucial element for achieving gender equality and social justice. This analysis seeks to explore the multifaceted dimensions of women empowerment in the context of globalization, highlighting its importance, challenges, and potential solutions. In conclusion, the empowerment of women in a globalized era is a complex yet vital endeavor. It requires collaborative efforts from individuals, communities, and nations to address the challenges and leverage the opportunities presented by globalization. By recognizing and supporting the empowerment of women, societies can work towards achieving equality and fostering sustainable development for all. Women empowerment is a multifaceted concept aimed at addressing the historical and systemic inequalities faced by women. By promoting education, economic participation, legal rights, political representation, and social equality, the empowerment of women is essential for building a more just and inclusive society. It is a powerful tool not just for women's development, but for the progress of entire communities and nations.

Introduction

India has come a long way since independence. Women, who constitute nearly half of the population, play a very significant role in the homes and outside. The future of mankind is thus linked to the development of women's potential. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said "To awake people it is the women who must be awakened once she is on themove, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves." After independence the constitution has given equal opportunities to men and women on paper yet women remain secondary to men. Female employment in India has an intrinsic relationship with female empowerment. Female employment and empowerment have been considerable issues over the years. The rise in economic growth in India has brought significant change to the lives of Indian women and ultimately affects the female employment. The national Household survey, Periodic Labour Force Survey, conducted by National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), reveals the female employment status in India. No doubt that the Female labour force participation (FLFPR) rate in India, which refers to women who are either working or looking for a job, is below the global average of 47 percent for several years. But the commendable fact

is that the women empowerment over the years has taken the female employment at the risings steps. Though it is still not at par with global average, however, it's improving over the years. The latest Periodic Labour Force Survey for 2021-22 highlights that the FLFPR for prime working age group (15 years & above) has increased considerably and stood at 32.8% in India. Experiencing structural improvements to their lives, such as decline in fertility rates and expansion of women's education brought India's female LFPR on an upward track. Now, India is a country where one third of women have joined the labour force

Present Status of Indian Women: An Overview

The status of women in India has evolved significantly over the years, influenced by cultural, economic, and political factors. Despite notable progress, women continue to face challenges that impede their full participation in society. This overview aims to highlight the current status of women in India, focusing on education, employment, health, and social issues.

Education is a fundamental aspect of women's empowerment. The literacy rate for women in India has increased over the years, reaching approximately 70% in recent statistics. Government initiatives, such as the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme, have encouraged families to educate their daughters. However, disparities remain, particularly in rural areas, where cultural norms may prioritize boys' education over girls'. Access to quality education is still a challenge, with many girls dropping out due to early marriages and household responsibilities.

Employment is another critical area where women face hurdles. While more women are entering the workforce, they often occupy lower-paying jobs with limited opportunities for advancement. According to recent data, women's participation in the labor force is around 23%, which is significantly lower than that of men. Factors contributing to this gap include societal expectations, lack of childcare facilities, and workplace discrimination. Women entrepreneurs are emerging, yet they encounter barriers such as access to finance and business networks.

Health is a vital component affecting women's status in India. Women face various health issues, including maternal mortality, malnutrition, and reproductive health challenges. Although the government has made strides in improving healthcare access, many women still lack necessary information and services. Awareness campaigns and healthcare programs targeting women's health have been introduced, but societal stigma around certain health issues persists, hindering progress.

Social issues, including gender-based violence and discrimination, continue to impact women's status. Reports of domestic violence, sexual harassment, and human trafficking are concerning. Legal frameworks exist to protect women's rights, but enforcement remains weak. Initiatives to raise awareness and educate communities about gender equality are crucial in addressing these issues.

Sex Ratio

From 972 females per 1000 males in 1901, the figure stood up at 946 females per 1000 males-at independence. The sex-ratio which declined to 930 in 1971 again went upto 945 in 2021. It came down by seven in 1991 and stood at 927. It has against risen by 6 points of 933 females for 1000 males in 2001.

Table 1: Sex Ratio (No. of Women per 1000 males)

Year	No. of Women
1901	972

1947	946
1971	930
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933
2011	943
2021	945

Source: Census Report, Government of India.

Literacy Rate

Seventies the male literature population was 46.77 percent compared to 24.68 percent for females. As per the 1981 census, 75 percent of women were illiterate. According to 1991 Census the female literacy rate was 39.4 percent compared to 63.86 percent for males. 2001 figures showed 75.85 percent literate males and 54.16% literate females.

Table 2: Literacy Rate

Year	Total	Male percent	Female percent	Differential
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	21.69
2021	77.70	84.70	70.30	14.4

Source: Census Report, Government of India

In 2021 was 77.70%, with 84.70% of men and 70.30% of women being literate. This is an increase of 2.6% from 2018 to 2021, and an increase of 0.8% from 2020 to 2021. The gender gap is more pronounced in rural areas, where only 66% of women aged 15–49 are literate, compared to 81% of men.

