



Women Empowerment in Haryana vs India: A Comparative Analysis

Rahul Rathee

Department of Social Work,

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi, India,

Abstract

This research examines the status of women's empowerment in Haryana compared to the rest of India, focusing on key indicators such as education, economic participation, political representation, health, and sports achievements. The analysis reveals that while Haryana outperforms national averages in areas like literacy rates and sports accomplishments, it faces significant challenges in women's workforce participation and economic empowerment. The state shows mixed results in health indicators, with better performance in some aspects but lagging in others. The paper identifies sociocultural, financial, and political barriers as major challenges to implementing women's empowerment policies effectively. It highlights the need for targeted interventions to address the intersectional challenges faced by marginalized groups of women. The research emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach to women's empowerment, suggesting improvements in education systems, gender equity in leadership, reproductive health, and dismantling of socio-economic constraints. Future research directions include evaluating the effectiveness of current policies and exploring community-based approaches to enhance the impact of empowerment initiatives. The findings contribute to the existing literature on women's empowerment and offer practical recommendations for achieving gender equity in Haryana and India.

Keywords: *Women's rights, Haryana, India, Workforce participation, political barriers,*

Introduction

Women's Empowerment denotes the enhancement of the status of women in all facets of life social, economic, political, and health. It includes ensuring the creation of a conducive and empowering environment that enables women to make their own decisions and have similar opportunities to those available to men in society (Mahato et al., 2023). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines women's empowerment as 'women's right to decide on the choice defining their lives, their access to resources and the freedom to make strategic life decisions.' Empowerment assists in eliminating

problems that affect women, enables them to participate in decision-making processes, and enables them to be economically productive which assists in transforming them and the society too. The position of women in the development of any given society cannot be overemphasized. Society gains value every time women are empowered because it becomes their prime responsibility to work on social justice, economy, and sustainability. They help in the development of the economy by increasing the number of people in the productive age group, starting new projects, and improving productivity (Waghmode & Kalyan, 2014). Besides, empowered and educated women also contribute to better health and education of children; hence, creating a positive cycle for future generations (Kabeer, 2020). Empowerment also assists in combating gender-based violence and discrimination, as well as enhancing gender equality (Chakrabarti & Biswas, 2012).

The objective of this review paper shall be to highlight the current status of women's empowerment in Haryana about the general outlook on women's empowerment across India. Hence, it is the scope of this paper to outline the achievements made and the challenges encountered by women in Haryana in the core domains of education, economy, politics and social esteem while presenting sequent recommendations for policymakers and other stakeholders to improve women empowerment in the region (Mahata et al., 2017). Haryana is one of the states of India located in the Northern region and their socio-economic setting is highly influential on women empowerment. As a state with an agrarian economy and patriarchal culture, Haryana has ranked low in terms of literacy rate and willingness of women to join the workforce, even lower than the national average according to a survey conducted by Narayan in 2016. Nevertheless, there appear to be recent attempts with policy measures to try to tackle these issues and attempt to achieve gender parity. Therefore, to understand the efficacy of these measures, the progress of Haryana needs to be compared with national averages which is evident through the analysis done in this paper (Kumar, 2017).

Historical Context and Background

Women's roles in India and Haryana have conventionally been less progressive due to conservatism and ineffective reform passed down by historical and cultural conditioning. As we look back into ancient and medieval India, women were mostly bound to household chores and were restricted from education, employment, and politics (Kaur, 2010). Such restrictive norms were especially prevalent in Haryana, which, along with the general preference for male children and the dowry system, perpetuated women's marginalization (Nagpal, 2013).

Social customs of the society especially in the Haryana culture are still predominant with the women folk and they have worsened the gender prejudice completely. Gender stereotypes being firmly entrenched in society's collective consciousness meant that gender bias was able to influence the restriction of women's freedom to move about, decide on matters, and access the capital. Patriarchal norms such as child marriage and imparting gender roles within households such as girls graduating with limited prospects of attaining better education and being employed (Kumar, 2017). These norms also impacted women's self-development aspect as well as suppressed their role in wider society development.

