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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to analyse the present status of Women Empowerment in India and highlights the Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment. Today the empowerment of women has become one among the most necessary issues of the 21st century. There are so many women, who are wordlessly bearing the harassment from their life partners and others because of the shortage of education, lack of legal awareness and lack of empowerment. Even though women work 24/7 to boost their kids and to keep up their families, they're not obtaining enough recognition for housework and home maintenance. As this work is unpaid, women who prefer to be home makers aren't considered as working persons in the Indian economy. Because of this, their self-worth tends to be low. However much women empowerment continues to be an illusion of reality. We have a tendency to observe in our day to day life how women become victimised by varied social evils. The study finds that women of the Republic of India are comparatively disempowered and that they enjoy somewhat lower rank than that of men in spite of the many efforts undertaken by the Government. It is found that acceptance of unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing within the society. The study concludes by an observation that access to Education, Employment and change in social structure are only the facultative factors to women empowerment. The sample size used in the research is 200 collected from the general public. The dependent variables are Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of the women empowerment, aspects important for women's empowerment, Factors that encourages and prohibits women's empowerment and the role of media. The main aim of the study is to understand the current situation of the women in the society and their progress as victims in all areas.

KEYWORDS

Women Empowerment, Education, Health, Socio-Economic Status, Crimes against women, Policy implications.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution is that Before India's independence, efforts were centered on advocating for basic rights such as women's education and the abolition of practices like child marriage and sati (widow burning). Pioneers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Jyotirao Phule laid the foundation for addressing gender inequalities. Post-Independence Era (1950s-1980s): After independence, the Indian

Constitution guaranteed equal rights and opportunities for women. Government policies focused on women's education and participation in politics. The establishment of the National Commission for Women in 1992 marked a significant step toward addressing women's issues systematically. The Government initiatives are Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP): Launched in 2015, this savings scheme encourages parents to save for their daughter's

higher education and marriage, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY): This maternity benefit scheme, launched in 2017, provides financial assistance to pregnant and lactating women to support their health and nutrition needs during pregnancy and childbirth. The factors affecting the topic are Socio-cultural Norms: Deep-rooted gender norms and cultural practices can limit women's ability to voice their concerns, especially in patriarchal societies where women's opinions are often given less weight, lack of Education and Awareness, Economic Dependence, Fear of Backlash: The current trends are Skill India Mission: While not exclusive to women, the Skill India Mission aims to provide skill training to millions of Indians, including women, to enhance their employability and income-generating abilities. Women Helpline (181): The national toll-free helpline continues to provide emergency assistance to women in distress and connects them to appropriate support services, One-Stop Centers (OSCs): OSCs continue to offer a range of support services to women affected by violence, including medical, legal, and psychological assistance. The aim of the study is to analyse about the issues and challenges of women empowerment in India.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the importance of women empowerment in India.
- To identify Hindrances in the Path of Women Empowerment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

H. Subrahmanyam (2011) compares women's education in India at the present and Past. Author highlighted that there has been smart progress in overall enrolment of women students in colleges. The term empower means to provide lawful power or authority to act. It is the method of acquiring some activities of women. (Leyenaar 2004) **M. Bhavani Sankara Rao (2011)** has highlighted that health of women members of SHG have definitely taken a turn to higher. It clearly shows that health of

women members discuss among themselves concerning health connected issues of different members and their children and create them responsive to various Government provisions specially meant for them. (Schwarz 2017) **Doepke M. Tertilt M. (2011)** does female empowerment Promote Economic Development? This study is an empirical analysis suggests that money in the hands of mothers benefits children. This study developed a series of non cooperative family negotiation models to know what kind of friction will create to the observed empirical relationship. (Hufad, Pramudia, and Hilmi 2017) **Duflo E. (2011)** Women's empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic analysis Cambridge The study argues that the inter relationships of the empowerment and Development are in all probability too weak to be independent and that continuous policy commitment to equality for its own sake may be required to create equality between men and women. (Khan 2018) **Sethuraman K. (2008)** The Role of Women's empowerment and force in child Growth and under nutrition in a tribal and Rural Community in South India. This analysis paper explores the link between Women's empowerment and domestic violence, maternal nutritional status and therefore the nutritional status and growth over six months in children aged 6 to 24 months in a very rural and tribal community. This longitudinal empirical study undertaken in rural state. India included tribal and rural subjects. (G. R. 2018) **Venkata Ravi and Venkatraman (2005)** focused on the results of SHG on women participation and exercising control over deciding both in family matters and in group activities. (P. R. and B. 2018) **(Women Empowerment 2006)** India is a very famous country known for its cultural heritage, traditions, civilization, religion and geographical features from the ancient time. On the other hand, it is also popular as a male chauvinistic nation. Women are given first priority in India however on the other hand they were badly treated in the family and society. (Sinha 2008) Women constitute half

