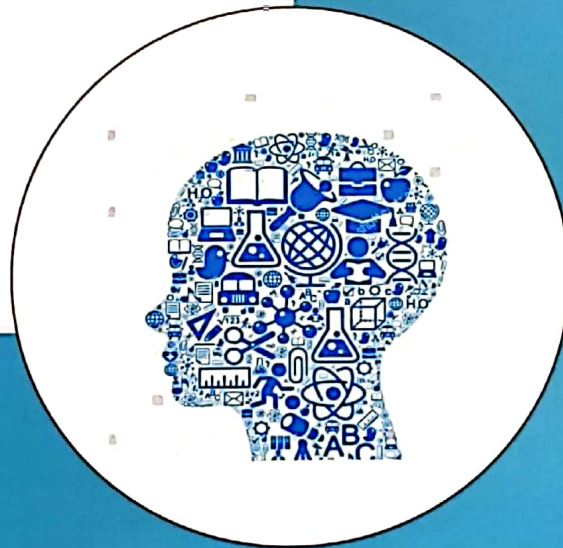


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**RETHINKING WOMEN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH THE
LENS OF THEIR EMPOWERMENT**

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Introduction:

Women's empowerment and mental health are two sides of the same coin. These two concepts are essential because they contribute significantly to the complete development of women. As such, this research paper sought to investigate and analyse women's empowerment and its relationship to the prevention of mental health problems in challenging situations. .

Empowerment of any segment of a society is a myth until that segment is granted legal equality. Empowerment cannot be dispensed in capsules to those deemed deserving. . It is not just a concept that could be defined with the help of some universally accepted parameters. It was proposed by women from the south as a counter-project to the integration concept for advancing women at the international women's conference in Nairobi in 1985. ¹ Empowerment means increasing the socio-economical political, educational, spiritual, and emotional strength of women or moving from enforced powerlessness to a position of powerfulness. It often involves developing confidence in them. Unequal treatment opportunities and discrimination based on gender hamper women's ability to lift themselves from powerlessness to power because it adversely affects the mental health of women.

Numerous studies and theories have identified a variety of factors and stages associated with female empowerment. They are social-political mental financial education; some research indicates that women's empowerment is strongly related to social norms regarding culture, women's role in society, and particularly religious culture. Several studies indicate that gender equality is one of the most effective strategies for women's empowerment and mental health improvement. Women's mental health is jeopardised when they face gender discrimination in the family and society, as well as unequal access to education. Discrimination against women is frequently justified by religion, tradition, and social norms and regulations. ²

Although we live in a secular state, religious influences have an effect on family and society, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Religion also has an effect on women's status in society. Women's status has fluctuated across India's various religions. She has been oppressed and subjugated, while also being revered as the deity of the home. From the Vedic period to the present day, her status and position have shifted with the passage of time.

In the Vedic period status of women was high and respectful and later on, it started to decline with the prevalence of child marriage, Sati system, Jauhar, polygamy, and pardha system. Hindu widows' life was more miserable. The rigidity of the caste system denied them the right to freedom and social mobility. widowed is to think that the Sati system is a better alternative than being a widow, and the Apart from the above practices, there were other bad practices such as Devadasi, Prostitutes, etc. These all-bad practices were made to follow by the women and not by men.

Women's status is supposed to deteriorate completely during the mediaeval period, which is referred to as the 'dark age' for them. During the Middle Ages, the term "Stridhana" took on enormous dimensions when used in conjunction with dowry. This contributed to female foeticide and infanticide in some ways, as it became a burden on the poor. The majority of the population came to view the birth of girls as a misfortune.

India is one of the few countries whose Constitution protects human rights. Civil and political rights are protected as Fundamental Rights and are enforceable in court. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are

¹ Siddiqi, F. E., & Ranganathan, S. (n.d.). *Women and Human Rights* (2010th ed.). New Delhi: Kanishka.