Crimes against Women

Crimes against women encompass a wide range of offenses that specifically target women based on their gender. These crimes include domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and harassment. Understanding the nature and impact of these crimes is crucial for fostering a safer society and advocating for women's rights.

Domestic Violence is a pervasive issue that affects individuals regardless of age, race, or socioeconomic status. It refers to abusive behaviors in intimate relationships, where one partner seeks to gain or maintain power and control over another. This abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, or financial. Victims often face challenges in seeking help due to fear, stigma, or lack of resources. Raising awareness about domestic violence is essential to support victims and implement preventive measures.

Sexual Assault is another critical area of concern. It includes any unwanted sexual contact, ranging from groping to rape. Research indicates that a significant number of sexual assaults go unreported, often due to feelings of shame or fear of not being believed. Educational programs that focus on consent and respect are vital in addressing this issue, particularly among college students, who may be at increased risk.

Human Trafficking is a severe violation of human rights and often disproportionately affects women and girls. Victims are often deceived or coerced into sex work or forced labor. This crime thrives in environments of poverty, instability, and lack of education. Combating human trafficking requires a multifaceted approach, including legal action, support services for victims, and public awareness campaigns.

Harassment, whether in the workplace or public spaces, remains a significant barrier to women's safety and equality. This can manifest as verbal abuse, unwanted advances, or threats. Establishing clear policies against harassment and promoting a culture of respect and accountability can help mitigate this issue.

Crimes against Women

Year	Dowry deaths	Reported Rapes	Domestic Violence
2008	8172	21467	81344
2009	8383	21397	89546
2010	8391	22172	94041
2011	8618	24206	99135
2012	8233	24923	106527
2020	6843	28046	136000
2021	6753	31677	137956
2023	6400	31204	28811

Source: Government Data (OGD)

Crimes against women continue unabated. There were 21467 reported victims of rape in 2008 and 8172 dowry deaths. According to today's official statistics there are more than 9000 women killed in dowry related crimes in India every year. Thousands of others commit suicide or die accidental deaths. Despite stringent laws justice is a distant dream for most victims.

Work Participation

Approximately 90 percent of the women workers are engaged in the unorganized sector. Of these over 80 percent are in agriculture and allied occupations. In the organized sector women constitute only 13.3 percent of all employees. In the public sector, they account for 11 percent of total employment and in the private sector for 17.8 percent. Apart from their domestic duties, women are engaged in agricultural operations. Despite this, their access to ownership of land, credit and other productive resources remain negligible.

Participation of women in workforce

The data on Employment and Unemployment is collected through Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) which is conducted by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) since 2017-18. The survey period is July to June every year.

As per the latest available Annual PLFS Reports, the estimated Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) on usual status for females of age 15 years and above during the years 2017-18 to 2022-23 are as follows:

Participation of women in workforce(2017 to 2023)

Year	LFPR(in%)	WPR (in%)
2017-18	23.3	22.0
2018-19	24.5	23.3
2019-20	30.0	28.7
2020-21	32.5	31.4
2021-22	32.8	31.7
2022-23	37.0	35.9

Source: PLFS, MoSPI

The data indicates that the women's participation in labour force and the workforce has significantly increased over the years. During 2022-23, the women participation in labour force has notable increased to 37.0%. As per PLFS 2021-22, about 33.6% of women wanted to continue their studies, while 44.5% cited childcare/personal commitments in homemaking as reasons for not participating in the labour force.

Suggestions to Improve the Conditions of Women Workers

The efforts of the government to improve the conditions of the women workers although inadequate are praise worthy, the failure of these efforts is either due to the corrupt practices of the functionaries involved in the implementation or the beneficiaries are not so capable to utilize these programmes for their own betterment. To improve the conditions of women workers in the unorganized sector there is need to develop the capacities of these women so that they may get the maximum out of these efforts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the present status of women in India shows improvement in various areas, significant challenges remain. Continuous efforts are needed to promote gender equality, enhance educational opportunities, improve employment prospects, and ensure health and safety for women. Empowering women is not only a matter of social justice but also essential for the overall development of the nation. Addressing crimes against women involves collective action from individuals, communities, and governments. Education plays a crucial role in changing attitudes and behaviors. By fostering a society that values respect and equality, we can work towards reducing these crimes and supporting survivors. It is essential to engage in open discussions, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for policies that protect women's rights and promote their well-being.

The above analysis reveals that, no doubt the role of women is indispensable in the globalization process. In recognizing that importance of gender equality a number of institution and organization have been established. Despite this still the literary rare of females is around 50 percent in all the developing countries including India. Apart from this economic participation, political empowerment is equally important. All the efforts to improve the conditions of women depend upon the external will of the government, financial resources, emotional commitment, and self-confidence of women.

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