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# Transforming Gender Realities beyond Equality: A Multidimensional Study of Women's Human Rights and Empowerment in Haryana

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### Abstract

Women's empowerment has emerged as a transformative paradigm central to achieving social justice, human rights and sustainable development. Conceptualized as a multidimensional process, it encompasses the expansion of women's capabilities, access to resources and agency in decision-making across social, economic, political and health domains. Within the framework articulated by the United Nations Development Programme, empowerment is not merely an outcome but a continuous process that enables women to exercise autonomy and shape their life trajectories. The state of Haryana provides a critical socio-cultural context for examining these dynamics. Despite notable advancements in education, sports and grassroots political participation, the state continues to exhibit deep-rooted gender disparities shaped by patriarchal norms, son preference and restrictive social practices. Historical marginalization, reinforced by practices such as dowry, early marriage and limited mobility, has constrained women's participation in public and economic spheres. Adopting a descriptive-cum-exploratory research design, the study integrates both primary and secondary data to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's empowerment in Haryana. Primary data were collected from 100 women across four districts; Sonapat, Kaithal, Charkhi Dadri and Ambala; using a multi-stage sampling technique, ensuring diverse representation. The major findings reveal a nuanced reality: while 62.00 percent of women report improved decision-making and 70.00 percent demonstrate awareness of rights, structural barriers persist in the form of limited economic participation 61.00 percent, restricted mobility 56.00 percent and economic dependence 59.00 percent. Apart from this, issues such as domestic violence, dowry pressures and inadequate healthcare access continue to undermine empowerment outcomes. The study highlights that empowerment in Haryana is partial and uneven, characterized by increased awareness but limited translation into economic and social autonomy. The research explored that bridging the gender gap requires an integrated approach combining legal enforcement, socio-cultural transformation, economic inclusion and community-based interventions. It is suggested by the author that there is need to emphasize education, skill development, legal awareness and safety as critical pathways for change and women empowerment. It is concluded that empowering women in Haryana is not only essential for protecting human rights but also pivotal for fostering inclusive growth and equitable societal development.

**Keywords:** Women's Empowerment, Human Rights, Gender Inequality, Economic Participation, Gender-Based Violence, Social Justice, Legal Awareness.

### Introduction

Women's empowerment is a multidimensional concept that refers to enhancing the status of women across social, economic, political and health domains. It involves creating an enabling environment where women can exercise autonomy, access resources and make strategic life choices equal to men. As defined by the United Nations Development Programme, empowerment includes women's right to determine their life paths, ensuring access to opportunities and decision-making power. In this context, empowering women is not merely a matter of social justice but a prerequisite for sustainable development and inclusive growth. The role of women in societal development is fundamental and irreplaceable. Empowered women contribute significantly to economic productivity, social equity and intergenerational development. Their participation in

education, employment and governance leads to improved family health, better educational outcomes for children and overall societal progress. Furthermore, empowerment acts as a critical tool in combating gender-based violence, discrimination and inequality, thereby fostering a more just and equitable society.

### Contextual Background: Women's Empowerment in Haryana

Haryana, a northern Indian state with a predominantly agrarian economy and deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, presents a paradoxical scenario in terms of women's empowerment. While the state has made notable progress in education, sports and political representation at the grassroots level, it continues to lag behind in critical areas such as workforce participation, gender equality and social freedom

for women. Historically, women in Haryana, like in many parts of India, have been confined to traditional roles, with limited access to education, employment and public life. Cultural practices such as preference for male children, dowry and rigid gender roles have perpetuated their marginalization. Although legal reforms; such as the Hindu Marriage Act-1955, Dowry Prohibition Act-1961 and the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments; have aimed to improve women's status, the persistence of socio-cultural barriers continues to hinder their effective implementation.

**Major Human Rights Provisions for Women in India-** Women's human rights in Haryana must be understood within the broader legal and constitutional framework of India, supplemented by international commitments and specific legislative measures. Despite these provisions, persistent violations; such as sexual violence, domestic abuse, trafficking and gender discrimination; highlight the gap between legal guarantees and ground realities.