However, India has recorded some major milestones in women's empowerment. The post-independence period of constitutional reforms saw some improvement with the formulation of constitutional provisions

for women's rights. Legal reforms like the Hindu Marriage Act 1955 and the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 were initiated to safeguard women and fight social evils (Chandra, 2007). Further, the 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendments in the 1990s provided for the reservation of seats for women in local government to enhance political leadership and participation at the grassroots level (Fadia, 2014). These milestones have been useful for women's empowerment though inequalities still exist and region-specific such as Haryana need continued efforts and focused initiatives (Raju, 2006).

Key Indicators of Women's Empowerment

The most common factors used to assess women's status include education and literacy levels, economic activity and employment, political status and leadership, and physical and mental health. These indicators capture various aspects of empowerment to help enhance the position of women and ensure their participation in the advancement of society and decision-making processes. As a result, the policymakers and gender stakeholders can be able to work on the milestones formulated hence eradicating discrimination of women all over the world.

Education and Literacy

India has placed several national policies and programs on the education of women into practice. The National Policy on Education which was formulated in 1986 was revised in 1992 aiming at removing gender inequality and encouraging education for girls. The Right to Education Act of 2009 which provided for free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 also girls benefited a lot as their enrolment rates in schools increased (Ahmad, 2011). Particular emphasis was placed on the girl child with the launch of the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" program in Initial campaigns in 2015, reinforcing education and the social status of the girl child in states such as Haryana that portrayed high levels of gender disparity.

Metric	Haryana (Women)	National Average (Women)	Source
Literacy Rate	75.9%	70.3%	Census of India 2011
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)(Class 1-12)	95.7%	87.68%	UDISE+ Report 2021-22
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education (18-23 Years)	37%	28.5%	All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-22
Women with 10 or more years of schooling	49.5%	41.0%	National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019-21

Table 1: Comparative Table of Education & Literacy- India Vs Haryana

Even so, inequality remains an issue. Women in India have lower literacy levels as compared to men in the country. According to recent data, the current national female literacy rate is about 70. 3% while the male literacy rate was 84% (Chandra, 2007). The literacy rate among women in the state of Haryana is

75.9 %, which is above the national average of 70.3 % population according to the Census of India 2011. This shows an enhanced status of female literacy in Haryana, making the effort to implement worthy educational policies and initiatives (Kumar, 2017). Though some progress has been made, there are still some militating factors, especially in rural areas where sociocultural factors have strong negative impacts on female education (Mahata et al., 2017). The gross enrolment rate for the girls of class 1-12 is even slightly higher in Haryana at 95.7 %, 8.02 % more than the national average of 87.68%, as stated by the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) Report 2021-22. This suggests that Haryana has been more successful in enrolling girls in school and retaining them through secondary education. This is due to the role played by the state in promoting quality primary education for the girl child as a prerequisite to other education levels (Nagpal, 2013).

In terms of higher education, Haryana is above the national average, GER in higher education for women in Haryana is 8.5 percentage points higher than the national average. This indicates that women in Haryana have better access to and participation in higher education compared to the national scenario. This higher participation rate in tertiary education implies that more women in Haryana are attending institutions of higher learning thus increasing employment chances and economic independence (Sharma, 2017).

There are several issues and obstacles regarding the education of women in Haryana and other parts of India. Girls are also denied their right to education by sociocultural practices that give more importance to the education of boys and compel girls to drop out of school because of early marriage, teenage pregnancy, and other cultural practices (Ahmad, 2011). Early marriage and bearing of children also affect education for young women in other ways as well. Another significant factor is the economic factor, where families with fewer means may prefer to spend more on their sons' education than their daughters' (Nayak & Mahanta, 2012). Furthermore, issues to do with safety and lack of basic amenities such as girls' washrooms compound the drop-out rates for girls in school (Waghamode & Kalyan, 2014). But despite all these challenges In Haryana, a higher percentage of women i.e. 49.5 % have completed 10 or more years of schooling compared to the national average of 41 %, with a difference of 8.5 percentage points. This suggests that women in Haryana are more likely to complete secondary education and potentially pursue higher studies.

