

Women's Empowerment, Economic Development and Employment in Indian Economy

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ABSTRACT: Women empowerment and economic development are closely related: in one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, empowering women may benefit development. Development policies and programs tend not to view women as integral to the economic development process. This is reflected in the higher investments in women's reproductive rather than their productive roles, mainly in population programs. Yet women throughout the developing world engage in economically productive work and earn incomes. They work primarily in agriculture and in the informal sector and increasingly, in formal wage employment. Their earnings, however, are generally low. Since the 1950s, development agencies have responded to the need for poor women to earn incomes by making relatively small investments in income-generating projects. Often such projects fail because they are motivated by welfare and not development concerns, offering women temporary and part-time employment in traditionally feminine skills such as knitting and sewing that have limited markets. By contrast, over the past twenty years, some non-governmental organizations, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association in India, have been effective in improving women's economic status because they have started with the premise that women are fundamental to the process of economic development.

KEY WORDS: Population Programs, informal sector, development agencies, income generating projects, nongovernmental organizations, Empowerment, Economic Development and Employment.

INTRODUCTION:

Women and men are different not only in their obvious physical attributes, but also in their psychological makeup. There are actual differences in the way women's and men's brains are structured and "wired" and in the way they process information and react to events and stimuli. Women and men differ in the way they communicate, deal in relationships, express their feelings, and react to stress. Thus, the gender differences are based in physical, physiological, and psychological attributes. There are psychological theories that present a gender sensitive viewpoint called as alpha bias, and there are others that are gender neutral representing beta bias. Alpha bias proposes that men and women are different and opposite, and in beta bias differences between men and women are ignored. Alpha bias is seen in psychodynamic theories and therapies where according to Freudian viewpoint, male anatomy and masculinity is the most desired and cherished goal and female anatomy and femininity are seen as a deviation. In contrast, the cognitive theories, behavioral theories, and humanistic-existential theories have beta bias. Alpha bias could be rooted more in the social conditioning and power structure in the societies.

Gender roles have been culturally prescribed through the prehistoric cultures to the more civilized societies. In hunter-gatherer societies, women were generally the gatherers of plant foods, small animal foods, fish, and learned to use dairy products while men hunted meat from large animals. In more recent history, the gender roles of women have changed greatly. Traditionally, middle-class women are typically involved in domestic tasks emphasizing child care. For poorer women, economic necessity compels them to seek employment outside the home. The occupations that are available to them are; however, lower in pay than those available to men leading to exploitation. Gradually, there has been a change in the availability of employment to more respectable office jobs where more education is demanded. Thus, although, larger sections of women from all socioeconomic classes are employed outside the home; this neither relieves them from their domestic duties nor does this change

their social position significantly. For centuries, the differences between men and women have been socially defined and distorted through a lens of sexism in which men assumed superiority over women and maintained it through domination. This has led to underestimating the role a woman plays in the dyad of human existence. It is necessary to understand and accept that women and men differ in biological attributes, needs, and vulnerabilities.

The persistent of gender inequality is most starkly brought home in the phenomenon of “missing women”. Today it is estimated that 6million women are missing every year (World Bank 2011) of these, 23 percent are never born, and 10 percent are missing in early childhood, 21 percent in the reproductive years, and 38 percent above the age of 60. For each missing women, there are many more women who fail to get an education, a job, or a political responsibility that they would have obtained if they had been men. Both the relative deprivation of women, and the extent to which there have been improvements over the last twenty years, are apparent in a number of spheres. In access to education in low and moderate income countries, the enrolment rate for girls in secondary school was 34 percent in 2010, while that for boys was 41 percent.

Meanwhile primary school enrolment has become nearly universal for both boys and girls. In labour market opportunities: women are less likely to work; they earn less than men for similar work, and are more likely to be in poverty even when they work. Women spend almost twice as much time on housework, almost five times as much time on child care, and about half as much time on market work as men do. In political representation: women constituted just 19.4 percent of the members of lower and upper houses of parliaments in July 2011. In legal rights: women in many countries still lack independent rights to own land, manage property, conduct business, or even travel without their husband’s consent.

