

## Women & Economic Development

Michal Foucault, one of the foremost French thinkers of the twentieth century writes that women have always been man's dependent and two have never shared the world in equality. Man the sovereign would provide women the liege with material protection but she must accept the moral constraints of confinement. Such an oscillation between the pit & pedestal was common in a feudal society. In transition from feudalism to capitalism the increase in urbanization made new spaces available to women hitherto confined to feudal estates. With such an advent constitutive & legislative processes helped them to have equal rights.

Most of the developed nations of the world like Japan show that there are 1022 females per 1000 males a much higher ratio as compared to India's record of 933 females per 1000 males according to the 2001 census. This shows that women are the key to economic development of the nation. To bring India among the developed nations we have to increase the gender ratio, level of literacy & education, mean age of marriage and the worker population of level of women.

Women's economic development recorded by the development indicators have given a major contribution to human development & helped in sensitizing nations in needs to accord priority to basic needs. The major indicators firstly, Gender Related Development Index (GDI) has shown that India ranks 105 amongst the 162 nations. Which is far behind and secondly in the Gender Employment Measure (GEM) India ranks 95 amongst the 174 nations. This shows that our nation has shown progress in this regard but it needs still more to do.

Gender disparity reduces participation of women not only in employment but also in economic empowerment. It shows that even the educated women are oppressed. As policy shifts & graduates from welfare to development & empowerment new initiatives are helping a lot in agriculture & as a result of which Mahila Sanchay or self help groups have formed their own cooperative credit societies. The village Nayla near Jaipur has been a live example of such smoothly running cooperative societies by women which impressed the ex president of USA Mr Bill Clinton so much that he visited it twice.

Mahila Samridhi Yojana which was started on 2 October 1993 has provided economic security to rural women. Under this scheme women of 18 years or above can open their saving accounts in rural P. O. S with a minimum of Rs. 4 or its multiplier. Further from 20 August 1995. Union government has launched the India Mahila Yojana to coordinate among various plans & avail the funds so released for the welfare of women in rural & urban slum areas. DWCRA is trying to generate self employment activities for women below poverty line especially in rural areas. Swadhar is a scheme to help women in different circumstances & is meant for widows, destitute, prisoners & migrant women. Under this scheme shelters & other basic amenities would be provided to these women who would also be given vocational training further corpus

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for Rastriya Mahila Kosh has been enhanced by 250 crores over next 5 years. It will increase the scope of its credit activities by giving credit for food, health, consumption loans and redemption of household assets such as land.

The rural women development & empowerment work called Swashakti project has also achieved success. Other projects include Jtraining cum Employment for women (STEP), Balika Samriddhi Yojana, Mahila Samkaya, Swayam siddha etc. Year 2001 is being celebrated as women's empowerment year & government has sanctioned many incentives for this purpose As a matter of fact such scheme are believed to generate not only confidence but also extra incomes in their hands which can be utilized for better food health & edu of them selves & their children. As elimination of all discrimination is our national goal Though these initiatives are laudable much will depend on The effective implementation of these schemes or else they will not achieve the targets set for them.

India's women have great hidden potentials & by empowering them we are sure to strengthen our country economically Remember.

Great achievements build a monument

Which shall endure till the sun grows cold.