

## **Socio Economic Conditions of Women in India: A review**

**Ms. Rajni Goel, Assistant Professor of Economics,  
Govt. College, Chhachhrauli (Yamuna Nagar)**

### **Abstract:**

The socio economic status of women in a society is the true index of its economical, social, cultural and spiritual levels and the attitude of a community towards her has a great social significance. No doubt, socio economic status of women plays an important role in determining their decision making role. Socio economic status is measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Over the years, women have made great strides in many areas with notable progress in reducing some gender gaps. Still inequalities persist in their access to education, health care, physical and financial resources and opportunities in the political, economic, social and cultural areas, participation of women in different work activities and independence of women in household decision making. Socio economic status affects overall human functioning including development across the life span, physical and mental health. In this paper different indicators such as Sex ratio, Educational attainment, literacy rate, health status, labour force participation rate, participation in decision making are used to show socio economic conditions of a women.

Key words: Socio economic status, gender gaps, development, sex ratio, labour force

### **Introduction:**

The historical background of Indian society reveals that in Vedic times a woman was given a high status. It is an old saying, "Where women are honoured, Gods reside there." She was known as „*Ardhangini*’ – one half of husband’s body. As a mother, wife and sister she occupied an honoured place. She is the personification of courage and boldness, love and affection, sacrifice and suffering. However during the course of history women lost their honoured place due to social, economic and political factors. Evil customs like sati, child marriage, enforced widowhood, dowry system, crept in the society and this led to decline in women’s status inside and outside the home. During the last few years, sexual harassment at work place, eve teasing, abduction and female foeticide has given an preference of the horrible behaviour patterns prevailing in the society. Majority of women live a life of dependency that does not possess any self-identity. Struggle for equality, justice and parity between women and men continues with more and more literature appearing on the subject on empowerment of women.

### **The Status of Women:**

Women constitute half of the population, perform nearly two-thirds of its work, receive one-tenth of the world income and own less than one- hundredth of world property (UNDP report, 1980). Women spend two thirds of their working hours on un-paid works but men spend just a fourth (HDR, 1995). For centuries, they have been deliberately denied opportunities of growth in the name of religion and socio-cultural practices. Before independence, women were prey to many abhorrent customs, traditional rigidities and vices due to which their status in the society touched its lowest point and their situation was all round miserable. They were victims of widespread illiteracy,

isolation in the dark and stained rooms in the name of *purdah*, forced child marriage, indeterminable widowhood, rigidity of reliability and opposition to remarriage of widows turning many of them into prostitutes, polygamy, female infanticide, violence and force to follow Sati, and the complete denial of individuality. Besides, the economic dependence, early guidance of husbands and in-laws, heavy domestic work-load which remained unpaid and unrecognized, absence of career and mobility, non-recognition of their economic contribution, poor work conditions and wages, and monotonous jobs which men generally refused to do was also responsible for their pitiable conditions. At the socio-political plain, women suffered from the denial of freedom even in their homes, repression and unnatural training, unequal and inferior status, rigid caste hierarchy and untouchability. Consequently, most women were reduced to dumb cattle and had lead to inhuman terrible life.

The religious traditions and social institutions have a deep bearing on the role and status of women. A multitude of critical attributes have been ascribed to Hindu women by the writers of the Smritis. Like the *Shudras*, she is not allowed to study the Vedas or perform any sacrifices. According to Manu, "In childhood a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be independent." She is viewed solely as mother and wife and never as a woman or a person, and these roles were idealized. Practices like giving away of daughters in marriage and the importance attached to sons for maintaining the continuity of the line have strengthened the matrilineal social structure of Hinduism. A widow is regarded as ill-fated. She cannot participate in social-religious ceremonies. Re-marriage was not permitted for high caste widows. But the Hindu male is not subject to such restrictions.