Therefore, national policies offer a good start to the advancement of women's education; however, regional disparities as exemplified by Haryana call for special strategies. Mitigating sociocultural barriers; enhancing physical facilities; and providing sufficient economic funding for female education as measures towards achieving parity in education for women in Haryana and India (Chakrabarti & Biswas, 2012).

Workforce and Economic Participation

In the recent past, India has launched various national programs for women's economic development like "Skill India" and "Start-up India" etc. Hence, training within the framework of Skill India endeavours to enhance skills with market relevance and to make women empowered and employable (Rani & Agrawal, 2020). Start-up India, another vast campaign, helps women entrepreneurs through funding, and hand-

holding besides a ready-made business environment (Mahato et al., 2023). These programs are aimed at the provision of women’s opportunities in respective sectors so that their economic role is improved.

Indicator	Haryana	India	Year	Source
Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) all ages(ps+ss)	15.9%	27.8%	2022-23	Annual Report of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23
Female Worker Population Ratio (WPR) all ages (ps+ss)	15.2%	27.0%	2022-23	Annual Report of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23
Female Unemployment Rate (UR) average (ps+ss)	4.7%	2.9%	2022-23	Annual Report of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23

Table 2: Comparative Table of Workforce Participation- India Vs Haryana

However, women's employment figures point towards the fact that the position of women in Haryana is much worse than the overall picture painted for the whole of India. Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is the proportion of women who are at work or searching for employment. At 15.9%, Haryana’s female LFPR across all ages for usual status (principal activity status + subsidiary economic activity status) is significantly lower than that of the nation, with a difference of 11.9 percentage points which means Haryana’s women are much less likely to participate in the labour force compared to the country as a whole. The reasons behind this phenomenon could be cultural norms, low job opportunities, and poor educational attainments among women in Haryana.

“Female Worker Population Ratio” is used to identify the proportion of women who have jobs, whether they are looking for jobs or not. The female worker population ratio (WPR) for all usual statuses (principal + subsidiary) across age groups is at 15.2 percent, the female WPR in Haryana is much lower than India’s 27.0 percent, with the national average having a gap of 11.8 percentage points. This suggests that a smaller proportion of women in Haryana are actually employed compared to the national average. This aligns with the LFPR data and further emphasizes the lower economic participation of women in Haryana.

The Female Unemployment Rate (UR) measures the percentage of women in the labour force who are not currently employed but are actively seeking work. Haryana's higher unemployment rate of 4.7 % suggests that even among those women who are part of the labour force, a higher proportion are unable to find work compared to the national average of 2.9 %. This could point to more significant challenges in job availability or accessibility for women in Haryana.

Research indicates that women's economic participation is significantly lower in Haryana compared to the national average, with both LFPR and WPR as evidence. This difference in women’s engagement in the labour force is structured. The difference in LFPR and WPR between Haryana and India are consistent ranging from 11.8-11.9 percent points thereby indicating that there is an inherent distinction in how

women from Haryana are engaged in the labour market, compared to other parts of India. Nevertheless, despite this lower labour force participation ratio, unemployment soars high hitting at 4.7 % in Haryana thus; making it more difficult for women on job-hunt in the state. The data shows that Haryana faces more serious challenges than the rest of India in promoting women's economic power and including them in the workforce as indicated by the information gathered. Consequently, focused interventions are required in Haryana to enhance women's economic engagement and employment opportunities.”

Women in Haryana state, and all parts of India, work as farmers, factory workers, and in services. Even though women are involved in most farming activities, many are involved as unpaid workers on their family farms. However, they are mostly ignored and sometimes their input is either not fully acknowledged or their significance is not fully captured in composited reports (Mahata et al., 2017). Women's representation is still negligible in the industrial sector mainly due to gender prejudice and restricted chances of technical training (Biswas & Banu, 2023). Over time there has been a gradual increase in Female labour force participation within the services sector and the width gap is narrowest in Education, health, and retailing albeit still with high barriers (Sharma, 2017).

Of recent, self-employment or entrepreneurship has become some of the most important forms of women's employment. Other programs such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for Girl's Empowerment in Haryana State empower women to engage in petty business and hence have incomes to help their households as well as contribute to society (Setia & Tandon, 2017). However, other challenges like; access to credit, lack of business education, and social constraints still pose a big problem to women wishing to venture into business (Nagpal, 2013).

