

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LEGAL AWARENESS: AN
EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF YOUNG INDIAN WOMEN**

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ABSTRACT

Legal literacy is a requirement for preventing violence against women. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act-2005 and other laws aimed at empowering women was first introduced in India. Whether women are aware of the law is crucial, and every national news story regarding domestic and workplace abuse against women is incorporated into them. While the Government of India has passed several regulations to support and safeguard women against violence, these laws remain ineffective since the nation's female population lacks an understanding of them. The current study examined the amount of legal knowledge among women of various occupations, levels of education, and income, as well as how it affected their day-to-day lives about violence. The results strongly correlate with education, earnings, professional activity, and legal knowledge. Also, it was discovered that legal expertise and victimization of inversely connected to women.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Legal Rights, Legal Knowledge, Domestic Violence

INTRODUCTION

The unpleasant reality is that women have historically suffered mistreatment in every society, and India is no exception. Ironically, those crimes against women are done in all spheres of life in our nation, where they are venerated as Shakti. She is treated like a commodity or an enslaved person. While not stripped of her pride and dignity outside of her home, she nevertheless endures mistreatment and other atrocities inside those same walls. They are seen as male sexual objects for the sake of childbearing. They are among society's true underdogs. They experience

discrimination on two levels: first, because of their gender, and second, because of their extreme poverty.

Dijkstra and Hanmer (2000) said that women empowerment refers to empowering women to make decisions about their lives and careers and ensuring their equality in all spheres, including personal, social, economic, political, and legal rights. Women work side by side with men in today's workplace because of women's empowerment. A woman also balances her family, house, and career responsibilities. With fantastic simplicity and complexity, they are juggling several duties at home as a mother, daughter, sister, and wife and at work as professionals. These days, crimes against women are limited to the Vedas and Puranas, which are getting worse daily. Women's empowerment is a contentious topic throughout India, and India is no exception. Figure 1 shows various aspects that empowers the legal awareness:



Figure 1 Women Empowerment Aspects through Legal Awareness

The standing of women has changed significantly in recent years, both positively and negatively (Schüler, 2006). The Indian government has been working continuously to translate all rights,

obligations, and safety from a de jure to a de facto status, deriving strength from the constitutional pledges. It results in an increase in internal capability, a boost in self-assurance, and an internal alteration of consciousness that makes it possible to overcome obstacles (Nilesh & Gajjar, 2017). This viewpoint focuses primarily on two significant factors. First, it is a power to accomplish objectives but not a power over people. Second, empowerment is more applicable to those who lack authority, regardless of gender, group of people, class, or caste. Even though self-determination is not specific to women, it is unique because it cuts across all castes, classes, and even within houses and families. Women lack financial resources and are reliant on men to make a life. She had to perform all housekeeping duties, which were not acknowledged or compensated, as women's employment is frequently restricted to the domestic sector. Many women are entering the workforce today, but they must shoulder a double burden: first, they must perform their job duties, and second, they must perform all household duties. In addition, they are the last to be hired and the first to be fired because they are viewed as being less productive than their male counterparts (Haque et al., 2011). Her standing has generally been low and unrecognized in the family and society. So, women's empowerment consists solely of reorganizing women's fundamental rights, fostering an atmosphere where they are treated equally to men, and increasing people's capacity to make strategic life decisions in situations where such capacity was previously denied to them.

LITERATURE OF REVIEW

Heaton et al. (2005) examined that the consensus on terminology and research methods is given the gravity of violence against women and domestic abuse as a violation of human rights and public health concerns. Women's safety and health are in danger. For laws and policies to be effective, they must be supported by grounded research, a compelling and trustworthy database that is context-specific, comparable nationally and internationally, and informed by an epistemic framework that takes gender into account.

The prevalence of violence against women is a global issue rooted in unequal power distribution between men and women. As a result, women frequently experience severe physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse. This understanding must be reflected in laws and policies.

Chaudhary et al. (2012) found that women continue to battle nationwide for the rights to freedom, equality, and dignity guaranteed by the constitution. Improving a woman's social, financial, political, religious, and mental state is primarily involved in empowering women, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds. From both a national and global viewpoint, this article discusses various women's difficulties, challenges, and related answers using legislative provisions and judicial approaches. Primarily focusing on women's rights and how the legislation works in this area, the book will be relevant to a broad readership. It will be a reliable source of knowledge that will pave the way for more in-depth study in this area.

