

## Conceptual study on women's empowerment on Socio-Economic Development

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### Abstract

Empowerment is defined as the authority or power that is given to someone to do something. Women empowerment is the strategy of women to increase their control of resources and generate decision making capacity. Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society. Women are the essential part of our society and half of the total population, the sustainable development of a country depends on the maximum utilization and equal participation of both women and men. Development of a nation could only be achieved if women are empowered, and their social and economic status is improved; it is possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women. This paper aims to understand women empowerment and socio-economic development conceptually. This paper is descriptive and qualitative and based on secondary data.

### Introduction :

Empowerment is the process whereby the less powerful members of the society gain access and control over resources, knowledge, challenges, and ideologies of discrimination and subordination, and transform the structures and institutions through which unequal access and control over resources is sustained and perpetuated (Batliwala., 1994) Women empowerment means giving power and authority to the women, it is the process of empowerment which required transformation of structure of sub ordinance, control over material and intellectual recourses, gaining decisions, making authority and reduction of gender inequality. Development is defined as a process of transformation of a particular system to better forms and optimal states through a set of quantitative and qualitative changes.(Anxo Dominique & Lindh, 2010) "Women's empowerment via gainful employment is a component and tool of development in any nation." He added that the under empowerment of women in the economy not only hinders development and the fight against poverty, but also has several additional detrimental effects, such as poorer health and educational results for children, hence it is crucial

to make sure women are socially and economically and endowed with political power. Social development is the structure of norms, general rules and a level of quality that govern human interactions, it is a comprehensive social improvement strategy that seeks to make the lives better for all citizens and there is a particular emphasis on making the lives better of people who are poor or otherwise needy. This phenomenon is associated with qualitative changes in social structure. It changed the opportunities of individuals striving to achieve higher social status. (Deiningger & Liu, 2009)

Economic development, a phenomenon of higher GDP and market productivity, is a governmental intervention meant to enhance people's wellbeing as they grow. Economic growth is one facet of the economic process, according to economist Amartya Sen. "development". Economists mostly concentrate on the economy as a whole and the growth component.

In contrast, community economic development academics that focus on socioeconomic growth.

There is disagreement over what constitutes economic development. Economic growth was the primary metric used by economists in the 20th century to assess development.

Sociologists instead focused on more general modernization and transition processes. (Bala, 2018) Socio-economic development is a chosen concept of development that has shaped how a phenomenon is understood, has been documented by international organizations and state declarations, and has collaborated to accomplish development objectives. (Bhat, 2014) For instance, the UNDP's 2000 Millennium Development Goals included food security, education, sustainable resource use, health, poverty alleviation, and good governance. Development is no longer taken into account, namely when it comes to reducing poverty in underdeveloped areas. (Mayer et al., 2017) The growing significance of humanitarianism is linked to socioeconomic growth. Still, other important elements include the realization of the value of social capital, the popularity of environmental conservation, and philosophical and sociological concepts about equality of opportunities. (Awati, &

Deshpande, 2018) Despite making up half of a nation's population, women are underrepresented in a number of opportunities. Equal chances must be offered in the areas of the economy, society, politics, education, religion, and law.

It is important to remember that gender The achievement of total equality in every facet of the social order, irrespective of gender. Despite making up half of a nation's population, women

are underrepresented in a number of opportunities. Equal chances must be offered in the areas of the economy, society, politics, education, religion, and law. It is important to remember that gender equity is the achievement of total equality for all members of society, regardless of gender. (Bhakuni, 2018) In order to achieve full gender equality, all forms of oppression, discrimination, and dominance must be eradicated from society. I believe that Nepal will prosper and reach its necessary goal if men and women are able to cooperate and actively participate in all areas of developmental activities. Development can occur at all levels, from the micro to the macro. Without women's empowerment, socio-economic development cannot occur. According to Swami Vivekananda, a country that does not respect its women will never become great in the present or in the future. (Kabeer, 1994)

### **Objective**

The study's overall goal is to examine conceptual knowledge about women's empowerment and socioeconomic growth. Its particular goals are as follows:

1. To examine socio-economic progress and women's empowerment.
2. To examine the conceptual framework for socio-economic development and women's empowerment.
3. To examine the connection between socio-economic progress and women's empowerment.

### **Research Methodology :**

To fulfill the achievement of this paper, this study completely depends upon the secondary literature. As per the fulfilment, to get depth knowledge conceptually, empirically secondary sources of relevant literature, are used which are more multifaceted, multi-sector, and time sequences. The present study is based on qualitative methods of social science research and is completely secondary. To find out the literature relevant to this study, I have gone through various sources, electronic sources like Google, Google Scholar, Academia, JOSTR, etc. Various research information is collected from different books, articles, journals, historical accounts, officially published data, research work of other researchers, published documents and electronic sources, Self-Help Groups relevant government departments, NGOs and INGO labor force surveys, economic surveys; census reports, household surveys, as well as statistical surveys. All relevant literature with priority and utility are organized. The data used in this study are based on secondary sources. Descriptive and exploratory research design has been used.

