



CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN 21ST CENTURY

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"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing to possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women."

- Maya Angelou

Abstract :

Women Leadership seeks to encourage women participation in every decision making. United Nation, various conventions, treaties played an important role in bring a change in the society. Indian Constitution as fundamental law of the land contains various provisions for the overall development of women. Economic empowerment allows women to control & benefit from resources, assets & income. It also aids the ability to manage risk and improve women's well being. It can result in approaches to support trivialized genders in a particular political, economic & social context. In this paper, researcher focuses on most successful & influential women in India & their contribution for the development of the nation.

Keywords :

Women Leadership, Economic empowerment, contribution, development.

Introduction :

Women have been dominated over years. Women's empowerment is basically a process of empowering women. First and foremost, if women are consulted at home for taking decision by their family members in India, one would easily agree that women are empowered at home. If women get recognition from the society for their talents, skills and leadership abilities, there will not be any conflict and violation of human rights.

International Instruments such as CEDAW (1993), Mexico Plan of Action (1975) Beijing Declaration etc. specified clearly equal rights to women. Vienna conference 1993 also urges the full & equal enjoyment by women of all human rights & that this be a priority for Governments. Constitution of India also made

various provisions under Article 14,15,16 etc. for gender equality. Due to globalization, liberalization & technological development, the women literacy rate was increased in Modern Era. Today we have seen Women Chief Minister, Presidents, Advocates, Bureaucrats, Political Leaders, well established businessmen etc. It shows that the society in on its footsteps in empowering women & giving them equal status.

International Concern :

Article 1 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that "All human beings are born free & equal in dignity & rights". All civil, political, social, economic rights of everyone is also protected by the Declaration. Article 11 of Convention of the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 (CEDAW) & Vienna Declaration stated that the State parties are required to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure social security, free choice of employment, equal remuneration, right to protection of health etc.

The Beijing Platform for Action was the first UN world conference on women to include a specific focus on the girl child and young women's rights and needs and was the most comprehensive and progressive blueprint. This action was carried out in 1995. In addition to that, in 1995 The World Program of Action for Youth provided for a framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world with special emphasis on girls and young women. The World Summit for Social Development Copenhagen recognise that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is main objective of development and its principal resource. The millennium declaration 2000 also emphasised on equality in men and women.

National Concern:

It is significantly important to note that the Government of India has contemplated enough through discussion, research and finally ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights to women. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the

Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. Article 14 of the Constitution of India guarantees equality before law. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex. Article 16 states about equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment. In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD-1985) and the National Commission for Women (NCW) have been worked to safeguard the rights and legal entitlement of women. The 73rd & 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India have provided reservation of seats to 33% in local self Govts. & Municipalities for women.

The Government has been adopted different schemes and programs i.e. the National Credit Fund for Women (1993), Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), Information and Mass Education (IME) etc. favouring the women.

Justice Bhagwati in *Meneka Gandhi Vs Union of India*¹ pointed out that "The fundamental rights represented the basic values cherished by the people of India since the vedic times & they are calculated to protect the dignity of the individual & create conditions in which every human being can develop his personality to the fullest extent.

Article 39(d) directs the state to secure equal pay for equal work for both men & women. At the central and state levels too women are progressively making a difference. The framers of the constitution of India included certain general as well as special provisions for upliftment of the status of women.

Women holding various important positions & their contribution :

There have been many examples where women have played an important role in the development, freedom fighting & other circumstances. They have become a role model for many & have been contributing to the development of the society. Of late, women are getting leadership positions. In 2017, the cabinet committee on security has included two women ministers, Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj & Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman, the four

¹ AIR, 1978 SC 597.

main high courts were headed by women chief justices & the three powerful administrative agencies i.e. (Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussorie, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad & the Bureau of Police Research & Development in Delhi) are, for the first time, headed by women officers. ²

Today we have seen women in many fields. There were many areas such as Army, RAW, Intelligence Bureau etc. were often closed to women but at present women shows their ability & compel the government to assign work to women also in these fields. Now a days there are reservations in these fields for women also.

