

# Indian Journal of Modern Research and Reviews

This Journal is a member of the '*Committee on Publication Ethics*'

Online ISSN:2584-184X



## *Research Article*

## Vikshit Bharat – 2047- with Special Emphasize on Women’s Empowerment

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19705958>

### Abstract

In complex ways, Bihar stands out in India as a distinctive case because of its demographic intensity, which intersects with ecological vulnerability. Because of the pressure of the economy on agriculture, a growing population and a less industrial base, the stress on land, water, and forest resources is facing an immense load. This study examines how demographic expansion influences environmental conditions in Bihar and how environmental degradation, in turn, shapes patterns of livelihood insecurity and regional imbalance.

Based on the reports of census, economic surveys, environmental assessments, the landholding patterns, extraction of groundwater, forest reserves, and urbanisation analysis shows changes in these areas. Only population increase alone is not responsible, but the evidences say that it has broader structural constraints, such as less technological awareness, poverty, and no control over environmental governance. Rural areas are facing many issues like shrinking landholdings, aggressive cultivation, which reduces soil resilience, whereas in urban areas lack of infrastructure planning has contributed to pollution growth and results in the failure of waste management.

The paper argues that sustainable development in Bihar cannot rely solely on population control measures. Instead, a balanced strategy combining demographic stabilisation, resource-efficient agricultural practices, environmental regulation, and community-level awareness is essential. The population–environment relationship in Bihar must therefore be understood as mutually reinforcing rather than unidirectional.

### Manuscript Information

- **ISSN No:** 2584-184X
- **Received:** 01-03-2026
- **Accepted:** 27-03-2026
- **Published:** 23-04-2026
- **MRR:**4(SP1); 2026: 121-127
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- **Plagiarism Checked:** Yes
- **Peer Review Process:** Yes

### How to Cite this Article

Roy K. Vikshit Bharat – 2047- with Special Emphasize on Women’s Empowerment. Indian J Mod Res Rev. 2026;4(SP1): 121-127.

### Access this Article Online



[www.mrrjournal.in](http://www.mrrjournal.in)

**KEYWORDS:** Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, Natural Resource Pressure, Agricultural Land Fragmentation Sustainable Development in Bihar.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

"Viksit Bharat," or "Developed India," is a comprehensive vision for the nation's growth, aspiring to achieve comprehensive development across economic, social, and cultural dimensions. This vision, championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, extends beyond a mere catchphrase, serving as a compass for India during its "Amrit Kaal" or golden period. A key objective of Viksit Bharat is to enable every citizen to participate in the economy, fostering a strong, inclusive economy with abundant job and entrepreneurial opportunities. This includes implementing policies to encourage investment, advance economic growth, and foster innovation. Initiatives such as "Made in India," "Digital India," and "Startup India" demonstrate the government's commitment to creating an environment favourable for business expansion and employment generation, aiming to lift millions out of poverty and realize the nation's full economic potential.

Women empowerment in India is one of the principal terms for society's overall development. There is nothing erroneous in participating in the development of society. In the world of corporates, women are playing numerous roles in meadows such as medical, engineering, and so on. Apart from taking part in the sphere of technology, they are energetically partaking in security services such as police, navy, military, etc. All these before-mentioned services are taking the community to another level. Over the preceding decades, there has been a uniform increase in women's empowerment. Women must possess self-worth, confidence, and freedom to choose their needs and requirements. Classifying the people based on gender is unreasonable, and it has no worth. Still, women are paid less, expected to cook, and restricted by their family members. To overcome these situations and to have an independent role in society, women's empowerment is needed. Empowering women is the fundamental right of women. They can have equal rights to participate in education, society, economics, and politics. They are allowed to have higher education and treated in the way like men. In recent times, everyone is pointing on the empowerment of women. It is right to say that women's empowerment has become the necessity of the time. Women should possess liberty, faith, and self-worth to opt for their needs and demands. Discrimination based on gender is useless and is having zero worth by looking at the growth of women in the last few decades. Women are paid less and are treated as a cook and slave in families, and their real potential fails to get highlighted. Women empowerment in India is required to overcome situations of such types and to provide them with their independent role in Indian society. Empowering women is a necessary right of women. They should have proportional rights to contribute to society, economics, education, and politics. They are approved to gain higher education and receive a similar treatment as men are receiving. In this article, you will know about the importance of women's empowerment in the light of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developing India) concept. A crucial aspect of Viksit Bharat is gender equality. It is not just a slogan but a fundamental principle underpinning the holistic