Isran&Isran (2012)said that the current study aimed to evaluate the dynamic impact of legal awareness on women's empowerment by controlling the two demographic factors that have been the subject of substantial research (education and age). Legal education could be a catalyst for accelerating the empowerment of women. The findings also suggest that general education programs and policies to increase women's legal awareness of their rights will empower them in various spheres of life and help advance the economy.

Khan & Maan (2008) found that the Discrimination against Indian women has been and continues to be experienced in silence. Their courage and nobility are self-sacrifice and self-denial, yet they have experienced all injustices, indignities, inequality, and prejudice. It is understood that societal attitudes and institutional changes cannot happen quickly despite constitutional protections and robust legal backing for women's rights. Nevertheless, it is imperative to quicken this change process via conscious and prepared efforts to ensure that the poisonous societal ill of gender disparity is buried far beneath the earth. Black-and-white laws are insufficient to stop evil. The current situation calls for a communal consciousness awakening. Making women more independent in every way—from their minds and thoughts to their rights and decisions—includes removing them from all social and familial constraints. Also, it will bring about equality for men and women in all spheres of society. Women must be given more influence if the family, community, and country are to have a successful future. Men still have to travel a long way to be treated equally in society with women. It is necessary to improve women's social, economic, educational, and social position in addition to passing several laws and regulations.

Moni and Uddin (2004) said that In the total sense of the word, entrepreneurship primarily refers to the establishment of a setting where they can claim and obtain their legal, equal, and opportunity-based standing as citizens, where they can make free choices regarding their personal lives, and where they can be expected to treat as true equals in society. In the context of women's empowerment, a relatively straightforward approach is proposed in this paper, with particular reference to "Women & Law." This essay suggests a novel approach to the practice of law that would assist women in formulating policies to eradicate violence against women, reduce feminized poverty, and advance education and prevention. The germ of education for learner empowerment has been sown, and that much is evident. There are numerous issues. A better knowledge of these problems will enhance the program's effectiveness, ultimately supporting the promotion of female students as "empowered" members of society.

Sultan & Bould(2004) revealed that there is a pressing need to raise awareness of the rights, government services, and programs for improving status that are available specifically for women in rural areas. The time has come for women to be aware of their rights and watchful. India's future and present both belong to its women. In the modern world of the twenty-first century, women have excelled in every field and enjoy a higher quality of life; they are in no way inferior to males. Women have a great history in India, having held positions as President, Governor, and Prime Minister. Today, women can become doctors, lawyers, and prominent government officials.

Roy & Niranjana (2004) found that in order to empower women, one must first increase their spiritual, political, social, educational, gender, and economic strength. In India, a number of factors, such as physical location (urban vs. rural), educational attainment, social standing (caste and class), and age, have a significant impact on how empowered women are. There are national, state, and local (Panchayat) policies on women's empowerment in several fields, including health, education, economic opportunity, gender-based violence, and political engagement.

Tareque et al (2007) revealed that while discussing the current situation of women in India, a number of indicators of women's empowerment are examined using information from a number of sources. The indicators of household decision-making by women, financial independence, freedom of mobility, acceptance of unequal gender roles, media exposure, access to education, and domestic violence experiences by women, among others, are given the most weight.

The position of Indian women is generally lower than that of men, and they are generally less empowered. Despite all of the efforts made by the government and NGOs, the situation is not satisfactory right now. The process of empowerment cannot be aided by merely having access to jobs and education. They are the instruments or enabling elements that enable the process to proceed more quickly. Yet, mindset has a bigger role in achieving this goal. Without a change in attitude toward the acceptance of uneven gender roles by society and even women themselves, women will not be able to make use of the opportunities made available to them by constitutional provisions, laws, etc.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of an individual's position or class, marriage, dowry, and divorce issues are widespread throughout all cultures in India. Even among highly educated individuals, those who hold respectable occupations, are wealthy, and those who own adequate real estate and assets, these variables of marriage, dowry, and divorce occasionally occur. These issues are typically brought on by greed, desire, and rage. On the other side, rural masses, weaker portions of the community, and socioeconomically disadvantaged elements of the society typically believe in inter-caste weddings since they are poor and lack resources and possessions, and they want money and goods when they marry off their kids.