Protest movements within the Hindu fold, like Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishvanism, and Sikhism contributed to some improvement in the status of women, particularly in regard to religious activities. However, they continued to regard women primarily as mothers and wives, and inferior to men in society. The advent of Islam brought further deterioration in the status of women. Even in the early British period her condition remained as before. From the middle of the nineteenth century reform movements like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, etc. championed the cause of women, but nothing solid could be achieved. It is significant to note that upliftment of women was an important item in the agenda of Mahatma Gandhi. Pyare Lal, his secretary, tells that Gandhi often used to say that he would like to be reborn either as an untouchable or a woman. These two symbolized for him the oppressed and the suppressed sections of humanity. Another result of the social conditioning is that man either as father, brother or husband considers women as socio-economic gift of his household. A woman's value judged, not so much in terms of her worth as a person with rights and dignity as in terms of her utility to man. Expression of this mentality is found in different language and society. For example, in Hindi, girl is called "*paraya dhan*" and boy "*apana dhan*".

In spite of women contribution in all spheres of life and they enjoy a unique position in every society and country of the world, but they suffer in silence and belong to a class which is in a disadvantaged position on account of several barriers and impediments. India, being a country of paradoxes, is no exception. Women's empowerment in legal, social, political and economic requires to be enhanced. However, empowerment and equality are based on the gender sensitivity of society towards their problems. The strengthening of women's issues and rights movement all over the world is reflected in the form of various Conventions passed by the United Nations.

Gender equality is always escaped the constitutional provisions of equality before the law or the equal protection of law. This is because equality is always supposed to be between equals and since the judges did not compromise that men and women were equal. Gender equality did not seem to them to be a legally forbidden inequality.

In India, the Constitution makers while drafting the Constitution were sensitive to the problems faced by women and made specific provisions relating to them. In various articles, not only mandates equality of the sexes but also authorizes gentle discrimination in favor of women and children to make up for the backwardness which has been their age-old destiny. But categorical imperative constitutionals by the Founding Fathers are not self acting and can acquire socio-legal locomotion only by appropriate State action. Our Constitution is the basic document of a country having a special legal holiness which sets the framework and the principal functions of the organs of the Government of a State. It also declares the principles governing the operation of these organs. The Constitution aims at creating legal norms, social philosophy and economic values which are to be affected by striking synthesis, harmony and fundamental adjustment between individual rights and social interest to achieve the desired community goals. The Constitution of India contains various provisions, which provide for equal rights and opportunities for both men and women.

The rights available to woman (ladies) in India can be classified into two categories, namely as constitutional rights and legal rights. The constitutional rights are those which are provided in the various provisions of the constitution. The legal rights, on the other hand, are those which are provided in the various laws (acts) of the Parliament and the State Legislatures.

**Constitutional Rights to Women:** The rights and safeguards enshrined in the constitution for women in India are listed below:

1. The state shall not discriminate against any citizen of India on the ground of sex [**Article 15(1)**].
2. The state is empowered to make any special provision for women. In other words, this provision enables the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women [**Article 15(3)**].
3. No citizen shall be discriminated against or be ineligible for any employment or office under the state on the ground of sex [**Article 16(2)**].
4. Traffic in human beings and forced labour are prohibited [**Article 23(1)**].
5. The state to secure for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [**Article 39(a)**].
6. The state to secure equal pay for equal work for both Indian men and women [**Article 39(d)**].
7. The state is required to ensure that the health and strength of women workers are not abused and that they are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their strength [**Article 39(e)**].
8. The state shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief [**Article 42**].
9. It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women [**Article 51-A (e)**].
10. One-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women [**Article 243-D (3)**].

11. One-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women [**Article 243-D (4)**].
12. One-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall be reserved for women [**Article 243-T (3)**].
13. The offices of chairpersons in the Municipalities shall be reserved for women in such manner as the State Legislature may provide [**Article 243-T (4)**].

**Legal Rights to Women:** The following various legislation's contained several rights and safeguards for women:

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) is a comprehensive legislation to protect women in India from all forms of domestic violence. It also covers women who have been/are in a relationship with the abuser and are subjected to violence of any kind—physical, sexual, mental, verbal or emotional.

1. Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1956) is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. In other words, it prevents trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution as an organized means of living.
2. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986) prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner.
3. Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act (1987) provides for the more effective prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification on women.
4. Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) prohibits the giving or taking of dowry at or before or any time after the marriage from women.
5. Maternity Benefit Act (1961) regulates the employment of women in certain establishments for certain period before and after child-birth and provides for maternity benefit and certain other benefits.
6. Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1971) provides for the termination of certain pregnancies by registered medical practitioners on humanitarian and medical grounds.
7. Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (1994) prohibits sex selection before or after conception and prevents the misuse of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for sex determination leading to female foeticide.
8. Equal Remuneration Act (1976) provides for payment of equal remuneration to both men and women workers for same work or work of a similar nature. It also prevents discrimination on the ground of sex, against women in recruitment and service conditions.
9. Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act (1939) grants a Muslim wife the right to seek the dissolution of her marriage.
10. Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act (1986) protects the rights of Muslim women who have been divorced by or have obtained divorce from their husbands.
11. Family Courts Act (1984) provides for the establishment of Family Courts for speedy settlement of family disputes.

12. Indian Penal Code (1860) contains provisions to protect Indian women from dowry death, rape, kidnapping, cruelty and other offences.
13. Code of Criminal Procedure (1973) has certain safeguards for women like obligation of a person to maintain his wife, arrest of woman by female police and so on.
14. Indian Christian Marriage Act (1872) contain provisions relating to marriage and divorce among the Christian community.
15. Legal Services Authorities Act (1987) provides for free legal services to Indian women.
16. Hindu Marriage Act (1955) introduced monogamy and allowed divorce on certain specified grounds. It provided equal rights to Indian man and woman in respect of marriage and divorce.
17. Hindu Succession Act (1956) recognizes the right of women to inherit parental property equally with men.
18. Minimum Wages Act (1948) does not allow discrimination between male and female workers or different minimum wages for them.
19. Mines Act (1952) and Factories Act (1948) prohibits the employment of women between 7 P.M. to 6 A.M. in mines and factories and provides for their safety and welfare.
20. The following other legislation's also contain certain rights and safeguards for women:
  1. Employees' State Insurance Act (1948)
  2. Plantation Labour Act (1951)
  3. Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act (1976)
  4. Legal Practitioners (Women) Act (1923)
  5. Indian Succession Act (1925)
  6. Indian Divorce Act (1869)
  7. Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (1936)
  8. Special Marriage Act (1954)
  9. Foreign Marriage Act (1969)
  10. Indian Evidence Act (1872)
  11. Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (1956).
21. National Commission for Women Act (1990) provided for the establishment of a National Commission for Women to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal rights and safeguards of women.
22. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013) provides protection to women from sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organized or unorganized.

Despite these legal provisions provided by the government of India the socio economic conditions of a women is still depressed. The govt. of India has made so many policies, regulations to provide better socio economic conditions for women. Some of the factors showing Socio-Economic conditions for women as follows.

**Educational Deprivation:** In India the literacy rate of women is much lower than men because boys receive more schooling than girls. T.P. Sechan says that there are parts of India where the literacy rate of women today is as low as 3 percent. So stark is the gender inequality in India that it is one of the 43 countries in the world where male literacy rate are at least 15 percent higher than female

rates. Educational deprivation is intimately associated with poverty. The UNICEF Executive Director Mr. Carol Bellamy says; “No country has ever emerged from poverty without giving priority to education.” However, modest improvement is gradually coming up in educational level of women. After independence many steps have been taken to improve the lot of women. Many laws have also been passed. A National Commission on Women was setup to act as a watchdog on the matters concerning women in 1992. Many programmes in the areas of education, health and employment have been initiated for development of women, rural as well as urban. As a result, literacy rates are going up and fertility rates coming down. Universalisation of education, elimination of drop- out from schools, promotion of Balwadi and Crèches, Girls Hostels, Technical Institutions for women and distinct emphasis on health, nutrition and family welfare programmes etc. are some such initiatives.