development of the nation. The empowerment of women and the elimination of gender-based discrimination are pivotal to realizing the full potential of India's vision. Despite advancements, India faces entrenched challenges, including structural obstacles and societal norms that perpetuate disparities between genders in academic achievement and workforce contribution. Empowering women is considered vital for Viksit Bharat 2047, not only from a moral standpoint but also as a strategic imperative for sustainable development and prosperity. Prioritizing women's empowerment is seen to help India get closer to its 2047 aim of becoming an enriched and just democracy.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the transformative impact of the 'Viksit Bharat' vision on women across various socio-economic and political dimensions.
2. To meticulously identify and categorize the contemporary challenges hindering women's empowerment in India at individual, organizational, and industry levels.
3. To propose actionable and sustainable strategies aimed at overcoming these identified challenges, thereby facilitating comprehensive women's empowerment towards achieving Viksit Bharat 2047.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology involved content analysis of published research papers and governmental schemes to synthesize information on gender disparities, economic participation, social welfare, and policy reforms concerning women's roles in national development. The aim was to provide a holistic overview of the current landscape, drawing insights from diverse sources to support the challenges identified and the strategies proposed for women's empowerment in the context of Viksit Bharat 2047.

### Challenges towards Women's Empowerment

The foundation of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047 rests on four key pillars, collectively known as 'GYAN': Garib (the poor), Yuva (youth), Annadata (farmers), and Nari (women). The empowerment of women, as one of these essential components, is vital for achieving this national vision. However, India continues to grapple with deep-seated challenges, including systemic barriers and persistent societal norms, which contribute to significant gender disparities in educational attainment and workforce participation. Addressing these issues demands strategic interventions that focus on improving access to education, ensuring healthcare availability, fostering financial independence, and implementing comprehensive policy reforms to promote and uphold gender equality. Empowering women both politically and economically will yield considerable societal advantages, leading to increased productivity, stronger communities, and more inclusive governance. By prioritizing women's

empowerment, India can move closer to its 2047 goal of becoming a prosperous and equitable democracy.

Empowering women in the vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) is crucial, yet it faces significant hurdles. These challenges span individual, organizational, and industry levels, rooted in deeply ingrained societal norms, inadequate infrastructure, and systemic biases. Overcoming these barriers demands a multi-pronged approach involving policy reforms, cultural shifts, and targeted interventions to ensure equitable opportunities and full participation for women.

Women, in Viksit Bharat– As world moves fast, women in India are playing an important part in forming its development & future trajectory. Viksit Bharat aspires to foster an inclusive economy by promoting investment, growth and innovation through initiatives such as make in India, digital India, and startup India. India's commitment to significant international agreements, such as the Beijing's "Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)", the "convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW, 1979)", and the "agenda 2030 for sustainable development, forms the foundation of the country's policy framework on women's empowerment and equality. With, India announcing its own theme of "Nari Shakti se Viksit Bharat" the goal is to shift from women's development to women -led development.

#### Challenges at Individual-Level:

1. Traditional gender roles and societal expectations in India profoundly influence women's lives. These norms often prescribe women's roles within the family and society, thereby limiting their access to education, employment, and decision-making opportunities. Despite progress, deeply held cultural beliefs can perpetuate inequalities and restrict women's autonomy.
2. Access to education for girls in India continues to be an issue, especially in rural and marginalized communities. Factors such as poverty, social biases favouring boys' education, and safety concerns contribute to higher dropout rates among girls. Furthermore, barriers to higher education include insufficient infrastructure, a scarcity of female teachers as role models, and limited opportunities beyond primary schooling.
3. India grapples with various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry-related violence, and gender-based violence in public spaces. Despite legal frameworks like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and stringent laws against sexual offenses, enforcement remains inconsistent. Societal attitudes that blame victims or normalize violence contribute to underreporting and the perpetuation of these crimes.
4. Women in India encounter difficulties in accessing healthcare services due to geographical limitations, financial constraints, and cultural taboos. Gender-specific health issues, such as maternal mortality, reproductive health concerns, and diseases like breast cancer, often do

not receive adequate attention or resources. Cultural norms surrounding women's health can lead to delayed treatment and poorer health outcomes.