power of the country so in order to make this country a fully powerful country, women empowerment is very necessary. It is empowering women to understand their rights to be independent in every area for their proper growth and development. **(Ranjan 2016)** Women are given a top place in India from the ancient time however they were not given empowerment to participate in all areas. They need to be strong, aware and alert every moment for their growth and development. **(Maiti 2016)** The term “Women Empowerment” refers to empowering women with education, employment, decision making, and better health in view of an equal and just society. Women Empowerment is a process to make women financially independent, educated and progressive, enjoying a good social status..

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method followed is empirical research. A convenience sampling is a sample where the respondents are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher and data was collected by a structured questionnaire. The samples were collected from general public, friends, relatives. Sample size is 200. The questionnaires consisted of demographic data and statements in Likert scale. The independent variables are gender, age, educational qualification, income. The dependent variables are Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of the women empowerment, aspects important for women’s empowerment, Factors that encourages and prohibits women’s empowerment and the role of media. All data was analysed by using SPSS.

ANALYSIS

LEGEND

Figure 1

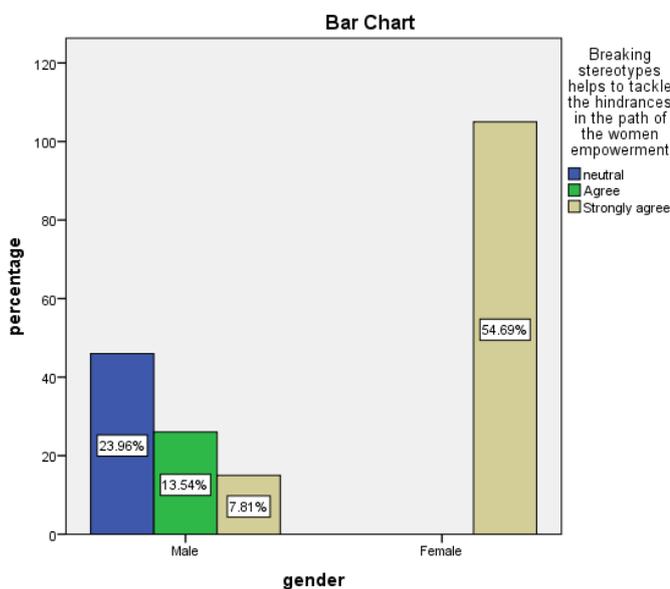


Figure 1 shows that agreeability on Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of women empowerment with gender.

Figure 2

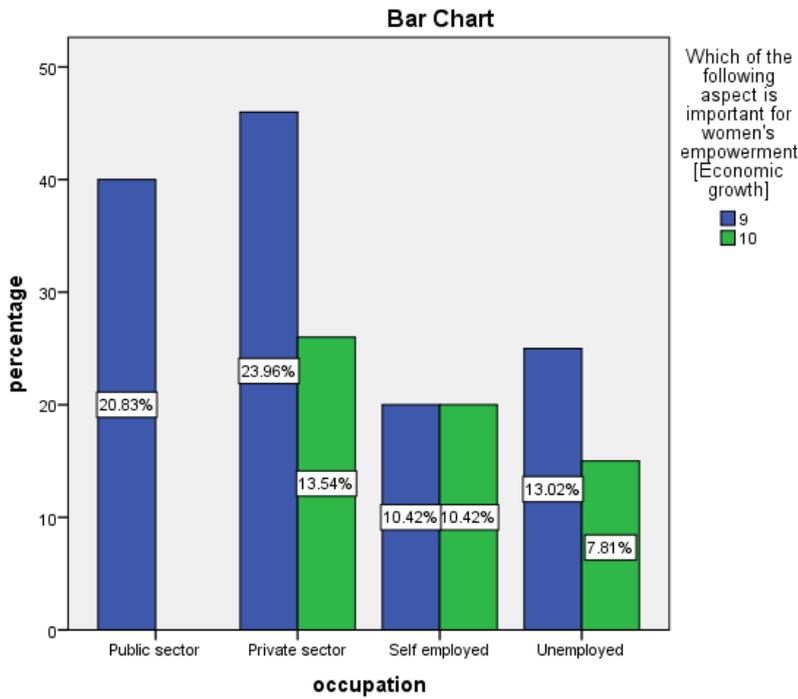


Figure 2 shows that Economic Growth is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to occupation.

