



Shri Mouni Vidyapeeth's

KARMAVEER HIRE ARTS, SCIENCE, COMMERCE AND EDUCATION COLLEGE

Ht. Murlidharnagar, Gargoti, Tal. Bhudargad, Dist. Kolhapur (MS) India - 416209



(Affiliated to Shivaji University, Kolhapur)
Reaccredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC (CGPA-3.15)

CERTIFICATE

One Day

Multidisciplinary National Conference on

Republic of India : Idea and Reality

Organized by

Faculty of B.A., B.Com., B.A.B.Ed. (Inte.), B.C.A. & Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)

This is to certify that Dr./Prof./Mr./Mrs./Miss.

Ganesh S. Salatar

of Central Uni. of Haryana has participated in the One Day Multidisciplinary National Conference on

"Republic of India : Idea and Reality" organized by Faculty of B.A., B.Com., B.A.B.Ed. (Inte), B.C.A. & Internal Quality

Assurance Cell (IQAC). He/She has Chaired the Session / acted as Resource Person / Rapporteur / Presented the

paper entitled Women Empowerment and social Development in North India

a case study of Haryana state

Dr. Shahajirao Warke

Conference Convener

Prof. (Dr.) S. R. Powar

Co-Ordinator, IQAC

Prof. (Dr.) V. R. Shinde

Principal

Women Empowerment and Social Development in North India : A Case Study of Haryana State

Mr. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar ,

M.A. in Sociology , Department of Sociology, Central University of Haryana,
Mahendragarh, Haryana, India , Email: ganeshnale0@gmail.com

Abstract

Haryana exemplifies a development paradox: significant economic growth and sporting success alongside entrenched patriarchal norms and poor gender indicators. This paper examines women's empowerment in Haryana across education, economic participation, and socio-political representation, using theoretical lenses such as the capability approach and Kabeer's resources–agency–achievements framework and synthesizing secondary empirical evidence. The analysis finds meaningful gains—in female literacy, visibility through sports, and increased local political participation—but also persistent structural barriers: skewed sex ratios, gender-based violence, low female labour force participation, and the coercive influence of caste-based institutions. The paper argues that episodic successes must be converted into structural empowerment through coordinated policy action, local enforcement, gender-sensitive social programming, and efforts to redistribute resources and capabilities. Key recommendations include strengthening access to secondary and higher education, enforcing property and labour rights, expanding leadership training for elected women, and running sustained behavior-change initiatives to challenge khap/honor-based control. Haryana's experience shows that genuine empowerment requires simultaneous transformation of norms, institutions, and material conditions.

Introduction

Women's empowerment is central to inclusive social development because it expands agency, improves household welfare, and enriches democratic processes. Haryana provides a compelling case study: the state contributes substantially to India's agricultural and industrial output and has produced internationally celebrated women athletes, yet it also records poor sex ratios, high levels of gender violence, and constrained female labour force participation. This mixed trajectory raises the question: how can material and symbolic gains be translated into structural equality? This paper investigates the evolution of empowerment in Haryana, focusing on education, economic participation, and socio-political representation, and examines the persistent contradictions that limit progress. The methodology synthesizes secondary data and applies intersectional and capability-based frameworks to interpret empowerment as both process and outcome.

Conceptual Framework

Empowerment is a process in which those denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability. Kabeer's tripartite model—resources (preconditions), agency (capacity to act), and achievements (outcomes)—provides a useful analytic lens. Sen's capability approach complements this by emphasizing substantive freedoms: the real opportunities people have to pursue lives they value. In practice, measuring empowerment requires both quantitative indicators (literacy, labour-force participation, sex ratios, political representation) and qualitative assessments (decision-making power, bodily autonomy, mobility, and experiences with institutions). In Haryana, gender intersects with caste, class, and rural–urban location; thus, an intersectional lens is essential to assess differential capacities and constraints across social groups.

Historical and Socio-cultural Context

Haryana's social fabric is shaped by agrarian traditions, patrilineal inheritance, and caste hierarchies. Son preference, dowry practices, and restrictions on women's mobility are historically embedded. Informal institutions such as khap panchayats exert social control and can sanction honor-based violence. Despite legal reforms—like the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005—and state efforts to promote girls, patriarchal norms often limit women's ability to claim rights. The coexistence of high household incomes in

some districts with persistent gender gaps in others produces a geography of uneven empowerment: urban centres and prosperous districts display improved female literacy and professional presence, while rural pockets lag behind.

