



DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

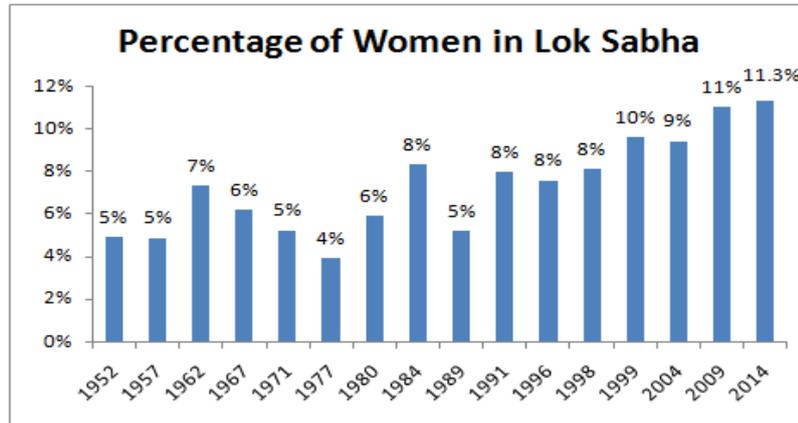
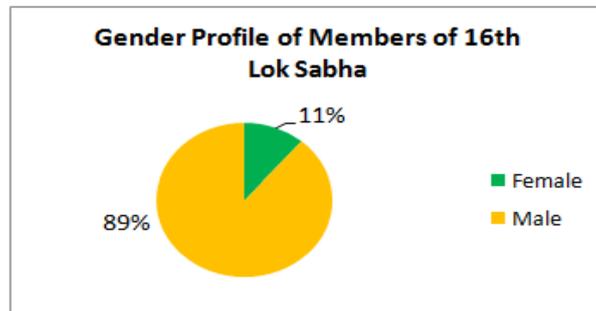
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ABSTRACT

The concept of women's empowerment is well received by all sectors of society, but the fact is that this word is not applied everywhere. This truth can be easily exposed to the presence of women employed in the corporate sector in the public or private sector the issues faced are always ignored being Indian women have found it difficult to overcome traditional and orthodox view of society towards women, where the society view and culture makes a nature of work has traditionally meant that female representation is much smaller than that of men the percentage represented by women is also facing many harassments depending on who stand for themselves are known and stands with standards based on cases the women is compressed or forcibly thrown out of service. The representation of women in sectors such as IT, corporate trainings, teaching, airhostess, receptionists, marketing, etc., most important blind faith in religion and daras and other religious satang's women's are harassed recently seen in many cases, famous case ram Rahim found guilt, swami nityanad which changed the society believes at some extent only during the period of time of news again it stands at same stage. This is quite clear from the statistics that the representation of women in upper house is only around 11% of the total strength. This article is an attempt to reveal the hidden truth that the relationship of women with the total employed in small industries, in crafts or more precisely in the small sector around 30%, but at the same time this relationship is more disturbed than the level of responsibility and the position of work increases in the hierarchy of the company. Therefore, in this article the main concern is to reveal this disparity and identify the area in which the representation of women in the labor market is increasing. The representation of women in the public sector is expected to advance, since the presentation of the women's bill is just around the corner in both the upper and lower parts of parliament. This is almost over, since the decision to introduce the law on women is unanimous, but there are still some obstacles to face. This article also covers the statistics of specific business sectors, such as IT and the stock market, and a comparison between the corporate sector and the minuscule sector with respect to the relationship between women and the total number of employees. The representation of women in government sector in expected to move upward, as the presentation of woman bill is just round the corner in both the houses upper and lower of the parliament. This is almost done, as the decision of introducing women bill is unanimous, but still some impediments are there to cope up. This article also covers the statistics of specific corporate sectors like IT and stock market and a comparison between corporate sector and tiny sector as far as the ratio of women to total employee is concern.

Keywords: - Women Empowerment, Corporate Sector, IT., Constitution, Law, Programmes.