Figure 3

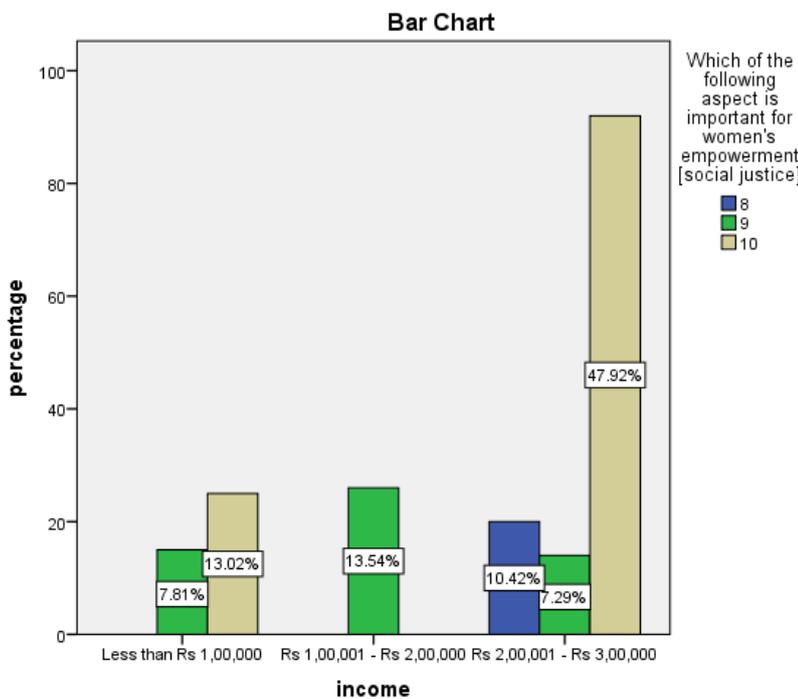


Figure 3 shows that Social Justice is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to income.

Figure 4

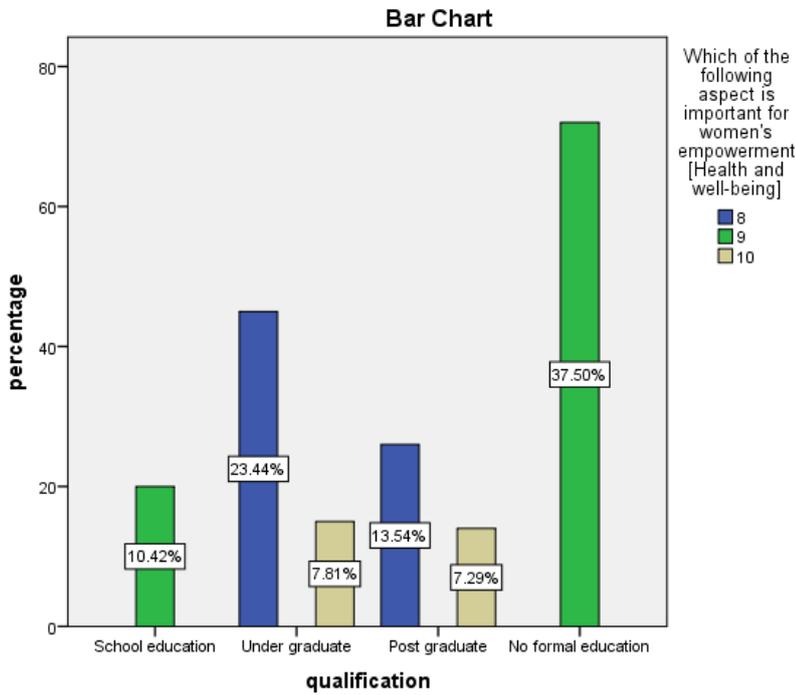


Figure 4 shows that Health and Well-being is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to educational qualification.

