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Work, Skills, and Well-Being: The New Dimensions of Women's Professional Lives in Viksit Bharat

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ABSTRACT

The idea of "Viksit Bharat" is gaining traction in national discourse as India approaches its 100th anniversary of independence in 2047. India's progress toward economic, social, and technical advancement is being guided by the Viksit Bharat roadmap. The government agencies aim to improve the accessibility of essential services for underprivileged people. A comprehensive strategy to empower rural India is in line with both international sustainability commitments and national development goals, underscoring its significance in achieving the goal of "Viksit Bharat." Aspects pertaining to the social, economic, and political domains are included in women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is not only crucial, but also necessary for a nation's overall development.

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Introduction

Women are essential to the political and socioeconomic spheres because they are involved in every act of change. Women who are respected, educated, and in good health are seen as essential to achieving greater socioeconomic objectives. In actuality, the idea of Viksit Bharat—an India with a GDP of $30 trillion by 2047—was inspired by their all-around empowerment. Imagine the rate at which India must increase its GDP annually in order to become a developed country in the next 23 years, as well as the role that marginalized people and women in general must play and the position, they are entitled to in an inclusive Bharatvarsh. [1]

Women's active involvement will be essential in determining the economic, social, and political course of India as it moves closer to its goal of Viksit Bharat @ 2047. In India's Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0), integrating women into the workforce is not just an issue of social justice but also a crucial strategic and economic necessity. The involvement of women in critical industries like technology, manufacturing, and digital transformation will decide India's competitiveness in the global market as it strives to become a $10 trillion economy and an industrial powerhouse by 2030. Women currently make up just 18% of India's GDP, which is significantly less than the 37% global average and suggests a large amount of unrealized potential. India has one of the lowest rates of female labour force participation (FLFP) in the world, at about 24% (World Bank, 2022). A significant increase in productivity and innovation could result from raising FLFP to 50%, which is comparable to OECD nations. Stronger industrial growth has been shown in nations with higher rates of female labour force participation, such as China (61%) and Vietnam (73%). [2]

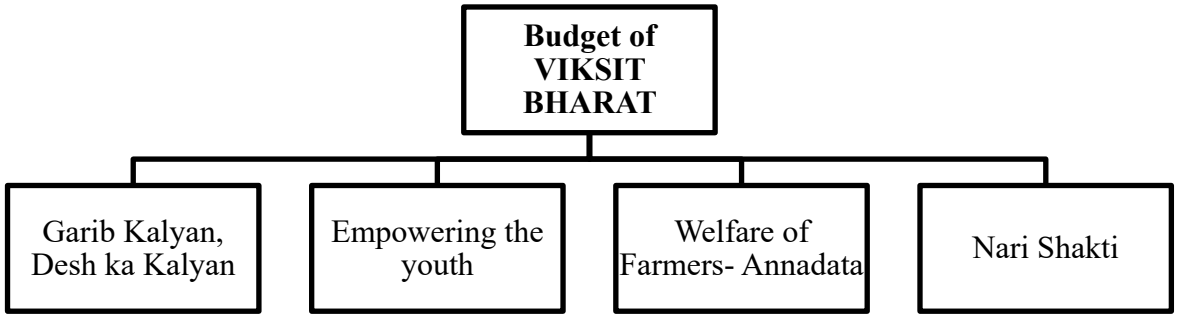


Figure 1: Budget of VIKSIT BHARAT
(Source: pib.gove.in)

The Modi government's gender-inclusive policies, which cover job benefits, pension security, governance, and skill development, demonstrate a comprehensive approach to women's empowerment by fostering an environment for women's economic, social, and political engagement. The government is ensuring that women are not just beneficiaries but also active builders of India's transformation by removing structural impediments and implementing progressive reforms. These programs acknowledge that real progress can only be made when women have equal access to leadership positions, financial security, and opportunities. [3]

Initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana show the government's dedication to enhancing healthcare, financial inclusion, gender parity, and sanitation. PM Modi accomplishes his objective of building a more equitable and inclusive society where everyone may prosper by placing greater emphasis on social welfare. Programs like Jan Aushandu Kendras were able to save 30,000 crore rupees for members of middle-class and poor households by providing pharmaceuticals at an 80% discount. One of the key principles of PM Modi's Viksit Bharat is the use of technology to increase the efficacy and openness of governance [4]. Through initiatives like Aadhaar and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), the government has streamlined the delivery of social payments and subsidies, reduced leakage, and ensured that help reaches the intended recipients directly.

