

## Gender Equality and Women Empowerment: A Pre-requisite for Viksit Bharat @2047

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### Abstract

As India approaches the centenary of its independence in 2047, the vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) necessitates a holistic and inclusive development model that embraces diversity, promotes equity, and guarantees equal opportunities for all citizens. At the heart of this vision lies the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women across all dimensions of life. A nation cannot achieve true progress when nearly half of its population continues to face systemic barriers and socio-economic limitations. This paper underscores the pivotal role of gender equality and women's empowerment as essential pillars of national development. It evaluates government policies, social programs, educational systems, and technological innovations that collectively influence the empowerment landscape, while also identifying enduring challenges and proposing a strategic roadmap for achieving a gender-equitable India by 2047. The discussion highlights that a society grounded in inclusivity, justice, and respect is not only ethically imperative but also economically advantageous, as empowered women drive innovation, foster economic growth, and enhance social stability. Ultimately, gender equality stands not as an auxiliary goal but as a fundamental requirement for building a resilient, self-reliant, and forward-looking Viksit Bharat.

**Keywords:** Gender equality, women empowerment, holistic development, inclusion, progressive, self-reliant, Viksit Bharat.

### Introduction

When she rises, the nation blossoms;  
When she speaks, the quiet fades.  
When she leads, progress takes shape.

These words embody the spirit of a nation that acknowledges the strength, resilience, and immense potential of its women. As India advances on its path toward Viksit Bharat @2047, women's empowerment stands out not merely as an objective but as a pivotal force influencing the country's developmental course. The vision of a developed India is incomplete without the full and equal participation of women across all spheres, including education, governance, the economy, science, culture, and community life.

Viksit Bharat envisions a future where the country is thriving economically, socially inclusive, technologically ahead, environmentally conscious, and respected worldwide. This goal ties into India's aim to become a developed nation by 2047, marking a century of independence. Reaching this milestone means tapping into the full potential of its people, especially women, who have long been underrepresented in leadership, innovation, and economic roles.

**Gender equality**—Ensuring equal access to opportunities, rights, and resources for all genders isn't just a lofty social goal—it's a crucial driver of economic growth and development. Research, including findings from the McKinsey Global Institute, shows that closing gender gaps in education, workforce participation, and entrepreneurship could raise India's GDP by as much as 27%. When women succeed, families flourish, communities strengthen, and nations progress.

But empowerment goes far beyond economics. It's about creating lasting social change, ensuring access to education, increasing political representation, protecting bodily autonomy, and giving everyone the freedom to make informed choices. For India to truly lead on the world stage by 2047, women must not just take part, but lead, innovate, and help shape the nation's future.

### **Women's Empowerment: Dimensions and Importance**

Women's empowerment is a multidimensional concept rooted in freedom, agency, dignity, and equality. It encompasses several interlinked dimensions:

#### **Educational Empowerment**

Education serves as the most powerful catalyst for empowerment, fostering the acquisition of knowledge, the development of critical thinking, and the capacity to challenge entrenched stereotypes systemic inequalities. It empowers women to engage actively in the workforce, assert their rights with confidence, and create a positive ripple effect by securing improved health and educational opportunities for future generations. Through education, women are better positioned to influence societal progress and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.

#### **Economic Empowerment**

Economic independence enhances women's decision-making authority and fosters greater social mobility. When women generate income, they tend to reinvest substantially in their families and communities, thereby creating a powerful multiplier effect that accelerates development. Women entrepreneurs, self-help groups (SHGs), and digital enterprise owners are emerging as key catalysts for both rural and urban economic transformation.

#### **Social Empowerment**

Social empowerment encompasses the elimination of discrimination, the assurance of safe mobility, the preservation of bodily autonomy, equitable access to resources, and fair representation within social institutions. It further entails the dismantling of patriarchal norms, the guarantee of safety, and the cultivation of respectful and supportive relationships within families and communities.

#### **Political Empowerment**

Political representation empowers women to actively shape laws, policies, and governance frameworks. Female leaders often place a strong emphasis on advancing welfare, education, healthcare, and community-focused reforms, thereby fostering broad societal benefits.