There is a bidirectional relationship between economic development and women’s empowerment defined as improving the ability of women to access the constituent of development - in particular health, education, earning opportunities, rights, and political participation. In one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, continuing discrimination against women can as Sen. has forcefully argued and hinder development. Empowerment can, in other words accelerate development.

This paper reviews the evidence on both sides of the empowerment–development relationship. It first shows that poverty and lack of opportunity breed inequality between men and women, so that when economic development reduces poverty, the condition of women improves on two counts: first, when poverty is reduced, the condition of everyone, including women, improves, and second, gender inequality declines as poverty declines, so the condition of women improves more than that of men with development, however, is not enough to bring about complete equality between men and women.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Duflo (2000) finds in households where there is a woman receiving an old-age pension compared to households where no one receives a pension, girls have better anthropometric status (weight for height and height for age). Atkin (2009) uses Mexican data to study the effect of mothers' employment in manufacturing on children's height for age. Engle (1993) provides cross-sectional data from Guatemala to show that a higher female budget share is associated with better children's nutritional status (measured by height for age, weight for age, and weight for height). Phipps and Burton (1998) use data from the 1992 Expenditure Survey in Canada and focus on married-couple households where both spouses work full time. The authors find that a higher share of wives' income is correlated with higher expenditures on

Child care, children's clothing, women's clothing, and food. Kennedy and Peters (1992) compare female headed with male headed households in Kenya and Malawi and find that in female headed households (typically headed by a widow, who is often the grandmother of the children in the

household), a larger share of the budget is spent on food. The paper also documents better anthropometric outcomes (weight for age and height for age). For Malawi, the paper also documents smaller expenditure shares on alcohol. The econometric specification does not control for income, but interestingly female-headed households have better child anthropometric outcomes despite overall lower incomes. Thomas (1990) uses Brazilian survey data collected in 1974/75 to study gender differences in the impact of non-wage income on health and nutrition in Brazil. He finds that maternal income increases family nutrition by four to seven times more than income of men. Both total calory intake as well as protein intake is affected more by female than by male income. Child survival is highly positively related to unearned income of mothers, and the effect is 20 times larger compared to unearned income of men. Maternal income also has a larger effect on two anthropometric outcomes (weight for height and height for age). Thomas (1994) uses the relative education level of the wife compared to the husband as a proxy for bargaining power. Based on data from the United States, Brazil, and Ghana, the paper documents that the mother's education has a bigger effect on the nutritional status of girls (measured by height for age) compared to the father's education, while the opposite is true for boys. In addition, recent randomized field experiments have found that transfers to men running small businesses lead to a substantial increase in business profit a few years later, whereas no such effect is found for women (De Mel, McKenzie, and Woodruff 2009; Fafchamps et al. 2011).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the relation between women empowerment, employment, and the economic development.
- To examine the relation between the women empowerment and education.
- To understand the relation between the women empowerment and the poverty levels.
- To explore the major problems faced by Indian women today.
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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

The word Women Empowerment essentially means that the women have the power to regulate the activities in day to day in the external environment as in the social, political and economic terms. Women's empowerment is the new phrase in the economic development. There are many researchers and scholars have proved that increase in women empowerment has a drastic change in the economic development. Empowering women and promoting gender equality are enshrined as global development activities within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the 2000's. Women agency and freedom are among the crucial means for enhancing to their development. In the 21st century most of the women are involved in the agriculture and home based activities as shown below.

Table 1: Levels and trends in sector wise composition of women by sector and region (%) for the years 2009-2010

Year:	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Services	Mining
2009-2010					
North	70.1	6.4	2.4	20.9	0.2
Centre	76.9	5.5	8.8	8.7	0.2
North-East	67.9	4.0	9.6	18.3	0.2
East	59.4	18.7	4.0	17.4	0.6
West	72.3	5.9	1.8	19.9	0.2
South	61.4	14	5.6	18.5	0.6

Source: Authors' calculations from several rounds of NSSO unit level data.

