*Indian Journal of Adult Education* 87 (1) 2026, 165-180
*https://www.iaea-india.com* DOI: 10.5958/0019-5006.2026.00013.9
ISSN 0019-5006

# Women Empowerment - Analysis of Government Policies and the Way Forward

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## Abstract

Women comprise approximately half of the world's population. Even today, in our society, women are not given prime decision-making roles in most of the professions and in households. In the past, there have been numerous articles on women's empowerment which have focused upon social, economic and political realms. However, this article sheds light on women's empowerment with reference to the Economic Survey 2023-24 and the Periodic Labour Force Survey (July,2023 – June,2024). This study analyses the gender-wise sectoral trends with a comparative analysis of the rural and urban areas and the status of employment in India. It examines the main factors leading to the under-representation of women in the main workforce and concludes by giving some suggestions for overcoming the obstacles to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5.

**Keywords:** *empowerment, education, government policies, entrepreneurs, Self-Help Groups, Sustainable Development Goals, Economic Survey.*

## Introduction

We have all been there and experienced it in our lives, but have just accepted the reality of our patriarchal society. We have read numerous research articles and blogs about gendered roles, gender inequality, breaking gender stereotypes, gender in workplaces, and the list goes on, but we have never given importance to education as a medium to break these gendered lines of our society.

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Education plays a crucial role in empowering citizens to participate and reap the benefits of economic growth. On an individual level, education promotes employment, income generation, health benefits and poverty reduction, just to name a few of its benefits. Whereas, on the societal level, it drives long-term economic growth, spurs innovation, strengthens institutions, and fosters social cohesion (World Bank, 2024). Investing in education and empowering women should be one of the priorities for countries such as India, which is facing a demographic dividend.

There is a direct link between education and empowerment, i.e., education equips people to meet the challenges of development. According to the World Bank, empowerment is "the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes" (Ghosh et al., 2015). Developing countries, like India, have formulated and implemented many policies and have made significant progress in attracting children to formal education and empowering adults, especially women, to develop skills, but still barriers exist.

For Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher known for his work 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', the development of humans is through education for social transformation (Ghosh et al., 2015). He has introduced the method "conscientisation", which indicates the development of critical consciousness in the education of adults (Ghosh et al., 2015). This method aids in the termination of the "culture of silence" and gives a voice to the socially dispossessed. It is necessary to empower women so that they are able to voice their opinions and climb the social ladder.

In this article, I would like to focus on the analysis of Indian policies on women's education and empowerment with reference to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to what extent they have been successful in achieving the goal. According to UNESCO's Delors (1996) report "Learning: The Treasures Within", education is based on 4 pillars throughout life – learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. Education is one of the prime factors which would assist in achieving other sustainable development goals, as it empowers learners to make informed decisions and act responsibly for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations (UNESCO, 2017). Education for sustainable development is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education (UNESCO, 2024).

India is a country which is dominated by a service-led economy. Over the years, its policies shifted from the agrarian economy to a service-led economy. In the past decade, it can be seen that there has been growth in services related to information technology (IT) and banking and insurance. There has been an increase in the national income, but in contrast, the per capita income and rate of employment among women have been considerably low (Kumar, 2024). There has been an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but there has been a growing pressure of unemployment amongst women (Kumar, 2024). It may be due to:

1. Slow structural transformation in India.
2. Inequality in the labour market in terms of region, social groups, gender and occupation.
3. Regional disparity: Some Indian states have a large, highly educated youth population, but are relatively underdeveloped.
4. Mismatch of education and relevant skills for employability.
5. Developing technology and climate change: an important issue to think about as technology keeps changing, and climate change affects the workers in the informal sector, as they work in extreme weather conditions (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2024).

Appreciating the role of the industrial sector for sustainable growth, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, introduced various policies and programmes for empowering women. He had a vision for India to be recognised as a manufacturing hub.

