

Shakti Shores of Telangana

Women's Empowerment in Action



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INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES
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The Woman

The 'Woman' stands as a beacon of resilience, compassion, and boundless potential. She embodies the essence of strength, grace, and wisdom, shaping the world with her presence and influence. In every corner of history, her contributions have been profound, yet often overlooked or underestimated. It's time to celebrate her prominence, greatness, and exemplary qualities that continue to inspire generations.



Her greatness lies not only in her achievements but also in her ability to navigate adversity with unwavering determination. In the face of challenges, she rises, breaking through barriers and shattering stereotypes. She is a testament to the power of perseverance and the limitless capacity of the human spirit.

Her compassion knows no bounds, extending a nurturing hand to those in need and fostering a culture of empathy and understanding. She recognizes the interconnectedness of all beings and strives to create a world where kindness reigns supreme. Her heart is a wellspring of love, radiating warmth and acceptance to all who cross her path.

Her wisdom is a guiding light, illuminating paths to progress and enlightenment. She draws from her experiences and insights to sow seeds of change and inspire others to reach their fullest potential. With each step forward, she forges a legacy of wisdom that transcends time and resonates with future generations.

In her, we find the embodiment of courage, resilience, and grace. She stands as a living testament to the power of the human spirit to overcome adversity and achieve greatness. Let us celebrate "The Woman" in all her magnificence, honoring her contributions to society and recognizing her as a beacon of hope and inspiration for us all.

Indeed, life's very essence finds its truest expression in the presence of womanhood. From the dawn of creation, she has been the nurturing force, the vessel through which the miracle of life unfolds. Her role transcends mere existence; it is the cornerstone upon which civilizations are built and futures are shaped.

In her, we witness the embodiment of creation itself, as she carries within her the potential for new beginnings and endless possibilities. From the tender embrace of motherhood to the unwavering strength of sisterhood, her presence infuses life with meaning, purpose, and beauty.

Woman, in her infinite diversity, brings a richness to the tapestry of existence. She is the caregiver, the educator, the healer, and the innovator. Her contributions ripple through time, shaping cultures, challenging norms, and inspiring change.

Beyond her biological role, womanhood encompasses a spectrum of experiences, challenges, and triumphs. It is a testament to resilience in the face of adversity, courage in the midst of uncertainty, and compassion in times of need.

Life without woman would be devoid of its most precious qualities – empathy, nurturing, and love. She is the heart and soul of humanity, the embodiment of hope and possibility. Let us cherish, honour, and empower her, for in doing so, we celebrate the very essence of life itself.



Empowerment of Women



Empowerment, especially of women, is not just a noble concept; it's a fundamental necessity for the progress and prosperity of societies worldwide. Here are the facts that prove that women empowerment is so crucial.

1) Equality and Justice

Empowerment ensures that all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources. It's about leveling the playing field and ensuring justice and fairness prevail in all aspects of life.

2) Fulfilment of Potential

When women are empowered, they can fully realize their potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities and economies. By tapping into their talents, skills, and creativity, societies can benefit from a broader pool of ideas and innovations.

3) Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Empowering women economically is one of the most effective ways to combat poverty. Studies consistently show that investing in women's education, healthcare, and economic opportunities has a multiplier effect, lifting families, communities, and entire nations out of poverty.

4) Health and Well-being

Empowered women are more likely to make informed decisions about their health and well-being, leading to healthier families and communities. When women have access to education and healthcare, maternal and child mortality rates decrease, and overall population health improves.

5) Social and Political Participation

Empowerment goes beyond economic and educational opportunities; it's also about having a voice in decision-making processes. When women participate in politics, they

bring unique perspectives and priorities to the table, leading to more inclusive and representative governance.

6) Cultural Shifts

Empowerment challenges harmful gender norms and stereotypes, paving the way for more progressive and inclusive societies. By promoting gender equality from a young age and dismantling barriers to women's advancement, we can create a culture that values and respects everyone's contributions.

7) Role Modelling and Mentorship

Empowered women serve as role models and mentors for future generations, inspiring them to dream big and pursue their goals without limitations. By seeing successful women in various fields, young girls are encouraged to aspire to greatness and believe in their abilities.

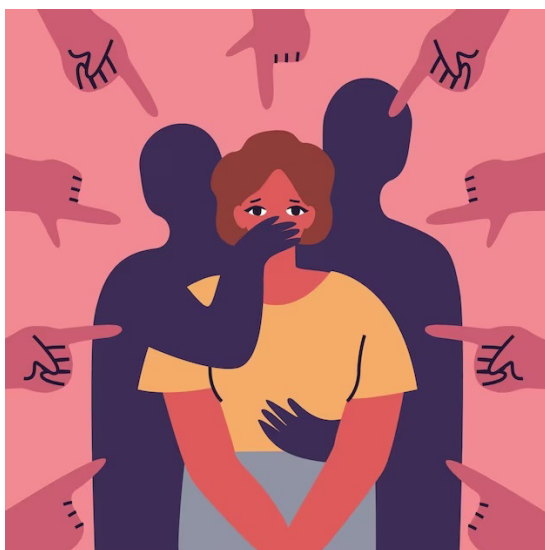
8) Global Development Goals

Empowerment is not just a moral imperative; it's also integral to achieving global development goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality is explicitly recognized as a standalone goal (SDG 5) because of its interconnectedness with other development objectives.

In essence, empowerment, particularly of women, is not just about giving them opportunities; it's about recognizing their inherent worth, agency, and potential to create positive change in the world. When we empower women, we empower entire communities and pave the way for a brighter, more equitable future for all.



Forced Subordination



The inhuman subordination of women to men in our society is a pervasive issue deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and systemic biases. Across various regions and communities, women face discrimination, oppression, and marginalization simply because of their gender. This systemic inequality manifests itself in numerous ways, perpetuating a cycle of subjugation and limiting the full potential and autonomy of women.

One of the most visible forms of this subordination is in the realm of economic opportunity. Women are often paid less than men for the same work, face barriers to advancement in their careers, and are disproportionately burdened with unpaid domestic labor. This economic disparity not only robs women of financial independence but also reinforces the perception of their inferiority in the workforce and society at large.

Moreover, the inhuman subordination of women is evident in the prevalence of gender-based violence and abuse. From domestic violence to sexual assault, women are disproportionately affected by violence perpetrated by men. This not only inflicts physical and psychological harm but also perpetuates a culture of fear and silence, where women are afraid to speak out due to societal stigmatization and victim-blaming attitudes.

In many societies, women's autonomy over their bodies and reproductive rights is also severely restricted. Laws and cultural norms often dictate women's choices regarding marriage, childbirth, and contraception, depriving them of the fundamental right to make decisions about their own bodies and futures.

Furthermore, the inhuman subordination of women intersects with other forms of oppression, such as racism, classism, and ableism, exacerbating the marginalization of women from marginalized communities.