Strengthening Women's Participation in Governance

The Modi government has enacted a number of historic reforms to increase the involvement of women in governance, administration, and economic decision-making because it recognizes that women's

participation is essential to India's advancement. By empowering women as leaders, decision-makers, and business owners, these policies not only advance gender inclusion but also influence India's growth path.

Historic Women's Reservation Bill: 33% Reservation in Legislatures

The Women's Reservation Bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023), which requires 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, was a significant step toward gender-inclusive government. A significant step toward gender parity in Indian politics, this reform guarantees increased participation of women in national leadership, governance, and policymaking.

Despite making up about 50% of the population, women's representation in legislatures remained stable for decades, at about 14% in the Lok Sabha and 10% in State Assemblies. The Women's Reservation Bill ensures that women's perspectives are heard in high-level decision-making by guaranteeing a significant increase in their political participation. It is anticipated that this action will encourage more women to pursue careers in politics, bolstering inclusive and varied leadership throughout the nation. [5]

Empowering Women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

A key component of gender equality is economic empowerment, and the Modi administration's Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) has significantly boosted women-led business. More than 83 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have been established as a result of this effort, directly helping nearly 9 crore women by offering them chances for entrepreneurship, skill development, and financial support.

Rural women's lives have been greatly improved by SHGs, which allow them to work in profitable industries like agribusiness, food processing, handicrafts, and textile manufacturing. Many SHG members are now financially independent, which lessens their reliance on conventional work sources and boosts household income and local economies. [6]

Challenges to women empowerment

In India, women's empowerment is a complex issue impacted by sociocultural, political, and economic factors. It is essential for achieving gender equality, however a number of important barriers stand in the way, such as:

1. Discriminatory Social Norms: Due to the historical background, there are still sociocultural norms that discriminate against men and women, especially in rural areas. Women are generally expected to be modest and restrained, whilst men are frequently taught to be bold.
2. Role Stereotyping: A sizable segment of Indian culture continues to hold the concept that women's tasks should be limited to household chores, with money and outside work being considered the purview of men.
3. Low Literacy Rates: Many households believe that educating girls is not financially feasible due to traditional practices like dowries. As a result, women's literacy rates are still startlingly low, particularly in rural areas.
4. Safety Concerns: Female feticide, domestic abuse, sexual assault, trafficking, forced prostitution, honour killings, and job harassment are just a few examples of the gender-based violence that Indian women often experience, frequently in silence.
5. Limited Employment Opportunities: Biases and discrimination against women in the workforce are caused by gender role preconceptions. For example, because they are responsible for managing the home and raising children, women may be seen as less trustworthy workers.
6. Glass Ceiling: The "Glass Ceiling Effect" indicates that women in India and around the world face unspoken obstacles that prevent them from reaching higher levels of professional success.
7. Economic Disparities: Women's independence is significantly hampered by the large economic gaps between men and women in India, which are caused by a lack of employment possibilities and limited access to financial resources.
8. Low Political Representation: Women are still underrepresented in Parliament and other legislative bodies, which further reduces their ability to influence decisions.

Women's empowerment contributes to India's development and strength. Women may contribute significantly to the development of the nation when they have more access to social support, employment opportunities, and education. Empowered women contribute to economic growth through employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership positions. As a result, there are more workers and the economy is more

productive. According to studies, the economy performs better when men and women have equal opportunity. Regardless of the predominance of men, young girls might be inspired to pursue their goals by well-educated and exceptionally talented female STEM educators [7]. Furthermore, information gained during schooling helps raise understanding of how to maintain hygiene and health for both the person and the family.

Review of Literature

The increasing demand for Indian working women to improve their financial well-being is highlighted by Vasagadekar's (2014) [8] study on employed women, which indicates that modern women with higher education are finding lucrative career prospects. However, a major obstacle is the fact that many women have poorer levels of financial literacy, which affects their capacity to handle investment portfolios on their own. Additionally, because they lack financial literacy, working women in India tend to be reluctant to take risks.

