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**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT- A CHALLENGE BEFORE HARYANA  
GOVERNMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

In a male dominated society, women have always been underestimated and discriminated in all spheres of life be it their family and social life or their economic and political life. Despite traditional duties of managing households, rapid changes, technological developments and huge competition in the world is revealed the importance and necessity of empowering more and more. Over the years various efforts have been made by many Government and Non-Government organizations to promote women empowerment. Therefore, the aim of this paper was to find out what should be done to enhance women empowerment. The methodology adopted in this paper is to review critically the existing literature on empowerment both online and print. This study will contribute greatly to existing literature specifically in inspiring government and non govt. agencies to develop various strategies on how to achieve empowerment; the outcome from the review indicates that women empowerment is essential in this era of globalization to enable the country to respond quickly to any changes in the environment.

**Keywords-** Challenge, Women, Empowerment

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## INTRODUCTION

Women have been the most underprivileged and discriminated strata of the society not only in India but the world over. Despite all Government and Non-Governments' efforts, they have been highly ignorant clients of the financial sector. Women empowerment is one of the most important issues that have been in the focus of various policies and programs initiated by the Govt. and the non-govt. organizations.

The contact of Indian culture with that of the British also brought improvement in the status of women. The third factor in the revival of women's position was the influence of Mahatma Gandhi who induced women to participate in the Freedom Movement. As a result of this retrieval of freedom, women in Indian have distinguished themselves as teachers, nurses, airhostesses, booking clerks, receptionists, and doctors. They are also participating in politics and administration. But in spite of this amelioration in the status of women, the evils of illiteracy, dowry, ignorance, and economic slavery would have to be fully removed in order to give them their rightful place in Indian society. This situation lead the investigator to work in this area and collect the views of post-graduate students of education regarding the status of women in past, present and according to them what will be the status of women in Indian society. To serve this purpose, the investigator had to formulate objectives such as, to know dignitary women regarding their achievements at world level, the women who are admired by Indian society and who had done remarkable works in the past of India, to know and access the views of post graduate students of education regarding the status and condition of women in the past, present and future time, to know and access the views of post graduate students of education regarding the necessity of education for women. And she got some remarkable results i.e. the position of women will be above men in future and will be the role model for the country, according to students, necessity for educating women is not only for family, society and country, but also for their self-development and self-recognition and personal success.

Thousands of women joined the Satyagraha army of the Gandhi ji. They raised their voices against the Rowlatt Bill, Salt Laws and Forest Laws and went to jail as a consequence of their defiance. During the civil Disobedience movement women like Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, Lado Rani Zutshi, Durga Bai and many others became war dictators, Sarojini Nadu was not only the first Indian Woman to become the President of Indian National Congress in 1925 but was also the first woman to lead the biggest salt raid in Bombay. While men were in prison it was left to the women

of India to guide and lead the people during the critical periods. In a bid to achieve their aim they had to face Lathi (Wooden Stick) blows and bullets, but once they had decided to come out and work for freedom, there was no going back from it. Swaroop Rani Nehru, wife of Motilal Nehru, was one of many who received lathi blows.

The demand for independence brought in other concession's for Indians for in the form of Govt. of India Act, 1935. By virtue of this ministries were formed in provinces after general elections. Women contested the seats and were elected. Vijay Lakshmi Pandit became first woman minister while Ansuyabai Kale and Sipi Milani became the deputy speakers of central province and sindh assemblies respectively.

The post-independence period, particularly in case of women has been a continuation of era of social reforms, economic uplift and political recognition. Struggle for equity justice and parity between two human beings continues.