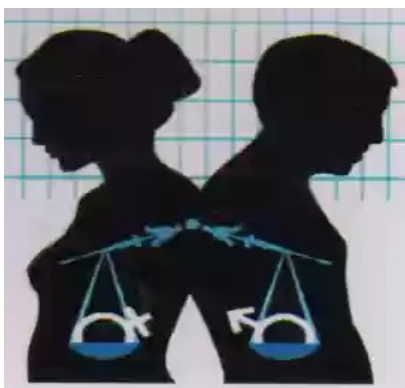
Addressing the inhuman subordination of women requires multifaceted approaches that challenge ingrained societal norms, dismantle systemic barriers, and promote

gender equality at all levels. It necessitates not only legislative reforms but also shifts in cultural attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and violence.

By empowering women, promoting gender equity, and fostering inclusive societies, we can work towards a future where all individuals, regardless of gender, can thrive free from oppression and subordination.



Progressive Footprints



Over the past century, women have made remarkable strides in their quest for liberation from the oppressive grasp of inhuman subordination by men. These progressive changes have been driven by various factors including social movements, legislative reforms, and shifts in cultural attitudes. Here are some key areas where women have achieved significant liberation:

1) Legal Rights

Women have gained increased legal rights, including the right to vote, own property, and access education. Through advocacy and activism, discriminatory laws have been challenged and overturned, paving the way for greater gender equality under the law.

2) Workforce Participation

Women are increasingly participating in the workforce, breaking free from traditional gender roles that confined them to domestic responsibilities. This shift has been facilitated by initiatives promoting equal employment opportunities and workplace policies that support work-life balance.

3) Political Representation

Women have been breaking barriers in political representation, attaining positions of power and influence in governments worldwide. Through electoral victories and grassroots organizing, women are challenging patriarchal structures and advocating for policies that prioritize gender equality.

4) Education

Access to education has expanded for women, enabling them to pursue higher learning and professional opportunities previously unavailable to them. Educational empowerment has been instrumental in dismantling stereotypes and fostering women's economic independence.

5) Reproductive Rights

Women have been asserting control over their reproductive choices, advocating for access to contraception, abortion rights, and comprehensive reproductive healthcare. These efforts aim to challenge the notion that women's bodies are subject to male control and societal judgment.

6) Media Representation

There's a growing movement to challenge stereotypes and portrayals of women in media and popular culture. By demanding more diverse and authentic representations, women are reclaiming narratives that have historically perpetuated harmful gender norms.

7) Global Solidarity

Women's liberation movements have become increasingly globalized, with women from diverse backgrounds uniting in solidarity against gender-based oppression. This interconnectedness has strengthened advocacy efforts and amplified voices demanding justice and equality for all women.

Despite these advancements, it's important to recognize that the struggle for women's liberation is ongoing, and many challenges remain. Intersectional approaches that address the overlapping forms of discrimination faced by women based on factors such as race, class, sexuality, and disability are essential for achieving true gender equality. By continuing to challenge systemic injustices and championing the rights and agency of women, we can build a more equitable and inclusive society for future generations.



Unveiling the Tapestry of Women's Empowerment

A Multifaceted Case Study

Introduction

In the pursuit of fostering gender equality and empowering women, comprehensive analyses are imperative. This case study endeavors to unravel the complexities surrounding women's empowerment through a myriad of sources including official documents, reports, press releases, media narratives, personal stories, and diverse perspectives from women, men, students, and the elderly. By amalgamating these insights, a holistic understanding of the current landscape of women's empowerment emerges, facilitating informed strategies for progress.



Methodology

1) Official Documents and Reports Analysis

Analysis of of governmental policies, conventions, and organizational reports pertinent to women's empowerment.

Examination of information on gender disparities in various sectors such as education, employment, and political representation.

2) Press Releases and Media Reports

Analysis of media coverage and press releases regarding initiatives, campaigns, and events related to women's empowerment.

Evaluation of the portrayal of gender issues in mainstream media and its impact on public perceptions.

3) Personal Narratives and Stories

Collection of anecdotal evidence and personal testimonies from women across diverse backgrounds, capturing their experiences, challenges, and triumphs.

Exploration of the intersectionality of gender with other identities such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation.

4) Stakeholder Perspectives

In-depth interactions with women, men, students, and elderly individuals to ascertain their perspectives on women's empowerment.

Examination of varying attitudes, beliefs, and misconceptions surrounding gender roles and equality.

Findings

1) Progress and Challenges

Identification of areas of progress in women's empowerment efforts, such as increased access to education and economic opportunities.

Highlighting persistent challenges including gender-based violence, wage disparities, and underrepresentation in leadership positions.

2) Intersectional Dynamics

Recognition of the intersecting factors that influence women's empowerment, including race, class, age, and disability.

Understanding the unique challenges faced by marginalized groups of women and the importance of inclusive approaches.

3) Media Influence and Representation

Analysis of media biases and stereotypes perpetuating gender norms and hindering progress towards gender equality.

Exploration of media initiatives and narratives that challenge stereotypes and promote positive representations of women.

4) Policy Implications

Recommendations for policy reforms aimed at addressing systemic barriers to women's empowerment, including legislative measures, institutional reforms, and targeted interventions.

Emphasis on the importance of inclusive policymaking that amplifies the voices of marginalized women and promotes their agency.

This comprehensive case study underscores the multifaceted nature of women's empowerment, encompassing socio-cultural, economic, and political dimensions. By synthesizing insights from diverse sources and perspectives, it elucidates the complexities, challenges, and opportunities inherent in advancing gender equality. Armed with this nuanced understanding, stakeholders can chart a course towards more inclusive and effective strategies for women's empowerment, ensuring a more equitable and just society for all.



Chapter 1

Women's Empowerment in India, from the Ancient Period to the Modern Period

Introduction

Women in India enjoy several rights, including the freedom to vote, the right to own property, the capacity to make their own decisions, and many more. As such, it is implied that women must be aware of these rights when we discuss women's empowerment in India. Put another way, women's empowerment helps them recognize their value and exert social pressure to guarantee that they are treated with the same respect and rights as men. The development and advancement of society, the neighborhood, and the nation depend on the empowerment of women.



The percentage of women in the world's population who fit this description is about 50%. However, if we narrow our emphasis to the population of India, we find that there is a disproportionate sex ratio, meaning that there are relatively fewer women than men.

In contrast to the rest of the globe, where Women's Empowerment is highly valued, gender bias in India makes women's empowerment the least priority in society. It is thought that until gender bias is addressed, problems with literacy, population, and health won't be resolved. This is because women won't be able to actively participate in creating a society and a community where everyone's needs and rights are respected. If we focus more on how women's empowerment in India gained traction from antiquity to the present day. When it comes to women's empowerment, Indian culture has seen many ups and downs over the years.

What is Women's Empowerment?