**TABLE 1. TRENDS IN LITERACY RATES IN POST INDEPENDENT INDIA**

Year	Rural			Urban			Combined		
	Female	male	total	Female	male	total	Female	male	total
1951	4.87	19.02	12.1	22.33	45.6	34.59	8.86	27.15	18.32
1961	10.1	34.3	22.5	40.5	66	54.4	15.35	40.4	28.31
1971	15.5	48.6	27.9	48.8	69.8	60.2	21.97	45.96	34.45
1981	21.7	49.6	36	56.3	76.7	67.2	29.76	56.38	43.57
1991	30.17	56.96	36	64.05	81.09	67.2	39.29	64.13	52.21
2001	46.7	71.4	59.4	73.2	86.7	80.3	53.67	75.26	64.83
2011	57.93	77.15	66.77	79.11	88.76	84.11	64.63	80.88	72.98
% increase in 2011 over 2001	24 %	8%	12%	8%	2%	5%	20%	7%	13 %

**Source:** Census of India, Office of Registrar General India.

**Table 2. ADULT LITERACY RATE (AGE 15YEAR AND ABOVE)**

Year	Male	Female	Total
1961	41.5	13.2	27.8
1971	47.7	19.4	34.1
1981	54.9	25.7	34.1
1991	61.9	34.1	34.1
2001	73.4	47.8	34.1
2011	78.8	59.3	34.1

**Source:** Census of India, Office of the Registrar General, India.

Table clearly depicts that over the years female literacy is increasing gradually. but compared to male literacy, it is much low. Low weightage to girl students, their high dropout rate, poverty and present social system can be attributed for this.

**Sex ratio in India:** Sex Ratio is a term used to define number of females per 1000 males. It's a great source to find the equality of males and females in a society at a given period of time. Though female foetus has been proved to be biologically stronger than the male foetus and 108 females are born per 100 males. Yet there is sharp decline of sex ratio. This is due to loss of more females on account of insufficient attention and care given to them, and relatively high proportion of deaths among females at the time of puberty, nutritional deficiency, poverty etc. Lower sex ratio leads to many social and moral evils. In India, Sex Ratio was ok till the time of Independence, thereafter it has declined regularly. According to Census of India 2011, Indian sex ratio has shown major signs of improvement in the last 10 years. From a small number of 933 in 2001, the bar has been raised to 940 in the 2011 Census of India. Although this improvement is fair enough in a developing economy, but still there is a long way to go. India suffers from a huge inequality of male female child ratio resulting in a poor sex ratio in some regions. With a overall improvement in sex ratio, the states of South India has shown major signs of improvement in comparison to states of Haryana and Punjab, where sex ratio is far low than national average figure. Improvement of Sex ratio indicates a healthy growth rate among female to male population in India. The state of Kerala and union territory of Puducherry are only two places in India where sex ratio is above 1000 or exceeds female to male ratio. Another three states which has shown a major signs of improvement in their sex ratio are Assam, Mizoram, and Nagaland. Densely populated states of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim have also shown improvement in female to male ratio. According to Census of India, all these states have taken necessary measures to improve sex ratio in urban and rural areas. Delhi and Chandigarh have also registered a sharp growth in sex ratio between 2001 to 2011 census. On the other hand, the states of Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana have also shown positive signs of overall improvement in their sex ratio. In fact, these two states have registered a positive increase in their sex ratio in the last few years. According to recent estimates of Haryana Govt. the state's child sex ratio (0-6 age group) crossed 900 mark for the first time in December, 2015. This is the first time in the last 15 years that Haryana child sex ratio crossed the 900 mark. Overall, Sex ratio in various states of India has started to witness a descent growth in the last 4-5 years beginning from Indian Census in 2011.

**TABLE 3: SEX RATIO IN INDIA**

Year	Sex ratio in India
1901	972
1911	964
1951	946

1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933
2011	940

Source: censuses of India, 2011

Table clearly indicates a declining sex ratio of females in the period from 1901 to 2011. Although the recent Indian census has brought favorable figures for the better half of the society, a rise of 7 more females per 1000 males than the 2001 of the previous census.

**Health status of women:** The health of Indian women is basically linked to their status in society. Research on women’s status has found that the contributions of Indian women make to families often are overlooked, and instead they are viewed as economic burdens. There is a strong son preference in India, as sons are expected to care for parents as they aged. This son preference, along with high dowry costs for daughters, sometimes results in the mistreatment of daughters. Further, Indian women have low levels of both education and formal labor force participation. They typically have little autonomy, living under the control of first their fathers, then their husbands, and finally their sons. All of these factors exert a negative impact on the health status of Indian women. Poor health has repercussions not only for women but also their families. Women in poor health are more likely to give birth to low weight infants. They also are less likely to be able to provide food and adequate care for their children. Finally, a woman’s health affects the household economic well-being, as a woman in poor health will be less productive in the labor force. Because of the wide variation in cultures, religions, and levels of development among India’s 29 states and 7 union territories, it is not surprising that women’s health also varies greatly from state to state. The infant mortality rate has been taken as one of the important measurement of health status of population and indicator of women’s development in general.