#### ANTI FEMALE PRACTICES AND THEIR CORRECTIONS

In spite of the liberal provisions made to ensure equality to all citizens and thereby to women as well, the women continue to suffer from oppression. In pre-independence era, woman had no property rights; she was not legally authorized to adopt a child. Efforts to reduce and remove the disabilities were made by enacting acts of Parliament. The Hindu succession Act of 1956 empowered the Hindu women to inherit property. In addition to these acts, a number of other laws have been passed to eliminate undesirable practices and protect, promote and safeguard the interest of women. Some of these were Dowry act, suppression of prostitution and immoral traffic act of 1958. It may be explained here system of Dowry was actually introduced with lot of good intentions. The primary purpose of providing dowry was to provide Bride as a security in case her husband dies or she gets divorce. But unfortunately society later used as business transactions. More dowries became one of the essential qualifications for girls to get married to prospective boys.

The year 1976 witnessed passing of Bill for equal remuneration to men and women for same type of work. Another progressive step was taken by amending the factories act which made it obligatory on employer to provide creches for children of working in factories. At about the same time maternity benefit was extended to those women who hitherto were not covered under the act of 1958. The laws relating to dowry, rape and

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violence against women were amended to make them more stringent to ensure that culprit is punished. For instance, in case of violence against women, the criminal law amendment act of 1983 recognized for the first time domestic violence inflicted by husband or any of his relations and such violence became an offence under the act. Prevention of Sati or widow burning was passed in 1987 which was preceded by amendments to Dowry act of 1961 in 1984 and 1986. The offence has been made cognizable and non bailable. It also provided for Dowry Prohibition officers at state level. The other progressive amendments related to abortion, marriage, divorce, right to children and right to property. It appears that women had to ask for, agitate, demand and advocate legal remarks to reduce and or eliminate the hardships inflicted on them. It has also to be understood that there is still a need for “stringent laws”, sensitive judiciary and effective enforcement. The Indian women has come long ways in making progress both in education, holding Govt. and private job.

#### EMPOWERMENT

The empowerment of women refers to providing the necessary rights and responsibilities to women in order to make them self-reliant. Traditionally, Indian women have been brought to become workers or servants to serve the man – dominating world. Even in mythology, there is no gender equity and women were deprived of their legal rights, to get property, education privacy, social status and they were never treated as participants in any developmental works. Empowerment is the process of building capacities of women, creating an atmosphere which will enable people to fully utilize their creative potentials. Empowerment gives women, the capacity to influence decision making process, planning, implementation and evaluation. The status of women empowerment in India using various indicators like women’s household decision making power, financial autonomy, freedom of movement, political participation, acceptance of unequal gender role, exposure to media, access to education, experience of domestic violence etc. based on data from different sources. Gender gap exists regarding access to education and employment. Household decision-making power and freedom of movement of women vary considerably with their age, education and employment status.

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Social values, norms

What are the factors that limit girls' choices about education? For example (taken from the UK before women gained widespread access to education):

- belief that women's role is domestic/childcare and does not require formal education
- belief that women's reproductive abilities will be damaged by education
- belief that education will cause women to challenge their socially ascribed gender roles
- belief that education will threaten institution of marriage

Empowerment in development studies

There is no single, widely accepted definition of empowerment. On the one hand it is argued that "it is only by a focus on change to existing patterns of power and its use that any meaningful change can be brought about" (Oakley 2001; 14). On the other hand it can be said to involve "recognizing the capacities of such groups [the marginalized and oppressed] to take action and to play an active role in development initiatives" (Oakley 2001; 14). Oakley identifies five key uses of the term empowerment in development studies. These are: empowerment as participation, empowerment as democratization, empowerment as capacity building, empowerment through economic improvement and empowerment and the individual (Oakley 2001; 43). He considers the link between empowerment and participation as the strongest in practice, The World Bank, for example, "began to recognize several stages of participation: information sharing, consultation, collaboration and finally, empowerment" (World Bank 1998; 19). In this primarily project-based view of empowerment the term is depoliticized, divorced from power structures and inequalities. Oakley cites Oxfam as an example of the more radical view which identifies empowerment as "essentially concerned with analyzing and addressing the dynamics of oppression" and "explicitly rejects the notion that 'participation' in development in donor-funded projects is a sign of 'empowerment'" (Oakley 2001; 43).

