

1 **Women in Leadership Role: Shifting from Women's Development to Women-Led** 2 **Development**

3 **Abstract**

4 India's approach to gender equality has developed significantly, focusing on "women's
5 development" has given attention to the paradigm of "leading development of women". This
6 change highlights the important role of women as leaders and active participants in running
7 social and economic changes rather than being beneficiaries of development programs only.
8 The development of women emphasized the leadership of women in social, economic and
9 political fields, which aligns with the widespread goals of inclusive development and the
10 sustainable development goals (SDG). Policies like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Stand-up India,
11 and women entrepreneurship and government support are important for this change. Despite
12 these progressions, challenges such as patriarchal norms, economic inequality, gender-based
13 violence, and under-purposed in leadership, hurdle in progress (India's Census, 2021;
14 Chattopadhyay and Duffle, 2004). Addressing these obstacles is important for unlocking the
15 ability of women led by women. By empowering women as decision-makers, India can
16 promote innovation, strengthen social harmony and achieve sustainable development. This
17 approach is necessary to create justified, flexible societies and achieve long-term national
18 progress.

19 **Introduction**

20
21 India's development discourse has long recognised the importance of women's
22 empowerment, putting it at the centre of social and economic progress. Historically,
23 Katha focused on "women's development", which equips women with education,
24 healthcare, skills and resources to improve its position in society. However, in recent
25 years, there has been a significant change towards "women-led development". This
26 new paradigm emphasizes not only to empower women but also to empower them as
27 major drivers of social progress. Women-led development accepts that women are not
28 only the beneficiaries of development programs, but also active participants and
29 decision-makers to shape the future of the nation (India of Economic Survey, 2023).
30 In the development of women from women's development, infection has a deep
31 implication for the social, economic and political scenario of India. This reflects a
32 belief that sustainable progress requires the leadership of women at all levels of
33 society - with homes, communities, workplaces and governance structures. This
34 article examines the major dimensions of this change, the policies and programs
35 supporting it, women face challenges, and the transformative ability to guide women
36 in India.

37 38 39 **Historical Context: From Women Development to Women-Led Development**

40
41 Women's development has been the focal point of India's policy agenda since independence.
42 Meditation was mainly on addressing horrific inequalities in education, healthcare,
43 employment and political participation among men and women. The objective of government
44 programs is to increase the literacy rate among women, improve maternal and child health

45 results, and promote women's participation in the workforce (Desai and Vanman, 2019).
46 Important progress has been made in these areas, in which more girls enroll in schools, better
47 access to healthcare, and some areas (ILO, 2018) have the participation of the growing
48 female labor force. However, traditional women development models often considered
49 women as passive recipients of development intervention rather than agents of change. What
50 could be done for women for women, it was emphasized what women could do for society
51 (Kabir, 2005). The voices of women were often sidelined in decision -making processes, and
52 their ability to lead the initiative of development was reduced. The change towards the
53 development of women departs from this point of view. It lies in the belief that women
54 leadership is necessary to create a more equitable and durable society. Women-led
55 development focus on making women capable of taking charge of their own life and destiny,
56 located as leaders in all areas of life-economic, social and political. This paradigm change
57 recognizes women's agency, leadership ability, and ability to run positive changes, not only
58 for themselves but also for their families, communities and nation for a whole(women of the
59 United Nations, 2020).

61 **Policy Framework Supporting Women-Led Development**

62
63 Many policies and programs have been introduced in recent years to support women
64 leadership development in India. These initiatives aim to create a competent environment for
65 women's leadership and entrepreneurship, to increase their access to resources and
66 opportunities and ensure their participation in decision -making processes.

67
68 1. BT Bachao Beti Padho (BBBP): Launched in 2015, this major program aims to improve
69 the child sex ratio, promote the girl child's survival, promote safety and education, and
70 empower young girls to realize their full ability. By focusing on education and awareness,
71 BBBP lays the foundation for women's leadership by ensuring that girls have the necessary
72 knowledge and skills required to lead in future (Ministry of Women and Child Development,
73 2015).