Therefore, alongside the countrywide programs like Skill India and Start-up India that are helpful for women's economic engagement the issues identified in Haryana remind us that a regional approach is needed. Integration of women in education, vocation, and business requires improvement to achieve the economic goal and sound economic and sustainable development in Haryana and India (Mahata et al., 2023).

Political Representation and Decision-Making

Voting rights, leadership, and participation in politics are some of the ways women's rights can be empowered with the view of coming up with policies that suit them. They help women have the ability to make laws, fight for women-friendly policies, and even get leadership positions in the political system of the country. While analysing the status of women in political positions, it is imperative to look at the local, state, and national levels to determine how far we have come and the setbacks encountered in realizing equal representation in politics.

Indicator	Haryana	India	Year	Source
Women MPs in Lok Sabha	10% (1 out of 10)	13.6% (74 out of 543)	2024	Election Commission of India
Women MLAs in State Assembly	10% (9 out of 90)	9% (average across states)	2019-2023	PRS Legislative Research (Institute for Policy Research Studies)
Elected Women Representatives (EWRS) In Panchayati Raj Institutions	42.1%	45.6%	2018	Ministry of Panchayati Raj
Women mayors in urban local bodies	42%	37% (average)	2018	State Election Commissions
Women contestants in Lok Sabha elections	7 %	10 %	2024	Election Commission of India

Table 3: Political Representation of Women in Haryana vs India

While women in Haryana have advanced in political status and leadership, there is still some distance they need to travel to experience parity as compared to women across the country. Compared to the national average, women's political representation in Haryana is diverse and complex with a few areas having a better representation while others are left behind. At the national level (Lok Sabha), Haryana has slightly less representation than the national average regarding elected MPs and contestants alike. In terms of women MLAs, however, Haryana performs slightly better than the national average at about 10%, though this is also low. In urban local bodies particularly, Haryana depicts good performance in local governance with mayors from its towns being more female compared to the national average. On the other hand, both figures are relatively high for Haryana and India (over 40% each) for Panchayati Raj Institutions probably because of reservation policies. This data implies that local levels have higher women's political presence in comparison to state and nationwide levels within Haryana and India as a whole. The divergence from a higher percentage of representation in local bodies to a lower percentage of it in state legislature and parliament suggest that there may be barriers for women moving into top positions of political office. There is therefore need for more engagement of women candidates in Lok Sabha elections from Haryana which recorded only 7% against 10% nationally. Efforts to increase women's participation and representation at all levels of governance, particularly at state and national levels, remain crucial.

Indicator	Haryana	India	Source
Currently married women who usually participate in three household decisions	87.5%	88.7%	NFHS-5 (2019-21)
Women who worked in the last 12 months and were paid in cash	18.8%	25.4%	NFHS-5 (2019-21)
Women owning a house or land	39.3	43.3%	NFHS-5 (2019-21)
Women have a bank or savings account that they use	73.6%	78.6	NFHS-5 (2019-21)
Women have a mobile phone that they use	50.4%	54%	NFHS-5 (2019-21)

Table 4: Comparative Table of Decision Making of Women- India Vs Haryana

Across all indicators except household decision-making, Haryana consistently falls below the national average in measures of women's empowerment and decision-making capacity. The gap is most pronounced in women's paid work, with Haryana 6.6 percentage points behind the national average. This suggests significant challenges in women's economic participation and financial independence in the state. While Haryana is close to the national average in women's participation in household decisions, it lags in indicators of financial and economic empowerment (paid work, property ownership, bank account ownership). The lower rates of property ownership and bank account usage in Haryana indicate that women in the state may have less control over financial resources compared to the national average. The slight lag in mobile phone ownership suggests that women in Haryana may have somewhat less access to information and communication technologies, which can be crucial for empowerment and decision-making in the modern context. Despite being below the national average in most categories, it's worth noting that Haryana still shows relatively high rates of women's participation in household decisions (87.5%) and bank account ownership (73.6%). The data suggests that while women in Haryana have a strong role in household decision-making, they face more challenges in achieving economic independence and control over resources compared to the national average.