Empowerment as democratization is concerned with macro-level political activity. Empowerment is seen as the basis on which democratic structures and practices can be built. This approach leads to strategies of support for civil society structures and grassroots organizations. Capacity-building in general is often regarded as empowering, although

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there are many approaches, some of which seem little more than training. Empowerment through economic improvement is an approach which (unsurprisingly given women's well-documented relative lack of economic power) has been extensively used with women. Based on the assumption that women's relative powerlessness is primarily a function of their poverty, such interventions often focus on microfinance and small business development activities, targeted at women. Empowerment at the individual level is strongly influenced by Freire's work and includes consciousness raising and the development of a critical faculty (Freire 1974). However, despite its having "identified empowerment as a... primary development assistance goal... neither the World Bank nor any other major development agency has developed a rigorous method for measuring and tracking changes in levels of empowerment" (Malhotra, A. et al 2002).

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Over the years various efforts have been made by many Government and Non-Government organizations to promote women empowerment. Therefore, the aim of this paper was to find out what should be done to enhance women empowerment.

#### HARYANA

Haryana is a state located in the northern part of the country and has New Delhi as its neighbor along with Punjab and Rajasthan. Gurgaon is one of the most promising areas of Haryana and has developed a lot in recent times. Gurgaon has been the center of development for many IT companies thus there has been an influx of youth population into the state. Haryana shares its capital with the state of Punjab. Chandigarh is the capital of both Punjab and Haryana. Haryana has often been criticized for its low sex ratio something the state government has to work on.

The Population of Haryana according to the 2011 census stands at about 25 million, making it the 17th most populated state in India. The state lies in the northern part of the country and is well connected to the capital of India. There is a huge influx of population into Gurgaon, which is a part of Haryana from Delhi. The state is spread over an area of about 44000sq. km. making it the 20th largest state in the country in terms of area. The density of population per sq. Km. is about 570 which is above the national average. The state has a growth rate of about 19% which slightly exceeds the national growth rate of about 17%. The population of the state is rising considerably due to rapid efforts towards

development and progress. The literacy rate in the state is about 76% a figure that has improved tremendously in the last few years due to the consistent efforts of the government. The sex ratio in Haryana leaves a lot to be desired as it lags behind the national average by 70 points. The statistics in the Haryana Census 2011 reveal facts that can be instrumental in planning for a better development plan for the state. The largest city in the state of Haryana is Chandigarh while Faridabad is the capital city of the Haryana. The languages spoken in the Haryana state includes Hindi and Haryanvi. In total Haryana (HR) state comprises 21 districts. The ISOCODE assigned by International Organization for Standardization for Haryana state is HR.

Table No. 1

Approximate Population	2.54 Crores	2.11 Crores
Actual Population	25,351,462	21,144,564
Male	13,494,734	11,363,953
Female	11,856,728	9,780,611
Population Growth	19.90%	28.06%
Percentage of total Population	2.09%	2.06%
Sex Ratio	879	861
Child Sex Ratio	834	964
Density/km2	573	478
Density/mi2	1,485	1,239
Area km2	44,212	44,212
Area mi2	17,070	17,070
Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	3,380,721	3,335,537
Male Population (0-6 Age)	1,843,109	1,833,655
Female Population (0-6 Age)	1,537,612	1,501,882
Literacy	75.55 %	67.91 %
Male Literacy	84.06 %	76.10 %
Female Literacy	56.91 %	59.61 %
Total Literate	16,598,988	12,093,677
Male Literate	9,794,067	7,480,209
Female Literate	6,804,921	4,613,468

Source: Census 2011



As per details from Census 2011, Haryana has population of 2.54 Crores, an increase from figure of 2.11 Crores in 2001 census. Total population of Haryana as per 2011 census is 25,351,462 of which male and female are 13,494,734 and 11,856,728 respectively. In 2001, total population was 21,144,564 in which males were 11,363,953 while females were 9,780,611. Literacy rate in Haryana has seen upward trend and is 75.55 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 84.06 percent while female literacy is at 56.91 percent. In 2001, literacy rate in Haryana stood at 67.91 percent of which male and female were 76.10 percent and 59.61 percent literate respectively. In actual numbers, total literates in Haryana stands at 16,598,988 of which males were 9,794,067 and females were 6,804,921. Sex Ratio in Haryana is 879 i.e. for each 1000 male, which is below national average of 940 as per census 2011. In 2001, the sex ratio of female was 861 per 1000 males in Haryana.