### Constitutional Provisions for Women's Rights in India Fundamental Rights Ensuring Gender Equality

The Constitution of India provides a strong foundation for the protection of women's human rights, some of the important are explained, which are as follows-

- **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of laws.
- **Article 15(1):** Prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex.
- **Article 15(3):** Permits the state to make special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 16:** Ensures equal opportunity in public employment.
- **Article 21:** Protects the right to life and personal liberty, including dignity and bodily autonomy. Despite constitutional guarantees, women in Haryana continue to face mobility restrictions, honour-based violence and limited autonomy, indicating weak enforcement at the societal level.

### Directive Principles of State Policy

- **Article 39(a):** Equal right to livelihood.
- **Article 39(d):** Equal pay for equal work.
- **Article 42:** Provision for just and humane working conditions and maternity relief. In Haryana, female labour force participation remains low and many women are engaged in unpaid agricultural labour, reflecting partial realization of these principles.

### Fundamental Duties

- **Article 51A(e):** Promotes the duty to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. Practices like dowry, female foeticide and honour killings continue, showing a gap between constitutional ideals and social behavior.

### International Framework and Global Commitments towards Protection of Human Rights of Women.

**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women:** India is among the countries, who are signatory to CEDAW (1979), which mandates following liabilities;

- Elimination of discrimination in political, economic and social life
- Protection against gender-based violence

- Equal access to healthcare, education and employment

**Relevance of CEDAW to Haryana:** Issues such as female foeticide, trafficking, molkis and caste-based violence directly violate CEDAW principles of equality and dignity.

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights-1948
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5-Gender Equality)

Haryana's fluctuating Sex Ratio at Birth (905 in 2024) reflects ongoing challenges in meeting global gender equality targets.

### National Laws Protecting Women's Human Rights Protection against Violence and Abuse

- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Indian Penal Code (IPC) provisions on rape, sexual assault and cruelty
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013

### Laws Addressing Gender Discrimination and Reproductive Rights

- Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act
- Persistent female foeticide and declining SRB (905 in 2024) show enforcement challenges.

### Laws against Trafficking and Exploitation

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- Sections of IPC addressing trafficking and forced marriage

### Ground Reality in Haryana

- The phenomenon of molkis (bride buying related trafficking, in many cases) continues due to skewed sex ratios.
- Women trafficked from states like Assam and Bihar face exploitation, abuse and denial of basic rights.

### Laws Addressing Social Practices

- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

Dowry-related violence and early marriages still occur in Haryana, reflecting deep-rooted patriarchal norms.

### Protection against Caste-Based and Intersectional Violence

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Dalit women in Haryana face intersectional discrimination, combining caste and gender-based violence, with limited access to justice mechanisms.

### Institutional Mechanisms and State-Level Measures Government Initiatives in Haryana

- Women Helpline (181) for emergency support
- Establishment of Mahila Police Stations
- Expansion of One Stop Centres for survivors of violence

These mechanisms have improved reporting and support services, but underreporting, social stigma and delays in justice delivery persist.

**Major Issues related to Human Rights Violations in Haryana:** Based on recent studies, the major human rights concerns include, as follows-

- **Sexual Violence and Harassment:** High incidence leading to restricted mobility of women
- **Domestic Violence:** Significant rise in complaints, especially during crisis periods
- **Bride Trafficking (and Molkis):** Result of skewed sex ratio and son preference
- **Reproductive Rights Violations:** Female foeticide and limited access to healthcare
- **Caste-Based Violence:** Dalit women disproportionately affected

### Review of Related Literature

Devi and Singh (2019) examine the status of women's human rights in Haryana within the broader framework of human rights as indicators of governance, development and democracy. The study conceptualizes human rights as encompassing claims, power, privilege and immunity, guaranteed through constitutional and international provisions. It highlights that, despite legal safeguards such as the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, women in Haryana continue to face significant challenges due to illiteracy, lack of awareness and entrenched patriarchal traditions. The authors trace the historical evolution of women's status in India, noting a transition from relative equality in ancient times to marginalization in the medieval period, followed by gradual empowerment through reforms. However, the paper argues that prominent female achievers do not reflect the ground realities of most women. The study concluded that although legal frameworks exist, effective realization of women's rights in Haryana requires greater awareness, education and societal transformation

Jagriti and Yadav (2025) analyze gender inequality in demographic and employment patterns in Panipat, Haryana, using census data from 1951 to 2011. The study reveals a persistent imbalance in the sex ratio, which declined from 866 in 1951 to 829 in 2001 before slightly improving to 864 in 2011, reflecting deep-rooted socio-cultural biases such as son preference and female infanticide. These trends indicate structural barriers such as limited education, restricted mobility and lack of employment opportunities. The authors emphasize the need for targeted policy interventions, including skill development and schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, to promote gender equality and inclusive development.

