

"Empowering Women, Empowering Nations": A Multidisciplinary Outlook Based on Law, Business, and Technology

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Abstract: "यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः। यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः।" – मनुस्मृती *This verse from Manusmriti means; where woman is worshiped, respected; the divinity and prosperity would blossom; but if woman is disrespected no actions would bear fruits. This paper therefore; by taking inspiration from this verse of Manusmriti takes multidisciplinary outlook on; how legal, business and technological tools can empower women to further empower nation. Nations cannot achieve sustainable development without women's empowerment. Women's empowerment through entrepreneurship and leadership is vital for inclusive growth and sustainable development. The theme "Empowering Women, Empowering Nations" reflects the idea that women's participation in business, governance, and innovation strengthens not only individual livelihoods but also national progress. For legal aspects; Constitutional Law, Company Law, Labour Laws, POSH Act, etc. are analysed to appreciate its implications, limitations and lacunae. For broadening the understanding about business dimension related to these, this study interrogates on representation of women in field, social barriers, stereotype and financial hindrances they face, along with effective application of Government's initiatives like MSME policies for Women, Stand Up India, etc. In Technology Era, Digital Platforms, E-Commerce and other tools can be employed effectively in enabling women to overcome long lasting traditional barriers and letting them have access to global platform as well. Even when women are now equipped with these tools, there are certain major issues like digital divide, limited digital literacy, digital safety, etc. which are yet to be worked upon. Therefore, this paper implies that women's empowerment cannot be attained seldom. It has to be done along with creating robust legal framework, gender neutral business policies and easy mechanism for women to have access to all technological updates. Also, it endorses mechanism to uplift women's position in society as entrepreneur who is exhaustively contributing in the development of nation.*

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Entrepreneurship and Leadership, Legal and Policy Framework, Business and Technology

1. Introduction

"यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः। यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः।" - मनुस्मृती

This verse from the Manusmriti encapsulates an enduring truth of human civilization: societies flourish where women are respected and empowered, while those that deny women dignity and equality stagnate. This ancient wisdom resonates with modern development paradigms: nations cannot thrive without empowering half their population. Women's empowerment is not merely a social justice issue; it is a strategic imperative for sustainable development. Across cultures and centuries, the empowerment of women has been closely tied to the prosperity of nations. The phrase "Empowering Women, Empowering Nations" is not simply a slogan but a developmental reality supported by evidence from economics, law, business, and technology.

Empowerment, in its true sense, synonymous to delegation, accreditation, authorization. Conclusively means enabling women to have equal access to opportunities, resources, and absolutely in decision making, may be for herself, for family or for nation as well.

In today's context, women's empowerment will not be attained only when she is given opportunity to educate herself, but it will be complete only when it is safeguarded with legal framework. It should be deliberately seen that she

is protected against discrimination, she gets equal opportunity in profession or business, she gets access to technology same as any man and she is not confined to any traditional barriers under the guise of practices or customs. Without these pillars working together, empowerment remains incomplete.

Therefore, this paper adopts a multidisciplinary method in enduring to explore how law, business, and technology can collectively strengthen women as powerful chunk of the society, by going through various case studies, examples, policies, and tries to encapsulate lacunae in concerning areas.

2. Historical and Philosophical Underpinnings

Women empowerment in nation-building means giving women equal rights, opportunities, and leadership roles. Empowered women bring fresh viewpoints, consideration, and strength to governance. History has witnessed remarkable leaders like Indira Gandhi, Savitribai Phule, Kamala Harris prove that women can guide nations with vision, mission, shaping stronger, progressive, and balanced societies. When women are empowered with education they contribute to governance with empathy, vision, and determination. Empowered women in governance prioritize inclusivity, welfare, and long-term growth. Their presence ensures balanced decision-making and inspires future generations. Women empowerment is not just about individual success, but about creating a society where women's voices shape

national progress and drive sustainable, equitable development.

Indira Gandhi is a prominent example of women's leadership in governance because she broke barriers in a male-dominated political system. She became the first and only female Prime Minister of India in 1966. Her bold decisions in defence and diplomacy were appreciated and showed that women could be a strong and just leader and lead a nation effectively.

Savitribai Phule, a pioneer in women's education in the 19th century. With the support and encouragement from her husband, Jyotirao Phule, she educated herself first and then going against all odds she established schools for girls and marginalized communities. Despite social opposition, she empowered women through literacy, knowledge, and equality, laying the foundation for modern education and social reform in India.