Educational Empowerment

Education is a primary pathway to empowerment. Haryana has recorded improvements in female literacy and primary enrollment, helped by schemes such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Ladli incentives, the Cycle Yojana, and scholarships. Yet the gains truncate at secondary and tertiary levels: dropouts increase because of early marriage, household responsibilities, safety concerns during travel, and lack of nearby higher-education institutions. Technical and professional education remains male-dominated, limiting women's access to higher-paying sectors. Nonetheless, sports participation has emerged as an alternative route: families that support girls' athletic training often subsequently support education and mobility, and state scholarships for athletes link sport to educational opportunity. To solidify educational empowerment, Haryana must expand rural access to higher education (residential colleges and distance programs), ensure safe transport, and invest in gender-sensitive pedagogy.

Economic Empowerment and Labour Participation

Economic autonomy is a powerful driver of agency. Historically, rural Haryana women contributed substantially to agriculture and household economies, but their labour was undervalued and rarely translated into asset rights. Urbanisation has generated new employment opportunities in IT, services, healthcare, and retail—especially in hubs like Gurugram and Faridabad—but overall female labour-force participation remains low. Barriers include social norms restricting mobility, lack of childcare, workplace harassment, and inadequate skill alignment. Microfinance, self-help groups (SHGs), and cooperatives have enabled women to start microenterprises in dairy, handicrafts, and food processing, boosting income and confidence. Sports-related earnings and government jobs awarded to medal winners have also provided alternative livelihoods. To deepen economic empowerment, policy must focus on skill development tailored to market demand, formalising informal work with social protections, enforcing wage parity, ensuring access to credit on fair terms, and protecting women's rights at work.

Socio-political Empowerment

Constitutional provisions for women's reservation in local bodies (73rd and 74th Amendments) have expanded political participation in Haryana. The state's implementation of reservation quotas has meant many women serve as sarpanches and panchayat members, addressing sanitation, pensions, and local services. However, the phenomenon of proxy governance—where male relatives (sarpanch-pati) exercise authority—dilutes substantive representation. Representation at state and national levels remains limited; cultural barriers, campaign costs, and party nomination biases constrain women's electoral presence. Grassroots activism shows promise: women have mobilized around sanitation, education, anti-liquor campaigns, and have been visible in broader protests (e.g., farmers' demonstrations). Strengthening women's political agency requires leadership training, legal protections against intimidation, monitoring of proxy governance, and incentives for political parties to field women candidates.

Challenges and Contradictions

Haryana's progress is uneven and fragile. The child sex ratio remains a critical concern—reflecting deep son preference and selective prenatal practices. Gender-based violence, including domestic abuse and honor killings, persists and is often linked to caste and marriage practices. Dalit and marginalized caste women experience layered oppression, with limited access to justice and resources. Urban–rural divides and a widening digital divide exacerbate inequities: urban women may access online education, telemedicine, and e-commerce, while rural women are often excluded. Moreover, the transition to a more service-oriented economy risks leaving behind women without relevant skills or mobility.

Discussion: Pathways to Structural Empowerment

Empowerment must move beyond isolated role models and be institutionalised through data-driven, integrated interventions. Programs such as Ladli Yojana or conditional cash transfers can alter parental

investments when coupled with monitoring and community engagement. Convergence of education, health, and livelihood services at the village level—through Anganwadis, schools, and panchayats—can create protective ecosystems for adolescent girls, preventing early marriage and supporting vocational pathways. Legal and institutional reforms are necessary but insufficient without enforcement. Improving police accountability, gender-sensitivity training for judiciary and law enforcement, fast-track courts for gender crimes, and accessible legal aid can strengthen women's access to justice. Male engagement programs that involve fathers, brothers, and community elders, sustained over time, have demonstrated capacity to shift norms when they are locally owned and adequately resourced.

Case Studies and Role Models

Haryana's women athletes—such as the Phogat sisters and Sakshi Malik—provide compelling examples of transformation. Their success altered family and community perceptions and created pathways into education and employment. Similarly, female sarpanches who have implemented sanitation or microenterprise projects illustrate the tangible gains of women's leadership. Scaling such examples requires market linkages (via platforms like Mahila e-haat), mentoring, and access to affordable credit and quality inputs for micro-enterprises.