## Policies and programmes introduced by the Indian government and their outcomes

There are certain provisions provided by the Constitution of India that emphasise women's empowerment and prohibit discrimination against women in society. For instance, Article 14 informs about the equality before the law, and Article 15 authorises the states to make special provisions for women (Muniraju & Attri, 2022). In India, adult education has been part of the government plans since the First Five-Year Plan (1951–56) (Kumar, 2023). In each plan, crores of rupees have always been sanctioned for women's literacy and empowerment. There has been some progress since then, but still a lot of work needs to be done on this front. In the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-12), '*Saakshar Bharat*' was launched with the aim of achieving an eighty per cent literacy rate and reducing the gender divide by ten per cent in literacy, with a focus on minorities and rural women (Kumar, 2023). India's sex ratio

was not in favour of the females, and therefore, this scheme was launched to save the girl child and educate her. Consequently, the Indian government pioneered the Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child (*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Andolan*), the flagship scheme (Muniraju & Attri, 2022). Schemes such as *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* (for affordable housing in urban & rural areas), the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), *Pradhan Mantri Vyay Vandana Yojana* (PMVVY – a pension scheme for the senior citizens in India) and the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) were initiated to support females to be socially secure. Whereas, initiatives such as, *Samagra Shiksha* (integrated scheme for school education from pre-school to class XII), Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship, *Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna* (scheme for the construction of hostels for students belonging to Scheduled Castes), and *Swacch Vidyalaya Mission* (a national initiative to ensure all schools have access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities) were executed to guarantee girl-friendly educational institutions, especially for vulnerable sections of society, and have sufficient provisions to fulfil their requirements (Ministry of Women and Child Development [MWCD], 2021).

Besides this, in support, there have been numerous other programmes, such as the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) and the National Literacy Mission, for those who had missed their right to education in their primary years. The NAEP was launched with the aim of promoting literacy skills among the socially and economically deprived sections of society so that they are self-reliant and empowered (Kumar, 2023). Subsequently, the Government of India introduced a new scheme, the 'New India Literacy Programme', under 'Education for All' (earlier known as 'Adult Education') with emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills, basic education (equivalency), vocational skills development and continuing education for the 2022-27 plan (Karwal, 2022). This scheme is proposed to cover all the aspects of adult education to align with the National Education Policy 2020 and the Union Budget of 2021-22 (Karwal, 2022). The scheme was to be implemented through volunteerism in an online mode, where all the necessary training and materials would be provided.

There are schemes like the Working Women Hostel, initiated by the Government of India, to look after the safety of women who are eager to work in non-conventional sectors such as fighter pilots in the Indian Air Force, Commandos, Central Police Forces, admission in Sainik school, and so on. (MWCD, 2021) This scheme aims at providing safe and convenient accommodation to all working women without any discrimination, whose income is less than Rupees 50,000 per month in metropolitan cities and less than Rupees 35,000 in small cities (Muniraju & Attri, 2022). The

Indian government has recognised and validated the 'the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women' (CEDAW) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The CEDAW launched an international bill of rights for women, in which Article 10 states the right to education for women (Muniraju & Attri, 2022). Additionally, the government has decided to implement an umbrella scheme catering to the safety, security and empowerment of women under the name '*Mission Shakti*'. This scheme would employ a participatory approach to address the issues of women and make them equal partners in nation-building through convergence at different levels of governance. (MWCD, 2021).