If studied thoroughly we can see in Ancient History of India, position of women was quite vibrant but swinging through times.

We can see, that Vedic Period was very much graced by presence of women like Gargee, Maitreyee; where Gargee's questioning and interrogating a respected sage; Yadnyavalkya showcased her intellectual postulates, Maitreyee's pursuit of immortality over worldly possessions reflects core principles of Vedic Philosophy. We can therefore conclusively say that during this phase women were not just care givers but they were well accepted and respected in society as educators who participated in intellectual debates. They showcased and represented a firm, informed opinion on various subject matters. They were not confined to certain roles only. Above mentioned quote from Manusmriti, itself contains both empowering and limiting prescriptions, reflecting this contradiction. Above mentioned verse acknowledges the prosperity that a women brings when respected, while elsewhere, it enforces gender hierarchies.

But; during medieval times mainly; we see decline in a position of women in society attributed mainly to certain reasons like; pervasive patriarchal structure of society, child marriages, growing number of widows, and practices like Perdah, Sati and Jauhar. Restrictions on education, disconnect from various cultural and religious practices added to their plight. Ultimately amounting to limited freedom and rights, duty-bound and duty driven, obliged life, domestic confinements and therefore denial and devaluation of female children.

But today, women have barged into the male dominated field of Armed Forces also. In Operation Sindoora, women broke the long tradition of staying confined to homes by taking leadership in defence. Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh led the briefing, while others contributed in planning, logistics, and surveillance, symbolizing strength, empowerment, and India's progress toward inclusivity in armed forces. Sky is not the limit for women now. Sunita Williams, an Indian-origin astronaut, symbolizes women empowerment by breaking barriers in space exploration. She motivates women globally with her

adventurous feats. Her achievements highlight courage, determination, and leadership, proving that gender is no limit to success, and empowering women to dream beyond traditional boundaries.

This societal phenomenon was very much universal in nature. Which ultimately made way for reforms all over the world concerning female's rights and empowerment in various segments. Wave of feminist movements or movements for women's rights gained momentum during suffragette movements from 19th and early 20th centuries. Where under, state like US, UK took a step towards gender equality by granting equal right to women as well, i.e. "to vote". This wave of feminism also could secure more rights for women like equality at workplace, autonomy in reproduction, in limited sense but, definitely it was a step forward to make environment more open for "Her". Now in this today's era of technology, these rights shall emphasize on equal opportunities for her in technology, online spaces, and intersectionality.

3. Reforms and Legal Framework in India

India had always been blessed in terms of reformist for women's rights. Raja Ram Mohan Roy worked for abolition of Sati Practice. Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule fought against men's subjugation in education and curated place for women in education. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar contended for widow remarriage. And many more like them put their heart and soul into it and laid the foundation for 'Modern Woman'. This foundation is getting stronger and stronger day by day, observant in every field. Creating robust backing for "Her" to fly high without any limitations.

Reinforcement of women empowerment through legal folio

Legal folio provides formal design for guaranteeing and enforcing equality for women. In India, this folio has gone rugged due to several layers of Indian legislations, and precedents. Provisions of Constitution, various legislations and judicial work through landmark judgements have considerably contributed in gender neutral interpretation of laws and effective enforcement of the same.

Constitution of India, adopted on 26th January, 1950 provides for principle of gender equality and endorses progressive treatment for women.

Article 14 of the Constitution of India- (Right to Equality) states –

"The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India."¹

As stated under Article 14 of the Constitution of India, 1950, the foundational law of the land mandates to treat everyone equally. Use of the term "Person" makes provision itself gender neutral and assures equal treatment for all women irrespective of their nationality. If "She" is standing on the land called India, is mandated to be treated equally under this

¹ The Constitution of India, 1950

Article by everyone in every given situation, non-adherence to which will attract constitutional sanctions.

Article 15 (1) of the Constitution of India – “*The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.*”²

Article 15 as well is the part of chunk of rights termed as “right to equality”. Under Article 14 as Constitution is assuring equal right for women, under article 15 constitution mandates to not to discriminate on the basis of sex as well.