**TABLE 4: INFANT MORTALITY RATE FOR LAST 10 YEARS**

year	Infant Mortality Rate		
	female	Male	Total
2003	64	57	60
2004	58	58	58
2005	61	56	58
2006	59	56	57
2007	56	55	55
2008	55	52	53
2009	52	49	50
2010	49	46	47
2011	46	43	44
2012	44	41	42
2013	42	39	40
2014	40	37	39

**Source:** Sample Registration System, Office Of The Registrar General, India.

Table clearly depicts that in past years the infant mortality rate of female is declining gradually but compared to male infant mortality rate, it is high. Low preference to girl child, social discrimination can be attributed for this.

**Economic Exploitation:**

On the world level, women and girls together carry two-third of the burden of the world’s work yet receive only a tenth of the world’s income. They form 40 percent of the paid labour force. Though women constitute half of the world’s population yet they own less than one percentage of the world’s property (UNDP Human Development Report 1995). According to UN Report (2005) “women constitute half the world’s population, perform nearly two-third of its work hours, receive one-tenths of the world’s income and own less than one-hundredth of the world’s property”. The condition of women in India is more miserable in every field of social life. They are paid half of three-quarters of the money while their male counterparts earn for the same job. In India a predominantly agricultural country, women do more than half of the total agricultural work. But their work is not valued. On an average, a woman works 15 to 16 hours a day unpaid at home and underpaid outside. According to National Committee of Women, the growth in the percentage of women labour force in the organized sector is minimal in the last sixty years i.e. 3.44 percent in 1911 to 17.35 percent in 1971, besides, the work load either in the field or in the factories or offices, the women have to do the household such as cooking, washing, cleaning up the house etc. The younger women, besides all these, have to carry the burden of early pregnancy, childbirth and breast-feeding. In terms of help offered to people for their various functions women seem to receive the least attention from the society.

The status of women is intimately connected with their economic status, which in turn, depends upon rights, roles and opportunity for the participation in economic activities. The economic status

of women is now accepted as an indicator of a society's stage of development. However, all development does not result in improving women's economic activities. Pattern of women's activities are affected by prevailing social ideology and are also linked with the stage of economic development.

### **Participation in Economy:**

The economic activity may be classified as organized and unorganized, each of which may be in the formal or informal sector. Participation of women in economic activities in formal sectors of industries, services and agricultural sector is measurable, but activities of women in informal sectors such as house works, training and education of children, activities in agricultural sectors and household services are difficult to measure.

Although women constitute a little less than the half of the economically active population, but their contribution to economic activity is far below the potential. The progress toward gender equality in respect of participation in economic activities seems to have delayed.

### **Workforce Participation Rate**

In 2011, the Workforce Participation Rate at all India level is 25.51% for females and 53.26% for males. While there is no rural-urban gap for males (53%), there is considerable rural urban gap for females (rural -30%, urban- 15.4%). As per NSS 2011-12, 59.3% of the female workers in rural India are self employed while in urban areas the corresponding figure is 42.8%. Among the male workers, 54.5% in rural areas and 41.7% in urban areas are self employed. In rural areas the share of regular wage/ salaried employees is less for both females (5.6%) and males (10%) compared to urban areas (females : 42.8%, males: 43.4). The LFPR of females (rural: 25.3%, urban: 15.5%) is lower than that of males (rural: 55.3%, urban: 56.3%) in both rural and urban areas (NSS 2011-12).