OBJECTIVE

In this article we discussed the women conditions and their status in the Indian society. What are the truth regarding the women, and how much they are empowered in Indian society in modern scenario? What are the constitutional provisions, laws and policy are established for the women empowerment? The **Women's Empowerment Principles** are a set of Principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. They are the result of a collaboration between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact and are adapted from the Calvert Women's Principles. The Women's Empowerment Principles seek to point the way towards best practices by developing the gender dimension of corporate responsibility, the United Nations Global Compact and the role of business in sustainable development. In addition to being a useful guide for companies, the Principles seek to inform other stakeholders, including governments, in their efforts with companies.

Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

- **Leadership Promotes Gender Equality**
- Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights
- Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and include progress as a factor in managers' performance reviews
- Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality
- Ensure that all policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion

Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination

- Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Nondiscrimination
- Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value and strive to pay a living wage to all women and men
- Ensure that workplace policies and practices are free from gender-based discrimination
- Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors
- Assure sufficient participation of women – 30% or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas

- Offer flexible work options, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status
- Support access to child and dependent care by providing services, resources and information to both women and men

Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers

- Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence
- Taking into account differential impacts on women and men, provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to reproductive health
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work, including verbal and/or physical abuse and prevent sexual harassment
- Strive to offer health insurance or other needed services - including for survivors of domestic violence - and ensure equal access for all employees
- Respect women and men worker's rights to time off for medical care and counseling for themselves and their dependents
- In consultation with employees, identify and address security issues, including the safety of women traveling to and from work on company-related business
- Train security staff and managers to recognize signs of violence against women and understand laws and company policies on human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation

Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women

- **Education and Training**
- Invest in workplace policies and programs that open avenues for advancement of women at all levels and across all business areas, and encourage women to enter nontraditional job fields
- Ensure equal access to all company-supported education and training programs, including literacy classes, vocational and information technology training
- Provide equal opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring
- Articulate the company's business case for women's empowerment and the positive impact of inclusion for men as well as women

Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

- Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices Expand business relationships with women-owned enterprises, including small businesses, and women entrepreneurs
- Support gender-sensitive solutions to credit and lending barriers
- Ask business partners and peers to respect the company's commitment to advancing equality and inclusion.
- Respect the dignity of women in all marketing and other company materials.
- Ensure that company products, services and facilities are not used for human trafficking and/or labour or sexual exploitation.

Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

- **Community Leadership and Engagement**
- Lead by example – showcase company commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Leverage influence, alone or in partnership, to advocate for gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to promote inclusion.
- Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls.
- Promote and recognize women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities and ensure sufficient representation of women in any community consultation.
- Use philanthropy and grants programs to support company commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights.

Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

- Transparency, Measuring and Reporting
- Make public the company policies and implementation plan for promoting gender equality
- Establish benchmarks that quantify inclusion of women at all levels

- Measure and report on progress, both internally and externally, using data disaggregated by sex
Incorporate gender markers into ongoing reporting obligations

Women Representation in IT sector:

Try to think of women CEO in Indian corporate sector and certainly you will struggle. Only few names are there that may come quickly to mind like Indra Nooyi, Chief of Pepsico, Chandra Koacher the chief of ICICI, Neelam Dhawan MD of HP India but after that it is not easy to recall. Though some sectors are there where the representation of women at the highest level is quite negotiable for example. IT sector where Neelam Dhawan is MD of HP India. Aruna Jaynath has been directly promoted at the post of global delivery officer in Capgemini as CEO for India, Akila Krishna Kumar has been head of gungend India for some year now. At the most EXO level it is only a little better. In an industry where over 30% of the employees are women and which boasts of almost 50% of its new hirer in recent times bring women at the top may appear odd. Most of the women share value roles at homes are they are dedicated to devote 24/7, at the CEO level the requirement is same but the level of dedication and devotion is missing. Traditional business houses prefer their own family members as board members. They are quite uncomfortable with external women director on their board. Therefore, in order to prove their worth and availability 24/7 they required same dedication and devotion. Now there are plenty of sign that their situation will change with introduction of policies like flexi hours, school facility, and long maternity leave therefore representation of women increasing. As the no. of women employee in growing in IT sector keeping the ratio women employee to total employee quite noticing, so has their ambition. Their expectation is to share the responsibilities with their male counterparts and these phenomena is expected to grow as the industry matters. The number of women of CEO level is also expected to increase as the no. of women employee at the lower level in increasing. At the negotiation table during their selection they are much responsive and bold in asking for more salary packages.