#### Challenges at Organizational Level:

1. The persistent gender pay gap in India is influenced by several factors. Women often earn less than their male counterparts for comparable work, a disparity driven by occupational segregation, discrimination, and biases in hiring and promotion practices. Additionally, societal expectations and traditional gender roles often channel women into lower-paying sectors or positions. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021 highlighted India's rank of 140th out of 156 countries in gender wage equality, with women earning, on average, 19% less than men in similar roles. This disparity underscores the need for greater pay transparency and equitable compensation practices.
2. Balancing career aspirations with family responsibilities presents a significant challenge for women in India. Traditional gender roles disproportionately burden women with caregiving, impacting their career progression and overall well-being. Limited access to affordable childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements further exacerbates these challenges. A study by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) indicated that women in urban India spend almost six hours daily on unpaid care work, compared to less than an hour for men. This disparity highlights the critical need for organizations to implement policies that support work-life balance, such as parental leave policies, flexible working hours, and remote work options.
3. Women in India frequently encounter a "glass ceiling," which significantly impedes their advancement to senior leadership roles. Factors such as unconscious bias, limited mentorship opportunities, and workplace cultures that favour male leadership styles contribute to this phenomenon. The representation of women in top leadership positions remains disproportionately low across various sectors. As of 2020, women held only 7.3% of board seats in NSE-listed companies in India, highlighting their stark underrepresentation in corporate governance. Addressing this requires targeted initiatives, including leadership development programs and policies promoting gender diversity in decision-making roles.
4. Despite legislative measures like the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, workplace harassment remains a pervasive issue in India. The implementation of these policies varies, with many organizations lacking effective reporting and redressal mechanisms. Cultural attitudes that normalize or minimize harassment further complicate efforts to create safe and inclusive work environments. A 2020 survey by the Indian National Bar Association revealed that nearly 70% of working women in India have experienced some

form of sexual harassment. This statistic emphasizes the urgent need for organizations to strengthen their policies and foster a culture of zero tolerance through awareness campaigns, training, and robust grievance mechanisms.

### Challenges at Industry Level

1. Women in India are often concentrated in sectors like education and healthcare, where they constitute a majority of the workforce. However, they are significantly underrepresented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields and manufacturing industries. This sectoral segregation perpetuates gender stereotypes and limits women's access to higher-paying and traditionally male-dominated sectors. As of 2020, women comprised only about 14% of the total STEM workforce in India, reflecting a substantial gender gap in these critical fields.
2. Women entrepreneurs in India face numerous barriers, including limited access to finance, professional networks, and mentorship opportunities. Despite government initiatives like the Stand-Up India and Mudra Yojana to promote women's entrepreneurship, accessing credit remains a challenge due to stringent collateral requirements and biased lending practices. A report by Bain & Company and Google revealed that women led startups in India receive only about 2% of the total venture capital funding. This stark disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve access to capital and support networks for women entrepreneurs, fostering an ecosystem conducive to their growth and success.
3. While India has implemented policies aimed at promoting gender diversity in workplaces, their effectiveness varies due to gaps in compliance and enforcement mechanisms. The Companies Act, 2013, mandates certain disclosures regarding gender diversity on corporate boards, yet the actual representation of women in leadership positions remains low. A study by Catalyst showed that women held only about 17% of board seats in NSE-listed companies in 2020. This indicates a need for stricter enforcement of existing regulations and proactive measures by companies to enhance gender diversity in decision-making roles. Strengthening policies and ensuring their effective implementation is crucial for creating inclusive work environments where women can thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Addressing these multi-faceted challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, employers, financial institutions, businesses, and civil society to dismantle barriers, promote gender equality, and empower women across all sectors of the economy for a truly Viksit Bharat.