Measuring Empowerment: Beyond Numbers

Quantitative metrics are vital, but qualitative measures—household decision-making, freedom of movement, and experiences of institutional responsiveness—capture dimensions of empowerment that numbers miss. Participatory monitoring, where women's groups collect and analyze local data, can both empower participants and produce nuanced evidence for policy adjustments.

Policy Recommendations : To convert episodic achievements into structural empowerment, Haryana should adopt a multi-pronged strategy:

1. **Education:** Expand secondary and higher education access in rural areas via residential institutions and distance learning; invest in safe transport and gender-sensitive pedagogy.
2. **Economic Rights:** Enforce property and inheritance rights through legal aid clinics and awareness campaigns; scale skill development aligned to local and urban labour markets; support childcare infrastructure.
3. **Labour Protections:** Formalize informal work, ensure social security coverage, strengthen grievance redressal for harassment, and implement wage-equality measures.
4. **Political Capacity:** Provide leadership and governance training to elected women; enact accountability mechanisms to prevent proxy governance; incentivize political parties to field women at higher levels.
5. **Social Norms and Protection:** Run sustained, locally embedded campaigns to counter khap/honor-based dominance; strengthen policing, witness protection, and legal assistance for victims.
6. **Digital Inclusion:** Establish community digital centers to offer digital literacy, e-governance access, and market linkages for women entrepreneurs.
7. **Sports and Cultural Change:** Institutionalize sports scholarships linked to education and employment to scale the model of athletic empowerment.

Implementation Challenges and Political Economy

Policy uptake will confront norms and vested interests. Land and property reforms, for example, meet patrilineal resistance and require political will and community-level mediation. Tokenistic measures can undermine intent; thus, transparency, civil-society oversight, and community audits are necessary to ensure substantive outcomes.

Conclusion

Haryana stands at an inflection point. The state's economic dynamism and sporting successes provide a platform for broader gender transformation, but turning these advantages into durable

empowerment requires systemic interventions that combine legal enforcement, resource redistribution, norm change, and local capacity-building. Improving women's agency in Haryana is not only an equity imperative but also a development priority; increasing women's capabilities will enhance human development across generations and help the state live up to its economic potential in an inclusive manner.

References / Bibliography

1. Agarwal, B. (1994). *A field of one's own: Gender and land rights in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Bhattacharyya, R., & Singh, S. (2017). Empowering the Indian women: Problems and prospects. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 23(4), 473–482. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2017.1375466>
3. Chaudhary, N. (2018). Gender, patriarchy and honor crimes in Haryana. *Journal of Indian Law and Society*, 9(1), 55–76.
4. Chowdhury, R. (2014). Interrogating women's empowerment: Lessons from grassroots NGOs in India. *Community Development Journal*, 49(1), 23–37. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bss040>
5. Government of Haryana. (2016). *Statistical abstract of Haryana*. Department of Economic and Statistical Analysis, Government of Haryana.
6. Government of India. (2015). *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Scheme guidelines*. Ministry of Women and Child Development.
7. Government of India. (2011). *Census of India 2011: Primary census abstract*. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.
8. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), & ICF. (2021). *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019–21: India*. IIPS.
9. Jejeebhoy, S. J. (1995). *Women's education, autonomy, and reproductive behaviour: Experience from developing countries*. Clarendon Press.
10. Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435–464. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00125>
11. Kumar, A. (2020). Women empowerment in India: An analysis. *Journal of Social and Economic Development*, 22(2), 293–310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40847-020-00105-9>
12. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). (2022). *Crime in India 2021: Statistics*. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
13. NITI Aayog. (2020). *SDG India index and dashboard 2019–20: Partnerships in the decade of action*. NITI Aayog, Government of India.
14. Nussbaum, M. C. (2000). *Women and human development: The capabilities approach*. Cambridge University Press.
15. Raju, S., & Bagchi, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Women and work in globalizing India*. Routledge.
16. Rawat, R., & Jha, S. (2019). Caste, patriarchy and violence against women in rural Haryana. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 54(6), 46–54.
17. Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.
18. Sharma, K., & Sudha, R. (2016). Female foeticide and declining sex ratio in Haryana: A socio-legal analysis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 5(7), 1–7.
19. UNDP. (2020). *Human Development Report 2020: The next frontier—Human development and the Anthropocene*. United Nations Development Programme.
20. World Bank. (2018). *Closing the gender gap: Empowering women in India*. World Bank Group.