

Women's Empowerment and Nation-Building: - A Sociological Perspective

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Abstract

Women's empowerment is a very important and necessary process for strong nation-building, as they constitute around 50 percent of the population worldwide and contribute to social, economic, and political development. The main aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between women's empowerment and nation-building in India. Women are getting empowered through employment, education, and decision-making power within their families. They are gaining the right to participate in politics, and freedom of movement. This empowerment is helping them contribute to India's growth and development. Using a sociological framework, the study examines data from various sources to understand the challenges and opportunities for women's empowerment. The findings suggest that women's empowerment is essential for promoting national development, social justice, and human rights. Educated and employed women are more likely to participate in politics, contributing to India's economic growth and development. However, women in India face challenges such as limited access to education, employment opportunities, and social and cultural barriers.

The study highlights the importance of policies and programs promoting women's empowerment, such as education and employment initiatives, and reservations in politics. The paper concludes that empowering women is crucial for India's development and recommends increased investment in women's education, employment opportunities, and political participation. By promoting women's empowerment, India can accelerate its progress towards achieving sustainable development goals and become a more equitable and prosperous nation.

Keywords

Women's empowerment, nation-building, education, employment, political participation, India.

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Introduction

Women and men together form the foundation of a thriving society, playing a vital role in nation-building and shaping the future with their collective strength and resilience always. However, examining the fundamental aspects of nation- building, it becomes clear that a woman's contribution is multifaceted and pivotal. She can only realize this potential when she is empowered and occupies a position of influence. In such a scenario, the nation we envision will be transformed. It is essential that we grasp this perspective and recognize the transformative impact of women's empowerment on the very fabric of our nation. Women empowerment means women have the freedom to make their own choices, driven by their own desires and goals, without being bound by societal expectations or judged for their decisions. It is about every woman being able to choose her own path, whether it is what to wear, what career to pursue, or how to lead her life, without fear of shame or judgment.¹

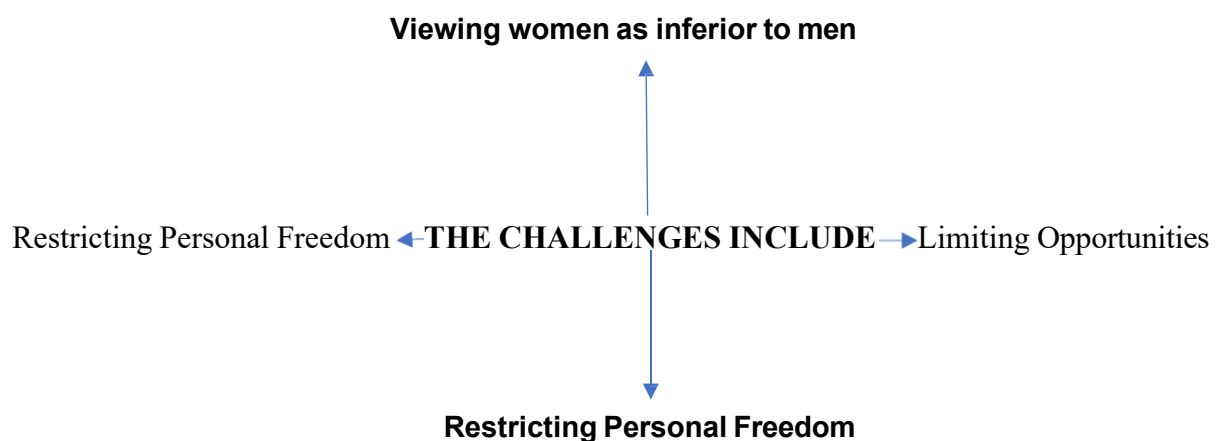
Understanding empowerment is crucial to grasping women's status relative to men. Empowerment involves redistributing power to challenge patriarchal norms and male dominance. It's a process and a result, transforming institutions that perpetuate gender discrimination.² The subjugation of women hinders societal development, as men dominate and control valuable resources, earning prestige and power. In India, socio-economic power is controlled by caste, class formation, and various entities. Power is a set of proficiency and ability that enables the person holding it to exercise it effectively. A cluster of power bases is necessary for the desired changes.³

Empowerment and decision-making power go hand-in-hand. When someone has power, they are not only able to make decisions but also implement them. Understanding the link between decision-making power and empowerment requires clarity on the empowerment process in a given society. The decision- making context plays a crucial role in empowering women. Empowering women and improving their status, especially in education, health, and economic opportunities, is vital. It enhances their decision-making capacity in key areas, leading to better quality of life through informed and planned decisions. Women's empowerment is a continuum of interrelated and mutually reinforcing components. Nation-building is a concept that means different things to different people. Essentially, it involves helping unstable or failed states develop their governmental infrastructure, civil society, dispute resolution mechanisms, and economy to increase stability. It assumes someone is intentionally building or rebuilding a nation.⁴ Nineteenth-century scholars like Renan viewed nations as a

"soul" or "spiritual principle," believing they had a moral consciousness. They thought nations were ancient and emerged when people became aware of their shared nationality.⁵ Women play a vital role in nation-building by contributing to politics, economics, and society, leading to more democratic, equitable, and prosperous nations. Their participation is key to good governance, economic growth, and building inclusive societies. They contribute through leadership, peace-building efforts, economic activities, and addressing social issues like education and health. In the present study, the researcher focuses on women's empowerment and their contribution in nation building. Women are getting empowered through employment, education, and decision-making power within their families and aware about the development of nation. There are numerous women who are serving in various high-ranking positions in the country, proving that they can break barriers and inspire others. In doing so, they play a crucial role in nation-building, demonstrating that women can excel in leadership roles and drive positive change. The study is based on secondary sources. Overall objective of the study is to find out relationship between the women empowerment and nation building.