"The world cannot achieve true welfare unless the status of women is uplifted; a bird cannot fly with only one wing," said the esteemed Indian Thinker Swami Vivekananda. "If you educate a man, you educate one person; if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family," said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Mother India is empowered when women are empowered (Singh, 2016 [9]; Prathiba, 2017 [10]).

For families, communities, and the nation to have a prosperous future, women's empowerment is crucial. Future generations will likewise be denied educational chances if women do not acquire an education. Napoleon, the Greek hero, famously said, "Give me a few educated mothers, and I'll give you a heroic race." Abdul Kalam added that empowering women is essential to creating a powerful country. A stable society is guaranteed when women are empowered (Mandal, 2018 [11]; Sobha Rani, 2021 [12]).

These cultural obstacles often dictate how women should act in the home and in society, which restricts women's freedom of choice. Patriarchal ideas that prioritize males over women continue to exist in many facets of Indian society. This could lead to discrimination against women in the political, professional, and educational domains. Traditional gender norms and expectations may limit women's alternatives and choices, especially in areas like marriage, family, and work (Agarwal et al., 2024 [13]; Yashoda, 2021 [14]).

Puvvada Viswanadha Gupta and Aruna Deshpande (2024) [15]: The purpose of this study is to investigate how lifelong learning might help women in Viksit Bharat overcome prejudices in fields that have historically been dominated by males. Their journey highlights the integration of life education outside of formal settings by showcasing resilience, skill development, and societal change. These women make substantial contributions to their families and communities through their professional development and empowerment, upending antiquated conventions and opening the door for a more diverse workforce.

Disha Sirohi and Sanjeev Kumar (2024) [16] This study highlights India's advancements over its subcontinental counterparts while examining the positive trends in the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) and addressing persistent gender inequities. Progress is indicated by notable increases in financial inclusion for Indian women, as shown by account holdings, involvement in mutual funds, and a rise in Demat account openings during the pandemic. In line with India's vision for Viksit Bharat 2047, closing the gender investment gap calls for specialized financial education programs and customized financial solutions.

Arora Rajesh (2024) [17] In order to solve past gender inequities and advance a society in which women have equal rights and opportunities, the article on women's empowerment in India captures a revolutionary journey. This multidimensional strategy challenges long-standing conventions and preconceptions in social, economic, and political spheres. Programs like Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Beti Bachao, and Beti Padhao are examples of initiatives aimed at improving women's economic independence, promoting education, and addressing problems like female foeticide. Programs that emphasize entrepreneurship and skill development, which not only promote financial security but also advance communal development, are essential for economic empowerment. These initiatives demonstrate a dedication to promoting women's empowerment in all spheres of Indian society.

Objectives of the Study

- To Study the Work, Skills, and Well-Being
- To Explain the new Dimensions of Women’s Professional Lives in Viksit Bharat"

- To analyze the transformative impact of the 'Viksit Bharat' vision on women across various socio-economic and political dimensions.
- To Explain women in India's workforce

Hypothesis of the Study

To propose actionable and sustainable strategies aimed at overcoming these identified challenges, thereby facilitating comprehensive women's empowerment towards achieving Viksit Bharat 2047.

1. H 1: Increased Participation and Economic Growth.
2. H 2: Skill Development and Digital Literacy as Catalysts.
3. H 3: Education and Skill Development in Women's Empowerment.
4. H 4: Women-Led Development and Entrepreneurship.
5. H 5: Policy Implementation and Legal Safeguards

Research Methodology

The methodology involved content analysis of published research papers and governmental schemes to synthesize information on gender disparities, economic participation, social welfare, and policy reforms concerning women's roles in national development. The aim was to provide a holistic overview of the current landscape, drawing insights from diverse sources to support the challenges identified and the strategies proposed for women's empowerment in the context of Viksit Bharat 2047. This research employs a qualitative approach, using content analysis to examine existing research on women's empowerment and its role in achieving the vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047." The study systematically reviews academic articles, government reports, policy documents, and international indices to identify the key barriers and enablers of women's empowerment in India. The analysis is guided by the GYAN framework, which underpins India's developmental goals, focusing specifically on the 'Nari' pillar—representing women's empowerment.