### Empowering Women: India's Multifaceted Approach

Government has introduced and implemented various schemes for empowering women of India. As Viksit Bharat is focusing

on the women as one of its themes, here are some of the schemes or programs for women by the Ministry, of Women and Child Development (MWCD).

1. **Swadhar Greh:** This is a place where women who faced difficulties due to any natural disasters or are homeless, prisoners released from jail, victims of domestic violence or women rescued from trafficking, who are in distress and have no support from family and society gets facilities and support such as food, shelter, medical etc. Women are provided with a temporary accommodation or shelter with the primary needs such as food, medical facilities, in addition to the emotional support, counselling, behavioural trainings, legal aid and guidance. They also get skill training for their financial independence.
2. **One Stop Centres:** One Stop Centres are facilities made for women who faces issues in their life like violence, abuse whether it is physical or sexual or verbal or emotional, sexual harassment, human trafficking, attacks, and honour killings. Irrespective of the women's caste, culture, religion or economic status, One Stop Centres are always available to help them with their problems. The services provided by One Stop Centres are medical services, counselling, assisting women in filing FIR, legal aid & counselling, and a place to stay in for a maximum period of 5 days. The major benefit of One Stop centres is that all these services given to women are easily available under one roof. These services are also available for the girls below 18 years of age but in this situation the One Stop Centre should be registered under "Juvenile, Justice Act, 2000" and the "Protection, of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012."
3. **"Beti BachaoBeti Padhao scheme"** This scheme focuses on improving the sex, ratio between girl child and boy child in India with the help of making changes in society. Many awareness campaigns have been organized to raise the issue of huge difference in the sex ratio and the difference in educational ratio i.e. literacy rate among boys and girls. The Hon'ble Prime minister of India inaugurated the Beti, Bachao Beti Padhao campaign on 22nd January, 2015. The main goals of this scheme were:
  - Avert discriminatory practices of sex-selective based on gender.
  - Making sure that no girl child is being killed before or after birth and protecting them
  - Ensuring that every girl child receives education and feel empowered.
4. **181 Helpline number for women:** A toll-free number i.e. 181 has been established for women in need of emergency services when faced by any kind of violence or attack. The number also provides information related to all the government schemes that are made for women throughout the country. Women just need to dial the three-digit number and immediate assistance is provided to them by the staff and the service is available 24/7. The staff of women helpline do not disconnect the call until and unless

the issue is resolved and then take the feedback later. This helpline relates to Police, hospitals, protection officer, district level service authority (DLSA) and one stop centres. This scheme benefits women who are the victims of violence whether in public or private space through one call. It also provides details about the government programs or services that are available to women.

##### 5. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna (PMMVY):

The scheme was implemented on January 1st, 2017 by the Indian government. The scheme "Pradhan Mantri Matru, Vandana Yojana" promotes healthy behaviour of Pregnant women and lactating mothers, by providing financial support to them so that it could compensate with the loss of wage or salary during pregnancy and lactating period. Women are provided with adequate cash incentive so that they would only focus on taking rest, have nutritional food and take care of their child.

The amount of Rs. 5000 is provided in two different instalments for the first child. There are several criteria for women to be eligible for the benefits, some of which criteria are:

- The scheme is only for the first child but to promote the positive behavioural change towards girl child, women will get benefit on second child with extra cash incentive if she has girl child as the second child. In this case the amount of Rs. 6000 is provided in one instalment.
- Pregnant women should not be an employ of any central/state government organizations or of any public sector undertakings (PSUs) or with any other similar benefits from law. If so the benefits of the scheme will not be provided under such conditions.