#### **Technological Empowerment**

Technology has become an essential instrument for empowerment, with digital literacy serving as a gateway to education, employment, entrepreneurship, and global connectivity. By providing access to information and resources, technology helps overcome challenges that once created significant barriers, particularly for women in rural regions, enabling them to participate more fully in economic, social, and professional spheres.

### **Why Empowerment Matters for India:**

Empowered women:

- Drive significant increases in national productivity through active participation in diverse economic sectors.

- Foster sustainable and inclusive development by ensuring equitable opportunities and resource distribution.
- Elevate education and health standards by influencing policy and community practices.
- Bolster democratic participation through active engagement in decision-making processes and leadership roles.
- Contribute to the reduction of poverty and social inequality by promoting fair access to resources and opportunities.

Therefore, the empowerment of women is intrinsically linked to the empowerment and progress of the nation.

### **Government Initiatives and Policies for Women's Empowerment**

India has implemented a wide range of schemes and policies aimed at fostering gender equality, increasing women's participation in the economy, and ensuring the protection of their rights.

#### **Mission Shakti**

An integrated framework that unites safety, security, and empowerment initiatives, encompassing the establishment of One Stop Centers, the operation of Women Helplines, and the implementation of programs focused on skill development and rehabilitation. This comprehensive approach aims to provide holistic support, ensuring protection, assistance, and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

#### **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**

A national initiative focused on addressing the declining child sex ratio and advancing education for girls has played a pivotal role in raising public awareness and fostering societal change. Through targeted campaigns and community engagement, it has successfully encouraged greater recognition of the value of the girl child, leading to a notable increase in school enrollment rates among girls and promoting gender equality in education.

#### **Stand-Up India and MUDRA Yojana**

These initiatives provide financial assistance to women entrepreneurs by offering loans that empower them to establish micro and small enterprises, with a particular focus on fostering economic growth and opportunity in underserved segments of society.

#### **National Education Policy (2020)**

The National Education Policy 2020 places a strong emphasis on fostering inclusive education, promoting gender sensitization, enabling flexible learning pathways, and integrating vocational training into the curriculum. It also prioritizes increasing the participation of girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, ensuring equal opportunities and encouraging diversity in these critical areas.

#### **Women's Reservation Bill (2023)**

A landmark initiative mandates the reservation of 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women, significantly enhancing their representation and strengthening their role in political decision-making processes. This measure aims to promote gender equality in governance and ensure that women have a more substantial voice in shaping the nation's policies and legislative agenda.

#### **Digital India and Mahila E-Haat**

The Digital India initiative enhances women's access to digital infrastructure, enabling greater participation in the digital economy, while Mahila E-Haat offers an online platform that serves as a marketplace for women entrepreneurs to showcase and sell their products and services.

### **Ujjwala Yojana**

Ujjwala Yojana is a scheme aimed at providing LPG connections to women from economically weaker households, thereby reducing health risks associated with traditional cooking methods and saving valuable time. By enabling access to clean cooking fuel, the program not only improves health outcomes but also empowers women to participate more actively in economic activities, contributing to their overall well-being and socio-economic development.

### **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana**

It is a dedicated savings scheme designed to secure the financial future of girl children, fostering long-term stability and growth. It aims to encourage parents and guardians to invest in their daughters' futures by offering attractive interest rates, tax benefits, and a safe investment platform. This initiative not only promotes financial security but also inspires positive and responsible investments that support the education and overall development of the girl child.

### **Case Studies of Women's Empowerment in India**

Recent case studies highlight inspiring examples of women's empowerment. In rural areas, SHGs and microfinance have been game changers. Pandhare, Bellampalli & Yadava (2024) showed how SHG membership and access to microfinance helped women save, start small businesses, make better decisions, and gain confidence. Suman Devi (2024) found that the Swa-Shakti Project boosted financial independence and control over life choices through pooled savings and credit. Bardhan & Karan (2025) confirmed that SHGs still drive financial inclusion and empowerment. In the MSME sector, Khandelwal & Priya (2024) documented how digital tools and e-commerce are helping women entrepreneurs grow, with training in digital payments, marketing, and technology adoption. A 2025 report noted that over 10% of SIDBI funds now go to women-led startups, improving access to formal credit and reducing reliance on costly informal loans. In Uttar Pradesh, over 17 lakh women have achieved "Lakshpati Didi" status under UPSRLM, engaging in farming, dairy, beekeeping, and micro-enterprises, as well as roles such as "Vidyut Sakhis" and "Banking Sakhis," which provide both income and influence.