Women's empowerment refers to the process of enabling women to have control over their own lives, to make choices and decisions, and to access resources and opportunities

for their personal, social, and economic development. It involves breaking down barriers and challenging societal norms and structures that have historically marginalized or disadvantaged women. Empowering women includes promoting their rights, providing access to education and healthcare, ensuring economic opportunities and financial independence, and fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where women can thrive and fulfill their potential. It's about creating a world where women have equal opportunities, rights, and agency to participate fully in all aspects of society.

Women's Struggle for Equality

Mistreatment of women has been a male ritual for centuries; women have been denied the right to own property, have no say in the assets owned by their parents, have never been granted the right to vote, and have never had the freedom to choose their path in life, career, or anything else.



Women are now empowered when they take charge of their destinies. It entails being in charge of your own material possessions, intellectual property, and personal beliefs.

Ancient Indian



In ancient Indian culture, women were respected by society and treated equally to males. Women were also known as Janani, or mothers, and were even called Devi in Hindu scripts. males and women were treated equally in this society. They used to have access to all of their fundamental rights, including the freedom to pursue an education. Because they would participate in spiritual activities with their husbands, the wives of rishis were also called the Ardhangini, or better half.

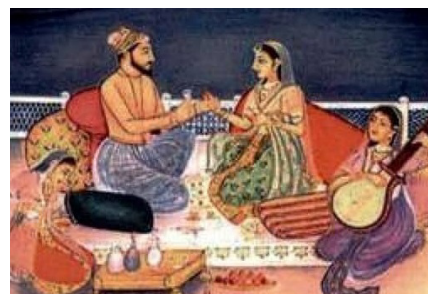
Women were allowed to live equal lives during that time, just as men did. In Indian history, women have experienced two distinct experiences: being subjugated and being delivered. Their roles may have evolved, but during the Vedic era, they served as a comprehensive symbol of protection and guardianship over death and values.

The greatest examples of female role models in this age are the accomplishments of Maitreyi, Gargi, Sita, Draupadi, and Alapa. These women not only had their rights and equality upheld, but they also owned significant wealth and property, were unrestricted, and could compete with men in a variety of industries. They also had a great deal of influence over how to raise their progeny.

The concept of humanity is central to Vedic culture; women and men were considered the two wheels of a cart in the Taittiriya Samhita. These were great paradigms of gender equality that the Vedas taught humanity.

Medieval India

In the early Vedic period, there was room for gender integrity; but, in the later Vedic period, there seemed to be a deterioration in this integrity and equality, particularly in the early Vedic period's equal standing of women, which later had a negative tendency. The primary theory explaining the decrease in women's position throughout that era is foreign conquest.



The Rig-Vedic principles of justice and harmony have been eroded, depriving women of their right to study the Vedas, recite Vedic mantras, and engage in Vedic rites. Women were compelled to enter into marriage, take on household responsibilities, and show unwavering loyalty to their husbands. Parents were embarrassed to have a girl child during that period.

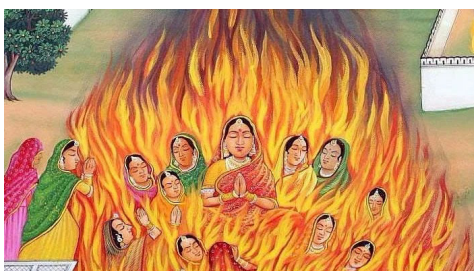
There came a time when women had to wear the "pardah," a bodily covering that restricted their independence. This is the reason it gave rise to numerous other social ills that made life worse for women. Many prohibitions existed, including those on child marriage, widow remarriage, Sati, Jauhar, and the lack of education for girls, among many more.

What is sati?

According to the theory of sati, a widow must sit on a blazing fire alongside her husband and burn herself to death. It is said that she owed her spouse a solemn



obligation. It was written in ancient Hindu scriptures that a woman's doors to heaven open for her when she passes away as a sati.



What is Jauhar?

When we try to comprehend what Jauhar is in the modern world, we find that it is just a mass suicide, but in the Rajput customs of the medieval era, Rajput women gave their lives as a sacrifice for their husbands when they were about to lose a war.

What is child marriage?

Several things make medieval India memorable, but child marriage is one of them. Parents used to marry off their girls as soon as possible because having a girl kid during the period was a source of shame for them and the family.



Another reason for child marriage is the perception that older girls are more likely to cause scandals. For this reason, parents marry their daughters when they are very young, and the girls remain at home until they reach puberty.

Men used to believe that women were only suitable for marriage at that time, and they were treated as such. This is the reason for the rising birth rate; women's health was terrible, which also contributed to the rise in the high death rate among women and infants.

· **No opportunity for widows to get married again:** - In the Middle Ages, it was customary to treat women as raw materials. During the Middle Ages, widows were viewed as cursed people who brought misfortune and depredation into their lives. Widows were not allowed in any holy or sacred places or rituals, and they were expected to give up all the comforts of home that their husbands had promised them when they were married. Their right to remarry was prohibited. She is forced to eat a certain type of food that is only consumed by widows, and she is never allowed the option to live a quiet life. She also always dresses in faded white clothes.

· **No education for women:** - While there is evidence that women had access to education in the past, the Vedic period completely reshaped the educational landscape, teaching women all household responsibilities in addition to fine art schools. In contrast, women in the Muslim faith received instruction in art. However, women's pain doesn't get any better throughout this time.

Modern India

Not all women were able to use their rights and power, but as society evolved throughout time, they eventually had the chance to do so. During the East India Company, several names emerged, signaling the beginning of the current age of women's reform in India. Begum Hazrat Mahal, Uda Devi, Azizun Baial, and Jhansi's Rani Laxmi Bai were among the many extraordinarily brave women of the era.



The struggle in India for women's emancipation became more and more intense throughout time. Numerous men, including Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Vivekananda, and Swami Dayananda Saraswat, participated in societal reforms. Each of them had aided women in regaining their prior social standing.

· **The Impact of the Civil Rights Struggle of 1960:** - The American civil rights struggle of 1960 gave rise to the idea and practice of empowerment. More precisely, empowerment is commonly understood to be a significant personal process in which an individual assumes responsibility and control over their life and circumstances while simultaneously being granted human rights and social justice.

The last several millennia have seen significant changes in the status of women in India. Some have referred to the entire 19th century as the global women's century. In India, women's empowerment has been influenced by the West, but women's education has become a moot point globally. This was not considered a topic of discussion recently.

· **The Impact of Girl's Education on Society:** - As we have learned, the trend of girls' education in India appears to have fluctuated over time. During the medieval era, due to social conditions, there was no way for female education to expand quantitatively, but quality education was preserved—albeit within a very small aristocratic circle. This

downward trend persisted until the early 19th century when there was a strong social stigma that prevented women from obtaining an education in India.

Indian social and cultural life saw certain modifications as a result of the actions of the British emperor and missionaries from England and other European countries. In Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, the missionaries established multiple schools for girls because they supported women's education. The administration made several very impressive efforts. In India throughout the 1800s, girls' education was highly publicized and challenged patriarchal standards that hindered their education. For women's education, many education committees are advised. There was an intense focus on female education in the Education Dispatch of 1854. As a result, several female-only schools were established across India.