Gradually over the years, the Government of India's focus shifted from women's development to women-led development. While advocating for women-centric development, it had been noted that most women were not able to continue their jobs after childbirth. Thereafter, the government passed the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017, which increased the maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks (Muniraju & Attri, 2022). This amendment stimulated women-centric development initiatives. To enhance this, women have been endowed with training through a network of Women Industrial Training Institutes, National Vocational Training Institutes and Regional Vocational Training Institutes (MWCD, 2021). With a lot of policies and programme implementation for education and skill development of women by the Indian government, it is noticed that there has been significant progress. According to the Economic Survey 2023-24, there has been increased access to education and skill development initiatives for women's empowerment, which has elevated their participation in India's development and progress (Ministry of Finance, Government of India [MoF], 2024). It has been observed that the female labour force participation rate in rural India has increased from 23.3 per cent in 2017-18 to 37 per cent in 2022-23 (MoF, 2024). The Self-Help Groups programme, the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-NRLM, covers more than 89 million women in 8.3 million Self-Help Groups (MoF, 2024). They concentrate on women's empowerment, self-esteem enhancement, personality development, reducing social evils, and medium impacts on better education, higher participation in village institutions, and better access to government schemes. The Indian government has launched initiatives such as Start-Up and Stand-Up India, which can be a stepping stone for women entrepreneurs. Through these initiatives, 68 per cent of the loans have been sanctioned to women entrepreneurs under the *Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana* (PMMY-a scheme to provide loans to small and micro enterprises) (MoF, 2024). As of May 2024, there are 77.7 per cent women beneficiaries under the Stand-Up India initiative (MoF, 2024). Recognising the vision of Digital India, till July 2023, there have been more than 53 per cent women beneficiaries for the Prime Minister Rural Digital Literacy Campaign (PMGDISHA).

• According to the annual report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) (July 2023-June 2024) published by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, the total Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in India is 45.1 per cent, where 35.5 per cent and 22.3 percent of women were from rural and urban areas, respectively (National Sample Survey Office, 2024).

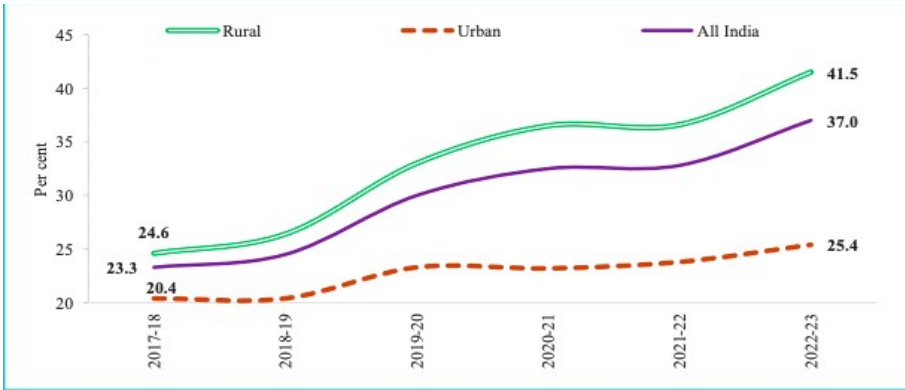
**Table 1: Labour force participation rates (in per cent) estimated from PLFS (2022–23) and PLFS (2023–24).**

**All-India**

| Age Group | Rural | | | Urban | | | Rural + Urban | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Person | Male | Female | Person | Male | Female | Person |
| **PLFS (2023-24)** | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 years | 65.1 | 30.8 | 48.1 | 59.9 | 23.8 | 42.6 | 63.5 | 28.8 | 46.5 |
| 15 years and Above | 80.2 | 47.6 | 63.7 | 75.6 | 28.0 | 52.0 | 78.8 | 41.7 | 60.1 |
| All Ages | 57.9 | 35.5 | 46.8 | 59.0 | 22.3 | 41.0 | 58.2 | 31.7 | 45.1 |
| **PLFS (2022-23)** | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 years | 65.5 | 25.8 | 45.9 | 58.4 | 20.8 | 40.7 | 63.5 | 24.5 | 44.5 |
| 15 years and Above | 80.2 | 41.5 | 60.8 | 74.5 | 25.4 | 50.4 | 78.5 | 37.0 | 57.9 |
| All Ages | 55.5 | 30.5 | 43.4 | 58.3 | 20.2 | 39.8 | 56.2 | 27.8 | 42.4 |