## Conceptual Understanding of Women's Empowerment and Socio-economic Development

The concept of women's empowerment seems to have been used in the 1980s by third-world feminists to address the issue of gender differences that exist in the control and distribution of resources. (Datta & Kornberg, 2002) . In the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of women's empowerment emerged as a radical strategy aimed at altering power dynamics to support women's rights and increase equality between men and women. (Batliwala., 1994) Empowerment is the process of questioning current power dynamics and acquiring more authority over the sources of power. Two modern concepts are women's empowerment and development. View points on gender equity paradigms. The development strategy has been heavily criticized for working against women's interests and failing to fulfill its promises. (Sharma, 2007) Redistribution of power is the definition of empowerment. The concept of "empowerment" encapsulated the feeling of taking charge of one's involvement in decision-making. (Marilee, 1995)

According to Rowland , It is necessary to recognize that power can manifest in a variety of ways in order to comprehend the empowering process. He gave four explanations of power. a Over-controlling power that is connected to weakened victimization or manipulation mechanisms. b Power that is absorbed or expressed as forms of resistance or manipulation that create new possibilities and activities without dominance is known as generative or productive power. c Power is the perception that the total is larger than the sum of the parts, particularly when a group works together to solve a problem. It is founded on self-acceptance and self-respect, which in turn extend to respect and acceptance of others as equals. d Power from within is the spiritual strength and individuality that each of us possesses and that defines a true person. Empowerment, which is defined as control over resources and ideology, said that empowerment is about shifting the balance of power in a particular culture. (Batliwala., 1994) Similarly, empowerment aims to alter society by redistributing power. (Beteille, 1991) As a necessary supplement to enhancing their capacity to manage resources, set agendas, and make decisions, empowerment strategies for women must build on "the power within." This requires "experiential recognition and analysis" of issues pertaining to women's own subordination and how it is maintained; such power cannot be granted; it must be self-generated. (Kabeer, 1994)

defines empowerment as the process of psychological, social, and political empowerment that is accelerated and strengthened by social power that can be converted into political power. (Young, 1993) Women who are empowered are able to take charge of their own lives, establish their own goals, band together to support one another, and demand change from the government and society at large. (Hashemi et al., 1995) Empowerment is both a process and an outcome whereby women and other weaker or less powerful elements of society have more access to and control over material and intellectual resources, as well as when they oppose the ideologies of discrimination and this unequal distribution is justified by subordination. (Vinod, 2004) "Empowerment is a process that increases the capacity of marginalized and helpless individuals or groups to contest and alter the current power dynamics that place them in inferior social, political, and economic positions." In order for women to obtain power, meaningful choices, and control over their lives, they must undergo a process of personal and social transformation that is interconnected and mutually strengthens psychological, political, social, and economic spheres. (Cornwall, 2016) With radical roots in the 1980s, women's empowerment is now a mainstream development concern. Much of the narrative focuses on instrumental gains—what women can do for development rather than what development can do for women. Empowerment is treated as a destination reached through development's equivalent of motorways: programmes rolled out over any terrain. But in the process, pathways women are travelling in their own individual or collective journeys of empowerment remain hidden. Revisiting foundational feminist work on empowerment, this article draws on findings from multi-country research programme, Pathways of Women's Empowerment, to explore what works to support these journeys. (Cornwall, 2016) The process of empowerment is not straightforward, uncontested, and marked by compromise and negotiation with unpredictable results. It is the ability of an individual to make wise decisions and turn them into the activities and results that are desired. (Awati, & Deshpande, 2018) Although there are various phrases used to describe the process of development, the following are key ideas: economic growth, which includes quantitative changes that are regarded as reproduction in the material world; an increase in the volume of products and services produced. Economic development, a more intricate process than economic growth, included both quantitative and qualitative changes, including changes in the structure of production, the adoption of new resource management techniques, economic development, and more opportunities for economic growth since it made

it possible to attain a higher approach of the latter. (Fritz, 2010) Processes brought about by both internal and exogenous causes impact the direction and trajectory of socioeconomic development. These procedures are typically preceded by or the result of other procedures; they do not operate independently of one another. Since the factors of socio-economic growth itself vary depending on the specific historical and geographical context in which socio-economic changes occur, it is impossible to characterize them more precisely in general terms. One of the main ideas and facets of change in the socioeconomic realm is socio-economic development. The idea of development serves as a tool for analysis as well as the result of an optimistic outlook and the expression of social interests. (Chojnicki, n.d.) emphasizes the development of the notion of socio-economic development by addressing two issues: (a) the concept's scope and reference, and (b) the nature of socio-economic development. They contend that socio-economic development includes social changes, most of which are of an economic character. They also contend that economic factors are inextricably linked to social factors and are prominent in studies of economic change. "Change and socio-economic development" combines two elements: change and development. the science of economics distinguishes political economy in the classic sense which concerned the economic aspects of a society's life. This theory is interested in the types of socio-economic systems, ownership relations, and interests and motivation behind economic activity". Social reality is a system approach and a dynamic approach. System approach consists in viewing reality in systemic terms. Social reality is then seen as made up of various social systems occurring at a variety of complexity levels, performing different functions, and assuming a diversity of forms.(Addo, 2017) The functioning of several social and environmental processes causes social systems to arise, alter, and vanish. Classifying social systems is a very difficult and complex task. (Chojnicki, n.d.) explains territorial social systems, which are characterized as those in which a human group permanently occupies, develops, and governs a particular region of the Earth's surface. (Chojnicki, n.d.) Because of their extreme complexity, internal and external structural entanglement, and uneven rate of change in its constituent parts, social systems—especially territorial social systems—are extremely challenging to understand. A comprehensive approach to social systems is based on the dynamic approach, which is viewed as complimentary to the systems. A system approach to things provides for a better understanding and depiction of the complexity, the different aspects, and the reciprocal relations that occur