Women's Empowerment in India After Independence

Consequently, women's empowerment efforts went into reverse when India attained independence. Many ladies returned home since they were no longer required to resist the colonists. Certainties of equality and unrestricted adult suffrage, along with the council's endorsement of a **Uniform Civil Code (Article 44)**, seemed to have allayed some of their



anxieties. Because of this, there was an increase in the rate of prejudice, oppression, dowry deaths, unemployment, declining sex ratios, infant mortality, and other issues. Sociopolitical instability was widespread in India. Thus, the United Nations appointed the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI).

Despite thirty years of independence and the ratification of the constitution, not much progress was made in improving women's empowerment in India. Neglect occurred in the areas of their work, education, healthcare, and other areas. Women made up very little of the political and economic spheres.

The Global Discourse on Human Rights

Human rights have become a catchphrase in today's language; it is no longer just an activist undertaking but also a topic of discussion, consideration, debate, criticism, and analysis in the fields of academics, politics, law, and policy-making.

Human rights are fundamental and inherent freedoms that are a person by nature just because they are a human being and not because they are citizens of a specific nation. Every person has equal dignity thanks to human rights.

Women's experiences serve as the foundation for the perspective that human rights should have on women. According to feminist analysis and advocates for women's rights, social, political, economic, and legal structures, and procedures are influenced by the gender viewpoint and have an impact on the experiences that women have on the ground.

It isn't easy to draw attention to the global work that the women's rights movements have done. Women's rights encompass more than only the restoration, reconstruction, and reform of women's status and natural lives.

There are two methods to describe women's human rights:

First, by looking at the general instruments of human rights, which contain a principle of nondiscrimination that applies to everyone, including women.

Second, by looking at the gender-specific provisions in international human rights legislation. Women experienced violence and discrimination in all its manifestations in their communities, and it was made simple for them to do so since they were never provided with the foundational education needed to protect themselves from such abuse and prejudice.

Barriers to Education for Women of All Social Classes

Women who belonged to lower social classes were denied the opportunity to receive an education due to their gender. Still, Upper-class girls had less of a chance to receive an education.

On the other side, there was also opposition to women's education from the National Education Movement. It was a humanist movement, too. The humanist viewpoint made it easier to do away with dogmas related to religion, caste, and class. The Brahmo movement caused girls' educational achievement to rise dramatically. After independence, India implemented several initiatives aimed at improving the qualitative and quantitative aspects of women's empowerment.

One of the **United Nations Organization's (UNO)** most significant projects is the **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDW)**. It pledged to restore women's human rights and legal and political equality with males, and it opposed violence and discrimination against women. The 1940s marked the beginning of this sustained campaign to empower women.

Women's Role in Politics and Economy.

The most important and productive stage of women's empowerment in India is when they enter the political and economic spheres. Women were eventually granted the opportunity to participate in political representation after numerous acts, reforms, and legislative implementations. Converting women's political empowerment into actual social empowerment was a particularly challenging undertaking since, despite the presence of a critical mass in local bodies, it was found that women in the legislature were still susceptible to gender-based violence.

The way society views women in leadership positions hasn't changed, but patriarchy is still very much in force and actively strives to keep women out of politics. In addition, women ought to be overrepresented in all other classes, castes, and ethnic groups, as well as in municipal and state legislatures.

Ensuring Safety and Rights for Domestic Workers in the Workplace Bill of 2011

The 2011 "Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill" encompassed domestic assistance, a demographic that is among the most marginalized in our society and is not classified as an employee. The significant influence that female Lok Sabha members played made this feasible.

In India, women's empowerment and the economic notion are mutually dependent. to take charge of their own lives. Although they have been compelled to work as forced laborers for many years and receive very little compensation, women have contributed significantly to the economic prosperity of India. Almost everywhere, national income accounting still ignores the contribution that women make to their country's economic prosperity.

The political, economic, and social life of nations, generations, and many more are greatly influenced by women. Therefore, women's control over resources and participation in decision-making can be positively impacted by economic progress, but in practice, women are still vulnerable to financial pressure.

However, the way Indian women exercise their empowerment in the present day has drastically altered the past situation. They have started their businesses, worked in factories, and started self-help groups.

Shri Mahila Girah Udyog Lijjat Papad

Indeed, Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad is a remarkable example of women's entrepreneurship and empowerment in India. Here's an overview:

1. Foundation and History: Lijjat Papad was founded in 1959 in Mumbai by seven Gujarati women with the goal of creating a source of income for themselves. The enterprise began with a loan of Rs. 80 and the production of just four packets of papads per day.

2. Business Model: Lijjat Papad operates as a cooperative society, where all the women involved are equal owners and shareholders. The organization follows a decentralized production model, with various centers across India where women gather to make papads, chapatis, spices, and other products.

3. Women's Empowerment: Lijjat Papad has played a significant role in empowering women by providing them with a source of income and financial independence. Women involved in Lijjat Papad are not only earning money but also gaining confidence, skills, and decision-making capabilities.

4. Ethical Practices: The organization is known for its ethical business practices, including fair wages, no child labor, and a commitment to quality. Lijjat Papad has built a reputation for producing high-quality products using traditional methods and natural ingredients.

5. Expansion and Success: Over the years, Lijjat Papad has grown into a successful enterprise with a presence in multiple states across India. It has expanded its product range and diversified its operations while remaining true to its founding principles of women's empowerment and ethical business practices.

6. Social Impact: Beyond its economic success, Lijjat Papad has had a significant social impact by uplifting women from marginalized communities and providing them with opportunities for self-reliance and dignity.

In summary, Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad serves as an inspiring example of how women's entrepreneurship can lead to empowerment, economic development, and social change. It demonstrates the potential of collective action and cooperative models in advancing the status and well-being of women in society.

This was the first papad business, run and managed by a women's group, who would dry the papad at their convenience and then sell it collectively. The Indian government also enacted numerous laws and other measures to further women's empowerment in the country.

Conclusion

It is evident from the call for women's empowerment that all people must be treated with respect and without having their rights or dignity violated. For thousands of years, women have been harassed because they were thought to be material objects. However, while society has developed and women are now able to fight for their rights, there remain a small number of women to whom this awareness has not yet extended. It is our responsibility as human beings to assist others in gaining enlightenment and removing themselves from any dogmatic mindset that hinders society's progress for us to live in a civilized world. For our women and children to pass on their legacy to the next generation and contribute to the development of our country, we must educate them.



Chapter 2

Status of Women in India



Introduction

From ancient times, women have played a significant role in Indian culture and society. But for a long time, there has been discussion and worry about the situation of women in India. Even with the recent advancements, women in India still face numerous obstacles.