²https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323031695_Empowerment_of_women_and_mental_health_improvement_with_a_Preventive_approach

inherent in all human beings, and the government's primary responsibility is to safeguard and promote them.³

Not only unjust acts, but also unjust national and international structures violate human rights. The human rights of women are being violated in many fields of life. Indian society is structured according to patriarchal rule. Patriarchy, as the rule of males over females, is in itself a form of violence because it affects women's dignity and place in society⁴. The problem in the case of Indian women is that they lack a basic essence of dignity and identity. Dignity is intrinsically linked to a human being's identity as a person; when a woman lacks the right to exist as a person, dignity ceases to exist. The problem in the case of Indian women is that they lack a basic essence of identity and are supposed to survive as dependents of husbands' fathers and sons. Numerous instances exist in which women's dignity is violated. Crime against women begins from womb to tomb. In domestic violence where women are beaten, harassed, and attacked by their men they had been raped, molested, teased, and even there are dowry death cases. The women often fear social stigma and So-called family prestige, concern for children's futures, economic difficulties, and fear of divorce Even in caste and communal wars, women are made soft targets and subjected to physical and psychological violence. They are sexually assaulted, humiliated, harassed, and tortured, which has a negative impact on their mental health.

The laws were enacted to eradicate bad practices in society. Many efforts were made to improve the condition of women by great leaders like Justice Ranade's Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who was instrumental in the abolition of the Sati system, spoke out against child marriage, and fought for women's rights to inherit. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar started a campaign for widows' right to remarry and advocated for women's education. Maharaja S. Rao, the king of Baroda State, campaigned to end child marriages and polygamy, as well as to provide women the right to education and widows the opportunity to remarry.

Swami Vivekananda, Annie Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, and Swami Dayanand Saraswati Mahatma Phule, Savitribai Phule Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Tarabai Shinde, Pandita Ramabai, Dhondu Keshav Karave took the effort to uplift social, educational, economic and political rights of the women.

After India became independent, the Indian parliament made special provisions in the Constitution about women's rights. Our constitution gives fundamental rights to women as well as every citizen. Gender equality is a principle enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Not only does the constitution guarantee women's equality. However, it also empowers the state to implement positive discrimination measures. Apart from the constitution's provisions, certain other pieces of legislation have been enacted to address specific issues. The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, The protection of women from domestic violence Act 2005, The prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation & prevention) Act 1994, The Hindu widow Re-marriage Act 1956, The Hindu Succession Act 1956.

While all of the provisions in the Constitution and other enactments reflect the goal of gender justice, implementing them has proven difficult.

Mental disorders commonly seen in women are depression, anxiety, somatic complaints, and eating disorders. The various atrocities faced by women like sexual violence, domestic violence and issues of multiple roles, overwork fairly contribute to mental disorders they suffer from, resulting in poor mental health.⁵

There are numerous reasons for such behaviour toward women, but the most important is the male superiority complex and society's patriarchal system. We are all aware that women are viewed critically. Though, in order to eradicate these ill-treatment and discrimination against women, numerous constitutional and legal rights must be strictly enforced.⁶

³ (Vienna declaration and programmed of action)

⁴ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4066596>

⁵ [ojsadmin,+144.pdf](#)

⁶ <https://acadpubl.eu/hub/2018-120-5/2/167.pdf>

Because a mental health problem is an invisible one, individuals cannot feel or visualise its impact. In this condition, their physical strength deteriorates, mental stability diminishes so socio-economic and medical problems increase. On the other hand, as a result of their relative physical and psychological vulnerability, their cries for assistance are confined within four walls. Neither one can understand the impact which creates on the individual who is afflicted and his family members, society views them as a burden, not utilising their potential or making sufficient efforts to transform them back into productive members of society.

CONCLUSION: - The law is an instrument to bring harmony to march with social change. Law changes from place to place and time to time. If it does not change to the ever-changing society, then it would be an instrument of oppression or suppression in the context of women. In the modern-day welfare State, the law starts its application almost from the stage of the womb and ends in the tomb. Like law, medicine and psychiatric knowledge are the other tools to restore the disturbed mind to its original status. So, every citizen of India must care for women's empowerment with a positive lens.

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