### **Average wage/salary received by regular wage/salaried employees**

As per NSS 2011-12, the average wage/ salary received per day by regular wage/ Salaried Employees of age 15-59 years for females (rural: Rs.201.56, urban: Rs.366.15) is lower than that of males (rural:Rs.322.28, urban:Rs.469.87) in both rural and urban areas and the gap is more in rural areas. Irrespective of education level and residence (rural Urban), the average per day wage/salary earned by a female is less than that by a male. Average wage of a female casual labourer engaged in MGNAREGA and works other than Public Works in Urban Areas is more than that of a male. Unemployment Rate (UR) is more for females than males 15 years and above in both rural and urban areas with the gap very wide for the urban. Maximum Unemployment Rate has been reported in Andaman & Nicobar Islands (30.8%), followed by Jammu and Kashmir (25.7%). In 2011, the Workforce Participation Rate at all India level was 25.51% for female and 53.26% for males. While there was no rural - urban gap for males (53%), there was Considerable rural - urban gap for females (rural -30%, urban- 15.4%).

As per NSS 2011-12, 59.3% of the female workers in rural India are self employed while in urban areas the corresponding figure was 42.8%. Among the male workers, 54.5% in rural areas and 41.7% in urban areas are self employed. In rural areas the share of regular wage/ salaried employees was less for both females (5.6%) and males (10%) compared to urban areas (42.8% - females, 43.4- males).

In 2015-16 (5th Annual Employment - Unemployment Survey conducted by Labour Bureau), the unemployment rate for persons aged 15 +a year was 3.7 at all India level. For females (15+ years),

the unemployment rate was 5.8, while for the males (15+ years) the Same was 3.0. There was considerable rural – urban gap in unemployment rate of females (Rural- 4.7, urban- 10.9). The 6th Economic Census (2013-14) showed that, 21.49% of the total establishments are owned by females and 18.29% of the workers employed in establishments are females.

**TABLE 5: WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (%)**

year	Rural		Urban	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
2000-2001*	28.7	54.4	14.0	53.1
2001-2002*	31.4	54.6	13.9	55.3
2002*	28.1	54.6	14	53.4
2004-05*	32.7	54.6	16.6	54.9
2005-06*	31.0	54.9	14.3	54.9
2007-08*	28.9	54.8	13.8	55.4
2009-10	26.1	54.7	13.8	54.3
2011-12	24.8	54.3	14.7	54.6

**SOURCE:** National Sample Survey Office

**TABLE 6: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (IN THE LABOR FORCE) ACCORDING TO USUAL STATUS(%)**

Round	Year	Rural		Urban	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>1972-73</b>	0.5	1.2	6.0	4.8
32 <sup>th</sup>	<b>1977-78</b>	2.0	1.3	12.4	5.4
38 <sup>th</sup>	<b>1983</b>	0.7	1.4	4.9	5.1
43 <sup>th</sup>	<b>1987-88</b>	2.4	1.8	6.2	5.2
50 <sup>th</sup>	<b>1993-94</b>	0.9	1.4	6.1	4.1
55 <sup>th</sup>	<b>1999-00</b>	1.0	1.7	5.7	4.5
61 <sup>th</sup>	<b>2004-05</b>	1.8	1.6	6.9	3.8
66 <sup>th</sup>	<b>2009-10</b>	1.6	1.6	5.7	2.8
68 <sup>th</sup>	<b>2011-12</b>	1.7	1.7	5.2	3.0

**SOURCE:** National Sample Survey Office 68<sup>th</sup> Round, July 2011-June2012

Table exhibits that the female worker participation rate is much lower than that of male worker. But work participation rate among females is increasing gradually. The rate if increase is more in rural areas than in urban areas. It is because women get more employment in the agricultural sector in rural areas. They perform a number of agricultural activities such as sowing, weeding, transplanting, harvesting, threshing etc. but in all the states, they are discriminated with regard to wage employment.

**Participation in decision making:** The Participation in decision-making plays an important role in empowerment of women. The true spirit of democracy cannot be realized if marginalized sections

that include women remain outside the ambit of political system. Political participation does not mean only the right to vote but it includes the ability to influence policies and decision making. But unfortunately women are unduly represented in all the wings of Govt-legislative, executive and judicial. Every human being has the right to participate in decisions that define her or his life. This right is the foundation of the ideal of equal participation in decision-making among women and men. This right argues that since women know their situation best, they should participate equally with men to have their perspective effectively incorporated at all levels of decision-making, from the private to the public spheres of their lives, from the local to the global.