Progress and Achievements

India's initiatives to empower women have made significant progress in recent years. To increase women's access to economic opportunities, education, and health, the government has put in place several initiatives. The proportion of women in the workforce has significantly increased, and they are now holding prominent positions in a variety of industries, including politics, business, and entertainment.

Challenges and Struggles

Notwithstanding these gains, there are still many obstacles that Indian women must overcome. Major difficulties that persist are unequal wages, violence against women, and gender discrimination. In particular in rural regions, infanticide and female feticides continue to be major concerns. Given the high number of recorded cases of sexual harassment and assault against women each year, women's safety and security are also major concerns.

Legal Rights for Women in India

Over the years, women in India have been awarded several legal rights to advance gender equality and safeguard their interests. The following are some of the most significant legal rights that Indian women have:

- **Right to equality:**

The Indian Constitution's **Article 14** ensures that every citizen, regardless of gender, has the right to equality.

· **Right to education:**

Under the 2009 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Schooling Act, schooling becomes a legal requirement for all children, including girls, between the ages of 6 and 14.

· **Right to work:**

Equal compensation for equal work is guaranteed for men and women by the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976.

· **Right against sexual harassment:**

The 2013 Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act establishes a framework for handling workplace sexual harassment allegations.

· **Right to property:**

In 2005, the Hindu Succession Act, of 1956 was modified to grant girls in Hindu families equal inheritance rights.

· **Right to marriage and divorce:**

Women can file for divorce under the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 for a variety of reasons, such as cruelty and adultery.

· **Right to health:**

Women are entitled to paid maternity leave and other benefits throughout their pregnancies and deliveries under the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961.

· **Right against domestic violence:**

Women are legally shielded against verbal, mental, and physical abuse by their spouses or other family members by the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005.

In summary, although women's legal rights have advanced significantly in India, much more has to be done to guarantee complete gender equality and shield them from violence and discrimination.

The Way Forward

A concerted effort from all spheres of society is required to address these issues and raise the status of women in India. The government must keep enacting laws that support women's economic empowerment, health, and education. Gender sensitization and education require more attention from all societal levels.

In addition, the media must work to dispel gender stereotypes and promote good messages about women.

Conclusion

In conclusion, women's status in India has improved recently, but there is still a long way to go. It is critical to acknowledge the progress accomplished thus far and keep pushing for a society that is just and equitable for women. Women in India may fully participate in all facets of life and contribute to the growth of their nation if we address the issues that they encounter and advance gender equality.

What can we do to give women more power?

Through imparting knowledge.

By permitting them to pursue their goals.

By not limiting their autonomy.

By treating them with the decency they merit.

By handling them with the same respect as males.

My mother stated a few days ago, "I'm willing to spend as much money as you want on your education because I want you to be able to lead your own life." Please stand up if you can. I want you to be self-sufficient.

Finally, by teaching your daughter as much independence as you have taught your son.



Chapter 3

Empowerment of Women Gained Momentum in 10 Years

Introduction

In India, women are becoming more and more influential in the consumer goods and IT industries, among other sectors. The increase in the number of women in leadership positions and the workforce is a reflection of shifting social mores and growing economic independence.



When it comes to influencing consumer choices, women are starting to become significant players. A report noted that this trend is anticipated to affect main consumer segments.

Packaged foods & beverages, apparel & footwear, beauty & personal care, health & wellness, food/grocery delivery, and home improvement are the categories where women are likely to spend more, upgrade, and seek convenience.

According to an analysis, with a 37% labor force participation rate and 35% bank account share, they are becoming more influential in the Indian consumer environment. Progressive government measures, changing family structures, more labor force participation, improved healthcare, and growing educational levels are to blame.

A progressive cultural and societal norm, expanding financial independence, increased voting rates, and increased influence over personal and household financial decision-making are all contributing to the emergence of a socioeconomic paradigm that empowers women.

Several programs and policies aimed at creating a work environment that is welcoming to women are focused on increasing the number of women in the workforce.

Gender Diversity in India's IT Sector and Other Industries: A Statistical Analysis

Analyzing the data for 136 MSCI India businesses, the IT sector is notable for having 34 percent of women on average in the workforce. Consumer staples, telecom, and financials follow with 20–24 percent of women who work in these sectors.

Alternatively, less than 10% of workers are women in the utilities, minerals, and energy sectors. Businesses have actively supported hiring, skill development, and retention strategies for women in the workforce over the years on several levels. From 12% in FY'2016 to 18% in FY'2023, the percentage of women on boards has steadily increased for MSCI India businesses.



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Announces Healthcare Benefits for Asha Workers and Boosts Female Education Enrollment

Budget 2024: Minister pledges several sops, including vaccines against cervical cancer for Asha workers under Ayushman Bharat.

Minister reported a 28% increase in female higher education enrollment and accelerated empowerment through entrepreneurship and ease of living, highlighting 30 crore Mudra

Yojana loans provided to women entrepreneurs.

Over the past decade, the number of women in higher education has risen by 28%, with girls and women accounting for 43% of students in STEM programs.

The minister highlighted the significant progress made in women's empowerment through entrepreneurship, ease of living, and dignity over the past decade, leading to increased women's participation in the workforce.

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government's Commitment to Women's Empowerment

The NDA government, under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has prioritized women's empowerment, including making triple talaq illegal, reserving one-third of seats in legislative assemblies, and providing over 70% of houses under the PM Awas Yojana in rural areas.

Union Finance Minister emphasized India's commitment to women-led development, highlighting the NDA government's focus on women's empowerment.

The Prime Minister has significantly contributed to women's empowerment in India through initiatives like Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in Parliament, building homes and restrooms in rural areas, or giving women gas cylinders under the Ujjwala Yojana. The NDA government is focusing on women's empowerment, with the Prime Minister's direction leading the nation toward women-led development.

Union Minister of Rural Development, attended a ceremony to discuss the ease of obtaining loans for women due to the PM guarantee, the government's "Lakhpati Didi" and "Drone Didi" programs, and female volunteers.



Chapter 4

List of Major Women Empowerment Schemes in India

Women Empowerment - A Brief Overview

Women's empowerment refers to their advancement, acceptance, and participation in decision-making. Along with disliking gender bias, it also entails giving them equal opportunities for social advancement.

The **welfare of women and children** is addressed in **Article 15(3)**, which states, in part, that "nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children."



Children and women have a crucial role in Indian society. Additionally, these are India's most vulnerable regions.

Objectives of the Women's Empowerment Schemes:

- The 2015 Beti Bachoo Beti Padhao Scheme was one of the Women's Empowerment Schemes' goals.
- Another was to prevent gender-biased, sex-selective elimination.
- To ensure the girl child's participation in and education from Program for One-Stop Centers in 2015
- To provide aid and encouragement to women who have been victims of violence, in both public and private domains.
- To assist in filing the First Information Report (FIR/NCR)
- To provide psychosocial assistance and counseling to women and girls
- The 2016 Women Helpline Scheme
- To provide women who have experienced violence with round-the-clock, toll-free telephone support.
- To facilitate both crisis and non-crisis intervention by connecting clients with appropriate agencies, such as OSC, the District Legal Service Authority (DLSA), hospitals, ambulance services, police, and protection officers (PO).