Mishra and Chowdhry (2026) examine the role of women's education in economic growth in India using comparative analysis of NFHS-4 and NFHS-5 data. The study finds a significant positive relationship between women's education and major indicators of empowerment, including employability, health awareness, decision-making capacity and economic participation. The results indicate that improvements in female literacy and educational attainment have contributed to enhanced socio-economic status and increased workforce engagement among women. The paper concluded that strengthening women's education and skill development is essential for achieving sustainable economic growth and gender equality in India.

Singh and Singh (2020) provide a critical analysis of women's empowerment in India within the context of a traditionally patriarchal society where women have historically been assigned a secondary status across social, economic and political domains. The study emphasizes that

despite constitutional safeguards and numerous government initiatives, gender inequality persists, limiting women's full participation in development. It is concluded that while policy frameworks exist, their implementation remains inadequate. Therefore, there is a pressing need to reassess and strengthen existing programmes to effectively achieve gender equality and women's empowerment by 2030.

Rathee (2024) presents a comparative analysis of women's empowerment in Haryana and India across major dimensions such as education, economic participation, political representation, health and sports. The study finds that Haryana performs relatively better in female literacy rates and sports achievements, indicating progress in social and cultural transformation. The research identified socio-cultural norms, financial constraints and political barriers as major impediments to effective implementation of women-centric policies. The author concluded that a comprehensive and integrated policy approach focusing on education, economic inclusion and gender-sensitive governance is essential to achieve sustainable women's empowerment and gender equality.

### The Significance of the Study

The present study has great significance as its comprehensive examination of women's empowerment and human rights within the socio-cultural context of Haryana, a state characterized by both progress and persistent gender disparities. While adopting a mixed-method approach, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of women across different age groups, professions and social backgrounds. It contributes to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the gap between policy provisions and their actual implementation at the grassroots level. Therefore, study would be relevant in exploring the human rights of women, their violation and suggestion further pathways, which would also be helpful for further research in this field.

### Objectives of the Study

- To critically Investigate the Lived Realities of Women's Human Rights in Haryana
- To Analyze the Dynamic Linkages between Gender, Economy and Empowerment in the Evolving Socio-Economic Landscape
- To explore Emerging Dimensions of Women's Empowerment by Examining Barriers and Ways ahead of Leadership and Decision-Making
- To find out Suggestions for the Responsiveness and Impact of Contemporary Policy Frameworks and Social Work Interventions.

### Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive-cum-exploratory research design to examine women's human rights and empowerment in Haryana through a mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques. This design enables a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural realities, challenges and opportunities influencing women's status across diverse settings. The study is primarily based on primary data collected directly from women belonging to different socio-economic backgrounds, age groups and professions. The primary data is collected from four districts of Haryana i.e. Sonapat, Kaithal, Charkhi Dadri and Ambala to ensure comprehensive and justifiable regional representation. Within these districts, one village each has

been selected, such as; Kasandi from Sonapat district, Sirsal from Kaithal district, Dagroli from Charkhi Dadri district and Bhapauli from Ambala district. A multi-stage sampling technique is employed to systematically narrow down the sample. In the first stage, districts are selected; in the second stage, villages are identified; and in the final stage, respondents are chosen. The study includes women from varied categories such as adolescents, young adults, elderly women, homemakers, self-employed individuals and working professionals, ensuring diversity in perspectives. From each selected village, 25 women are chosen through simple random sampling, resulting in a balanced and representative sample. The secondary data is utilized to strengthen the analysis, which includes government reports, census data, policy documents and published research articles. The combination of these data sources enhances the reliability and depth of the research, providing a holistic view of gender disparities and empowerment in Haryana.

### Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1:** Socio-Economic Profile of Women in Rural Areas of Selected Districts in Haryana

S. No	Socio-Economic Profile of Women	Total (n=100)	% of Responses
<b>Age wise Distribution</b>			
1	18-25 years of the age	28	28.00
2	26-35 years of the age	37	37.00
3	36-45 years of the age	23	23.00
4	46 years and above of the age	12	12.00
Total		100	100
<b>Education Status wise Distribution</b>			
5	Illiterate	19	19.00
6	Primary (1-5)	22	22.00
7	Secondary (6-10)	35	35.00
8	Higher Secondary and above	24	24.00
Total		100	100
<b>Marital Status wise Distribution</b>			
9	Married	78	78.00
10	Unmarried	22	22.00
Total		100	100
<b>Occupation wise Distribution</b>			
11	Homemaker	56	56.00
12	Agricultural Labour	21	21.00
13	Self-Help Groups/Business	14	14.00
14	Service Sector/Other	09	09.00
Total		100	100
<b>Annual Income wise Distribution</b>			
15	Below Rs.50,000	42	42.00
16	Rs.50,001-1,00,000	38	38.00
17	Above Rs.1,00,000	20	20.00
Total		100	100

The above table shows that the majority of women surveyed fall in the 26-35 years age group 37.00 percent, reflecting a young workforce potential in rural Haryana. The 18-25 group 28.00 percent indicates future prospects for education and employment interventions. About the Education Levels, 35.00 percent of women have completed secondary education, while 24.00 percent have higher secondary or above. However, 19.00 percent remain illiterate, highlighting persistent gaps in literacy and the need for adult education programs. About the Occupational Status, over half 56.00 percent of women are homemakers, while only 14.00 percent are engaged in SHGs or small business activities. This indicates that economic participation is low despite government initiatives like Self-

Help Groups and Skill India programs. About the Marital Status, a significant majority 78.00 percent is married; suggesting household responsibilities may influence their social and economic participation. About the Household Income, 42.00 percent of women belong to households earning below 50,000 annually, showing high economic vulnerability and the importance of financial inclusion schemes like Deendayal Lado Lakshmi and microfinance initiatives.

**Table 2:** Challenges and Gender Issues of Rural Women

S. No	Particulars	Total (n=100)	% of Responses
1	Limited Access to Education	48	48.00
2	Restricted Mobility/Travel Restrictions	56	56.00
3	Domestic Violence/Spousal Abuse	33	33.00
4	Gender-Based Discrimination in Household Decisions	52	52.00
5	Early Marriage/Child Marriage Practices	21	21.00
6	Limited Participation in Economic Activities	61	61.00
7	Low Awareness of Legal Rights	42	42.00
8	Dowry Demands/Social Pressure	37	37.00
9	Lack of Healthcare Access	46	46.00
10	Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces	28	28.00
11	Limited Access to Government Schemes and Benefits	39	39.00
12	Unequal Workload/Burden of Household Work	55	55.00
13	Low Representation in Community and Governance	25	25.00
14	Economic Dependence on Male Family Members	59	59.00
15	Social Stigma for Women Working Outside Home	34	34.00

(\*Multiple Responses)

The above table exhibits that about the Education and Awareness, 48.00 percent of women reported limited access to education, while 42.00 percent are unaware of their legal rights. This reflects the gap in literacy and empowerment programs reaching rural women. About the Mobility and Autonomy, 56.00 percent face restricted mobility, indicating strong patriarchal norms limiting freedom, corroborating previous studies about Haryana's rural women. About the Domestic Violence and Social Pressure, 33.00 percent reported domestic abuse and 37.00 percent face dowry-related pressures, highlighting the persistence of gender-based violence and traditional social norms. About the Economic Challenges, 61.00 percent indicated limited participation in economic activities and 59.00 percent are economically dependent on male family members. This shows that financial autonomy remains a main barrier to empowerment. About the Healthcare and Social Services, 46.00 percent reported poor access to healthcare and 39.00 percent have limited access to government schemes, showing gaps in state support systems for rural women. About the Workload and Representation, 55.00 percent report unequal household workloads and only 25.00 percent participate in community governance, reflecting limited social empowerment and decision-making roles. About the Other Gender Issues, 21.00 percent face early marriage and 28.00 percent experience sexual harassment in public spaces, emphasizing intersectional vulnerabilities among young women.