Notes: Definition of Region: North – Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Chandigarh; Centre – Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh; East - Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal; West - Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa; South – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala; North-East – Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram,

Manipur and Tripura. Data for states created in 2000 (Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand) were merged with the original states to maintain comparability over time periods.

From the above table it was clear that women participation in different sectors as shown above India stands fifth in agriculture, third in manufacturing, third in construction, sixth in services and third in mining. From this we can say that the women can withstand in any sector so by making some development interventions and programs make them to be more effectively involved in many fields and make economy as developed.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

The Indian women have spread of their age old shackles of serfdom and male domination. She has come to her own and started scaling the ladder of social advance with proud and dignity. Women in India are now uplifted and granted equal status with the men in all of life activities including the political, social, domestic and educational. But still there is a need to motivate and encourage women to participate in the activities because women secure around of in the total population. For this, Women empowerment must need some interventions for making women to be involved in the economic development of the country. The development interventions which must focus on the real gender needs, including women's income and material assets which will lead to the increased women empowerment and decreased poverty. From this intervention the women empowerment will start and led to the extent. With the implementation of some new interventions the rate of increase in the women empowerment will raise to mark. Duflo's explanation was that there was a positive correlation between women's rights and the per capita GDP in terms of a cost benefit calculus. From this point of view it was clear that by increase in the women empowerment the economic development may a raise

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH:

Most women in the India rely more on the informal work sector for an income. If women are empowered to do more the possibility for economic growth will be at large. If the informal sector is involved into many tasks and activities then there will be more growth. It was proved that female participation in counsels, groups and businesses is seen to be an increase in efficiency. For instance how an empowered women can impact a situation monetarily this was done by fortune 500 companies, "Those with more women's in the category of board directors had significantly higher financial returns, including 53% higher returns on equity, 24% higher returns on the sales and 67% higher returns on the invested capital (OECD,2008)." This study shows that there was an impact of women in the overall economic benefits of the company. If this was implemented on the global scale then the women in the formal workforce can increase the economic output of a nation. There by the increase in the economic growth of the nation.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND EDUCATION:

Education is most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self confidence to participate fully in the development process. It is necessary for everyone mostly to girls and women because it is an entry point to other opportunities. Investments in secondary level education yield especially more and higher dividends. At present in the 21st century there was no difference made it eh matters of education between boys and girls. Girls who have been educated can recognize the importance of health care and their children needs. Women's literacy rates are lower when compared to men in the developing countries like India. Finally if the women are educated then the status will be improved in the economy. Thereby they can grab more number of opportunities and become stronger and powerful than earlier.

"If you educate a man an individual is educated if you educate a woman the entire family is educated."

Table2: Women participation in the education and labour force participation rate

Countries	Primary Education Enrolment (in %)	Secondary Education Enrolment (in %)	Labor force Participation Rate (in %)

Pakistan	38	12	14
India	78	28	34
Srilanka	108	76	38
Bangladesh	76	16	60

Source: Authors' calculations from several rounds of NSSO unit level data.

From the above table India can improve with comparison to the Srilanka and more over India's must concentrate on certain programs for making people to be enrolled in the secondary education.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND POVERTY:

Investing in the girl's education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty. As income poverty goes down women become more empowered. Development activities should include both build the capacity of women to do this and also ensure that they have the material support and social networks not just to overcome any restrictions but to be able to enjoy an increased ability to make choices about their own futures. Women living in the extreme poverty will not have to struggle to progress along the road of empowerment this is done through engagement in economic activities or through mobilizing against the powerful to claim their rights, for this women will have to work hard. Women in the extreme poverty firstly concentrate on the practical needs which reflect on the daily activities for survival. Hence by having women empowerment the poverty lines will be reduced.