This analysis reveals that while Haryana is close to the national average in some aspects of women's decision-making roles, there is room for improvement, particularly in areas related to economic empowerment and resource control. Policies and programs aimed at increasing women's paid work opportunities, property ownership, and access to financial services and technology could help bridge these gaps.

Health and well-being

Available healthcare and nutrition represent valuable parameters of women's status which demonstrate their ability to obtain necessary provisions. Women's health indicators are not very different in Haryana compared to the national level in some aspects and are worse in others. The estimated life expectancy of females in Haryana is 72.3 years slightly above the national average of 70.7 years (SRS Statistical Report, 2018). Currently, Haryana has reported 91 MMR per 100000 live births, which is comparatively lower than the national rate of 113 (Special Bulletin on MMR, SRS, 2016-2018). For instance, Haryana has a lower IMR of 30 per 1000 live births compared to the national average of 32 (SRS Bulletin, 2020).

Indicator	Haryana	India	Year	Source
Life expectancy at birth (females)	72.3 years	70.7 years	2014-2018	SRS Statistical Report 2018
Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live births)	91	113	2016-2018	Special Bulletin on MMR, SRS
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	30	32	2019	SRS Bulletin 2020
Anaemia among women (15-49 years)	60.4%	57%	2019-2021	NFHS-5
Women with Body Mass Index below normal	15.1%	18.7%	2019-2021	NFHS-5
Institutional births	94.9%	88.6%	2019-2021	NFHS-5
Women who have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS	19.7%	21.6%	2019-2021	NFHS-5
Women using hygienic methods during menstruation	93.2%	77.3%	2019-2021	NFHS-5

Table 5: Comparative Table of Health & Well-Being- India Vs Haryana

Nevertheless, certain areas require more enhancement. A study conducted in Haryana thus revealed that 62.04% of women in the age group 15-49 are anaemic, while the national rate stands at 57%. Haryana has a smaller number of women having Body Mass Index (BMI) lower than normal at 15%. It also performs well in institutional births (94.9%). Women in Haryana have better knowledge about hygienic usage during menstruation than the national average of 77.3%. These indicators depict exemplary aspects and the ones that require enhancement in aspects of women's health and welfare in Haryana. Eradicating anaemia and improving other aspects of nutrition must remain priorities to continue progressing the role of women in the state and their health.

Violence Against Women

Less violence against women is a strong indicator of better women empowerment for several reasons:

1. Safety and security: A reduction in violence suggests that women can live and move more freely without fear, which is fundamental to empowerment.

2. Autonomy: Lower violence rates often correlate with greater respect for women's choices and decisions.

3. Social status: Decreased violence typically reflects improved social attitudes towards women and recognition of their equal rights.

4. Access to opportunities: When women feel safer, they're more likely to pursue education, employment, and public engagement.

5. Mental and physical health: Less violence leads to better overall health, allowing women to more fully participate in society.

6. Legal and institutional support: Lower violence rates often indicate stronger legal protections and institutional support for women's rights.

Gender Based Violence (age 18-49 years)	Haryana	India	Source
Ever-married women who have ever experienced spousal violence	18.2%	29.3%	NFHS-5 (2019-21)
Ever-married women who have experienced physical violence during any pregnancy	1.6%	3.1%	NFHS-5 (2019-21)
Young women aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	0.4%	1.5%	NFHS-5 (2019-21)

Table 6: Comparative Table of Gender-Based Violence Haryana vs India

Across all three indicators, Haryana consistently shows lower rates of gender-based violence compared to the national average. The most significant difference is in spousal violence, where Haryana's rate is considerably lower. This could indicate more equitable marital relationships and better protection for married women in Haryana. The lower rate of violence during pregnancy in Haryana suggests better recognition of women's health and rights during this critical period. The substantially lower rate of sexual violence against young women in Haryana is particularly noteworthy, potentially indicating a safer environment for girls and young women to grow and develop. While these statistics are encouraging for Haryana, it's important to note that any level of gender-based violence is concerning. Even though Haryana's rates are lower than the national average, there's still room for improvement. These lower rates of violence could be indicative of more effective policies, better law enforcement, or more progressive social attitudes toward women in Haryana compared to the national average. The data suggests that women in Haryana might experience a higher degree of empowerment in terms of personal safety and bodily autonomy compared to the national average.