- Providing the victim of violence with information about government initiatives, programs, and support services tailored to her particular circumstances in the community in which she resides or works. UJJAWALA 2016
- To put an end to the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation for financial gain.
- Helping to get the victims out of the place where they are being exploited and into a safe space.
- To provide abuse victims with both short-term and long-term rehabilitation services by attending to their basic needs, such as clothes, food, shelter, medical treatment, counseling, legal assistance, and career training. 1972–1973 Women’s Working Hostel.
- To house working women’s children, up to the age of eighteen for girls and five for boys, up to the age of five for boys.
- To promote the provision of safe and functional housing for women who work. Greh, Swadhar (2018)
- Give needy women access to food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and other essentials.
- To give women guidance and legal support.
- Support for the 1986–1987 Women’s Training and Employment Program (STEP)
- To transfer skills that help women find work.
- To benefit every woman in the nation who is sixteen years old or older. The Nari Shakti Puraskar for this year.
- To assist groups that work to progress and develop women in society.
- To raise the position of women in society. 2017’s Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)
- To create an environment in which women may access counsel, employment, education, and suitable healthcare, among other resources.
- To make these opportunities possible at all levels—national, local, and district. HIRABHAYA in 2012.
- To offer varying degrees of protection and safety to women.
- To ensure that women’s identities and personal data are kept completely confidential and secure.
- Doing everything possible to enable real-time intervention E-Haat Mahila, 2016.
- To promote women’s participation in online entrepreneurship.
- To educate women about the many aspects of internet selling and to help them launch their enterprises.

Mahila Police Volunteers 2016

To combat crime against women, an MPV will act as a public policy interface.

The primary responsibility of MPVs is to document cases of violence against women, including child marriage, dowry harassment, domestic abuse, and assaults against women in public areas.



The safety and empowerment of women and children are concerns that the Indian government takes very seriously. These plans provide solutions to the main issues affecting women in India and have the potential to minimize the growing injustice towards them. Applicants need to be aware that the UPSC Mains may include the Women Empowerment Essay. To write a strong Women's Empowerment Essay, candidates should utilize these strategies.

Several more government initiatives have been introduced in India to improve societal conditions and advance national development. Applicants interested in learning more about the government's numerous programs and schemes can visit the article mentioned below.

Women Empowerment in India – Recent News

India's Union Minister for Women and Child Development, highlighted India's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, highlighting the government's Financial Inclusion Initiative, which has enabled nearly 200 million women to access banking services and social assistance.

Microsoft has partnered with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to provide digital skills training to over a lakh underprivileged Indian women, an expansion of their collaboration to train over one lakh young people in digital skills.

To assist provide possibilities for young girls and women to enter the workforce in the future, especially those who are job seekers or whose jobs may have been impacted by COVID-19, the initiative will curate a series of live training sessions and digital skilling drives.

The issue of women's empowerment in India has gained greater attention recently. One non-governmental organization (NGO) is assisting underprivileged Indian women to become financially independent by using a unique approach: an all-women taxi company. Women on Wheels, an initiative of the Azad Foundation, gives underprivileged Indian women a reliable source of income and a secure setting where they may travel without worrying about harassment.



Chapter 5

India's Progress in Women's Empowerment: An Unfinished Journey

Introduction

"Towards Gender Equity in Sports: Challenges and Progress"



Leading women in sports stated at a symposium in Hyderabad that although women are in a better situation now than they were a few years ago, there is still a long way to go before there is gender equity in the nation.

Ms. Neha Agarwal Sharma, a former Olympian and table tennis champion, expressed concerns about women's safety, leading parents to be cautious about sending their daughters to play.

Ms. Neha recounted her experience going from being self-conscious about wearing shorts to a school match to being the only Indian woman to represent her country in table tennis at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

During a panel discussion on her journey hosted by the Young FICCI Ladies Organization (YFLO) at T-Hub, she gave credit for her achievement to her coach's appropriate guidance as well as her father's progressive and nontraditional ideas about her future as a sportswoman.

Ms. Maral Yazarloo-Patrick, an Iranian fashion designer and motorcycle rider, was equally inspirational. Despite being pregnant, she bucked social norms by going on a solo globe motorbike tour of over 64 nations. Ms. Maral defied expectations and followed her passion even though she was born in a nation where women were not allowed to own cars.

She acknowledged, though, that she is afraid to venture into the unknown because she doesn't know for sure that she will be safe. She voiced concerns about the nation's callous attitude towards women's protection, citing the gangrape of a Spanish woman biker in Jharkhand.

The speaker emphasized the importance of taking cases of women's suicide seriously, despite global support, to create a supportive environment for women's success, emphasizing the need for daily reporting in rural areas.

A seasoned desert runner, Ms. Michelle Kakade was the only Indian to be accepted into the Elite 4 Deserts Club. She highlighted the importance of mothers in promoting gender equality in girls from an early age. At the age of 45, Ms. Kakade completed the 6,000-kilometer run known as the Golden Quadrilateral, demonstrating her belief that age is no obstacle.

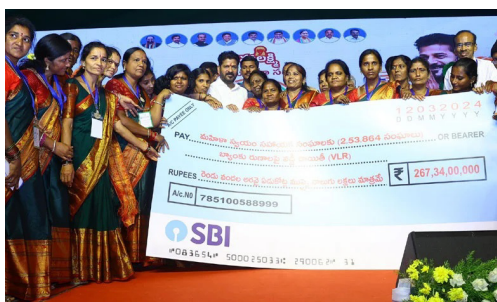
Together, the panelists pushed for a change in public perceptions and a wider acceptance of women's roles outside of the conventional domains of the house and family. They stressed that for India to truly attain gender parity, systemic changes are required.



Chapter 6

Telangana Promises to Make Women of Self-help Groups 'Crorepatis'

Under a new program dubbed "Telangana Mahila Shakti," the Telangana government plans to turn the 63.86 lakh members of self-help groups (SHGs) in the State from passive participants into successful business owners. With this ambitious plan, the self-help groups (SHGs) of the former Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) would be pushed toward a better future.



The Telangana government is set to unveil a new initiative in Secunderabad, following allegations that the BRS-led former administration had broken interest-free loan commitments, leaving ¹ 3,750 crore in arrears. The government is implementing a loan program with no interest and prompt interest repayment every six months to prevent similar failures.

As a token of appreciation, loans owed by SHG members who have passed away will be forgiven, supported by the introduction of a unique loan insurance program. A ¹ 5 lakh life insurance coverage will also be provided to all 63.86 lakh women in the SHGs, offering a safety net for their families.

The Telangana government has allotted ¹ 5,000 crore in loans to 5,000 villages throughout the State in the first year of an attempt to spur economic development. Plans are also in motion to create unique "mini-industrial parks" that target female entrepreneurs in each Assembly constituency.

