The Transformative Impact Of Women's Empowerment In Viksit Bharat@ 2047

Dr. Rajni Gupta

Assistant Professor of Economics

Govt. college for Girls, Cheeka(Kaithal)

Abstract

The foundation of **Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047** rests on four key pillars, collectively known as 'GYAN': **Garib (the poor), Yuva (youth), Annadata (farmers), and Nari (women)**. The empowerment of women, as one of these essential components, is vital for achieving this national vision. However, India continues to grapple with deep-seated challenges, including systemic barriers and persistent societal norms, which contribute to significant gender disparities in educational attainment and workforce participation. Addressing these issues demands **strategic interventions** that focus on improving access to education, ensuring healthcare availability, fostering financial independence, and implementing comprehensive policy reforms to promote and uphold gender equality. Empowering women both politically and economically will yield considerable societal advantages, leading to increased productivity, stronger communities, and more inclusive governance. By prioritizing women's empowerment, India can move closer to its 2047 goal of becoming a prosperous and equitable democracy.

Keywords: Women's Empowerment, Viksit Bharat, Challenges, Strategies.

Introduction

"Viksit Bharat," or "Developed India," is a comprehensive vision for the nation's growth, aspiring to achieve comprehensive development across economic, social, and cultural dimensions. This vision, championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, extends beyond a mere catchphrase, serving as a compass for India during its "Amrit Kaal" or golden period. A key objective of Viksit Bharat is to enable every citizen to participate in the economy, fostering a strong, inclusive economy with abundant job and entrepreneurial opportunities. This includes implementing policies to encourage investment, advance economic growth, and foster innovation. Initiatives such as "Made in India," "Digital India," and "Startup India" demonstrate the government's commitment to creating an environment favorable for business expansion and employment generation, aiming to lift millions out of poverty and realize the nation's full economic potential.

A crucial aspect of Viksit Bharat is gender equality. It is not just a slogan but a fundamental principle underpinning the holistic development of the nation. The empowerment of women and the elimination of gender-based discrimination are pivotal to realizing the full potential of India's vision. Despite advancements,

India faces entrenched challenges, including structural obstacles and societal norms that perpetuate disparities between genders in academic achievement and workforce contribution. Empowering women is considered vital for Viksit Bharat 2047, not only from a moral standpoint but also as a strategic imperative for sustainable development and prosperity. Prioritizing women's empowerment is seen as a way to help India get closer to its 2047 aim of becoming an enriched and just democracy.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the transformative impact of the 'Viksit Bharat' vision on women across various socio-economic and political dimensions.

2. To meticulously identify and categorize the contemporary challenges hindering women's empowerment in India at individual, organizational, and industry levels.

3. To propose actionable and sustainable strategies aimed at overcoming these identified challenges, thereby facilitating comprehensive women's empowerment towards achieving Viksit Bharat 2047.

Research Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative research approach, primarily relying on a comprehensive review of existing literature, policy documents, and reports related to women's empowerment in India and the 'Viksit Bharat' vision. Secondary data from academic studies, government publications, and reputable organizational reports, such as those from the World Economic Forum and the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), were systematically analyzed to identify key challenges, evaluate existing strategies, and understand the impact of various initiatives on women.

The methodology involved content analysis of published research papers and governmental schemes to synthesize information on gender disparities, economic participation, social welfare, and policy reforms concerning women's roles in national development. The aim was to provide a holistic overview of the current landscape, drawing insights from diverse sources to support the challenges identified and the strategies proposed for women's empowerment in the context of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Challenges

Empowering women in the vision of **Viksit Bharat** (Developed India) is crucial, yet it faces significant hurdles. These challenges span individual, organizational, and industry levels, rooted in deeply ingrained societal norms, inadequate infrastructure, and systemic biases. Overcoming these barriers demands a multi-pronged approach involving policy reforms, cultural shifts, and targeted interventions to ensure equitable opportunities and full participation for women.

Challenges at Individual-Level:

1.Traditional gender roles and societal expectations in India profoundly influence women's lives. These norms often prescribe women's roles within the family and society, thereby limiting their access to education, employment, and decision-making opportunities. Despite progress, deeply held cultural beliefs can perpetuate inequalities and restrict women's autonomy.

2. Access to education for girls in India continues to be an issue, especially in rural and marginalized communities. Factors such as poverty, social biases favoring boys' education, and safety concerns contribute to higher dropout rates among girls. Furthermore, barriers to higher education include insufficient infrastructure, a scarcity of female teachers as role models, and limited opportunities beyond primary schooling.