Women's Empowerment in Sports

Haryana is proud to have produced a large number of women athletes on the international level and they have won a large number of medals in the Olympics, Asian Games Commonwealth Games, etc. It has further been observed that the women athletes of Haryana have outclassed their counterparts of other states in sports.

Event	Medals by Women(Team event+ individual) (Haryana)	Medals by Women (Rest of India)	Medals per 1 crore women (Haryana)	Medals per 1 crore women (Rest of India)	Source
Olympics 2020	5 (Team event)	10	4.17	0.15	Sports Authority of India
Asian Games 2018	10	20	8.33	0.31	Sports Authority of India
Commonwealth Games 2018	8	22	6.67	0.34	Sports Authority of India

Table 7: Comparative Table of Women In Sports- India Vs Haryana

In the recently held Tokyo Olympics 2020 they earned 5 Olympic medals while sportsmen of rest of India got 10 Olympic medals women. Similarly in the Asian and Commonwealth Games 2018, the women of Haryana laid claim to 10 and 8 medals respectively. which is much higher than the current national international averages (Sports Authority of India). These achievements paved the way for the fact that women athletes from Haryana possess great potential and talent in serving Indian sports progress.

Haryana, with only 1.8% of India's female population, is producing a disproportionately high number of medal-winning female athletes in major international sporting events. Haryana's strong performance is consistent across different types of international competitions, suggesting a robust sports culture and support system for women athletes. The high medals-per-capita rate indicates that Haryana is extremely efficient in developing world-class female athletes compared to the rest of India.

In conclusion, this data highlights Haryana's exceptional performance in women's sports on the international stage, especially when considering its population size. It suggests that Haryana has created an environment that is particularly conducive to developing world-class female athletes, which could offer valuable lessons for sports development and women's empowerment initiatives across India.

Implementation and Enforcement Challenges: Challenges and Barriers

Some of the challenges that are associated with the implementation and enforcement of women empowerment policies in Haryana and India are as follows. These are complex and include socio-cultural factors, economic factors, and political factors which all work to prevent women empowerment policies

from being effective. This is one of the biggest barriers because socio-cultural beliefs and practices are still a hindrance to women. A large portion of Haryana is still highly patriarchal; women here do not have the freedom to work, attain education, or even be involved in decision-making (Nayak & Mahanta, 2012). Many of these norms are regressive, as they establish gender bias and reaffirm the notion that women belong in the household only (Chakrabarti & Biswas, 2012). Consequently, women experience a lot of opposition when attempting to gain entry into man-dominated occupations or to be independent.

Economic Constraints

This paper further finds that there is also a high level of economic vulnerability which acts as a major factor hindering women empowerment in Haryana and India. Even today, there are Government initiatives like Skill India and Start-up India, nonetheless, there is hardly enough funding and proper infrastructure to back these programs (Rani & Agrawal, 2020). For instance, many women cannot obtain credit and financial services which are vital in the establishment and running of enterprises (Garikipati, 2008). In addition, the inequality in wages remains a problem and many women are paid significantly less than their male counterparts for equal work, thus compromising their financial autonomy and capacity to invest in human capital development (Goel & Ravishankar, 2022).

Political Challenges

Political factors also overlay the prospects of women's advancement in Haryana and India. Though the policies and laws concerning gender equality are put in place they are however also tilted, hampered by bureaucracy and corrupt practices (Ahmad, 2011). Furthermore, women are in scarce supply in politics with lots of districts and parliaments not having women leaders or decision-makers through which they can be able to fight for their rights or lobby the government for transformation of policies (Fadia, 2014). This negative process does not only prevent the formation of proper legislative measures aimed directly at women but also does not promote the recognition of women's problems as the highest-priority task in the political arena.