Telangana's self-help groups have the second-highest rate of bank linkage loan recipients in the nation, which indicates their potential for expansion and improvement. Additionally, initiatives are being made to ascertain women's interests and offer customized skill-training programs, with a focus on generating employment and economic empowerment.

There are plans to produce sanitary napkins, install mini-solar panels, and make uniforms for law enforcement and schoolchildren.

Special branding along the lines of Golconda and Lepakshi is being introduced to promote these locally-made goods, guaranteeing market access and recognition for goods produced by Self-Help Groups.

Chief Minister Promotes Equality for Women in Telangana

The Minister celebrated International Women's Day by highlighting the significant increase in women's representation and involvement in public government. He emphasized the state government's commitment to empowering women and promoting financial independence through programs like Mahalakshmi free bus travel and a Rs. 500 gas cylinder guarantee for every home.

Telangana's Chief Minister has emphasized the importance of providing women equal rights and opportunities in all areas. He plans to introduce more programs to help women in their aspirations and hopes that these initiatives will be seen nationally as evidence of the state's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. Reddy also pledged to turn one crore women participating in self-help groups into "crorepatis" within five years.

Telangana's Chief Minister, during the introduction of Mahila Shakthi, announced that banks and the state's "street Nidhi" initiatives would approve loans worth Rs 1 lakh crore at no interest. She urged women to support the government and help Congress win 14 out of 17 seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Reddy claimed that 65 lakh women in the state, affiliated with 6 lakh Self-Help Groups, had no outlets to market their products.

The government plans to set up 100 stalls near Shilparamam for women SHGs to display and sell their products. The government will provide new channels for businesses to advertise and sell their goods in both domestic and foreign markets. The goal is to have one crore SHG members, which the state government will turn into "crorepatis" within five years.

Mahalakshmi Scheme Team

Telangana Government Announced **Interest-Free Loans For Women:** This fantastic effort by the Telangana government seeks to empower women. The



Telangana government is developing several initiatives to support women in the community.

The government's goal is to enhance women's entire development throughout the state.

The administration intends to give interest-free loans to women's organizations within the state as financial support. The main goal of this program is to increase women's involvement in a range of socioeconomic activities.

More significantly, the government has promised to lend money to organizations that support women at no interest, which is a huge relief for women who have to pay back their loans with no interest. The Telangana government's move is greatly appreciated by numerous women's groups.

Additionally, the government has taken action to guarantee that the salaries of Asha workers, Anganwadi workers, and numerous other workers have been paid regularly. Resolving this significant issue, which has caused difficulties for many people, demonstrates the government's commitment to providing for its workforce.

Free TSRTC travel for women has already been introduced by the government. **Gruha Jyothi, Gruha Lakshmi, and Mahalakshmi schemes** for financial assistance will soon be put into effect. This shows how supportive the government is of women in all walks of life.

This declaration was given during the government's six-guarantee scheme vision to implement Indiramma Rajya's tenets. Congress has ushered in a more egalitarian society by placing a high priority on women's empowerment.

The idea of offering interest-free loans to women has been embraced by numerous women's self-help organizations. The government's noteworthy action lessens the financial load on women, fostering greater female entrepreneurship in the state.

To make it easier for the women to repay their loans, financial help without interest will be given to all of them who want to take out loans under government programs.



Chapter 7

Telangana has the largest proportion of female workers.

Introduction



In Telangana, 93% of employed women are working in non-agricultural fields, compared to 64% of men in the same field. The employment rate for women between the ages of 15 and 49 is relatively high. Women in rural Telangana have

traditionally held jobs.

An analysis from the most recent year indicates that Telangana has one of the highest percentages of working women in India.

About 39% of Telangana's women are employed, lagging slightly behind the two northeastern states of Manipur (40%) and Meghalaya (42%). It is approximately 37% in Andhra Pradesh.

In Telangana, 93% of employed women are working in non-agricultural fields, compared to 64% of men in the same field. The employment rate for women between the ages of 15 and 49 is relatively high.

Telangana's Growing Women Workforce in IT, Malls, and Construction Sectors

Although it does go into detail about the industries with a high proportion of female workers, experts claim that these are spread across several fields, including the IT and IT-related sectors in urban areas like Hyderabad, where a sizable number of women from lower socioeconomic classes also work in malls and the construction sector, as well as the textile and other industries in rural areas.

Telangana State, states that the IT and IT sector has a women workforce of 35%-40%, while malls and construction have about 40%. This is due to women-friendly government schemes and measures, such as pick-up and drop services. The bidi and textile industries are almost entirely run by women in rural areas, with 90% in textile and 99% in bidi.

In Telangana, safety and connectivity are crucial for women, with the Telangana State Commission taking these issues seriously. We Hub praised the immense industrial policy support provided to working women and entrepreneurs.

Women and child welfare department, women in rural Telangana have traditionally held jobs, therefore the report is not shocking. In those regions of the state, women have long been engaged in related fields like agriculture. Even though they are not seen in public, they have always earned money and this has never been looked down upon by family members or society.

Meanwhile, one of the main objectives stated in the Sustainable Development Goals is women's empowerment, which is indicated by women's earnings. To compile its report, NFHS-5 gathered data on a variety of topics about women's autonomy and empowerment, such as menstruation hygiene, earnings and employment, decision-making, asset ownership, attitudes toward gender roles, and domestic abuse.

Telangana's High Percentage of Working Women Shines

Hyderabad: Telangana has one of the highest percentages of working women in India. About 39% of the state's female workforce is working, lagging slightly behind the two northeastern states of Manipur (40%) and Meghalaya (42%). It is almost 37% in Andhra Pradesh.



In Telangana, 93% of employed women are employed in non-agricultural fields, compared to 64% of men. Women in the 15–49 age range have a high employment rate.

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Telangana's last-mile safety and connectivity are crucial for women's safety, with the Telangana State Commission taking these issues seriously. We Hub, emphasizes the immense industrial policy support provided to working women and entrepreneurs.

Women in rural Telangana have always been employed. Women have long been engaged in agriculture and related fields in those regions of the state.

In the state of Telangana women's earnings are a crucial indicator of their empowerment, a key goal of the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite not being visible in the marketplace, they have consistently earned without being regarded negatively by family or society.

There are some wide ranges of issues related to women's empowerment and autonomy. These issues included views regarding gender roles, menstrual hygiene, earnings and employment, decision-making, asset ownership, and domestic abuse.



Chapter 8

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme in Telangana

Introduction



The “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” (BBBP) is a flagship scheme of the Government of India launched on January 22, 2015. The aim of this Scheme is to address gender imbalance and promote the education and welfare of girls. While the scheme is a national initiative, it is implemented by individual states as well, including Telangana.