#### PROBLEMS BEFORE HARYANA TO GAIN EMPOWERMENT

Horrible fact is that 30 Million Women are missing in India, One RAPE every 54 minutes, One molestation every 20 minutes, One kidnapping/ abduction in every 45 minutes, Women teasing act every 5 minutes, One dowry death in 1hr 30 minutes, One act of cruelty in every 33 minutes, 70% contribution in production, 1% ownership, 0-6 sex ratio in Haryana (2001) is 820, Sex Ratio in Literates in Haryana—617, Child Sex Ratio – Bottom Ten Districts in India.

#### Myths & Realities

1. Reduction in the number of women would enhance their worth Economic theory of Demand & Supply does not hold good Women cannot be equated with Onion or Tomato In most South Asian Societies low sex ratio reflects their lower status (Haryana as well) Rape, forced marriages, polyandry, social insecurity, sex stereotyping, purchase of brides will increase Women will be compelled to stay within their homes Powerful will have a JANANKHANA others will resort to menial means To murder a women on refusal to have forcible sex will become an accepted norm.
2. Laws cannot curb sex determination tests- (i) True any progressive law in isolation cannot solve a social problem. (ii) Legal action coupled with awareness campaign and suitable policy interventions can be effective, (iii) Unlike other problems like



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dowry, sati & child marriage, this issue has an additional player i.e. DOCTOR who is law abiding by and large but some are playing dirty game

3. Banning SD would infringe upon women's right to choose the sex of offspring  
Women from poor countries have never asked for a right to decide the off springs sex. Will not be given this right easily. Where she cannot take decision regarding her a) Education b) Health c) Marriage d) Economic freedom How about sex preference? Son Preference at the cost of girl. In a consumerist society demand for a choice could be created & nurtured.
4. Sex Selective Abortion is an effective tool for population control/ family planning  
Development & Women empowerment is the best contraceptive. Son Preference is a fact but it is not an important determinant of India's rising population. Women are not the Reproductive machines. SD test and SSA only eliminates the Undesirable sex. It does not guarantee the desirable birth. Repeated abortions adversely affect the already compromise the health status of women. Net reproductive rate target is 1 (decrease the number to decrease the population) Not good for societal health.
5. Sex Determination tests are safe and accurate Sonography can tell after 20 weeks and not accurate. SD will not alter the sex ratio of the population How can you oppose SSA if you are not opposed to abortion? SSA are more Humane than dowry murders or Sati.
6. Gender Inequality Facts - Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world, like Mortality inequality, Natality inequality, Basic facility inequality, Special opportunity inequality, Professional inequality, Ownership inequality, Household inequalities Household and Cultural Biases.
7. Status of Women--Some indicators Percent of births in past 3 years for which mother received Percent of women Ages 25 -- 49 married before age 18 (Haryana) 59.9 22.7 (Punjab) Percent of in the past 3 years Birth of order 3+ (H) 41.6 (P) 39.6 Percent of women ages 15 -- 49 With any Anemia (H) 47.0 (P) 41.4 Percent of women ages 15-49 with Any antenatal checkup (H) 58.1 (P) 74.0
8. Cultural Biases- Factors which maintain gender System, All religions have lower status for women, Patriarchal framework of society and family is against women, Judiciary also have gender biases, Political Institutions, Economic Institutions,

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Media –Print and electronic as well, Educational Institutions and Our day today life values.