Source: Annual Report, PLFS, 2023-24

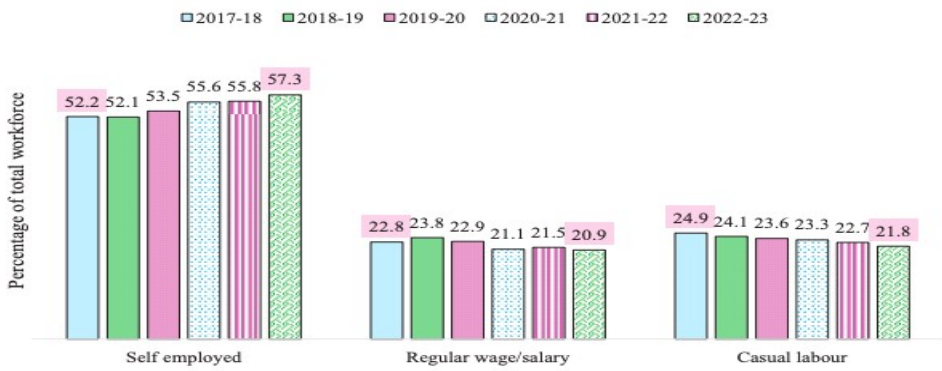
**Graph 1: Female Labour Force Participation Rate (2017-2023).**




Source: PLFS reports, NSO
Note: for usual status, 15 years and above

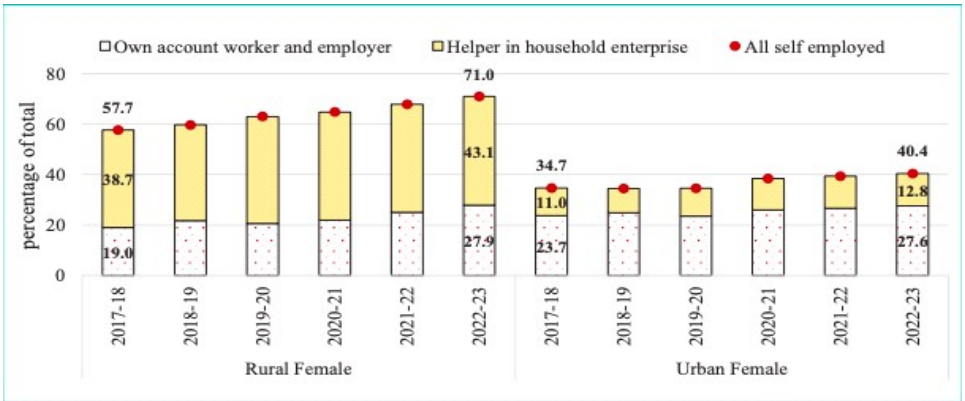
It can be seen in the above table and graph that in the past decade, India has witnessed a remarkable change in its female employment, leading to a positive inclination in economic growth and social development. This positive inclination is due to factors such as economic reforms, technological development and prioritising skill development and women's empowerment. A large proportion of the total workforce (men and women) (see Graph 2) can be seen in the self-employed category, followed by 21.8 per cent in casual labour and 20.9 per cent in regular work.

**Graph 2: Trend in broad category-wise employment status (2017-2023).**




Source: Annual PLFS reports, MoSPI

**Graph 3: Share of female workforce in self-employment (2017-2023).**




Source: Annual PLFS reports, MoSPI

Among the female workforce in self-employment (see Graph 3), the majority of the rural women are helpers in household enterprises (43.1 per cent), and urban women are their own-account workers and employers (27.6 per cent).

From the above table and graphs, it can be seen that the female labour participation rate has tremendously increased in the past decade. While the percentage of urban women's contribution in the workforce has been increasing, the rural women's contribution has witnessed a steep rise. This has been possible with the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA), which endorses that one-third of the jobs generated under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) should be given to women (MWCD, 2021). Other factors that equally play a crucial role in this result, such as disengaging them from their time in basic household chores by giving them access to basic amenities such as piped drinking water (*Jal Jeevan Mission*), clean cooking fuel (*Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana*), sanitation (*Swachh Bharat*), etc (MoF, 2024).

The Government of India has implemented a series of measures for enhancing employment generation, such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for strengthening the country's manufacturing capabilities, increasing capital expenditure and improving worker welfare (MoF, 2024).Along with this, promoting self-employment through ease of access to credit and other process reforms has been taken care of. Some of the initiatives implemented by the government include the

National Career Service Portal for employment and career services, e-Shram portal for assisting in job search, *Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana* (ABRY) for promoting employment with security benefits after COVID-19 job losses, *Atal Pension Yojana* (APY) and *Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan* (PM-SYM) scheme for ensuring a minimum pension for all workers, *PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi* (PM SVANidhi), One Nation One Ration Card programme, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) for assisting entrepreneurs setting up their businesses, *Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana* – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), and *Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana* (PMMY) for assisting self-employment, among others (MoF, 2024).