Sociological Perspective: -

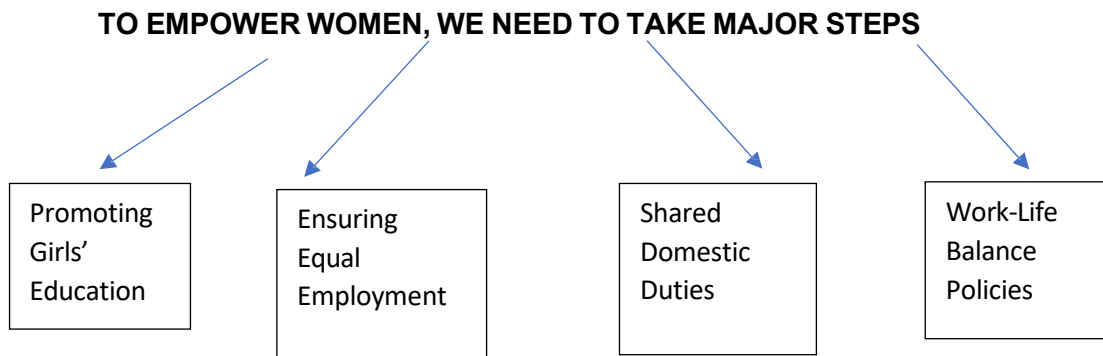
From a sociological perspective, women's faces numerous challenges, primarily stemming from patriarchal systems prevalent worldwide, including India. These systems perpetuate gender-based discrimination, deny women their rights, and undermine their capabilities. This mindset is a significant obstacle to women's empowerment.



Even when women work outside the home, they often face additional expectations to manage household duties, with little support or recognition.

Addressing these issues requires a supportive system that starts at the family level and extends to the community, city, state, and international levels. Initiatives should move beyond

rhetoric to practical implementation, ensuring women receive the support they need to pursue education, careers, and personal growth.



PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN WELFARE

The programs running for women's welfare need to be implemented properly. Firstly, women should be aware of these programs, and after awareness, they should have the enthusiasm to avail these benefits. If this enthusiasm is generated, then the implementation should be done properly.

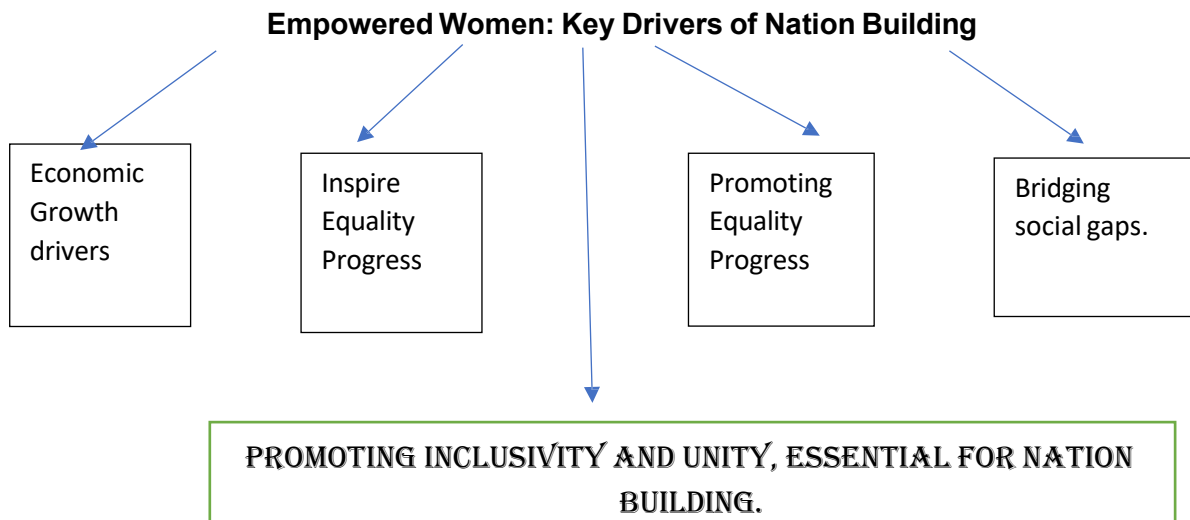
1. Developmental Corporation of women (DCW)
2. Rural Women's Development and Employment project.
3. Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Park (STEP)
4. Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme (MUNS)
5. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
6. Swayamsidha
7. Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)
8. Smile
9. Balika Samriddhi Yojana (BSY)
10. Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY)

Increasing women's participation in public works, agriculture, finance, and other sectors boosts economic growth, helping to lessen the impact of current and future financial crises.⁶

Women's Role in Nation Building

The individuals who play a major role in the development and building of a nation can be farmers, politicians, educators, and more. The strength of these individuals collectively contributes to the strength of the nation. If we observe, not just in our country but globally, women today are caregivers, conscience, farmers, educators, and more. Women are in their respective places in society, driving stability, progress, and long-term development. They make up 43% of the global agricultural workforce, with some countries seeing as high as 70%. In Africa, small farmers, mostly rural women, contribute 80% of agricultural production. Agriculture is widely recognized as a key driver of growth and poverty

reduction in developing nations. Women, especially mothers, lead decisions on family meals and diet, and are more likely to prioritize child health and nutrition. ⁷



Conclusion

To build a developed nation, it is crucial to prioritize women's development and empowerment. This entails granting them their rightful rights, respecting their values, and addressing the numerous challenges they face. Issues like honor killings, lack of education, dowry, rape, and other forms of violence are a blasphemy in a civilized society. It is imperative that we acknowledge these problems and work towards creating a safe and liberated environment for women, where they can flourish and contribute to national development. By doing so, we can empower them to play a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future.

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