3. India grapples with various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry-related violence, and gender-based violence in public spaces. Despite legal frameworks like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and stringent laws against sexual offenses, enforcement remains inconsistent. Societal attitudes that blame victims or normalize violence contribute to underreporting and the perpetuation of these crimes.

4. Women in India encounter difficulties in accessing healthcare services due to geographical limitations, financial constraints, and cultural taboos. Gender-specific health issues, such as maternal mortality, reproductive health concerns, and diseases like breast cancer, often do not receive adequate attention or resources. Cultural norms surrounding women's health can lead to delayed treatment and poorer health outcomes.

Challenges at Organizational Level:

1. The persistent **gender pay gap** in India is influenced by several factors. Women often earn less than their male counterparts for comparable work, a disparity driven by occupational segregation, discrimination, and biases in hiring and promotion practices. Additionally, societal expectations and traditional gender roles often channel women into lower-paying sectors or positions. The **World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021** highlighted India's rank of 140th out of 156 countries in gender wage equality, with women earning, on average, 19% less than men in similar roles. This disparity underscores the need for greater pay transparency and equitable compensation practices.

2. Balancing career aspirations with family responsibilities presents a significant challenge for women in India. Traditional gender roles disproportionately burden women with caregiving, impacting their career progression and overall well-being. Limited access to affordable childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements further exacerbate these challenges. A study by the **National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO)** indicated that women in urban India spend almost six hours daily on unpaid care work, compared to less than an hour for men. This disparity highlights the critical need for organizations to implement policies that support work-life balance, such as parental leave policies, flexible working hours, and remote work options.

3. Women in India frequently encounter a **"glass ceiling,"** which significantly impedes their advancement to senior leadership roles. Factors such as unconscious bias, limited mentorship opportunities, and workplace cultures that favor male leadership styles contribute to this phenomenon. The representation of women in top leadership positions remains disproportionately low across various sectors. As of 2020, women held only 7.3% of board seats in NSE-listed companies in India, highlighting their stark underrepresentation in corporate governance. Addressing this requires targeted initiatives, including leadership development programs and policies promoting gender diversity in decision-making roles.

4. Despite legislative measures like the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act**, workplace harassment remains a pervasive issue in India. The implementation of these policies varies, with many organizations lacking effective reporting and redressal mechanisms. Cultural attitudes that normalize or minimize harassment further complicate efforts to create safe and inclusive work environments. A 2020 survey by the **Indian National Bar Association** revealed that nearly 70% of working women in India have experienced some form of sexual harassment. This statistic emphasizes the urgent need for organizations to strengthen their policies and foster a culture of zero tolerance through awareness campaigns, training, and robust grievance mechanisms.

Challenges at Industry Level

1. Women in India are often concentrated in sectors like education and healthcare, where they constitute a majority of the workforce. However, they are significantly underrepresented in **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)** fields and manufacturing industries. This sectoral segregation perpetuates gender stereotypes and limits women's access to higher-paying and traditionally male-dominated sectors. As of 2020, women comprised only about 14% of the total STEM workforce in India, reflecting a substantial gender gap in these critical fields.

2. Women entrepreneurs in India face numerous barriers, including limited access to finance, professional networks, and mentorship opportunities. Despite government initiatives like the Stand-Up India and Mudra Yojana to promote women's entrepreneurship, accessing credit remains a challenge due to stringent collateral requirements and biased lending practices. A report by **Bain & Company and Google** revealed that women-led startups in India receive only about 2% of the total venture capital funding. This stark disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve access to capital and support networks for women entrepreneurs, fostering an ecosystem conducive to their growth and success.

3. While India has implemented policies aimed at promoting gender diversity in workplaces, their effectiveness varies due to gaps in compliance and enforcement mechanisms. The **Companies Act, 2013**, mandates certain disclosures regarding gender diversity on corporate boards, yet the actual representation of women in leadership positions remains low. A study by **Catalyst** showed that women held only about 17% of board seats in NSE-listed companies in 2020. This indicates a need for stricter enforcement of existing regulations and proactive measures by companies to enhance gender diversity in decision-making roles. Strengthening policies and ensuring their effective implementation is crucial for creating inclusive work environments where women can thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Addressing these multi-faceted challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, employers, financial institutions, businesses, and civil society to dismantle barriers, promote gender equality, and empower women across all sectors of the economy for a truly Viksit Bharat.

Empowering Women: India's Multifaceted Approach

India is implementing a comprehensive strategy to empower women across all spheres of life, focusing on health, safety, education, employment, and entrepreneurship. These initiatives are designed to ensure gender justice, equality, and the full participation of women in shaping the nation's socio-economic, political, and cultural landscape.