Furthered under Article 15 (3), Constitution empowers the State to make laws and craft special provisions for Women and Children for their development. It can be read as under;

Article 15 (3) “*Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.*”³

Constitution makers did not stop only by stating that opportunities must be provided to women equally. But they rather compelled all to give women equal opportunity in the public employment as well. Adding the tools for “Her” empowerment is this way under Fundamental Rights is achieved by our Constitution Framers.

Article 16. (1) “*There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. (2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State.”*⁴

It shows that our framers of the Constitution of India were well aware of the reality that, unless the movements of women empowerment are equipped with the robust mechanism of law, all the promises shared during these movements will never see the light of day. Empowering women can not be sustainably done without pledging it through vigorous legal support.

Not only in Constitution of India’s Part III, under Fundamental Right’s Chapter we see the fulfilment of this, but also under Part IV of the Constitution of India, i.e. Directive Principles of State Policy, we see continuation of promise.

Articles 39, 42, 51A (e) continues the thought of equality of women by providing them opportunity in all wakes of life. These Articles suggests to the States that, they can make their own State Laws or Union too is expected to endeavour in securing equal right of livelihood for women, even in terms of getting resources, ownership related issues, women are expected to be protected by state. In terms of getting a chance of being part of economic development of the nation, women

are expected to be given equal treatment by the virtue of many legislations to be made in concerning areas. This implies the duty of the State Legislature and Union Legislature to identify various areas where women would need legal support and provide that support substantially and sustainably. This gives way for various other laws like Labour Law, Company Law, etc. where under equal opportunities for “her” are created, endorsed and guaranteed.

This can be understood easily from the Vishaka Judgement.

Vishaka and Ors. Vs. State of Rajasthan and Ors. (AIR 1997 SC 3011)⁵

In 1992, Bhanwari Devi, a grassroots worker in Rajasthan, was gang-raped for intervening in a child marriage. Her case laid to the landmark *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* judgment (1997), which laid down guidelines for preventing sexual harassment at the workplace. This mandated formation of ICC – Internal Complaints Committee at workplace, laid to formation of POSH Act, 2013 and so shift in corporate accountability.

This gesture of the Government paved way for many such legal and policy changes aiming towards protection of women’s rights and assured “her” appropriate representation in various commercial activities as well. One such important change is evident through Company Law mandate. Under the Companies Act, 2013 it is compulsory to appoint at least one woman director on board of directors. This ensured “her” representation, though critic says it’s just titular, at least it paved the way for “her” appointments at certain important positions.

So also under various other labour and employment laws, efforts can be seen to promote, protect and propagate women’s participation in workforce.

For example: Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 amended the provisions and extended Maternity leave for “her” to 26 weeks and also ensures that “her” role will not be curtailed in “her” absence and to her disadvantage. Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 now can be read through provisions of Code on Wages, 2019 assures ‘equal pay for equal work’. Factories Act; Shops and Establishments Act guarantees safety and welfare provisions.⁶

Despite these efforts taken by government and other agencies, civil society members show contrast situations prevailing in society leading to wage gap, occupational segregation, and exploitation mainly in informal sector.

All these efforts are aimed at equal opportunities, representation and commissioning “her” in all possible roles, some obstacles still need better handling. When provisions are robust often it is observed that execution is weak

² The Constitution of India, 1950

³ The Constitution of India, 1950

⁴ The Constitution of India, 1950

⁵https://clpr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/18.-Vishaka_and_Ors_vs_State_of_Rajasthan_and_Ors_13080519s970198COM805691.pdf

⁶ Biswas, S. (2021). She innovates: Inheritance law reform, female ownership, and innovation in India. arXiv. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2109.09515>

attributing futile attempt at law. This becomes more difficult when situation accrues out of informal sector. Judicial delays adds more to the plight. Courage and patience degrades with every day passing by undecided. Stereotyping women in certain roles only further dilutes the progressive intent. Thus, it's extremely important that the, robust legal framework must exist but it should be assisted by social acceptance and institutional will to ultimately translate it into real empowerment of women.

Nexus between business and women empowerment

Business and economic participation provide women with freedom to decide for herself, financial independence and bargaining power, and respect in family. Yet, women's representation remains very less: according to World Bank data, female labour force participation in India is below 25%. In boardrooms, women hold only around 17% of director positions in NSE-listed companies (2024).

