

# REFLECTION ON WOMANHOOD IN INDIA

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**Women are the real architects of society - Harriet Beecher Stowe.**

We are living in a world where 50 percent of the entire population consists of women. We cannot possibly think of development in our country without strengthening its foundation, and this is utterly impossible if women are not aware of their rights and powers. Empowerment means supporting others to discover and claim their personal powers. It means granting social, political and economic powers to an individual or group. Women empowerment is the process of upgrading the status of women in which they elaborate and recreate what they can be, do and accomplish in a circumstance in which they were previously denied. Alternatively, it is a process for women to redefine their gender roles that allows them to acquire the ability to choose between alternatives, which have otherwise been

restricted for them.

Simone de Beauvoir in 'The Second Sex' claims that being a woman is not a way in which one is born, but rather something one becomes. One can depict the plight of a country by depicting the plight of its women. Women empowerment aims at generating a sense of self-worth among women, to ensure that they have access to equal opportunities, to control their own lives inside and outside home. There are debates concerning the position of women in our society--their education, health, economic position, gender equality. Women have always held a paradoxical position in our country. While on the one hand, we see women raising their voice and fighting for their rights, standing out amongst the crowd, on the contrary, female foeticide, poor health conditions, lack of education among them still prevails.

Our Constitution was formulated in such a way that it granted equal rights to women, considering them legal cit-

izens of the country and as an equal to men in terms of freedom and opportunity.

Hillary Clinton mentions, "Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights, once and for all."

Democracy is for all the citizens irrespective of gender. Different acts like the Dowry Protection Act, 1961, The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, Indecent Representation of Women Act, 1986 have socially upgraded the status of women in our society, while acts like Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace, 2013, Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 have ensured the safety of women. Swami Vivekananda had rightly said, "It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved."

It is impossible to fly on only one wing. One cannot develop without the other. Besides the fact that women are rising and proving their potential, there are instances of women who are

unaware of their rights, tolerating injustice. Inequality is still slowly breathing in our modernized society. Development should not necessarily be infrastructural but also social. Women are not physiologically similar to men. We are by nature, meant to be different and that is how we complement each other. We are not in competition with one another.

The concept of women empowerment not only throws light on giving women strength and skills to rise above their miserable situations, but at the same time it emphasises on the need to educate men in order to inculcate a sense of respect and duty towards women as equals. Empowerment focuses on cerebral equality and on the basis of that we demand equal opportunity. Equal pay, equal job opportunity, equality to work without restrictions, equal participation are the need of present generation.

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