In Telangana, the BBBP scheme focuses on several key objectives:

1. Addressing Declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR): One of the main focuses of BBBP is to address the issue of declining child sex ratio in India. Despite various efforts, the country has been experiencing a significant gender gap, with fewer girls being born compared to boys. BBBP seeks to arrest this trend and improve the overall CSR.

2. Promoting Girl Child Education: BBBP emphasizes the importance of educating girls by providing them with opportunities for schooling, skill development, and higher education. The scheme aims to bridge the gender gap in education and ensure equal access to quality education for girls.

3. Changing Mindsets and Social Norms: Beyond legislative measures and policy initiatives, BBBP also aims to bring about a shift in societal attitudes and norms towards the girl child. It seeks to challenge stereotypes and discrimination against girls, promoting their equal value and rights in society.

4. Awareness and Advocacy: BBBP involves extensive awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts to engage communities, parents, and stakeholders in supporting the rights and well-being of the girl child. These campaigns raise awareness about issues such as gender-based discrimination, female feticide, and the importance of girls’ education.

5. Multi-Sectoral Collaboration: The implementation of BBBP involves collaboration between various government departments, local authorities, NGOs, civil society

organizations, and communities. This multi-sectoral approach ensures a comprehensive strategy to address the complex issues affecting the girl child.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation: BBBP includes mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating its implementation to track progress and assess the effectiveness of interventions. Regular reviews and assessments help identify challenges and gaps, allowing for adjustments and improvements in the scheme's implementation.

7. Financial Support: The government allocates financial resources to support various components of BBBP, including awareness campaigns, education initiatives, skill development programs, and support services for girls and their families.

Overall, BBBP is a holistic initiative that aims to bring about positive change in the status and well-being of the girl child in India by addressing gender disparities, promoting education, and empowering girls to realize their full potential.

This verse is from Manu-smriti Book, "Yatra naryastu pujoyante ram ante tetra Devata, yatra itaastu na pujoyante sarvaastatrafalaah kriyaah." The passage "Divinity flourishes where women are honored, revered, and respected" is the focal point of the study. It highlights that when women are treated dishonorably and their rights are infringed, activities lose their meaning and remain ineffective. The book emphasizes the value of legislative action by the state as well as the financial consequences of fewer women and girls in the workforce.



Chapter 9

The rise in Telangana's per capita income can largely be attributed to women, Govt sources

Introduction



The Department of Industries & Commerce and Information Technology, Electronics & Communications, highlighted that women are primarily responsible for the state's rising per capita income. Telangana, India, celebrated its ninth anniversary and announced measures to encourage

women's entrepreneurship and empowerment, with the Chief Minister aiming to turn the state into a welfare state.

Telangana takes pride in being the location of WE-Hub, the nation's first state-led incubator for women. The state is also home to India's first industrial park exclusively for women. Additionally, Telangana has one of the highest percentages of working women in the nation.

Highlighted that women are primarily responsible for the state's increase in per capita income, with Telangana experiencing a 130% growth since 2014. The government's efforts to empower women through self-help groups, capacity enhancement, and support have led to this remarkable growth, making it one of the Telangana government's greatest achievements.

Women have made a major contribution to it, and this is because the government has worked hard to organize women into powerful reception mechanisms at the local level. The consensus is that governments everywhere prioritize welfare, but who exactly is supposed to receive these benefits is rarely taken into consideration. Accordingly, Telangana has attempted to establish self-help organizations and is working to improve and expand them, among other things.

The government's initiatives for women in urban and rural areas have created a conducive environment for entrepreneurship and creativity.

India has the potential to set a standard for inclusive and diverse workplaces, as research shows that such organizations have higher productivity. He estimates that

increasing female participation in G20 nations could boost GDP by \$5.8 trillion over the next five to six years. Businesses, including India, are now focusing on promoting female workforce participation.

A rise in female participation rates could increase the GDP of G20 member states by 5.8 trillion over the next five to six years, according to a study on the relationship between diversity, inclusivity, and productivity in organizations.

India's young population and increasing workforce participation are crucial, but many aging countries lack sufficient women to address the challenges posed by the aging population. Rosha believes India has a chance to establish a base by addressing the gender gap in the workforce, which is a significant issue in other countries.

HSBC has established a \$1 billion fund to support female entrepreneurs, aiming to achieve gender parity by 2025. The fund aims to support 35% of women in senior leadership roles globally.



Chapter 10

Hurdles to Overcome

- **Gender stereotypes:** The idea that women are inherently weaker, less clever, and less capable than males are still held by a large number of people. It may be challenging for women to be viewed as equals in the job and society as a whole because of these preconceptions.



- **Fear of change:** Some worry that a fundamental shift in society will result from women's empowerment. They fear that women will disrupt conventional family structures, become more independent, and replace men in the workforce.

- **Misconceptions about feminism:** Some people think that feminism is about wanting to take away men's rights or about disliking males. Feminism is actually about equality for all individuals, regardless of gender.

- **Personal insecurity:** When women gain authority, some males may have feelings of insecurity over their manhood. They might be concerned that women won't require them in the future or that they won't be valued as highly.

- **Religious convictions:** Some people may be unable to embrace women's empowerment because of their religious convictions. Certain religions, for instance, advocate for women to be subservient to men.

- **Stereotypes and prejudices:** Certain persons may harbor preconceived notions and prejudices regarding the roles and capacities of women in society. They could think that women should act by established gender roles, and they might get intimidated by those who don't.

- **Fear of Change:** Changing societal norms and power structures is a common step in empowering women. Because it threatens their perception of the status quo, some people may be afraid of change and oppose initiatives to empower women.

- **Cultural and Religious Beliefs:** Perceptions of women's empowerment may be influenced by cultural and religious beliefs. Women may encounter opposition while

attempting to express their rights and autonomy in certain cultures and religions where it is assumed that they will be obedient to men.

- **Fear of Losing Privilege:** Historically, men have occupied positions of privilege and authority in patriarchal society. Because they fear losing their position of power and privilege, some males may feel frightened by women's empowerment.

- **Economic Factors:** The empowerment of women may have an impact on the economy by raising competitiveness for resources and jobs. Some may be against women's empowerment because they believe it would negatively affect stability and economic prospects.

All things considered, there are several intricate social, cultural, and economic reasons why some individuals oppose women's empowerment. For the sake of establishing a more equitable and inclusive society for all, it is critical to confront these beliefs and promote gender equality.



A Word of Optimism

The imperative for women empowerment resonates more profoundly than ever before. The evolving landscape towards women's progress and excellence demands our unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity, equality, and opportunity for all.

As we navigate towards a future where gender barriers are dismantled, let us embrace the collective potential of women, recognizing their invaluable contributions across all spheres of society. Empowering women isn't just a moral obligation; it's a strategic imperative for building a more equitable, prosperous, and harmonious world.

Together, let us champion women's empowerment, amplifying their voices, nurturing their talents, and creating pathways for their success. For in the empowerment of women lies the realization of our shared humanity and the promise of a brighter tomorrow for generations to come.