74
75 2. Stand-up India Scheme: Stand-up India Scheme, introduced in 2016, provides loans to
76 women's entrepreneurs from marginalized communities to promote entrepreneurship and
77 economic leadership. The program recognizes the importance of economic empowerment of
78 women as a major driver of development and wants to support women in becoming job
79 creators instead of job seekers (Finance Ministry, 2016).

80
81 3. Prime Minister Mudra Yojana (PMMY): This scheme launched in 2015 provides financial
82 assistance to micro-entertainment, many of which are led by women. By providing easy
83 access to credits, PMMY encourages women to start and develop their businesses, leading to
84 their leadership role in the economy (Economic Survey India, 2023).

85
86 4. Mahaila e-Taur: This digital marketing platform established in 2016 offers women
87 entrepreneurs an online marketplace to show and sell their products. Taking advantage of
88 technology, women e-hat empowers women to lead the digital economy and increase their
89 visibility and access to the national and global markets (World Bank, 2020).

90

91 5. Reservation of women in politics: 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments reserved one -
92 third seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) for women. This has greatly increased the
93 representation of women in local rule and has provided them a platform to lead the ground
94 level (Chattopadhyay and Duffe, 2004).

95
96 6. National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM): NRLM promotes women's self-help groups
97 (SHG) and promotes women's economic empowerment by providing them access to training,
98 resources and financial services. Through collective action, women in SHG are not only
99 improving their economic status, but also claiming leadership in their communities (Ministry
100 of Rural Development, 2017).

101 **Challenges to Women-Led Development**

102
103 While the policy landscape supporting women leading the development of women is strong,
104 many challenges obstruct full involvement in the leadership roles of women.

105 • **Patriarchal criteria:** deeply stuck patriarchal views limit women's dynamics, autonomy
106 and decision-making power. Women often face resistance when they step into leadership
107 roles, whether in the house, workplace, or political field. To overcome these social and
108 cultural obstacles, continuous efforts are required at many levels including education,
109 advocacy and awareness campaigns (Kabir, 2005).

110
111 • **Economic inequality:** Women in India continue to face important economic inequalities,
112 including wage intervals, limited access to credit and locking, and concentration in informal
113 areas. These inequalities obstruct their ability to claim leadership in the economy and
114 participate completely in development processes. To address these inequalities requires
115 targeted intervention to promote women's financial inclusion, reach civilized work and
116 promote upstream dynamics opportunities (World Economic Forum, 2022).

117
118 • **Gender-based violence:** Violence against women remains an important issue in India,
119 which has implications of women's ability to lead and participate in society. The fear of
120 violence often curbs the freedom of women's movement and limits their engagement in
121 public life (Women of the United Nations, 2020). Efforts to reduce gender-based violence,
122 improve access to justice and create a safe environment for women are necessary to promote
123 women-leading development. Leadership: Despite progress, women

124
125 • **Underpritankein leadership:** Despite progress, women stay low in leadership positions in
126 certain areas. In politics, women hold only one small percentage of seats in the state
127 assemblies and the National Parliament (Census of India, 2021). In the corporate world,
128 women are less represented in senior leadership roles and in the board of directors. Structural
129 obstacles including working and in promotion limits, limit access to women's leadership
130 opportunities (Chattopadhyay and Duff, 2004).

131
132 • **Balance care work and professional roles:** Women in India often tolerate the dual burden
133 of unpaid care work and professional responsibilities. This limits their ability to be fully
134 engaged in leadership roles, as they often expect priority to career careers. Addressing the
135 uneven distribution of care work, through policies such as paid family holidays, cheap
136 childcare and flexible work arrangements, it is important to enable women to lead to lead

137 (ILO, 2018). Vinnating capacity of women led by women Changes towards women -led
138 development have immense transformational ability to India. Empowering women as leaders,
139 the country can unlock new opportunities for innovation, economic development and social
140 progress. Women-leading development can create more inclusive, equitable and flexible
141 society, which are with women, communities and future generations (IMF, 2019) beyond
142 women.

143

144 **The Transformative Potential of Women-Led Development**

145

146 Changes towards women -led development have immense transformational ability to India.
147 Empowering women as leaders, the country can unlock new opportunities for innovation,
148 economic development and social progress. Women -leading development has the ability to
149 create more inclusive, equitable and flexible society, which are with women, communities
150 and future generations (IMF, 2019) beyond women.