9. Cultural Practices maintaining gender, Medicines for Son Birth, Thali bajana aur Mattam manana, Celebration of son –Sweet distribution, 6th day celebration as “CHHATH” for Bo, 5 kg Ghee and 10 kg Ghee, Namkaran sanskar for Boy, Funeral is to be lit by Son, Different Dresses, Different Hair Styles, Honour Killings, Khansama is male, Halwai is male, Suhag, Vart- karva chauth.
10. Cultural Practices, She will eat last of all, Vans ka Chalaney wala, Pati parmeshwar- gambler, drunkard or womanizer, Different plays, Kanyadan, Life of a Widow women, Budhapey ka sahara, Son Preference and Daughter Aversion in Folk Songs, Inheritance Rights
11. Implications of Gender- Declining sex ratio, Increasing Atrocities on Women, Increasing Domestic Violence on women, Disturbed family life of marriagable age people, Many women for rich and polyandry for the poor, Purchase of Brides, Dehumanization of women and society as a whole and Increasing Fatwas of Panchayats
12. National Commission for Women- The National Commission for Women is a statutory body constituted under the National Commission for Women Act 1990 to protect and promote the interests and to safeguard the rights of women. From January to December 2000, the Commission received a total of 5,268 complaints, which included dowry deaths 527, murder 235, rape 277, molestation 11, dowry harassment 963, sexual harassment 131, bigamy 110, desertion of wives 267 and other types of harassment 2,747.
13. Purchased Bride Survey Total no. of surveyed villages 12, No. of Gotras in surveyed villages 3 – 93 Sex Ratio (general) 759 – 976 Sex Ratio (Schedule Castes) 632 - 941 Women brought from other States 50

#### WHAT IS REQUIRED?

1. Policy Initiatives- (i) Registering & monitoring of all pregnancies from 6th weeks onward & not from 12th weeks, Increase marriage age of girls from 18 to 21, Stop child marriages, Provide compulsory, free, quality education to all girl children up to Secondary school level (Real Access should be there), Extend 50% representation to women in all decision making bodies of the state to introduce a

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feministic political culture conducive to women friendly political action, Eradicate child Labour and guarantee employment for adult women., Bring policy and legal measures to ensure that women have rights and control over productive resources, for the economic empowerment of women, Provide life-sustaining resources such as health, nutrition, water, education to all the children without gender bias. (ii) Entrust power to panchayats to maintain a register of demographic profile with the details on vital statistics. Frame the child policy and girl child policy to protect the interest of the girl children. Extend gender sensitization training to policymakers, planners, administrators and implementers at all levels. Promote gender perspective in to all policies and sectoral programmes.

2. Administrative Reforms – (i) The health Secretary should issue necessary Guidelines and orders for periodical reporting of births, deaths and abortions by all the private hospitals and Government hospitals, to the state and this should be made public on request. Registration of all births and death should be made compulsory at village level, through the statutory health committee formed under panchayati raj institutions. Activate the health committee at the panchayat level to monitor the health services at the village level. (ii) Sex of the foetus for all second trimester abortions to be documented clearly. Publish a scientific report every year on the causes for the declining child sex ratio and the steps taken by the Govt. to stop the decline trend. Form Monitoring cell at the panchayat level to look into the incidence of atrocities on women and girl child. Maintain the disaggregate data by sex and age related to children and make it open to public. (iii) Women Empowerment Cell should be sensitized and check their working regularly.
3. Legislative Reforms – (i) Strict implementation of the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and prevention of Misuse) Act 1994, PNDT Act amendment Rules 2003 and compulsory registration of all genetic counseling centers, Genetic Laboratories and Genetic clinics. Take stringent action against the violators of the Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act 1994, by formulating suitable procedures which empower the appropriate authority to take action 20 police cases and 8 machines sealed by 31.12.2003. Punishment? Stop all medical technologies that imbalances the birth ratio of female children. Strictly enforce all progressive legislations and enact legislation to protect the rights of the girls and women. (ii) Enacting a central

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legislation for ensuring registration and monitoring the functioning of all private clinics as there is a growing trend in commercialization of medical profession. Necessary amendments in PNDT Act & MTP Act which takes away the punishment for victim women. PNDT (regulation and prevention of misuse) Amendment Act 2003 empowering the Advisory committee for monitoring the prenatal diagnostic centers should be strictly implemented and strict enforcement of MTP Act etc.

