

# A WAY TO EMPOWER WOMEN THROUGH LITERATURE

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**Abstract:** Most women's policies has recognised the idea of women's empowerment as a justifiable objective. The concept of empowerment is broad and it mainly aims to reveal women's inherent strength. The use of literature as a means of self-expression and self-identification can significantly increase women's power both internally and externally. This article mainly analyses how and why literature should be included in discussions on women's emancipation. It also highlights the advantages of introducing women to literature with the aim of empowering them both individually and collectively.

**Keywords:** Women's Empowerment, Gender Justice, Literature and Emancipation

## Introduction

The subjects of gender justice and women's empowerment have gained prominence in various fields of study over the past several decades as a result of numerous campaigns for women's equality and rights. The criticisms and discussions sparked by various national women's movements gave rise to the idea of women's empowerment. By gaining knowledge, power, and experience, it improves the intrinsic talent. Many government initiatives for social justice and women's welfare now regard empowerment as their main goal.

### Concept of Women's Empowerment

In recent decades, both the social scientific literature and the study of public policy have given a lot of attention to the idea of women's empowerment. Empowerment of women is a highly debated topic that is extremely complex. Nevertheless, it is generally acknowledged that the concept of empowerment in the context of women can be considered as such a relationship between women and society that is based on the values of freedom, rights, and equality despite the complexity and philosophical disagreements surrounding this theme. Empowering a woman essentially means treating her like a full human being. It's all about empowering a woman to claim her humanity.

The United National Development Fund for Women defines the term "women's empowerment" as the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of gender relations, the growth of a sense of self-worth on the part of women, a belief in women's ability to effect the desired changes, and the protection of a woman's right to control her own life. Women who are empowered will have more options and will be able to negotiate better terms to have a say in decisions that affect them. The concept of and efforts pertaining to women's empowerment attempt to achieve justice in both the national social and economic order as well as the international order.

### Challenges of Women's Empowerment

In many societies, women are unable to make a significant contribution to the decision-making processes despite decades of awareness of women's empowerment and attempts from governments and activists. Therefore, initiatives to advance gender equality and justice still need to speeded up.

Fundamentally, a woman must be liberated from what may be referred to as "dependence syndrome." A woman is fundamentally dependent on her father, spouse, sibling, family, community, or religious organisation for her survival and growth in the majority of her realms of existence. The process of liberating women from this state of structural dependence by realising their inner strength is at the heart of women's empowerment. This makes women's empowerment much more comprehensive than just political, social, or economic empowerment. Internal empowerment, or the advancement of one's emotions, spirit, or mind, is the true foundation of women's liberation.

### Literature and Women's Empowerment

The value of literature and writing resides in its ability to empower women and advance gender justice. The turmoil around women's rights and equality, which ensured feminist struggles all over the world, has had a significant impact on literature. Therefore, it is essential to examine literature as a field that reflects and promotes issues of gender justice and women's empowerment. Women's literature in some ways reflects and continues society's efforts to advance the status and rights of women. Women's works were recognised by literary criticism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a potent source for learning about patriarchal social systems as well as for understanding the frustrations, hopes, and expectations of women within these patriarchal structures.

As a result, although making up nearly half of human civilization, women have not produced as much literature as is expected. Experiences of men have been equated with human experiences for ages, which makes it biased and incomplete. The woman's status was not defined nor acknowledged as a subject in her own right. According to Virginia Woolf, the obvious explanation for this was that women lacked the resources and space to live on their own. Women were not acknowledged as unique, independent beings. In the areas of personal, literary, and cultural development, women had to overcome numerous challenges.

The obstacles faced by women in the artistic and cultural fields are similar to those seen in other fields. Even now, it's uncommon for women to find comfortable settings that foster their capacity for creativity and critical thought. Her innate creative potential and right to self-expression are suppressed as a result of this situation. Due to the strong feminism currents that have swept the literary world over the past one and half centuries, many women have utilised literature to express their individuality. Following are some of the ways how literature can serve as a platform for women's empowerment:

- Women's activism through writing has the potential to be quiet yet effective. They might get the chance to critically consider how gender and sexuality issues relate to other people and social interactions. Women can share their ideas, aspirations, and identities with the larger society through literature.
- The historical, psychological, and social contexts of women's experiences are explored via literature. Such an investigation would force us to confront the irony and complexity of human feeling and expose us to a reality that is different from the one we currently inhabit. This kind of literature will enable women by providing fresh perspectives on their advancement.
- Gendered realities frequently influence the experiences of women. Their writings are a product of and a representation of the socio-psychological and economic circumstances they typically experience. The identification of micro realities and situations that are not reflected in the larger conceptions of women's empowerment would benefit from literature that reflects these unique circumstances.
- Women's reading and writing would qualitatively and subtly change as a result of literary activity. For them, writing literature might be therapeutic. It would enable individuals to get rid of ingrained feelings of fear or weakness. Women would change and become more powerful as a result of their literary reading and writing experiences in the social and political realms.

### Conclusion

Thus, literature serves as a powerful tool for both communicating and hearing a woman's inner world because of its intimate relationship to her identity and empowerment. An important step toward women's empowerment is creating places and institutions where these voices of women can be nurtured and heard. Opening and supporting access to, as well as the production, discovery, interpretation, and dissemination of literature for, by, and about women would have profound effects on both women's power and the health of society.

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