Intersectional Challenges

The challenges of women's empowerment are even more accentuated among the socially oppressed women in India such as the Dalit, tribal and rural women. These groups suffer intersectionality of disadvantages which aggravates the effects (Mahato et al., 2023). For instance, women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes face dual marginalization in terms of caste and tribe, and they are not only denied their rights in various fields such as education, health, and employment (Mishra & Banerjee, 2024). Socio-cultural factors are also a concern due to limited mobility and restricted access to governmental plans and programs for rural women especially women of lower income brackets.

Altogether, many socio-cultural, economic, and political factors restrict women's empowering measures and their application in India and Haryana in particular. Top-down, patriarchy restricts women's opportunities and choices, and bottom-up, their financial vulnerability and unequal wages erode their economic agency. Political barriers such as procedures and rigidity, and lack of adequate political influence slow down the advancement. Moreover, as these patients experience pre-existing intersectional

issues, these compound the challenges they face, signifying the need for intersectional approaches in providing patient-centered care (Goel & Ravishankar, 2022). It is possible to achieve the desired goal of implementing better strategies for women's empowerment when the varied barriers that exist are acknowledged and then addressed (Mahato et al., 2023).

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of women's empowerment in Haryana versus India reveals a complex landscape of progress and persistent challenges. While Haryana has made significant strides in certain areas, such as higher literacy rates and improved political representation at local levels, it lags behind in others, particularly in workforce participation and economic empowerment. The state's performance in education is commendable, with higher literacy rates and enrolment ratios compared to national averages. However, the stark contrast in labour force participation rates, with Haryana significantly below the national average, highlights a critical area for improvement.

The health indicators present a mixed picture, with Haryana showing better performance in some aspects like institutional births and life expectancy, but facing challenges in others, such as higher rates of anaemia among women. Notably, Haryana's achievements in women's sports are exceptional, demonstrating the potential for women's empowerment through targeted initiatives.

The research underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to women's empowerment, addressing socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers. Future policies should focus on enhancing economic opportunities, ensuring gender equity in leadership positions, improving reproductive health, and dismantling socioeconomic constraints. Additionally, the implementation of existing policies requires strengthening, with a focus on intersectional challenges faced by marginalized groups. By addressing these issues comprehensively, Haryana can serve as a model for women's empowerment, not only catching up to national averages but potentially surpassing them in various aspects of gender equality.

Future Research Approach

Future research should look at the effectiveness of such policies and discover the lack of implementation. Explorative research undertaken in empowerment programs can help to obtain significant results that will allow for the improvement of practices in the future (Samanta, 2020). Finally, an empowering action research approach that includes community participation and embraces indigenous knowledge also increases the impact of empowerment interventions and work towards ensuring women's sustainable and non-exclusionary rights in the development of Haryana and India (Kumar, V., 2017).

References

1. Ahmad, J. (2011). Women's empowerment and gender equality to promote education: A review. *Economic Affairs*, 56(4), 347-352.
2. Biswas, B., & Banu, N. (2023). Economic empowerment of rural and urban women in India: A comparative analysis. *Spatial Information Research*, 31(1), 73-89. Doi: 10.1007/s41324-022-00472-3
3. Chahal, M., Kumar, P., & Lamba, K. (2021). Role of women in MGNREGA in Kaithal district of Haryana, India. *International Journal of Islamic Business and Management Review*, 1(1), 48-55. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54099/ijibmr.v1i1.41>
4. Chakrabarti, S., & Biswas, C. S. (2012). An exploratory analysis of women's empowerment in India: A structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of Development Studies*, 48(1), 164-180. DOI:10.1080/00220388.2011.615920
5. Chandra, R. (2007, December). Women empowerment in India: Milestones & challenges. In National conference on “What it takes to eradicate poverty”, organized by the PACS Programme, New Delhi.
6. Fadia, K. (2014). Women's empowerment through political participation in India. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 60(3), 537-548. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001955612014031>
7. Fletcher, E., Pande, R., & Moore, C. M. T. (2017). Women and work in India: Descriptive evidence and a review of potential policies.
8. Garikipati, S. (2008). The impact of lending to women on household vulnerability and women's empowerment: Evidence from India. *World Development*, 36(12), 2620-2642.
9. Goel, M. M., Goyal, V. P., & Walia, S. (2019, February). Microfinance as a tool for gender equity in rural development: A case study of Haryana. In The 9th International Conference Rural Research & Planning Group.
10. Goel, M., & Ravishankar, N. (2022). Impact of public policy and legislation on autonomy and empowerment of women in India. *Gender Issues*, 39(2), 198-219. DOI:10.1007/s12147-021-09282-7
11. Guylani, M. (2013). Economic and social rights of women in India: A critique.
12. Kabeer, N. (2020). Women's empowerment and economic development: A feminist critique of storytelling practices in “randomista” economics. *Feminist Economics*, 26(2), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2020.1743338>
13. Kar, S. B., Pascual, C. A., & Chickering, K. L. (1999). Empowerment of women for health promotion: A meta-analysis. *Social Science & Medicine*, 49(11), 1431-1460. doi: 10.1016/s0277-9536(99)00200-2.
14. Kaur, S. (2010). Issue of women's empowerment in Punjab: A critique. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 71(2), 333-344.
15. Kumar, A., & Gupta, R. (2017). Achieving gender equality in Haryana: Sensitising men to enable women. *International Journal of Gender Studies in Developing Societies*, 2(3), 177-206.
16. Kumar, V. (2017). Women empowerment: Status and challenges (A study of Haryana State). *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*, 2, 329-333.