### **Education, Technology, and Women's Leadership**

The intersection of education, technology, and women's leadership represents a powerful catalyst for social and economic progress. Education equips women with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world, while technology provides innovative tools and platforms that expand access to information, resources, and opportunities. When combined, these elements empower women to take on leadership roles across various sectors, fostering diversity, driving innovation, and promoting equitable decision-making. Strengthening this synergy not only enhances individual success but also contributes to building more inclusive and resilient communities.

### **Education as a Transformative Agent**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes the active participation of girls in STEM disciplines, leadership positions, and research-oriented careers. It emphasizes that education serves as a powerful tool to

delay early marriage, foster financial independence, and strengthen decision-making skills, thereby enabling women to contribute more effectively to personal, societal, and national development.

### **Technology as an Equalizer**

Initiatives such as Digital India, PMGDISHA, and mobile-based learning platforms have significantly contributed to bridging the digital divide. These efforts have empowered women by enhancing their access to online education, telemedicine services, e-commerce platforms, and diverse remote earning opportunities.

### **Women in Leadership**

Women leaders contribute collaborative, ethical, and community-focused approaches to governance, fostering inclusivity and shared decision-making. The growing representation of women across politics, the armed forces, academia, and entrepreneurship signifies India's advancement toward achieving gender-balanced leadership, highlighting a broader societal commitment to equality and diverse perspectives in positions of influence.

### **Challenges and Barriers**

Women continue to face significant challenges and barriers across various domains. Patriarchal cultural norms persist in restricting women's mobility, decision-making authority, and access to essential resources. Gender-based violence—whether physical, emotional, or economic—further undermines women's freedom and limits their full participation in society. Workforce participation among women remains disproportionately low, driven by the burden of unpaid care work, persistent workplace discrimination, and inadequate childcare support. The digital divide also remains a critical issue, as limited access to technology and insufficient digital skills exclude many rural women from participating in the digital economy. Furthermore, leadership gaps endure, with women significantly underrepresented in corporate, political, and academic leadership roles.

### **Future Vision: Amrit Kaal and Viksit Bharat 2047**

It envisions a transformative era in which India harnesses the coming decades as a historic opportunity to drive comprehensive socio-economic progress. Central to this vision is the commitment to advancing gender equality through a range of strategic priorities, including increasing women's workforce participation, promoting STEM education for girls, and strengthening women-led entrepreneurship. It also emphasizes ensuring effective political representation, implementing gender-responsive budgeting, and bridging the digital gender divide. Further, it prioritizes improving women's health infrastructure, supporting childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements, enhancing safety in both public and private spaces, and conducting large-scale gender-sensitization programs. The foundation of Viksit Bharat rests on the belief that a gender-equal society is indispensable for sustainable development and national prosperity.

### **Conclusion**

It is increasingly evident that a nation's true strength lies in the empowerment of its women. Society must embrace the understanding that her progress does not signify his decline; rather, her advancement uplifts all. Empowering women is not about competing with men, but about completing the circle of humanity. Equally, men must be empowered with the compassion and awareness necessary to uphold equality, for empowerment is most powerful when it is shared. When a man supports a woman's aspirations, progress becomes unstoppable. Equality should not be viewed as a struggle for dominance, but as a bridge uniting two complementary strengths. It is not about being greater or lesser, but about standing together on equal ground, beneath the same sky. Women do not seek crowns; they seek the freedom to define their own horizons, and in

doing so, they have the potential to chart new directions for nations. Equal opportunities can forge extraordinary destinies. Gender equality and women's empowerment are indispensable foundations for building a developed and enlightened India. Empowered women strengthen families, enhance community well-being, drive innovation, and serve as catalysts for social transformation. India's vision for Viksit Bharat @2047 cannot be realized without ensuring equality of opportunity, rights, and dignity for women. When gender equality becomes a lived reality, India will embody the highest ideals of justice, progress, and holistic national development.

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