Women Participation in Stock Market

Mention stock market and one would associate dalal street and share trading game with men. But over the years equation has been changed and indication are that more is to come. The no. of women investors currently may minuscule but with the fairer sex earning higher incomes having a better understanding of company's balance sheet and terms like earning for share (EPS) and price earning ratio (P/E) the trend is sure to be more noticeable in the days to come. It is estimated that about 5% of all retail investors are woman, up from about 2% five years ago. In the developed market the figure is at about 20% with increasing penetration of women in downstream economy, they have become an important earning member in family." And higher education and awareness of economy has led to a shift in mindset from traditional investment products to market linked product like mutual funds and direct equities. A big enabler for more women to play in the market and earn a substantial amount of extra money has been the inexpensive online trading platform. When it comes to the difference in psychology between women inventory and their male counterparts the former are more conservative in their approach. While those are aggressive women day traders, generally women prefer long term investment for capital appreciation. Earlier they were focused on participating through the primary market, now we see a lot of participation even in secondary market. While women investors are getting more market savvy, another interesting trend is growing no. of women professional that call the shots at brokerages and fund house. With the no. of institution offering MBA degree in shooting up the no. of better women talent in trading and investment in job is increasing. Now the hirers are not discriminating between men and women while offering jobs and higher salary packages. The disparity between men and women is getting fader day by day. But there is lot of work to be done dismantle the barriers between sexes.

Women Representation in Companies Board in Asia Pacific

More than 70% of company boards in five Asia Pacific countries, including India, do not have female independent directors. More than 70% of boards in five countries Honkong, India, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore have female independent directors. Boards with three or more female directors were rare, and boards with three or more independent female directors were almost nonexistent but the importance of recruiting women at boards has been felt. Therefore, trend reversal is getting up. The importance of women employees was felt long back therefore the recruiters are hiring women manager more. The number of women employee elevated to the top post is getting better and better and this trend is expected to continue.

Constitutional Safeguards of Women

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women. Empowerment is the one of the key factors in determining the success of development is the status and position of women in the society. We put a special focus on empowering women and girls, because we believe they hold the key to long-lasting social change in communities. Empowering women must be a united approach, a cause that requires continued attention and stewardship by all. We need to augment our efforts for empowering women and enhance their progress. It is our moral, social and constitutional responsibility to ensure their progress by providing them with equal rights and opportunities. Today women with their smartness, grace and elegance have conquered the whole world. They with their hard work and sincerity have excelled in each and every profession. Women are considered to be more honest, meticulous, and efficient and hence more and more companies prefer hiring women for better performance and result.

Constitutional Rights to Women:

The rights and safeguards enshrined in the constitution for women in India are listed below:

- The state shall not discriminate against any citizen of India on the ground of sex [Article 15(1)].
- The state is empowered to make any special provision for women. In other words, this provision enables the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women [Article 15(3)].
- No citizen shall be discriminated against or be ineligible for any employment or office under the state on the ground of sex [Article 16(2)].
- Traffic in human beings and forced labour are prohibited [Article 23(1)].
- The state to secure for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39(a)].
- The state to secure equal pay for equal work for both Indian men and women [Article 39(d)].
- The state is required to ensure that the health and strength of women workers are not abused and that they are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their strength [Article 39(e)].
- The state shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief [Article 42].
- It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women [Article 51-A(e)].
- One-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women [Article 243-D(3)].
- One-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women [Article 243-D(4)].
- One-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall be reserved for women [Article 243-T(3)].
- The offices of chairpersons in the Municipalities shall be reserved for women in such manner as the State Legislature may provide [Article 243-T(4)].

Legal Rights to Women:

The following various legislations contain several rights and safeguards for women:

- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) is a comprehensive legislation to protect women in India from all forms of domestic violence. It also covers women who have been/are in a relationship with the abuser and are subjected to violence of any kind—physical, sexual, mental, verbal or emotional.
- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1956) is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. In other words, it prevents trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution as an organised means of living.
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986) prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner.
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act (1987) provides for the more effective prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification on women.

- Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) prohibits the giving or taking of dowry at or before or any time after the marriage from women.
- Maternity Benefit Act (1961) regulates the employment of women in certain establishments for certain period before and after child-birth and provides for maternity benefit and certain other benefits.
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1971) provides for the termination of certain pregnancies by registered medical practitioners on humanitarian and medical grounds.
- Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (1994) prohibits sex selection before or after conception and prevents the misuse of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for sex determination leading to female foeticide.
- Equal Remuneration Act (1976) provides for payment of equal remuneration to both men and women workers for same work or work of a similar nature. It also prevents discrimination on the ground of sex, against women in recruitment and service conditions.
- Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act (1939) grants a Muslim wife the right to seek the dissolution of her marriage.
- Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act (1986) protects the rights of Muslim women who have been divorced by or have obtained divorce from their husbands.
- Family Courts Act (1984) provides for the establishment of Family Courts for speedy settlement of family disputes.
- Indian Penal Code (1860) contains provisions to protect Indian women from dowry death, rape, kidnapping, cruelty and other offences.
- Code of Criminal Procedure (1973) has certain safeguards for women like obligation of a person to maintain his wife, arrest of woman by female police and so on.
- Indian Christian Marriage Act (1872) contain provisions relating to marriage and divorce among the Christian community.
- Legal Services Authorities Act (1987) provides for free legal services to Indian women.
- Hindu Marriage Act (1955) introduced monogamy and allowed divorce on certain specified grounds. It provided equal rights to Indian man and woman in respect of marriage and divorce.
- Hindu Succession Act (1956) recognizes the right of women to inherit parental property equally with men.
- Minimum Wages Act (1948) does not allow discrimination between male and female workers or different minimum wages for them.
- Mines Act (1952) and Factories Act (1948) prohibits the employment of women between 7 P.M. to 6 A.M. in mines and factories and provides for their safety and welfare.
- The following other legislations also contain certain rights and safeguards for women:
- Employees' State Insurance Act (1948)
- Plantation Labour Act (1951)
- Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act (1976)
- Legal Practitioners (Women) Act (1923)
- Indian Succession Act (1925)
- Indian Divorce Act (1869)
- Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (1936)
- Special Marriage Act (1954)
- Foreign Marriage Act (1969)
- Indian Evidence Act (1872)
- Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (1956).
- National Commission for Women Act (1990) provided for the establishment of a National Commission for Women to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal rights and safeguards of women.
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal). Act (2013) provides protection to women from sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organised or unorganized.

Political Participation of Women

In recent years there have been explicit moves to increase women's political participation. The women's reservation policy bill is however a very sad story as it is repeatedly being scuttled in parliament. The

73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution provides reservation of seats and posts of chairperson for women in all grassroots level democratic institutions in the countryside known as panchayats. This is a historic step of far reaching implications and significant repercussions on the political process in rural India. The Constitution have impacted nearly 600 million Indian people in 500,000 villages. Interestingly the percentage of women at various levels of political activity have risen from 4-5% to 25-40%. Both nationally as well as at the state and local levels women in elected bodies have been very few and even those who have been elected when observed from closer quarters present a complex picture. The money and muscle associated with the electoral process inhibits a large number of women from joining politics. Restriction on mobility, lack of control over resources and low literacy rates are well known obstacles it is crucial to train and give real power to these women leaders so that they can catalyst change in their villages regarding women. All this shows that the process of gender equality and women's empowerment still has a long way to go and may even have become more equality and women's empowerment still has a long way to go and may even have become more difficult in the recent years. In the political sphere, women like Mayawati, Sonia Gandhi, late Jayalalitha and Pratibha Patil, Meera Kumari have emerged as undisputed leaders without any assistance from male counterpart. It indicates that women empowerment bill is a mere eye wash. In 21st century women should come forward and should establish their superiority without any political reservation.

Steps Required to Be Taken

The main reason for the contradiction is that, targeted scheme tend to have only limited impact when the basic thrust of development is not reaching some average women, making her life more fragile and vulnerable. To make a positive change basic infrastructure should be provided in every village and city.