17. Mahata, D., Kumar, A., & Rai, A. K. (2017). Female workforce participation and women empowerment in Haryana. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 11(4), 1039.
18. Mahato, T., Jha, M. K., Nayak, A. K., & Kaushal, N. (2023). Empowerment of women through participation in self-help groups: A bibliometric analysis and systematic review. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 17(6), 1511-1538. DOI: 10.1108/JEC-08-2022-0114
19. Mishra, T., & Banerjee, T. (2024). Disempowerment of Women: The Experience of Indian States. *Millennial Asia*, 15(1), 107-137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09763996221081566>.
20. Nagpal, R. (2013). Women's empowerment in Haryana: Role of female representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research (AJMR)*, 2(6), 135-150.
21. Narayan, L. (2016). Women's labour force participation in Haryana: A disaggregated analysis.
22. Nayak, P., & Mahanta, B. (2012). Women empowerment in India. *Bulletin of Political Economy*, 5(2), 155-183. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1320071>
23. Pratibha, Bhayana, S., & Neeraj. (2021). A study of the socio-economic status of women via self-help groups in the rural areas of Karnal district in Haryana. *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, 17(6), 759-776. DOI:10.1504/WREMSD.2021.10040140
24. Raju, S. (2006). Contextualising gender empowerment at the grassroots: A tale of two policy initiatives. *GeoJournal*, 65, 287-300. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-006-0027-8>
25. Rani, P., & Agrawal, R. (2020). Women empowerment through Skill India to achieve gender equality: A review. *Skill India*, 140.
26. Samanta, T. (2020). Women's empowerment as self-compassion?: Empirical observations from India. *PLoS One*, 15(5), e0232526. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232526>
27. Setia, M., & Tandon, M. S. (2017). Impact study of women empowerment through self-help groups: A study of Haryana. *Global Journal of Enterprise Information System*, 9(2), 50-53. DOI:10.18311/gjeis/2017/16010
28. Sharma, S. (2017). The dynamics of women's empowerment: A critical appraisal. *Social Change*, 47(3), 387-405. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049085717712822>
29. Sharma, S. L. (2000). Empowerment without antagonism: A case for reformulation of women's empowerment approach. *Sociological Bulletin*, 49(1), 19-39. DOI:10.1177/0038022920000102
30. Singh, D. (2013). Effectiveness of gender budgeting for women empowerment: Evidence from India. *Finance India*, 27(4).
31. Singh, N., Raj, K., & Kaur, S. (2021). Pros and cons of women empowerment methodologies/approaches: A review. *Agricultural Reviews*, 42(4), 455-459. DOI:10.18805/ag.R-2121
32. Waghmode, R. H., & Kalyan, J. L. (2014). Women empowerment in India: A study. *Reviews of Literature*, 1(7).