##### Limitations of the Governmental Schemes

As we observe Indian government has started various policies to help women and promote their empowerment. But when we check the actual status of these schemes, it is not providing as many benefits as it seems to be. The limitations or barriers behind the effecting working of these policies can be:

- There is a huge flaw in the implementation of these policies as in many cases the benefits do not make it to the target population, reasons could be corruption or lack of monitoring the mechanisms.
- Some policies are made to target only a specific state or region and due to which some states may benefit more and others may not because of the lack of facilities such as infrastructure, economic development etc.
- The awareness about the policies plays a major role in the successful implementation of those schemes. Women, sometimes are not aware about the benefits they could avail or have half information about it. As a result, they are unable to get advantage of these effective policies.
- One major drawback is that there is a lack of an integrated and comprehensive policy that focuses on the overall issues of women. There should be more practical and realistic approach in making these policies so that it could cater a

lot of issues that women encounter, collectively as social, economic, and cultural issues.

- Cultural factors and social norms are so deeply rooted in our lives that they continue to affect the women and their empowerment, such as stereotypes, patriarchal thinking, gender roles are pulling women down and obstructing the effective execution of policies designed to confront these issues.

##### Impact of Empowerment in Economic Growth

Empowering women has been observed as a pillar of progress for societal, political and economic areas. Women have the potential to transform the development of the country and this could happen only if they are provided with education, opportunities, medical facilities and social support.

Women are making their significant contribution toward the field of education, economic development, social initiatives, actively working in the MNCs and securing leadership roles. They are contributing in not only expanding the workforce but also improving their performance and efficiency. Women are actively contributing towards economic growth in country's GDP; poverty rates have come down and families & communities have built up economic resilience. As women are also becoming an earning member in the family, hence reducing poverty. These women then use their money to uplift their families by providing good education to their children, providing healthcare facilities, and nutritional food to the family, which then improves the overall well-being of the family and entire community, breaking the poverty cycle.

In terms of education, educated women majorly prioritize the education of their children as well, resulting in increased literacy rate.

Working and educated women are more likely to get involved in politics and social domains, which as a result, leads to improved and comprehensive policy making, addressing actual issues of women and of all citizens of the country. When we empower women, we are reducing the gender inequality in every field, questioning the stereotypes and discrimination women experienced from a long time back, creating a society where both men and women receive equal rights and chances to grow.

Women are also contributing in STEM fields and start-ups where they offer different frameworks and viewpoints leading to innovation, creativity, advances in technology and industrial development.

Women are also playing a crucial role in the sustainable use of the environment and its natural resources. They also bring a peaceful and balanced environment in the society. By empowering women, the traditional set gender roles are also challenged, nurturing a more integrated and healthier environment in society as well as at the workplace.

##### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the empowerment of women in India seems a complex and evolving journey characterized by advancement,

challenges and ongoing continuous efforts aimed at attaining gender equality. Government policies and initiatives are crucial in talking historical inequalities and promoting a favourable environment. In which women can exercise their rights. Contribute to socio economic progress and engage effectively indecision-making process. To strengthen the effectiveness of women empowerment policies, it is essential to focus on the cultural and societal norms that sustain gender inequalities. To enhance the effectiveness of women empowerment policies, it is essential to prioritizes their proper implementing address the cultural and societal norms that sustain gender inequalities and ensure the allocation of sufficient resources. Women empowerment transcends mere policy: it represents a societal shift that necessitates a united effort, awareness, and dedication to breaking down Obstacles that impede the higher progress towards equitable society and more inclusive. The lack of education serves as an obstacle to attaining empowerment. Reflecting on all the points discussed, it becomes evident that transformation is crucial, which recognizing that the pace of this change might be slower than desired.

Empowering women is not merely a matter of justice or human rights; it is a strategic imperative for India's sustainable development and prosperity, particularly in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047. It unlocks the full potential of half the population, creating a more equitable, resilient, and thriving society – a strategic imperative for ‘Viksit Bharat’.

To fully harness the potential of its female population, India must continue its consistent efforts and intentional measures to eradicate enduring gender gaps in decision-making roles, education, and the workforce. This includes ensuring fair economic opportunities, improving access to education, and rigorously enforcing laws that support gender equality. Beyond economic advantages, empowering women leads to more inclusive governance structures and stronger communities. Prioritizing women's empowerment will be vital as India moves closer to 2047, ensuring a society where all individuals, regardless of gender, can make a significant impact.

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