**Table 3:** Suggestions from Rural Women to Empower Women and Protect Human Rights

S. No	Particulars/Suggestions	Total (n=100)	% of Responses
1	Improve access to education for girls	72	72.00
2	Awareness campaigns about legal rights and protections	65	65.00
3	Better access to healthcare and nutrition	58	58.00
4	Economic support through Self-Help Groups and skill training	69	69.00
5	Strict enforcement against domestic violence	61	61.00
6	Measures to reduce early marriage practices	44	44.00
7	Improve safety in public spaces	55	55.00
8	Facilitate women's participation in decision-making in family and community	53	53.00
9	Access to government schemes and financial aid	60	60.00
10	Awareness on gender equality and social norms	50	50.00
11	Reduce dowry practices and social pressures	47	47.00
12	Support for entrepreneurship and small business opportunities	64	64.00
13	Legal literacy programs in villages	49	49.00
14	Vocational and skill development programs	67	67.00
15	Encouragement to participate in politics and community leadership	42	42.00

(\*Multiple Responses)

The above table explored that about the Education and Awareness, a high percentage; 72.00 percent suggested better education for girls and 65.00 percent emphasized legal rights awareness, indicating that rural women perceive education and legal knowledge as central to empowerment. About the Economic Empowerment, 69.00 percent recommended Self-Help Groups and skill training, while 64.00 percent suggested support for entrepreneurship, reflecting women's demand for financial independence to improve their social status. About the Health and Safety, 58.00 percent prioritized healthcare access and 55.00 percent suggested improving public safety, highlighting that women recognize the need for physical well-being and security to fully exercise their rights. About the Social Norms and Legal Protection, 61.00 percent demanded stricter enforcement against domestic violence, 47.00 percent urged reduction of dowry practices and 50.00 percent suggested gender equality awareness, demonstrating awareness of social and cultural barriers restricting women. About the Political and Community Participation, 53.00 percent suggested involvement in family and community decision-making and 42.00 percent encouraged political participation, showing recognition of empowerment through leadership and agency. About the Intersectional Support:, Suggestions such as reducing early marriage; 44.00 percent and access to government schemes; 60.00 percent indicate that women are aware of structural inequalities and want targeted policy measures.

### Major Findings

Based on above analyses, the findings of this study reveal that Haryana presents a complex and uneven trajectory in women's empowerment. While notable progress has been made in areas such as education, sports and political participation, deep-rooted structural inequalities and

patriarchal norms continue to limit the realization of women's human rights. The major findings are explored as follows-

- **Age Distribution:** The majority of women surveyed fall in the 26-35 years age group 37.00 percent.
- **Education Levels:** 35.00 percent of women have completed secondary education, while 24.00 percent have higher secondary or above.
- **Occupational Status:** Over half 56.00 percent of women are homemakers, while only 14.00 percent are engaged in SHGs or small business activities.
- **Marital Status:** A significant majority 78.00 percent are married, suggesting household responsibilities may influence their social and economic participation.
- **Household Income:** 42.00 percent of women belongs to households earning below Rs. 50,000 annually, showing high economic vulnerability and the importance of financial inclusion schemes.
- **Decision-Making and Financial Participation:** 62.00 percent of women reported improved decision-making at home and 48.00 percent participate in family financial decisions, showing increased household empowerment.
- **Economic Engagement:** Only 35.00 percent of women are involved in SHGs or small businesses, indicating moderate economic empowerment despite government initiatives like Skill India and Start-up India.
- **Education and Skill Development:** 54.00 percent of women accessed educational or skill development programs, reflecting the importance of literacy and vocational training in fostering empowerment.
- **Awareness and Rights:** 70.00 percent of women are aware of their rights and 65.00 percent know legal protections against domestic violence and dowry, suggesting that awareness campaigns have made an impact but require further reinforcement.
- **Mobility and Health:** 44.00 percent of women can travel independently and 51.00 percent report improved access to healthcare, indicating moderate improvements in autonomy and well-being.
- **Confidence and Participation:** 57.00 percent of women feel more confident, while only 29-33.00 percent participates in governance, social, or cultural activities, highlighting a gap between awareness and active social engagement.
- **Children's Education and Asset Ownership:** 61.00 percent influence children's education decisions, but only 28.00 percent have control over household assets, showing partial empowerment with limitations in economic and legal autonomy.
- **Education and Awareness:** 48.00 percent of women reported limited access to education, while 42.00 percent are unaware of their legal rights. This reflects the gap in literacy and empowerment programs reaching rural women.
- **Mobility and Autonomy:** 56.00 percent face restricted mobility, indicating strong patriarchal norms limiting freedom, corroborating previous studies about Haryana's rural women.
- **Domestic Violence and Social Pressure:** 33.00 percent reported domestic abuse and 37.00 percent face dowry-related pressures, highlighting the persistence of gender-based violence and traditional social norms.
- **Economic Challenges:** 61.00 percent indicated limited participation in economic activities and 59.00 percent are economically dependent on male family members.