It can be said that maintaining peace, friendship, and harmony between spouses will be made easier via the application of education, awareness, information, and knowledge as well as the establishment of norms, regulations, and policies both in the public sphere and within the home. Relationship issues do occasionally arise between spouses, but whether highly educated or not, everyone should learn to solve their issues peacefully, be understandable, rational, and logical in their thinking, practice effective communication, and free their opinions from feelings of rage, greed, and desire.

Objective of the Study:

- To explore the various facets of empowerment of young Indian women as a results of legal awareness

Methodology

The study was based on the survey of young Indian women. Data were collected from 168 young women professionals. Structure questionnaire was used to capture responses. Mean and bar diagram were used to analyze and present the data.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

SL. No.	Item	Mean Value
1	Legal awareness boosts the confidence	4.33
2	Legal awareness makes young women comfortable at workplace	4.02
3	Legal awareness enables us to avoid any kind of unreasonable treatment with us	4.19
4	Legal awareness help us deal with bad rituals / customs of the society	4.08
5	Legal awareness Equal rights as men in the society	3.83
6	Legal awareness makes us independent	3.99
7	Legal awareness will make us better parents	3.70

Table 1 and Figure 1 shows how legal awareness gives benefits to the young women. The most important benefits is that Legal awareness boosts the confidence (4.33), followed by, Legal awareness enables us to avoid any kind of unreasonable treatment with us (4.19) Legal awareness help us deal with bad rituals / customs of the society (4.08), Legal awareness makes young women comfortable at workplace (4.02), Legal awareness Equal rights as men in the society (3.83), Legal awareness makes us independent (3.99) and Legal awareness will make us better parents (3.70).

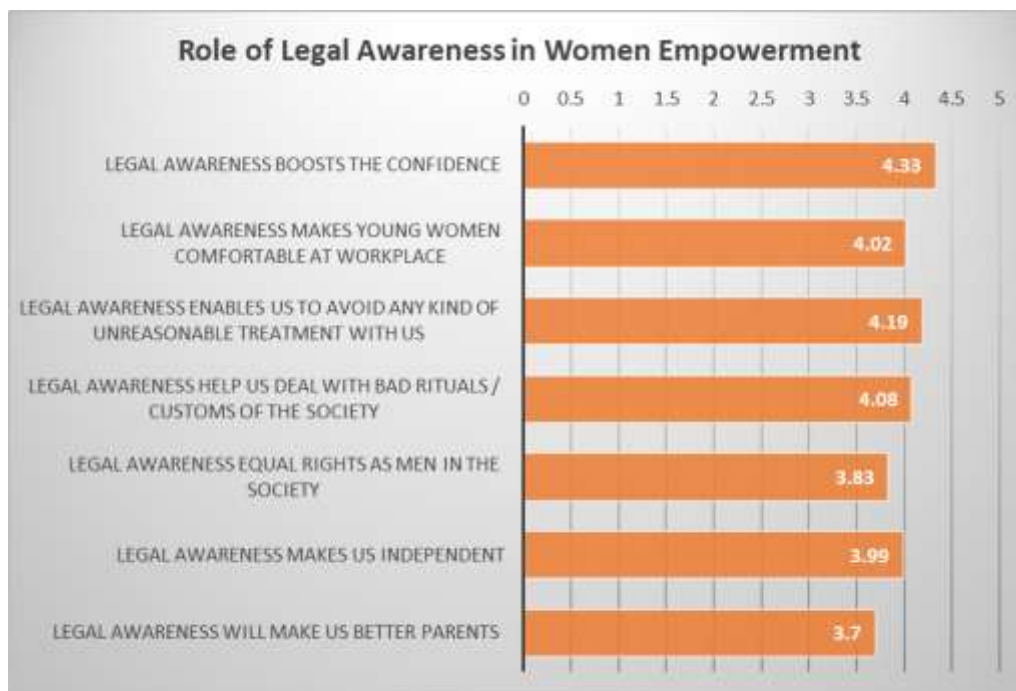


Figure 1 Role of Legal Awareness in Women Empowerment

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