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation 2022 report, India's female labour force participation rate is 23.5 per cent, compared to the male labour force participation rate of 57.5 per cent. Even though there have been many programme implementations by the government, the majority of the women are still not economically empowered, which may be due to factors such as a lack of women-demand jobs and the unavailability of jobs that satisfy the women's domestic work timings. India has been gradually transitioning from an agrarian economy to a service-led economy, which does not take women along. Also, about 39 per cent of women in urban areas and around 68 per cent of women in rural areas identify themselves as self-employed. For the women at the grassroots, small businesses have not grown, as they lack internet access (digitalisation), market promotion, training, skilling, finance and networking (Asian Development Bank Institute [ADBI], 2023). According to the data provided by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), around 50 per cent of the candidates enrolled for short-term skill training by the *PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana* were women. Thereafter, they remained out of the technology-based sectors, but their numbers prevailed in the traditionally feminised industries such as beauty, clothing and healthcare. This trend intensifies the gender gap in high-tech and STEM jobs (ADBI, 2023). This may be because, according to the recent media reports, India is still unsafe for women, and they lack internet access. Most women prefer to have their jobs near or at their homes. Also, with limited access to technology, they are not able to know their true potential for the job advertised and limit their ability to make transactions and be users of their own money. These make a huge impact on the participation and freedom of women in the workforce.

## The possible way forward

India, with its vast demographic dividend and young population, is placed in an advantageous position in the global market. Tapping this demographic advantage

depends on India's ability to recognise its young population's aspirations, channel their productive potential and help them construct a successful economic path. (ILO, 2024) But it needs to keep its young working population updated on the technological advancements and skills required in the market so that it can compete in the global economy. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines the term 'skill' in its World Employment Report (1998) as 'an acquired and practised ability or a qualification needed to perform a job or certain task competently'. But, in the current scenario, the term has evolved to mean "any skill, expertise or ability that has market value or the potential of being utilised for generating income and employment, irrespective of whether it is acquired formally or not" (ILO, 2024). Generally, individuals master the skills through informal channels (through hereditary occupation). However, the general education system, which includes foundational and cognitive skills as well as technical and vocational education and training (TVET), should be considered, as it links to specific trades and occupations. There is a need to constantly skill, unskill and reskill for the development of oneself. With growing global competition, changing labour market demand, and technology immersed in a new knowledge system, there is a change in labour demand with specific skills while giving significant weightage to basic, soft, foundational and transferable skills. (ILO, 2024) The Indian government needs to constantly work with its vast young population to make them adaptable to the emerging artificial intelligence (AI) in the global economy. There is a need to introduce and implement measures so that India does not lag behind this revolution. Such measures can put India as the key player in the AI age by engaging the "employees or job seekers in skills beyond communication, collaboration, and presentation, such as analytical thinking and innovation; complex problem-solving; critical thinking; learning and self-development; technology design and programming; and resilience and adaptability, to face the AI challenge" (MoF, 2024). Considering this measure, the National Education Policy (2020) strives to connect humanities and arts with science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This policy stresses student exchange programmes with foreign educational institutions, which would help them to develop innovative and critical thinking, transforming the educational system of India as per the international standard (ILO, 2024).

In recent years, it has been noticed that the gig economy has remarkably emerged in the global economy, in which India is not far behind (MoF, 2024).This type of economy has been a great success among the developing countries, such as India. This has been predominated by freelancers, the self-employed, online workers and creative tech talent. In India, most of these jobs have been occupied by deliveries, ride-sharing, mini tasks, care and wellness. These jobs are in great demand, as they have flexibility and are entry-level jobs for students, stay-at-home mothers, and people temporarily unemployed in small cities.