Key Initiatives and Achievements:

- **Integrated Support Systems:** A robust network of 759 **one-stop centers** provides integrated support and assistance, benefiting over 8.3 lakh (830,000) women.
- **Improving Sex Ratio:** The **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** program has addressed the root causes of female feticide, leading to an improved sex ratio at birth from 918 to 933 females per 1000 males.
- **Gender-Sensitive Education:** India's new education policy promotes a **gender-sensitive curriculum** and needs-based education, resulting in parity in the gross enrollment ratio for girls and boys in higher education.
- **STEM Participation:** India proudly has one of the highest proportions of women enrolled in **STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)** disciplines globally, with 43% of students being women.
- **Financial Inclusion & Economic Growth:** Initiatives like the **JAM Trinity** and financial inclusion targets promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. Notably, women hold over 55% of accounts opened under the **Prime Minister's Jandhan Yojana**.
- **Digital Literacy:** The **Pradhan Mantri Grameen Digital Saksharta Abhiyan** highlights the importance of digital literacy, with over 52% of enrollees being women.

- **Self-Help Groups & Housing: Self-help groups** connect approximately 100 million women, significantly transforming the rural economic landscape. Additionally, over four crore (40 million) houses have been built for the poorest, with benefits availed only if the property is in a woman's name or jointly held.
- **Maternal Healthcare:** Maternal health remains a priority, with India witnessing a significant decline in the **maternal mortality ratio** from 167 to 97. Frontline healthcare, supported by programs like **Asha** and the **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana**, provides financial support to over 3.31 crore (33.1 million) expectant mothers.
- **Women Entrepreneurship:** The **Mudra Yojana** provides collateral-free loans, supporting women entrepreneurs who lead one out of five non-farm businesses and 45% of manufacturing enterprises. The **Stand Up India** and **Startup India** schemes further benefit women entrepreneurs, reserving 10% of funds for women-led startups.
- **Improved Living Standards:** India has provided access to clean cooking fuel for 10 crore (100 million) households, safe tap water for 14 crore (140 million) households, and constructed over 13 crore (130 million) household toilets, reducing time poverty and care burdens on women.
- **Menstrual Hygiene:** To enhance accessibility, sanitary napkins are now 100% tax-exempt in India and are sold through government stores at one rupee per pad.
- **Political Representation:** India boasts over 14 lakh (1.4 million) elected women representatives, constituting 46% of the total representatives in panchayats and municipal corporations. The **Women's Reservation Bill 2023** further empowers women by reserving one-third of seats for them in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.
- **Women in Aviation:** India has a remarkable 15% women pilots in civil aviation, significantly higher than the global average of 5%.
- **Budgetary Allocation:** The current financial year's budgeting allocation for these initiatives exceeds **$37.3 billion**, underscoring the government's commitment.

The Transformative Impact of Women's Empowerment in India

Empowering women in India has profound implications across societal, economic, and political spheres. By enhancing women's agency through education, economic opportunities, and social initiatives, the nation sees significant contributions to its overall development.

Key Areas of Impact:

- **Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction:** Empowered women are crucial drivers of economic growth. Their increased participation in the workforce, entrepreneurship, and leadership roles expands the labor force and boosts overall productivity. This directly contributes to **GDP growth** and **poverty reduction**, as women are better equipped to generate income and invest in their families' education, health, and nutrition, creating a ripple effect of well-being.
- **Health and Well-being:** Women's empowerment directly translates to improved health outcomes for themselves and their families. Educated and empowered women are more likely to access healthcare services, leading to better **maternal and child health** and reduced mortality rates.
- **Education:** Empowering women expands access to education for girls and elevates overall educational standards. Educated women are more likely to prioritize their children's schooling, fostering a positive, intergenerational cycle of education and empowerment.
- **Political and Social Participation:** As women gain empowerment, their ability to participate in decision-making processes at all levels, from local communities to national politics, increases. This leads to more **inclusive policies** and better representation of women's interests, fostering more supportive and equitable communities.
- **Gender Equality:** Women's empowerment is a fundamental driver of gender equality. It challenges discriminatory practices and stereotypes, fostering a society where women and men have **equal opportunities and rights**, contributing to social justice and harmony.