Table 3: Levels and trends in female labour force participation rates by region (%) for the years 2009-2010

Year: 2009-2010	Paid	Unpaid	LFPR
North	23.2	12.2	36.0
Centre	22.6	18.4	41.1
North-East	17.3	13.0	31.6
South	38.5	11.4	51.0

From the above table it was mentioned that the labour participation levels in the economy by regions wise says that south people stand first in the paid form of participation after that India simultaneously in the unpaid participation also India stands second position which means that there is a scope for converting these unpaid into paid by empowering them. Labor participation was levels were good it not large in percentage there is a scope for making the improvement in the percentage and make India as first in the participation rates.

Women, employment and empowerment in Indian Economy:

India has experienced rapid growth and development in the past years in many spheres. Gender equity is not one of them. This is deplorable considering the important role played by women in the socio-economic growth of the country.

The Indian development model has yet to fully incorporate the important role played by women for propelling the socio-economic growth of the country. Current governments at state and central level must understand that no nation can progress unless its women are given equal access to opportunities and adequate safety and security.

A member of the so-called "BRICS" countries, India is noted for its rapidly expanding economy. Though India has certainly grown more prosperous in the recent decades, some groups have benefited from this boom more than others. In particular, women have faced a range of structural and social barriers in fully participating in the Indian economy, which not only hinders their individual agency but also limits India's ability to continue to modernize.

Gender discrimination begins at a young age. Girls face a range of structural barriers that contribute to unequal educational and economic performance: for example, only 53% of schools have sanitary facilities for girls.

Further, the threat of gender-based violence discourages girls and women from leaving their homes and is used by some parents to justify marrying off daughters before the legal age of 18; however, marriage provides girls little protection from violence—over 50% of both male and female adolescents justify wife beating, and 6 in 10 men admit physically abusing their wives. There are numerous instances of rapes and sexual assaults on girls and young women across the country, most notably the gang rape and subsequent death of a physiotherapy student in Delhi in 2012 that spawned nationwide protests and the BBC documentary India's Daughter.

Viewpoints:

- Across the globe, educating women and giving them the ability to stand on their own feet has been a priority. In India, social evils and a rising rape rate are confronting women in urban and rural areas, regardless of which political party is at the helm. Women are not being given a chance to become stronger in the political sector.
- The Women's Reservation Bill of 2013 is being vociferously opposed on the grounds that it will deny opportunities to persons of other groups. When it comes to legislations which aim to reduce gender inequity, India has a long way to go.
- Ancient India was a centre of learning and noted women scholars during that time contributed to the advancement of society. Women icons in India's rural areas are few and far in between. While most are aware of the high profile lady entrepreneurs and corporate heads in urban India, women in rural areas continue to face exploitation. If women are allowed to gain access to education, they can make a huge impact in enhancing the productivity of the economy.
- Noted rural entrepreneurs such as Jashwantiben Popat who pioneered Lijjat papad are proof of the strong capabilities of Indian women to mould positive social change in India. From 7 women working in one building to over 43,000 lady workers, Lijjat papad is a corporate initiative that is fuelling the economy.
- Empowered Indian women can also pioneer self help groups and initiatives for creating positive social change in rural or underdeveloped areas. There are notable examples of women self help groups in India which have generated employment and income for many families in villages and small towns.
- Women can also contribute to the social welfare of the country. Noted lady activists have championed the cause of gender justice and equity. They are shining examples of what India can accomplish if lady leaders are at the helm. Women-friendly policies and laws will be framed as a result of this. This can change the way the world looks at India.
- Stalwart women leaders such as Vijalakshmi Pandit and Sarojini Naidu played a key role in the Indian freedom movement.
- Now, women such as Ela Bhatt who founded SEWA are empowering women to gain freedom from poverty and unemployment. Women entrepreneurs are also benefiting from some of the well-implemented governmental programs at central and state level.
- They can contribute significantly to the growth the development of India in multifaceted ways.