It is good to note that there are 25 most successful and influential women in India. They are namely: Nehwal for Badminton, Kareena Kapoor Khan for Acting, Reshma Shetty, the Managing Director of Matrix India Entertainment Consultants, Ekta Kapoor, Joint MD of Balaji Telefilms, Chitra Ramakrishna, Joint MD of National Stock Exchange, Zia Mody, Managing Partner of AZB & Partners, Indra Nooyi, Chairman & CEO Pepsi Company, Vandana Luthra, Founder of VLCC Health Care Ltd., Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairman and MD of Biocon Ltd., Shikha Sharma, CEO of Axis Bank, Chanda Kochhar, Ex. MD, CEO of ICICI Bank, Vinita Bali MD of Britannia Industries, Nita Ambani, Chairman, Dhirubhai Ambani Foundation, Vanitha Narayanan, MD of IBM India, Kumud Srinivasan, President of Intel India, Naina Lal Kidwai, President, FICCI & Country Head for HSBC, Roshni Nadar Malhotra, CEO for HCL Corporation, Rakhee Kapoor, Business Manager for Yes Bank, Nisaba Godrej, President, Human Capital and Innovation for Godrej Industries, Jayanti Chauhan, Director for Bisleri Group, Aruna Jayanthi, CEO for Capgemini India, Zahabiya Khorakiwala, MD for Wockhardt Hospitals, Aisha De Sequeira, MD for Morgan Stanley India Investment Banking, Mallika Srinivasan, CEO of TAFE, Kirthiga Reddy, Head for Facebook India, Neelam Dhawan, MD for Hewlett Packard India, Abanti Sankaranarayanan, Managing Director of Diageo. These

² Amita Singh 'What Women Want' India Legal stories that count, January 22, 2018 Pg. 40

entrepreneurs are living proof that women can do anything they want to. Generations of women to come will be impacted by their work and success.³

In the political arena too, we could find that some women excelled in the past and still some of them are in their peak of glory and success because of their boldness and leadership qualities. The most notable amongst these are: Mrs. Protibha Devi Singh Patil, the Ex President of India, Shila Dixit, the Ex-Chief Minister of Delhi, Ms. Jayalalita, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mayawati, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (UP), Sonia Gandhi, President of the Indian National Congress Party since 1998, Binda Karat, the General Secretary of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) from 1993 to 2004, and thereafter its Vice-President, Late Sushma Swaraj, former lawyer and Ex. Minister of External Affairs of India, Mamta Benarji, the founder the party All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC) and at present Chief Minister of West Bengal since 2011, Indira Gandhi, India's Ex. Prime Minister from 1966 until 1984 etc.

Women are also involving in human development issues of child rearing, education, health, and gender parity. Many of them have gone into the making and marketing of a range of cottage products, pickles, tailoring, embroidery etc. The economic empowerment of women is being regarded these days as a sine-quo-non of progress for a country; hence, the issue of economic empowerment of women is of paramount importance to political thinkers, social thinkers and reformers.

Fortune India Most Powerful Women 2021⁴

1.	Nirmala Sitharaman	-	Union Minister of Finance
2.	Nita Ambani	-	Reliance Foundation Chairperson & Goodwill Ambassador
3.	Soumya Swaminathan	-	Chief Scientist WHO
4.	Kiran Mazumdar - Shaw	-	Executive Chairperson Biocon

³ [Fincash.com/1/investment](https://www.fincash.com/1/investment) last visited on 29 March, 2022

⁴ <http://currentaffairs.adda247.com.>, last visited on 28th March 2022.

Conclusion :

Thus from above we can conclude that the concept of women empowerment basically deals with empowering women and treating them equally like men. It has been a topic which was never considered in the past. However, due to changing dynamics and society, awareness has been created and the society in on its footsteps in empowering women and giving them equal status like men. Women Leadership mainly focuses on encouraging & enabling women to be independent & self reliant in all the aspects. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change.

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