In order to utilise the growing young demographic dividend of the Indian population, it is extremely crucial to facilitate the workforce, especially the women, with essential employable skills and knowledge to meet the requirements and standards of the global labour market and industry. The government has taken measures to cater to these demands by empowering the Indian youth with job and entrepreneurial opportunities. There have been initiatives undertaken by others, such as the corporate sector through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), which work at the grass-root level of our society, which the government is not efficiently able to reach (MoF, 2024).

India is known for its rich cultural heritage. There are many artisans and craftsmen, the majority of them women, whose talent needs to be preserved before they are lost in the technological era. Many women work with traditional tools and methods, such as basket weavers, potters, carpenters, masons, cobblers, barbers, etc., to earn their income. The *PM Vishwakarma Programme*, launched in September 2023, validates its recognition, upgradation of skills, collateral-free credit and marketing support to these traditional artisans and craftsmen (MoF, 2024).But recent statistics reveal that women lack access to relevant assets, tools and financial information. Access to finance and financial literacy are really important for the economic empowerment of women. Over the years, the financial awareness of women has improved, but still needs to be worked upon. For example, NGOs have assisted in providing financial awareness about the government interventions for women's small enterprises. SEWA has also reached out to women at the grassroots level to share the care burden of working women and provide livelihood opportunities to women under the care economy (ADBI, 2023).

Although the Indian government has introduced various measures and implemented programmes and policies for empowering women on the basis of the 4 pillars of education, introduced in UNESCO's 1996 Delors Report, there are still some challenges which the government has to strive to overcome. We all know that patriarchal and social customs, such as early marriage and childbirth, are prevalent and limit women's economic participation in the Indian subcontinent (Asadullah et al., 2024). But there have been improvements in the social norms and personal beliefs, such as an increase in the marriageable age of women, which has led to a notable increase in the female labour force participation rate (Asadullah et al., 2024).

However, the question that still remains is, even though there has been significant improvement in female education, why, in general, is there not a significant gain in

the employment of women in India? Globally, women are educated and empowered, but why does it not show the same trend? There are many reasons associated with this question. For instance, educational qualification, marriageable age, fertility rate, urbanisation, economic growth, and social norms play a significant role in defining the role of women in the public and private realms. Firstly, there has been progress in access to education among young women. Second, jobs were created in the economy which could not readily employ women, especially in the rural areas. Third, in spite of inadequate job creation, the household income increased, further reducing the rate of women's participation in the labour force (Verick, 2014). Fourth, in India, most of the women contribute to the economy in some way or another, but their work is undocumented. The majority of women are involved in unpaid domestic duties. Also, the Indian education system is not efficiently linked with employment opportunities and the gender biases taught in textbooks. In our families, schools and society, the traditional roles are imbibed in the young minds, which are unconsciously followed throughout their lives. From birth, we, as individuals, are taught gender-specific roles and job opportunities. But with changing times, these gendered roles are diminishing, and both men and women collaboratively manage household chores. Overall, Indians are less supportive of female employment as their preference for homemakers is still prevalent in Indian cities (Evans, 2022). These women are basically stay-at-home, do household chores and look after their children and the elderly. This hinders their active participation in the economic sphere of society. But there are still some homemakers who are ambitious and overcome all obstacles to earn for themselves.

## Sociological perspective

From a sociological perspective, discrimination and inequality emanate from power differences held by the privileged and the unprivileged groups in our society. Likewise, economics considers wage inequality as the differences in bargaining power between employers and across groups. Over a period of time, the workers may lose their bargaining power with their employers, but the question remains: why is it more prevalent amongst women? The outcome of governmental policies and programmes is now sociologically analysed with attributes beyond class, caste, gender, linguistics and regions. There is a strong association of social inequality with economic outcome, that is, social inequality and the path to economic development. Other than distributive inequality (which has always been the focus of research), there needs to be a shift towards relational inequality. It is grounded on socially determined hierarchies, such as the group inequalities approved by the laws, norms, habits, and people who relate to one another as superiors or inferiors (Ghosh, 2024). This implies

that power and its dynamics shape human behaviour, social and economic processes, and their outcome. There are many types of hierarchy, and when these hierarchies overlap with one another, it gives rise to relational inequality. Relational inequalities generally derive from the traditions that may be cultural, religious or social norms that have been followed since the beginning. Subsequently, they interact with economic forces and market relations, giving rise to unequal power, multidimensional poverty and deprivation (Ghosh, 2024). It further develops complex dynamics between relational inequalities, distributional inequalities and patterns of accumulation. The socio-economic system of capitalism assimilates and exploits the traditional norms and institutions (Ghosh, 2024).