Figure 5

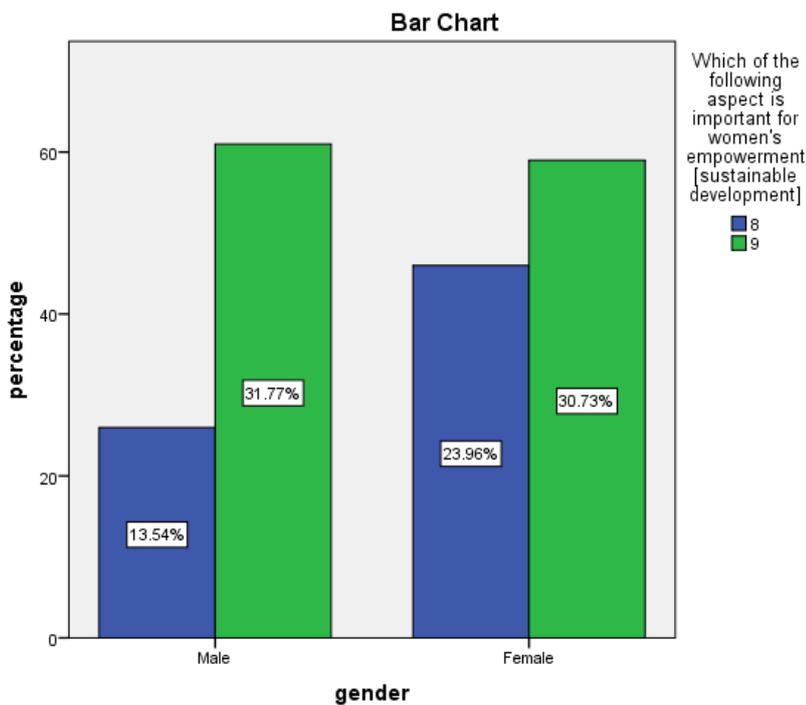


Figure 5 shows that Sustainable Development is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to gender.

Figure 6

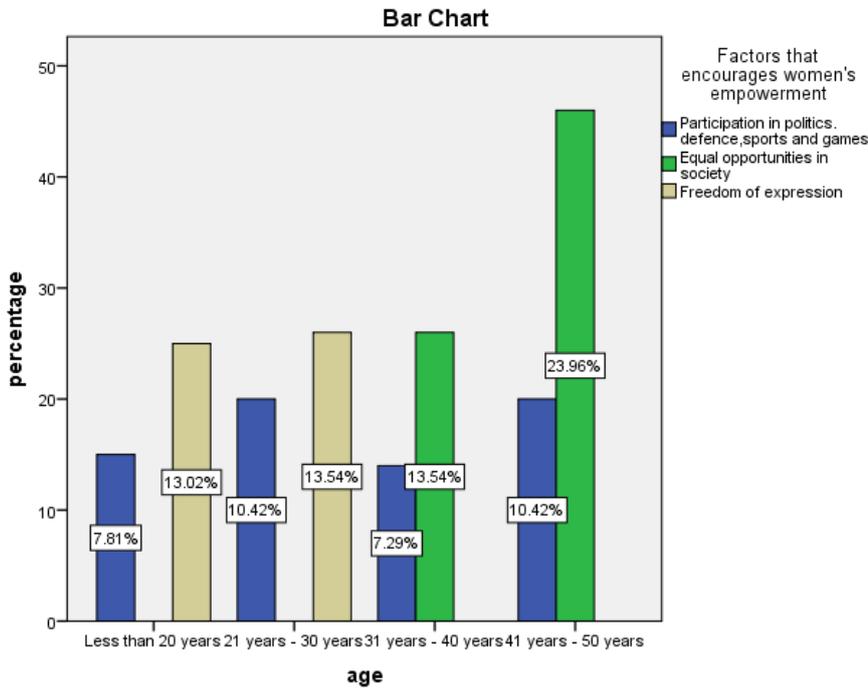


Figure 6 shows that Factors that encourages women’s empowerment with age.