- **Innovation and Development:** When women are empowered to participate in STEM fields and entrepreneurial ventures, they bring diverse perspectives and talents, sparking creativity and driving **technological advancements** and overall innovation.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Women often play vital roles in natural resource management and environmental conservation. Empowering them strengthens their ability to advocate for **sustainable practices** and contribute to environmental stewardship.
- **Peace and Stability:** Empowered women actively contribute to **peacebuilding and conflict resolution** efforts within their communities. Their involvement promotes stability and resilience in the face of various societal challenges.
- **Cultural Transformation:** Women's empowerment challenges traditional gender roles and norms, fostering a more inclusive and progressive society. This encourages a shift towards values of **equality, respect, and dignity** for all individuals.

Conclusion: A Strategic Imperative for Viksit Bharat

Empowering women is not merely a matter of justice or human rights; it is a **strategic imperative for India's sustainable development and prosperity**, particularly in achieving the vision of **Viksit Bharat (Developed India)** by 2047. It unlocks the full potential of half the population, creating a more equitable, resilient, and thriving society.

To fully harness the potential of its female population, India must continue its consistent efforts and intentional measures to eradicate enduring gender gaps in decision-making roles, education, and the workforce. This includes ensuring fair economic opportunities, improving access to education, and rigorously enforcing laws that support gender equality. Beyond economic advantages, empowering women leads to more inclusive governance structures and stronger communities. Prioritizing women's empowerment will be vital as India moves closer to 2047, ensuring a society where all individuals, regardless of gender, can make a significant impact.

References

I. Viksit Bharat Initiatives & Vision

1. **Govt. of India.** (2024). Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra. Retrieved from https://viksitbharatsankalp.gov.in/
2. **India.gov.in.** (n.d.). Website Viksit Bharat Sankalp. Retrieved from https://www.india.gov.in/website-viksit-bharat-sankalp
3. **Innovateindia.mygov.in.** (n.d.). Viksit Bharat 2047. Retrieved from https://innovateindia.mygov.in/viksitbharat2047/
4. **Press Information Bureau (PIB), Government of India.** (2024, February 1). Press Release [Specific PRID if available]. Retrieved from https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2001092
5. **First Post.** (2024, February 1). How interim Budget lays the foundation of 'Viksit Bharat'. Retrieved from https://www.firstpost.com/explainers/how-interim-budget-lays-thefoundation-of-viksit-bharat-13677792.html
6. **Mundhe, E.** (2024). VIKSIT BHARAT@ 2047: PATHWAYS TO A DEVELOPED INDIA. A PATHWAYS OF VIKSIT BHARAT@ 2047, 75.
7. **Singh, N. R.** (2024). Inclusive And Viksit Bharat 2047: A Proactive Strategy To A Better Future. Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 30(5), 9116-9122.
8. **Mehta, M. R., & Boltwala, M. M. S.** (2024). BUILDING THE FUTURE-INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR VIKSIT BHARAT.

II. Women's Empowerment & Viksit Bharat - Specific Focus

9. **Deshpande, M. A., & Gupta, P. V.** (2024). LIFELONG LEARNING FOR VIKASIT BHARAT: WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL GROWTH WITHIN NTO. A PATHWAYS OF VIKSIT BHARAT@ 2047, 6.
10. **Bharat, V.** (2024). Futuristic Higher Education Landscape: Skill-building for a Viksit Bharat Workforce. UNIVERSITY NEWS, 62, 201.
11. **Suratwala, M. T. F. M. A.** (2024). CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF SUKANYA SAMRIDDHI YOJNA: TOOL FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT. A PATHWAYS OF VIKSIT BHARAT@ 2047, 93.
12. **Sharma, M. A. M.** (2024). Forging Trails for Women's Collective Empowerment: A Diverse Strategy in Advancing Viksit Bharat. Vidhyayana-An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal-ISSN 2454-8596, 9(si2).
13. **Kumar, S., & Sirohi, D.** (n.d.). Fostering Fem-Economics: Navigating Indian Women Investment Vision for Viksit Bharat 2047.

III. General Women's Empowerment Challenges & Opportunities

14. **Agarwal Sugandha, Jaiswal Ankita , Misra Pranati, Sharma Radhika, & Mishra Osceen** (2024). Empowering Women for Viksit Bharat 2047: Challenges, Strategies, and Impact, International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR) E-ISSN: 2582-2160

15. **Shireesha, E.** (2019). Empowerment of women through self-help groups. International Journal of Scientific Development and Research (IJSDR), 4(12), 13-16.
16. **Prathiba, L.** (2017). A Study on Issues and Challenges of Women empowerment in India. Global Journal for Research Analysis, 6(9), 138-140.
17. **Selvi, V. D.** (2018). Opportunities and Challenges of Women Empowerment in India. Bonfring International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management Science, 158-168.
18. **Arora, S. C.** (2002). Women Empowerment in India. Indian Journal of Politics, 36(3-4), 124.