Gender inequality is one of the unique forms of relational inequality. The majority of sociological theories identify societal norms as the underlying reason for institutions. Social norms play an important role in gender inequality, as they specify the modes of behaviour that are compatible with the gendered division of labour and power. For instance, approaches from conflict theory stress subordination, and approaches from stratification theory focus upon the variety of outcomes that differ in parallel to wages and labour market status (Tyrowicz & van der Velde, 2021).

The 'social construction of gender' exists in all societies in some form. It can be understood with reference to the family. In the family, gender plays an influential role in the distribution of labour, which also affects the economy and society. It conditions the amount of power and autonomy women should have compared to men in decision-making, access to income, and control of wealth and assets. Also, it influences their development of capability, education and rights as citizens (Ghosh, 2024; Tyrowicz & van der Velde, 2021). Hence, the economic outcome of those sections is quite low. Further, the feminist theory goes on to include that in some of the sections of our society, women are allowed to work but in lower-status occupations compared to men.

In the changing time period, there have been changes in the social norms which have allowed women to actively participate in the labour market when compared to previous time periods. As the norms change towards gender equality, the relative position of women in the market also changes (Tyrowicz & van der Velde, 2021).

## Conclusion

Women need to be conscientised through education. Education is not just about literacy, but it is also about awareness of social injustice and discrimination that

women face in their day-to-day lives. To be educated is to be empowered with the tools of decoding the structures of patriarchy and seeking to remove its ill practices, which deter the progress of the nation (Ghosh et al., 2015). Education is also essential for the overall development of the nation. The government of India has implemented policies and programmes for women's empowerment to meet the statistics of UN Development Goals and others, but ignores such factors which are quite challenging. Even though the government has introduced changes in the educational, training and skill development system, there is a growing demand and supply gap as the present system is unresponsive to new skill demand resulting from globalisation and technology-induced growth of the economy (ILO, 2024). Steps need to be taken to overcome such challenges so that Indian women feel empowered enough to want to break the traditional and patriarchal barriers imposed on them by society. This will enable them to contribute to uplifting their lives and, in turn, participate as a major force in boosting the Indian economy. Some suggestions that may be taken into consideration:

1. Updated educational policies should be more inclusive to ensure the right to education of girls without any discrimination within the educational institutions.
2. Implementation of regional policies which address the issues of female employment and promote more balanced opportunities.
3. Girls from economically weaker sections should be given financial incentives till class 12 to decrease their school dropout rate.
4. Villages/districts should be rewarded for securing an equal child sex ratio through education, information and communication.
5. To decrease the gender divide, there should be implementation of short-term schemes (about six weeks) for the promotion of digital literacy and awareness, along with access to digital devices by the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), the polytechnics and other technical institutions, business schools and the Enterprise Facilitation Centres.
6. Online platforms such as Digital India should be used to promote education and skill development among women and establish a link between businesses, the market, and the consumer.
7. Bridging NGOs, SEWA, and other institutions should be more active in providing access to digital devices, employable skills and training to women, financial literacy and awareness, such that they lead a respectable life.
8. Companies should be rewarded for employing 30 per cent of women in their total workforce.
9. Regular re-orientation of the skill development curriculum such that it meets the demand of the industry and available job opportunities.

10. The private sector should play an active role in providing on-the-job training, internships and apprenticeships for women, as it can overcome the challenges from the global economy.
11. With the booming digital economy, it is crucial to include the digitally illiterate sections of society, especially women, in the employment platform. This would also strengthen entrepreneurship and start-ups.

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