Figure 7

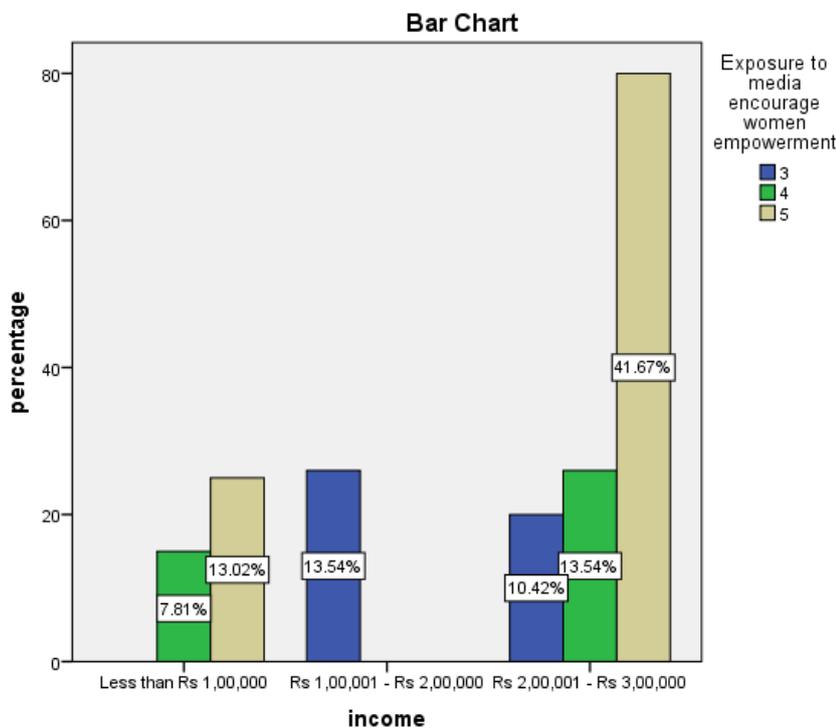


Figure 7 shows that Exposure to media encourages women empowerment with income.

Figure 8

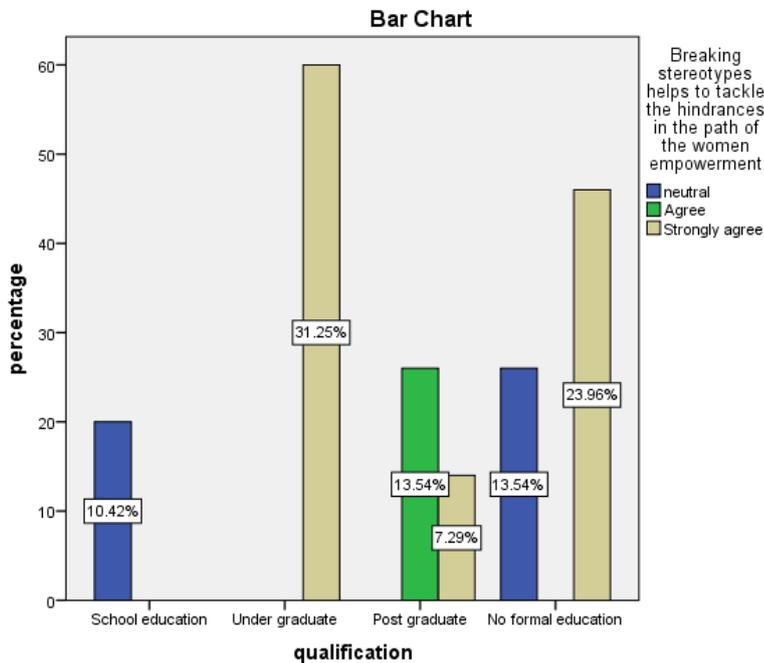


Figure 8 shows that agreeability on Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of the women empowerment with qualification.

RESULTS

Figure 1 results that females of 54.69% and males of 7.81% strongly agree that Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of women empowerment. Males of 23.96% stated neutral that Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of women empowerment. Figure 2 results that respondents of private sector of 23.97% and public sector of 20.83% rates 9 out of 10 stating Economic Growth is the important aspect for women empowerment and self employed 10.42% followed by unemployed 7.81% rated 10 out of 10 stating Economic Growth is the important aspect for women empowerment. Figure 3 results that respondents from the income category of Rs2,00,000-Rs 3,00,000 of 47.92% and respondents from less than Rs 1,00,000 of 13.02% rated 10 out of 10 stating that Social Justice is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to income. Figure 4 results that respondents of no formal education 37.50% and school education 10.42% rated 9 out of 10 stating that Health and Well-being is the important aspect

for women empowerment with respect to educational qualification. Figure 5 results that male of 31.77% and females of 30.73% stated maximum as Sustainable Development is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to gender. Figure 6 results that respondents of 41 years - 50 years of 23.96% and 31 years - 40 years of 13.54% stated Equal Opportunities in Society and 21 years - 30 years of 13.54% stated that freedom of expression as the Factors that encourages women's empowerment with age. Figure 7 results that respondents from income of Rs 2,00,001-Rs 3,00,000 of 41.67% and 13.02% of respondents from less than Rs 1,00,000 stated 5 out of 5 stating Exposure to media encourages women empowerment with income. Figure 8 results that undergraduates if 31.25% strongly agree that Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of the women empowerment with qualification.