Analysed closely we can enlist certain barriers they face. Out of all difficult barriers, most part is social barrier that women has to tackle. They are not only expected to contribute substantially monetarily when they work but also fulfil their role as wife, daughter, and daughter in law, mother simultaneously. This exhausts her physically, mentally leaving behind very less energy for herself to put in business or work. So generally she denies to handle demanding roles and often compromises with some lesser important role and so conclusively contributing very less in economy and so in her empowerment as well. Often this get worsened when her chosen field is portrayed to be male dominated one. That creates networking barriers for her and further stereotyping it for her even when she wants to grow and put in genuine efforts. Another prominent example is Indra Nooyi. A global business leader, is admired for her vision and determination. Before leading PepsiCo, she worked with companies like Coca-Cola and Motorola, showcasing her strategic skills. Her journey reflects women empowerment, breaking barriers in corporate leadership, and inspiring future generations to dream big, lead boldly, and achieve success.

Technology has brought about a wave of change in business. Technology and business together go hand-in-hand. It fortifies women empowerment by opening new paths in entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and leadership. Women now build startups, lead global corporations, and utilize e-commerce for financial independence and expand their business. Access to digital tools, online markets, and fintech bridges gender gaps, enabling women to succeed, inspire, and drive inclusive growth worldwide.

Sudha Murthy, a writer, philanthropist, and social worker, is also closely linked with technology as the co-founder of Infosys Foundation. She pursued mechanical engineering in those days when it was considered to be the course of boys only. She made a bold decision to take up mechanical engineering. Later she promoted computer literacy in rural schools, encouraged women in STEM, and supported digital libraries. Her work shows how technology can drive

education, equality, and change the society, empowering countless communities.

Taking into consideration all these barriers, Government is taking efforts to bring in female force on board through implementing various schemes and Yojanas like;⁷

Stand Up India - Stand-Up India Scheme facilitates bank loans between Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 Crore to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a Greenfield enterprise. It is specially crafted to promote and facilitate women entrepreneurs.

Mudra Yojana – likewise Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) provides loans upto 10 lakhs to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. The scheme has been classified under four categories as 'SHISHU', 'KISHORE', 'TARUN' and 'TARUN PLUS' to signify the stage of growth / development and funding needs of the beneficiary micro unit/ entrepreneur.

Launched a decade ago, The Mudra Yojana has approved more than 52 crore loans and disbursed more than 33 Lakh Crore Rupees, providing an opportunity for the youth, women, underprivileged and backward communities to become entrepreneurs. It has become more of a story of trust placed in the entrepreneurship potential of all those who were earlier undermined.⁸

Start Up India – The Startup India program empowers women entrepreneurs through access to funding, incubation, mentorship, and resources, fostering their success in various sectors.

Success of all these schemes can be observed through various examples such as; Falguni Nayar, founder of Nykaa, leveraged e-commerce to build a billion-dollar beauty business. She embodies how policy support, combined with entrepreneurial vision, can challenge male dominance in industries.⁹

In **SEWA** case study we can observe that – the Self Employed Women's Association in India is a registered trade union and movement that was initiated in 1972. SEWA's aim is to advance the rights of women workers in the informal economy through activities and programmes that contribute to their social and economic empowerment. Over the years the movement has grown phenomenally with a presence in 18 states across the India and a total membership of over 2.5 million women by 2023. It was possible as they employed information technology tools for empowering women members. These type of examples observed around are well explanatory to say that; incorporation of technology in business along with robust mechanism provided under law empowers the process of women empowerment effectively.¹⁰

The **POSH Act** ensures workplace safety for women, which can be assured easily when more women itself are hired in

⁷ <https://www.myscheme.gov.in/schemes/pmmy>

⁸ <https://financialservices.gov.in/beta/sites/default/files/2025-04/Decade-of-Mudra-Yojana-Cover-Story-by-NIS.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.ijfmr.com/papers/2024/2/15084.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.iied.org/22331g>

industry, further allowing them to frame women centric, women oriented policies in implementation and expansion of business in return allowing women to have more choices. Like letting them have option to work remotely in cases of need, balancing professional and domestic roles as well.

4. Conclusion

What we do understand based on this, that women empowerment is not a subject to be treated and understood in silos. Law shall provide a framework. Substantiating on rights, duties, and assuring various protections and opportunities. Once this stage is successfully accomplished, business can provide all inclusive platform for women entrepreneurs and ample employment opportunities to "her". Later this accreditation for women can be enhanced further by employing technological tools to enhance market access for "her", providing her better market and networking options through technological advancements and so making the effort of women empowerment more successful.

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