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**Economic Independency and women Empowerment****Dr. Krishna Devi****Abstract**

Economic independency is a critical determinant of women empowerment, influencing every dimension of a woman's life—social, psychological, political, educational, and personal. Empowerment is a multidimensional process enabling women to control resources, make independent decisions, and participate fully in social and economic activities. Despite the progress made globally and within India, women still face systemic inequalities that hinder their economic autonomy.

This research paper explores in depth the conceptual foundations of women's economic empowerment, the pathways through which economic independency fosters empowerment, and the socio-economic barriers that impede progress. It also presents policy recommendations and strategies for achieving inclusive gender-sensitive development.

**Introduction**

Women empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities. Among these dimensions, economic empowerment stands out as the most tangible and measurable indicator of progress. Economic independency defined as a woman's ability to earn, control and manage financial resources-contributes directly to autonomy, confidence and improved life outcomes.

Women constitute nearly half the global population, yet their participation in the economy remains significantly lower than men. Traditional patriarchal structures combined with socio-cultural expectations restrict women's mobility, educational attainment and financial independence. Economic empowerment is often considered the most effective entry point for achieving overall empowerment because financial resources provide bargaining power, security and freedom.

The Modern global economy increasingly recognizes women as key of economic growth. International organizations such as the UN, World Bank, ILO and IMF emphasize gender equality as essential for sustainable development. Increasing women's participation in the workforce can significantly boost national GDP and improve social indicators such as literacy, health and poverty levels.

Economic Independency refers to a women's ability to:

- Access to income-generating opportunities.
- Control her own financial resources.
- Make independent financial decisions.
- Participate in financial planning and budgeting.
- Own & inherit property
- Access credit, technology, markets.
- Engage in entrepreneurial ventures

Economic independency is thus not only about earning but also about having control, choice and ownership. It enables women to break cycles of dependency and participate fully in societal development.

**Women Empowerment includes several dimensions:**

- Social empowerment – Freedom from discrimination and restrictive gender norms.
- Political Empowerment- Representation in governance, political participation, leadership roles in institutions.
- Economic Empowerment- financial independence and secure livelihood, managing income, asset ownership and market participation. Economic empowerment strengthens all other dimensions and accelerates progress in all others.

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- Educational empowerment- access to formal and higher education, skill development and digital and financial literacy.
- Personal or psychological empowerment: self-confidence, self-esteem and autonomy.

### **How Economic Independency leads to Women Empowerment**

Strengthened Household Decision-Making related to financial planning, children's education, household purchases, healthcare and nutrition access, family planning, investment in assets. Thus Economic contributions increase a woman's influence over decisions. Research demonstrates that families spend more on education and health when women control financial resources. This also shows that economically independent women have stronger bargaining power within families.

Women who have jobs or business are less vulnerable to Gender-Based violence such as domestic violence like physical abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse, and forced dependency on abusive partners. So Economic security provides exit options from harmful environments. Economically independent women act role models for younger generations.

Employment or Entrepreneurship enhances social status, woman's identity, and respect within family, sense of dignity, recognition kin society and active participation in community organizations. Economic success challenges patriarchal stereotypes and fosters gender equality. Economic Empowerment act as a tool against poverty. Women's incomes contribute significantly to household consumption, better living standards, reduction in hunger and malnutrition. For households below the poverty line, women's earnings are often transformative. Economic Empowerment increases political awareness, voting behavior, participation in local government and involvement in civil society groups. Economic resources provide access to information and network that fuel political agency.

Economic Empowerment contributes largely to National Development. Women's economic participation boosts GDP growth, labor productivity, Innovation and entrepreneurship, poverty reduction, countries with gender-inclusive economies should higher human development outcomes.

### **Barriers to Achieving Economic Independency**

- Cultural and Patriarchal Norms- Social expectations confine women to domestic roles, limiting mobility and economic participation. This also includes preference for male employment and prioritization of domestic responsibilities.
- Lack of Education and Skills- Limited access to quality education and vocational training hinders employability. This barrier also includes gender bias in schooling, lower participation in higher education and minimal representation in STEM.
- Limited Financial Inclusion- Many women lack bank accounts, collateral for loans and awareness of financial services. Women often lack property rights. This restriction entrepreneurship and financial planning

Workplace Discrimination and Safety Issues: Women often receive lower wages for similar work especially in informal sectors. So issues such as wage disparity, gender

disparity, harassment, limited promotion opportunities create hostile environments safety issues in public spaces and workplaces reduce women's willingness to work outside the home. Unsafe public transport and glass-ceiling barriers restrict opportunities for career advancement. Digital Divide-Lower digital literacy restricts access to online jobs, digital banking and E-Commerce opportunities.

### **Strategies and Recommendations for strengthening Economic Independency:**

To enhance women's economic independence, a variety of strategies and policies have been identified as effective across different contexts. These strategies not only aim to address the specific barriers women face but also seek to create an environment that supports their economic empowerment stakeholders, including governments, non-governmental organizations business and the broader community, play a crucial role in implementing these strategies.

Strengthening Educational Systems-Focus should be on compulsory secondary education for girls, STEM education, digital literacy, vocational training and increased scholarship and gender-sensitive curricula encourage women to pursue diverse education fields.

Expanding Employment opportunities- Flexible work arrangements, Home-based and gig economy jobs, safe workplace infrastructure, strict enforcement of anti harassment Enhancing Financial Inclusion-women friendly credit schemes, reduced collateral requirements, financial literacy programs, low-interest loans for women, microfinance programs and digital financial literacy.

Reducing unpaid care work- Affordable child care centres, elder care facilities, workplace flexibility, encouraging shared household responsibilities.

Encouraging women in leadership-Gender quotas in political and corporate sectors, leadership training programs.

Legal and Policy Reforms- Enacting and Enforcing laws that guarantee equal pay for equal work, protect against workplace harassment and ensure maternity and paternity leave are essential steps. Additionally, reforms should focus on improving women's access to financial services, property rights and inheritance laws to support their economic autonomy.

Socio-cultural change- Efforts to shift socio-cultural norms that limit women's economic participation are vital, Awareness campaigns, education programs and community engagement initiatives can challenge traditional gender roles and promote the value of women's economic independence.

### **Conclusion**

Economic independency is not just a financial condition— it is a transformative force that enhances women's social, psychological, and political empowerment. Empowered women contribute significantly to family welfare, community development, and national progress. Achieving economic empowerment requires a holistic approach involving educational reforms, financial inclusion, legal protection, and societal change. When women are economically independent, societies become more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable.

Economic independency is an essential catalyst for achieving complete women empowerment. When women

gain financial control, they achieve greater autonomy, better decision-making power, and increased societal influence. The multiple benefits include improved family health, higher educational achievements for children, poverty reduction, and enhanced national productivity.

However, significant barriers persist in the form of patriarchal norms, unequal pay, workplace discrimination, and limited access to resources. Overcoming these challenges requires a combination of robust policies, educational reforms, community awareness, and digital inclusion. Empowering women economically is not only a matter of justice but also a strategic investment in the nation's future.

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