DISCUSSIONS

Figure 1 results that females of 54.69% and males of 7.81% strongly agree that Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in

the path of women empowerment. Males of 23.96% stated neutral that Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of women empowerment. A substantial 54.69% of females strongly agree that breaking stereotypes is an effective way to address obstacles to women's empowerment. This suggests that many women recognize the importance of challenging traditional gender roles and expectations. **Figure 2** results that respondents of private sector of 23.97% and public sector of 20.83% rates 9 out of 10 stating Economic Growth is the important aspect for women empowerment and self employed 10.42% followed by unemployed 7.81% rated 10 out of 10 stating Economic Growth is the important aspect for women empowerment. Among self-employed respondents, 10.42% rated "Economic Growth" with a score of 10 out of 10, signifying a strong belief in the significance of economic empowerment for women. **Figure 3** results that respondents from the income category of Rs2,00,000-Rs 3,00,000 of 47.92% and respondents from less than Rs 1,00,000 of 13.02% rated 10 out of 10 stating that Social Justice is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to income. In contrast, 13.02% of respondents from the income category of less than Rs1,00,000 also rated "Social Justice" with a score of 10 out of 10, indicating that even individuals with lower incomes prioritize social justice as a key factor in women's empowerment. **Figure 4** results that respondents of no formal education 37.50% and school education 10.42% rated 9 out of 10 stating that Health and Well-being is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to educational qualification. 10.42% of respondents with school education rated "Health and Well-being" with a score of 9 out of 10. This indicates that even among those with some level of formal education, there is a belief in the importance of women's health and well-being in the context of empowerment. **Figure 5** results that male of 31.77% and females of 30.73% stated maximum as Sustainable Development

is the important aspect for women empowerment with respect to gender. 31.77% of male respondents rated "Sustainable Development" with the highest score, indicating that a significant portion of male respondents considers sustainable development as a crucial aspect of women's empowerment. **Figure 6** results that respondents of 41 years - 50 years of 23.96% and 31 years - 40 years of 13.54% stated Equal Opportunities in Society and 21 years - 30 years of 13.54% stated that freedom of expression as the Factors that encourages women's empowerment with age. Respondents aged 31-40 years indicated that 13.54% of them consider "Equal Opportunities in Society" as a factor that encourages women's empowerment. This aligns with the belief that equal opportunities play a pivotal role in empowering women. **Figure 7** results that respondents from income of Rs 2,00,001-Rs 3,00,000 of 41.67% and 13.02% of respondents from less than Rs 1,00,000 stated 5 out of 5 stating Exposure to media encourages women empowerment with income. 13.02% of respondents from the income category of less than Rs 1,00,000 also rated "Exposure to Media" with the highest score of 5 out of 5. This indicates that even among individuals with lower incomes, there is a recognition of the positive influence of media exposure on women's empowerment. **Figure 8** results that undergraduates if 31.25% strongly agree that Breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of the women empowerment with qualification. This suggests that a significant portion of undergraduate students recognizes the importance of challenging traditional gender norms and stereotypes in promoting women's empowerment.

SUGGESTIONS

- Promote and ensure access to quality education for girls, including scholarships and incentives to keep them in school.

- Implement gender-sensitive curricula to challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality from an early age.
- Launch awareness campaigns to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes.
- Conduct workshops and training programs on gender sensitivity for teachers, community leaders, and government officials.
- Facilitate access to credit and financial services for women entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSION

The major findings of the study are respondents strongly agree that breaking stereotypes helps to tackle the hindrances in the path of women empowerment, economic growth, gender equality and the social justice are the important aspect for women empowerment, equal opportunities and participation in politics, defence, sports and games are the factors encourages women empowerment, Patriarchal Attitudes and Traditional Gender Roles major factors that prohibits women empowerment, proved Exposure to media encourages women empowerment. Despite progress, gender inequality remains a pervasive issue in India, affecting women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual harassment, remains a significant challenge. Legal reforms and awareness campaigns are necessary to combat this issue. Women in India often face barriers in accessing employment, equal pay, and leadership roles. Addressing these disparities is vital for women's economic empowerment.

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