151

152 • **Economic development:** Women-led development can lead to economic development by
153 increasing participation in women's workforce, entrepreneurship and leadership roles. Studies
154 show that the involvement of the labour force and closing gender intervals in leadership can
155 significantly promote GDP and Productivity (World Economic Forum, 2022). Women leaders
156 bring diverse approaches and innovative outlooks for problem-solving, which can increase
157 professional performance and economic competition.

158

159 • **Social harmony:** Women-led development can strengthen social harmony by promoting
160 inclusive governance and decision-making. Women leaders prefer social welfare, education,
161 healthcare and community development, which can improve overall welfare and reduce
162 inequalities (United Nations Women, 2020). When women are empowered to lead, they often
163 advocate policies and programs that benefit marginalized groups, including women and
164 children, more equitable and only lead to societies.

165

166 • **Sustainable Development:** Women-led development aligns with the goals of sustainable
167 development by promoting more inclusive, participation and accountable institutions. Women
168 leaders are often at the forefront of resolving environmental challenges, promoting
169 sustainable livelihood and building flexible communities (Aggarwal, 2010). Their leadership
170 is important to achieving SDG, especially related to gender equality, poverty decrease and
171 climate action.

172

173 **Conclusion**

174 In India, infection in women's development marks a significant change in the country's
175 approach to achieving gender equality and inclusive development. By recognizing women as
176 leaders and agents of change, India lays the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous
177 future. While challenges remain, policies and programs supporting women lead development
178 are helping women to create a competent environment to lead in all areas of life. As India
179 continues on this route, there is a lot of possibility of transformational change, which benefits
180 women and the entire nation. Women-led development is not just a goal, but an essential
181 strategy for the creation of a more, durable and inclusive society.

182

183 References

- 184 1. Census of India. (2021). India's gender statistics 2021. Registrar General of India.
185 <https://censusindia.gov.in>
- 186
- 187 2. Chattopadhyay, R., and Duffle, E. (2004). Women as policy makers: evidence from a random
188 policy experiment in India. *Econometric*, 72 (5), 1409–1443. [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0262.2004.00539.x)
189 [0262.2004.00539.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0262.2004.00539.x)
- 190
- 191 3. Desai, S., and Vanman, R. (2019). Women Empowerment in India: Progress and Challenges.
192 *Journal of Development Studies*, 55 (5), 632–649. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0022038888.2018.1516862>
- 193
- 194 4. Economic Survey of India. (2023). Empowering women: role of public policies. Ministry of
195 Finance, Government of India.
- 196
- 197 5. International Labor Organization. (2018). Women in the workforce: India scenario.
198 <https://www.ilo.org>
- 199
- 200 6. International Monetary Fund. (2019). Empowering women in emerging economies: key to
201 development. <https://www.imf.org>
- 202
- 203 7. Kabir, N. (2005). Gender equality and women empowerment: an important analysis of the third
204 millennium development goal. *Gender and development*, 13 (1), 13–24.
205 <https://doi.org/10.1080/1352070512331332273>
- 206
- 207 8. Ministry of Finance, Government of India. (2016). Stand-up India Scheme: Guidelines for banks
208 and entrepreneurs. <https://financialservices.gov.in>
- 209
- 210 9. Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. (2017). National Rural Livelihood Mission:
211 Progress Report. <https://rural.nic.in>
- 212
- 213 10. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. (2015). Bt Bachao BT Valo
214 Yojana Guidelines. <https://wcd.nic.in>
- 215
- 216 11. Niti Ayog. (2021). SDG India Index: Progress on gender equality. <https://www.niti.gov.in>
- 217
- 218 12. World Bank. (2020). Closing gender intervals in India's workforce. <https://www.worldbank.org>
- 219
- 220 13. Women of the United Nations. (2020). Empowering women: key to inclusive development.
221 <https://www.unwomen.org>
- 222
- 223 14. World Economic Forum. (2022). Global Gender Gap Report 2022
- 224
- 225 15. Aggarwal, B. (2010). Gender and green rule: political economy within community forestry and
226 beyond the presence of women. Oxford University Press.
227 <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199569687.001.0001>

228

229
230
231

UNDER PEER REVIEW IN IJAR