### **Women in Parliament**

As in 2016, women ministers constituted 12% in Central Council of Ministers (9 out of 75).

In the 16th Lok Sabha, 12% of the total members are women (64 out of 534). Out of the 318 first time elected members of the 16th Lok Sabha, 43 are women (14%). There is an improvement in the participation of women electors in the General elections (Lok Sabha) over the years and in the 16th Lok Sabha election 66% of women electors have participated vis-a-vis 67% participation by male electors.

### **Women in State Assemblies and Councils**

As in 2016, 9% of the State Assembly members and 5% of the State Council members are women. The States of Bihar, Haryana and Rajasthan have the highest share of women in their respective State Assemblies (14%). There is no women representation in the State Assemblies of Mizoram, Nagaland and Puducherry.

### **Women Judges in Supreme Court and different High Courts**

In 2015, the share of women judges in Supreme Court is 4% (1 out of 26) and it is 10% (54 out of 517) considering all High Courts in India.

The highest number of women judges is in the High Court of Delhi (10) followed by Mumbai (8). However, Sikkim has the highest percentage share of female judges among its High Court Judges (50%, One female and one male judge). No female judges are there in 9 High Courts in India.

### **Conclusion:**

Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decisions for their personal dependent. Empowering women is to make them independent in all aspects from mind, thought, rights, decisions, etc. by leaving all the social and family limitations. It is to bring equality in the society for both male and female in all areas. Women empowerment is very necessary to make the bright future of the family, society and country.

The most famous saying said by the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is "To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves". In India, to empower the women, first it needs to kill all the demons killing women's rights and values in the society such as dowry system, illiteracy, sexual harassment, inequality, female infanticide and domestic violence against women, rape, prostitution, illegal trafficking and other issues. Gender discrimination in the nation brings cultural, social, economic and educational differences which push country back. The most effective remedy to kill such devils is making women empowered by ensuring the rights to equality mentioned in the constitution of India.

### References:

1. Roy Kalpana (volume 1)“ women and their environment”.
2. Patnaik Sovan “ status of women in India” ISBN 81-8411-0790
3. Women and Men in India -2016 , Govt. of India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation
4. [WWW.census2011.co.in](http://WWW.census2011.co.in)
5. Kushwah Vandana, “The health status of women in India” , Published in Research Journal of Chemical and environmental sciences, ISSN 2321-1041 Volume 1 Issue 3 Aug 2013.
6. Sunil Kumar Kamalpur and Somnath Reddy “ Women health in India:An analysis” Published in International Research journal of social sciences, ISSN 2319-3565 volume 2(10) oct 2013.
7. Saba yunus and Seema verma “ Legal Provisions for women empowerment in India” published in International journal of humanities and management sciences volume 3 issue 5(2015) ISSN 2320-4044.
8. Mishra, R. C. (2006). Towards Gender Equality. Author spress. ISBN 81-7273-306-2. 2006.
9. "Status of Women in India" by Shobana Nelasco,
10. National Commission of Women, [ncw.nic.in](http://ncw.nic.in) International Journal of Humanities and Management Sciences (IJHMS) Volume 3, Issue 5 (2015) ISSN 2320–4044 (Online).
11. National sample survey organization(NSSO) 68<sup>th</sup> round 2011-12 “ employment and Unemployment Situation in India
12. [http://ncw.nic.in/acts/the commissionofsatiperventionact1987-1988.pdf](http://ncw.nic.in/acts/the%20commissionofsatiperventionact1987-1988.pdf)
13. Sanjeev Sharma, “Women in National Movement” ISBN 978-81-8484-520-4
14. Basu.A.N. and K.Basu,1991 “women’s economic roles and child survival: the case of India.” Health transition reiew1
15. Dreze ,Jean and Gita Gandhi Kingdom(2001) “school participation in rural India”, Review of Development Economics
16. Tripathy, S.N. and Pradhan premanda(2003), “Girl child in India” , Discovery Publishing house, New Delhi.
17. Rao, M.K. “Empowerment of women in India” Discovery Publishing house, New Delhi(2003)