Data at a glance:

- As per recent report by ILO, India and Pakistan have the lowest rates of women's labour force participation in Asia. In India, the worrying cause is further declining of labour force participation.
- According to National Sample Survey, in 1999-2000, 25.9% of all women worked and by 2011-12 this proportion had dropped to 21.9%.
- This is in contrast with global trends as well as countries like Nepal, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in Asia that have the highest women labour force participation. Even countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia are placed behind them.

- Of the 185 nations that are part of the ILO database, since the 1990s, 114 countries have recorded an increase in the proportion of women in the workforce. 41 countries have recorded the decline and India is leading the pack here.
- Even the Economic Survey 2016-17 expressed concern that the demographic dividend is already receding, reducing the opportunity for the Indian economy to catch up with its East Asian counterparts.
- The declining participation of women in labour force and subsequently in economy tells a sorry story about India's growth. It needs to be seen what ails the falling down of women participation.

Access:

- One explanation can be, with rising incomes, women have the opportunity to escape harsh labour in farms and on construction sites. They can now focus more on families.
- But another view, possibly more realistic one is- with declining farm sizes, rising mechanisation, and consequently dwindling labour demands in agriculture, women are being forced out of workforce.
- If the latter view is true, it has a serious implication on future policies pertaining to agriculture, economy and women empowerment.
- Research shows that when women have access to more work opportunities, they take them instantly.
- India Human Development Survey (IHDS) with other partners found that work provisions under MGNREGA have brought more rural women into wage labour.
- This can be verified from the fact that 45% were not in wage labour before the scheme was initiated.
- Moreover, increased availability of wage work also enhances women's control over household decision-making

Creating opportunities:

- However, it is imperative to explore other avenues for work for women as MGNREGA cannot be expected to provide consistent stable employment.
- From policy perspective, two main challenges have to be addressed for augmenting women's workforce participation rates:

Agricultural to non agricultural work:

- Because of shrinking farm work, there is need to create opportunities for women to move from agricultural to non-agricultural manual work.
- A research by University of Maryland finds that where roads were constructed between the first (2004-05) and second (2011-12) survey of IHDS, both men and women were more likely to undertake non-agricultural work but this effect was greater for women.
- The construction of roads has cascading effect such as improvement in transportation services such as buses, which in turn can facilitate movement of the rural workforce, especially women, into non-agricultural work in neighboring villages and towns.

White collar job access:

- On the other end of the employment spectrum too, it is necessary to make possible for educated women to continue work even while raising families.
- In India, the prevalence of a rigid work environment and dearth of family-friendly work institutions create impediments to women's access to white-collar jobs in the formal sector.
- Also, long distances between the home and the workplace increase both commuting time and work burdens, leaving workers with even less time for family duties.

- Hence, there must be a work environment that allows more women, especially urban and educated women, to take up salaried jobs.

Single handed responsibility:

- It has been known worldwide that women continue to bear the major share of household work and childcare.
- The women are expected to invest more in child's education over professional achievement thereby surfacing the skewed work-family equation.
- However, this highlights the contrasting situations- in west; there is decline in fertility rates because women prefer to opt out of marriages for better employment prospects whereas here, children's future achievements take the front seat instead of career development. This has led to urban and educated Indian women dropping out of the labour pool.
- Neither of these, however, seems an optimal outcome for society.
- The only thing that can address this issue is by encouraging workplaces to become more responsive to family needs and to promote sharing of household responsibilities between both genders.

Sharing the burden:

- The global competition has made the companies make the employees work even on weekends as well as increasing the work hours.
- A study has found that young workers in India worked 52 hours per week as against 42 hours by their counterparts in Canada.
- Work-family balance requires increased participation by men in household chores and caring for children. However, workplace inflexibility makes for difficult choices, involving trade-offs between investing in careers of either of couple, often resulting in women taking a back seat and at times even dropping out of the workforce.

CONCLUSION:

It is concluded that from the above discussions that women empowerment plays a major role in the developing countries like India as by undertaking the education they sustain their importance in each and every category which this they are ready to solve the organizational problems too there by reduction in the poverty levels and improvement in the economic growth happens.

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