#### WOMEN AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME BY HARYANA

1. To make women self-employed, the Corporation has proposed to provide financial assistance to 10,000 women every year under the loaning scheme.
2. Naveen Jindal will soon be launching a Women and Governance Programme (WGP) in his constituency Kurukshetra in Haryana, to train women for leadership roles. Since one-third of seats in Panchayati Raj institutions are reserved for women, the programme aims to prepare women for positions that are now mandated for them. WGP will arm them with information about their roles and responsibilities, leadership and government schemes, in addition to equipping them with knowledge about issues such as reproductive rights and health. Set-ups like WGP will help imbibe a sense of self-esteem among women and make them aware of their rights and duties towards building a strong and healthy community.
3. Manthan: A Project on Rural Women and Adolescent Girls in Haryana (Manthan) is an effort to understand villagers, especially women and adolescent girls' social, cultural and psychological problems which hinder their well-being, flow and optimal human functioning.
4. Pension to widows and destitute women (Widow Pension). She is widow, destitute without husband, parents and son(s). The pension is provided @ Rs.750/- p.m. per beneficiary.
5. A woman of age 18 years and above is eligible for grant of pension under the Scheme if she is domicile of Haryana and has been residing in Haryana State for the last one year at the time of submission of application and her own income from all sources is below ` 30,000/- per annum;

6. She is destitute due to desertion or physical/mental incapacity of, (a) Husband in case of married woman; or (b) Parents in case of other women.
7. Ladli Social Security Allowance Scheme (LADLI): Any family where biological single parent/parents are domicile of Haryana or working for Government of Haryana and having no son, biological or adopted, but only daughter/daughters are eligible to get benefit @ ` 500/- per month under this Scheme. Gross Annual Income from all sources of the family must not exceed Rs.2,00,000/-
8. Dairy Farming Spurs Women Empowerment In Haryana: There are over 35,000 cooperative societies in Haryana having around 46 lakh members. The dairy sector alone has about 700 exclusively women cooperatives with membership of around 39,000. These societies have done remarkably well, thus ushering in a new era of prosperity. Women engaged in agricultural activities are taking up dairy farming as an allied trade. Rural women, guided by the Haryana Cooperative Federation (HARCOFED) and other rural development agencies, are supplementing their income by introducing innovative schemes under dairy cooperatives (Bhanu P Lohumi).
9. In the recent times, microfinance has been emerging as a powerful instrument for empowering women particularly, the rural women. Apart from the informal sector of finance the formal and semi-formal sectors like commercial banks, NGOs etc. are taking much interest in providing microfinance to women considering it to be a profitable commercial activity. Women are also participating in the microfinance movement by availing the microfinance services being provided by the various financial channels.

## CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of this decade, much has been achieved in empowering women in the economic and social fields. An increasing volume of development financial resources has been devoted to achieving that objective. Consequently, many region have been able to report increased female literacy and enrolment rates, improved gender equality in education, reduced infant and child mortality rates, declining maternal mortality rates and expanding access to reproductive health services. The participation of women in formal economic activities has also registered a noticeable improvement.

“When women move forward the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves”. It is essential as their thought & their value systems lead the development of a good family, good society & ultimately a good nation”. Indian government has taken several steps towards empowering women. Empowerment of women also requires participation and co-operation of men as they benefit by having educated mothers, wives, daughters and sisters. The economic empowerment will allow raising women's self awareness, skill development, creative decision making and it may also lead to produce better citizens and a new and modern India. Govt. support is quite encouraging for women entrepreneurs. Hundred thousand women will be trained in trade related activities. Through constructive interaction with various R&D organizations like national research and development co-operation and department of science and technology and others, women can today develop new project ideas. The small Industries development Bank of India (SIDBI) plans to reserve 9 billion dollars of marketing development assistance for project promoted by women.

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