1. Create a safe space: Women in South Asia often have nowhere to gather with other women and talk about issues like gender equity, women's rights, or health. READ Centers provide a safe, trusted space for women to gather and learn. The Center is a safe place for women, and we do not really need approval from our family to visit.
2. Support independence and mobility: Most women in rural Nepal and India have to ask their husbands for permission to leave home. Because of their local READ Center, a large majority of women (75-77%) report being able to freely travel outside of their home unaccompanied.
3. Teach women to read: If you are illiterate, simple things like reading signs on a road, numbers on a phone, or directions on a medicine bottle make daily life a struggle. READ Centers teach thousands of women to read each year.

“When I was illiterate, I felt like I was blind. I began to see the world after coming to the library.”

4. Increase savings and income: 63% of women increased their savings or income after joining savings cooperatives at READ Centers in Nepal. Savings cooperatives allow women to invest money and then take turns receiving micro-loans to start micro-businesses or invest in education for their children.
5. Teach job skills and seed businesses: Women learn beekeeping, mushroom farming, sewing, and other income-generating skills through training programs at READ Centers. One in five Nepali women report going on to start her own income-generating business after joining a savings cooperative and taking skills training at a READ Center.
6. Build self-esteem and confidence: A majority of women (58-83%) report that their self-esteem or confidence has increased since coming to a READ Center – helping them to become more comfortable speaking in front of groups and sharing opinions.
7. Boost decision-making power: About two-thirds of women in Nepal (62%) and India (68%) say that they have greater decision-making power in their homes and communities as a result of coming to the READ Center.

“We were mostly busy doing household activities before... we now can travel outside of the village alone, [earn an income] in our family, and participate in decisions related to our children's education.”

8. Impact health: Women report increased influence in their families and communities after receiving training or information from their local READ Center on health care, family planning, domestic violence and reproductive rights. Almost all READ Center users (88-97%) access health information and services at Centers that they would not otherwise be able to access.

“I learned about women's empowerment, women's rights, gender equity... Now I can raise my voice against any form of violence...”

9. Build networks: By building social networks, women have more support and greater opportunities to effect change in their communities. Three-quarters of women in Nepal and half in India and Bhutan report expanding their network through their local READ Center. Women say that once this network is in place, they are emboldened by the knowledge that they are not alone in facing issues like domestic violence, reproductive health or family planning, and that they are inspired to help other women in their community by sharing the knowledge they have learned about these topics.
10. Create public leaders: In South Asia (particularly Bhutan), women rarely hold public leadership roles. READ Centers provide leadership training for women to increase their presence in the public sphere. 61-65% of women report that they are now able to express their opinions in public or in their home. Women report joining committees, facilitating meetings, participating in protests, raising their voices against violence, and organizing community programs.

To begin with, providing safe drinking water supply and better sanitation not only directly improved the lives and health of women but also reduces their workload in terms of provisioning and ensuring such facilities. An access to affordable cooking fuel reduces the need to travel long distances in search of fuel wood. Improved transport connecting villages with each other and with towns can also directly improve living conditions as well as unpaid labor time spent in transporting household items. It can also lead to access to a wider range of goods and services plus a better access to health facilities. Expenditure on food subsidy and better provisions for public distribution services directly affects the lives of women and girl children in terms of adequate nutrition. The patterns of resource mobilization by government also have significant effects on women that are usually not recognized. When taxes are regressive and fall disproportionately on items of mass consumption, once again these tend to affect women more. This not only because the consumption of such items may be curtailed but also because the provisioning of such items is frequently considered to be the responsibility of the women of the household. Also credit policies reduce the flow of credit to small-scale enterprises thus reducing the employment opportunities for women. There is a need to have women-friendly economic policies that can enhance their social and economic position and make them self-reliant. There is no doubt that the fact that development of women has always been the central focus of planning since independence. Empowerment is a major step in this direction but it has to be seen in a relation context. A clear vision is needed to remove the obstacles to the path of women's emancipation both from the government and women themselves. One cannot deal with the problem of female representation by a quota system alone. Political parties, the educational system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, churches all must take responsibility within their own organizations to systematically promote women's participation, from the bottom up. This will take time. It will not happen overnight, or in one year or five years. It will take one or two generations to realize significant change. Efforts should be directed towards round development of each and every section of Indian women by giving them their due share. By providing education to women the long persisted mindset of the people can be changed which is primary requirement for all around development of women.

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