during their change. On the one hand, no system has a static, unchanging character. The dynamic method typically deals with system changes. This pertains not just to modifications in the systems' overall characteristics, constituents, and organization, but also to their surrounds and outside connections.

### **Conceptualizing Women's Empowerment**

It is challenging to conceptualize women's empowerment because it is a multifaceted and intricate process, however, I have done so using a framework created by (Kabeer, 1994) Empowerment is defined as a dynamic process in which women obtain tools that help them gain agency—the ability to make choices and achieve their own goals—and voice—the ability to express preferences. These resources included social resources like peer networks, involvement in organizations, and access to role models outside of the family; economic resources or material assets like income, property, and land; and human resources like self-efficacy, skill development, and educational attainment.

A person's socioeconomic development is measured using a variety of proxies, including social development, sustainable livelihood, rising living standards, and multifaceted poverty reduction, all of which are used to conceptualize the overall socioeconomic development of those living in poverty.

### **Relationship between women empowerment and socio-economic development**

A person's socioeconomic development is measured using a variety of proxies, including social development, sustainable livelihood, rising living standards, and multifaceted poverty reduction, all of which are used to conceptualize the overall socioeconomic development of those living in poverty. (Cornwall, 2016) Environmental preservation, social and economic advancement, and women's empowerment were all embraced by sustainable development. More independent choices for women must have been a part of empowerment in the context of women and development. (Mehra, n.d.) Enhancing women's access to the components of development, specifically health, education, employment opportunities, rights, and political engagement, is one way to define the relationship between economic development and women's empowerment. According to Amartya Sen, progress alone can significantly reduce gender inequality in one direction, while ongoing discrimination against women might impede development in another. By her first relationship, she maintained that as poverty decreased, gender equality improved and that governments should concentrate on fostering economic

growth and prosperity. On the other hand, the second relationship—from empowerment to development—has received more attention. "Achieving gender equality is a "prerequisite" to achieving the other Millennium Development Goals (MDG)," such as eradicating poverty, lowering infant mortality, attaining universal education, and closing the gender gap in education by 2015, according to Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General (2005). The World Bank (2001) urges policies to address gender inequality in "rights, resources, and voice" in its report "Engendering Development." It also suggests that institutional structures be redesigned to advance equality and that particular policies be implemented, such as scholarships for girls and quotas for women in parliament. The paper argues that these actions are warranted not only because they advance equity but also because they are required to hasten development. Remarkably, the World Development Report of 2012 (Young, 1993) takes on a far more complex message. Although it highlighted the "business case" for women's empowerment, its primary contribution was that equality between men and women is a desirable objective in and of itself, and that policy should work toward achieving it.

First, "when poverty is reduced, the condition of everyone including women improves," and second, "when gender inequality declines as poverty declines, the conditions of women improve more than those of men with development." These two factors are why economic development decreased poverty and improved the lives of women. However, full equality between men and women cannot be achieved by economic progress alone. To attain gender equality, legislative action is still required; this action would be clearly justified if women's empowerment also spurs additional growth, beginning a positive feedback loop.

### **Conclusion :**

Women's empowerment is thought to be a multifaceted process. The term "women's empowerment" refers to the expansion of freedom of choice and action in all domains, including economic, political, social, cultural, personal, and familial, to shape one's life. It is a phenomenon that seeks to alter society through a reorganization of power. People with diverse experiences in geography, culture, economics, society, politics, the environment, and technology may have varied perspectives on empowerment. Sustainable development is a multifaceted idea that includes environmental preservation in addition to social and economic advancement. Without achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, it is impossible to achieve development across all the pillars of sustainable development.

Utilizing the nation's full potential in the process. The process of social and economic growth in a society that is quantified by indicators is known as socio-economic development. Development is impossible without the active participation of women in the nation's political, social, cultural, economic, and other spheres. Lastly, without empowering women, the pillars of sustainable development cannot be achieved; therefore, the government must make every effort to improve women's status and attain development that will positively influence women's empowerment and enhance their socioeconomic development in order to promote sustainable development both domestically and globally. Researchers and policymakers can use this paper as a starting point to gain a better understanding of women's empowerment and socioeconomic development. It will also assist readers understand the conceptual understanding of these topics.

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