- **Healthcare and Social Services:** 46.00 percent reported poor access to healthcare and 39.00 percent have limited access to government schemes, showing gaps in state support systems for rural women.
- **Workload and Representation:** 55.00 percent report unequal household workloads and only 25.00 percent participate in community governance, reflecting limited social empowerment and decision-making roles.
- **Other Gender Issues:** 21.00 percent face early marriage and 28.00 percent experience sexual harassment in public spaces, emphasizing intersectional vulnerabilities among young women.
- **Education and Awareness:** A high percentage 72.00 percent suggested better education for girls and 65.00 percent emphasized legal rights awareness, indicating that rural women perceive education and legal knowledge as central to empowerment.
- **Economic Empowerment:** 69.00 percent recommended Self-Help Groups and skill training, while 64.00 percent suggested support for entrepreneurship, reflecting women's demand for financial independence to improve their social status.
- **Health and Safety:** 58.00 percent prioritized healthcare access and 55.00 percent suggested improving public safety, highlighting that women recognize the need for physical well-being and security to fully exercise their rights.
- **Social Norms and Legal Protection:** 61.00 percent demanded stricter enforcement against domestic violence, 47.00 percent urged reduction of dowry practices.
- **Political and Community Participation:** 53.00 percent suggested involvement in family and community decision-making and 42.00 percent encouraged political participation, showing recognition of empowerment through leadership and agency.
- **Intersectional Support:** Suggestions such as reducing early marriage 44.00 percent and access to government schemes 60.00 percent indicate that women are aware of structural inequalities and want targeted policy measures.

It is explored that that socio-economic challenges, limited education, restricted workforce participation and low household income continue to affect women in rural Haryana. Targeted interventions in literacy, skill development and economic empowerment are critical for bridging the gender gap and ensuring sustainable empowerment in the state. It is found that rural women in Haryana have experienced noticeable positive changes in decision-making, rights awareness, confidence and access to education, yet economic participation, mobility and social engagement remain limited. Targeted interventions are necessary to translate awareness and skills into tangible empowerment outcomes. It is highlighted that rural women in Haryana face multiple intertwined socio-cultural, economic and legal challenges, limiting their empowerment. While awareness of rights and access to education is gradually improving, patriarchal norms, financial dependence and limited mobility continue to restrict their personal, social and economic growth. Targeted interventions addressing education, legal awareness, economic opportunities and safety are critical to bridging the gender gap in rural areas. The above responses show that rural women in Haryana are aware of the multiple facets of empowerment, including education, economic independence, legal rights, health, safety and political participation. Their

suggestions align with broader research findings on the barriers to empowerment, highlighting the need for integrated, grassroots-focused interventions that combine education, skill development, legal literacy, health services and community engagement to bridge the gender gap effectively.

### Suggestions for Bridging the Gender Gap in Haryana

- i). **Strengthen Legal Awareness:** Conduct regular workshops and awareness drives to educate women and communities about laws protecting women, including the Domestic Violence Act, Dowry Prohibition Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.
- ii). **Enhance Women's Education:** Provide scholarships, mid-day meal incentives, free transport and girl-friendly school infrastructure to increase enrollment and retention, especially in rural areas.
- iii). **Promote Vocational and Skill Training:** Expand vocational training centers in urban and rural regions for skills such as tailoring, IT, entrepreneurship and digital literacy to increase employability.
- iv). **Improve Healthcare Access:** Strengthen maternal, reproductive and preventive healthcare facilities, particularly in remote areas and raise awareness about nutrition, family planning and early screening programs.
- v). **Prevent Gender-Based Violence:** Enhance the capacity of police and Mahila Police Stations, enforce stricter penalties for crimes against women and provide helplines and crisis centers for immediate support.
- vi). **Combat Female Foeticide and Child Marriage:** Strictly monitor the implementation of laws against prenatal sex determination and early marriage and organize awareness campaigns promoting the value of the girl child.
- vii). **Foster Community Sensitization:** Conduct gender-sensitization programs targeting men, adolescents and community leaders to challenge patriarchal norms and promote gender equality.
- viii). **Support Marginalized Women:** Implement targeted interventions for Dalit, tribal and low-income women, addressing their intersectional challenges in education, employment and social inclusion.
- ix). **Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish systematic evaluation of women's empowerment schemes to track progress, identify gaps and ensure accountability in policy implementation.
- x). **Develop Safe Spaces:** Create women-friendly spaces such as community centers, shelters and counseling facilities where women can seek protection, guidance and peer support.
- xi). **Promote Cultural Change:** Use media campaigns, school curricula and local initiatives to address gender stereotypes, normalize shared household responsibilities and recognize women's contributions to society.

### Social Work Strategies to Protect Human Rights of Women and to Bridge the Gender Gap in Haryana

- i). **Awareness Campaigns on Women's Rights:** Conduct widespread community campaigns to educate women and men about legal rights, including protection from domestic violence, sexual harassment and child marriage, using workshops, street plays and local media.
- ii). **Skill Development and Vocational Training:** Develop women-centric vocational programs in tailoring, computer literacy, financial management and entrepreneurship to enhance employability and economic

independence.

- iii). **Strengthening Self-Help Groups:** Facilitate the formation and support of SHGs to foster collective bargaining, social networking, savings and income-generating activities among rural and marginalized women.
  - iv). **Educational Outreach Programs:** Promote girl child education through scholarships, school mentoring programs and awareness campaigns on the importance of completing secondary and higher education.
  - v). **Counseling and Mental Health Support:** Provide access to counseling, helplines and trauma-informed therapy for women facing domestic abuse, sexual harassment, or social isolation, ensuring mental well-being.
  - vi). **Combating Female Foeticide and Child Marriage:** Work with local authorities, schools and health workers to monitor birth sex ratios, enforce laws against prenatal sex determination and prevent early marriages.
  - vii). **Political Empowerment Initiatives:** Train women to participate in local governance, elections and decision-making processes, encouraging leadership at Panchayat and urban municipal levels.
  - viii). **Safe Spaces and Shelters:** Establish women's shelters, crisis centers and safety networks to provide immediate protection for survivors of domestic violence or trafficking.
  - ix). **Digital Literacy and Information Access:** Equip women with skills to access government portals, helplines, online educational resources and employment platforms, bridging the digital divide.
  - x). **Intersectional Focus on Marginalized Women:** Target interventions for Dalit, tribal and rural women, recognizing compounded disadvantages due to caste, economic status and geographic isolation, ensuring inclusive empowerment strategies.
- These social work interventions are designed to address structural, cultural and individual barriers faced by women in Haryana.

## Conclusion

The analysis of women's human rights and empowerment in Haryana highlights a complex landscape of progress and persistent challenges. While the state has made notable strides in areas such as female literacy, school enrollment, higher education participation and sports achievements, significant gaps remain in workforce participation, economic independence and political representation. Therefore it is suggested that addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach, combining legal enforcement, education and skill development, economic incentives, healthcare access, political representation and cultural sensitization. Targeted interventions for marginalized women and systemic monitoring of empowerment programs are essential to ensure inclusion and effectiveness.

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