Data Analysis

The percentage of women in India's workforce has significantly increased. Ensuring that women make up at least 70% of the workforce and are equal players in India's growth story is one of the main pillars of achieving #ViksitBharat. Between 2017–18 and 2023–2024, the female labour force participation rate (LFPR) rose from 23.3% to 41.7%. [18]

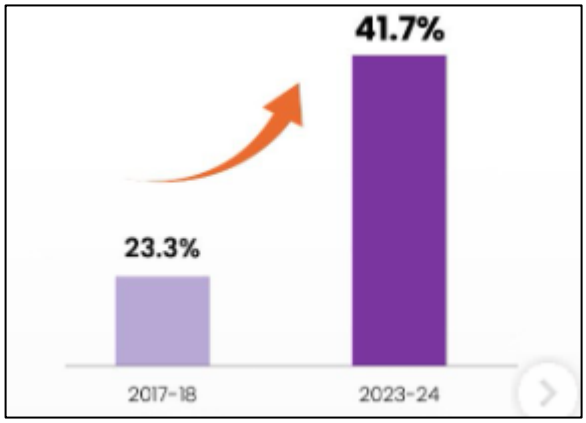


Figure 2: Women labour force participation rate (LFPR)

(Source: pibindia)

According to the figure, almost half of the respondents cited family background and support as the biggest obstacle. Gender discrimination and work-life balance issues also show up as significant obstacles, impacting more than 40% of participants. Another major problem that emphasizes the need for direction and role models is a lack of mentorship and assistance. Opportunities are still influenced by societal norms and expectations, while a smaller but significant segment is impacted by restricted access to networking and education. [19]

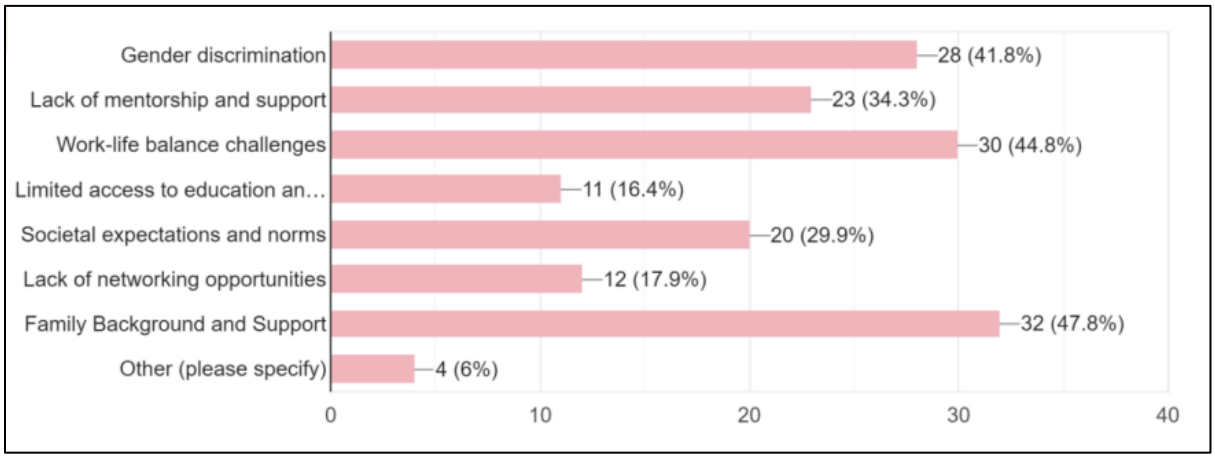


Figure 3: Barriers for women leadership position

(Source: Mrs. Aarti Atul Pathade, Viksit Bharat through Women's Eyes: The Impact of Female Leadership, Volume 13, Issue 1 January 2025 https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2501022.pdf)

The participation rate in rural areas increased dramatically from 24.6% in 2017–18 to 41.5% in 2022–2023, while the rate in urban areas increased moderately from 20.4% to 25.4% over the same period, resulting in a significant widening of the gap between women in the workforce in rural and urban India over the past five years. [20]

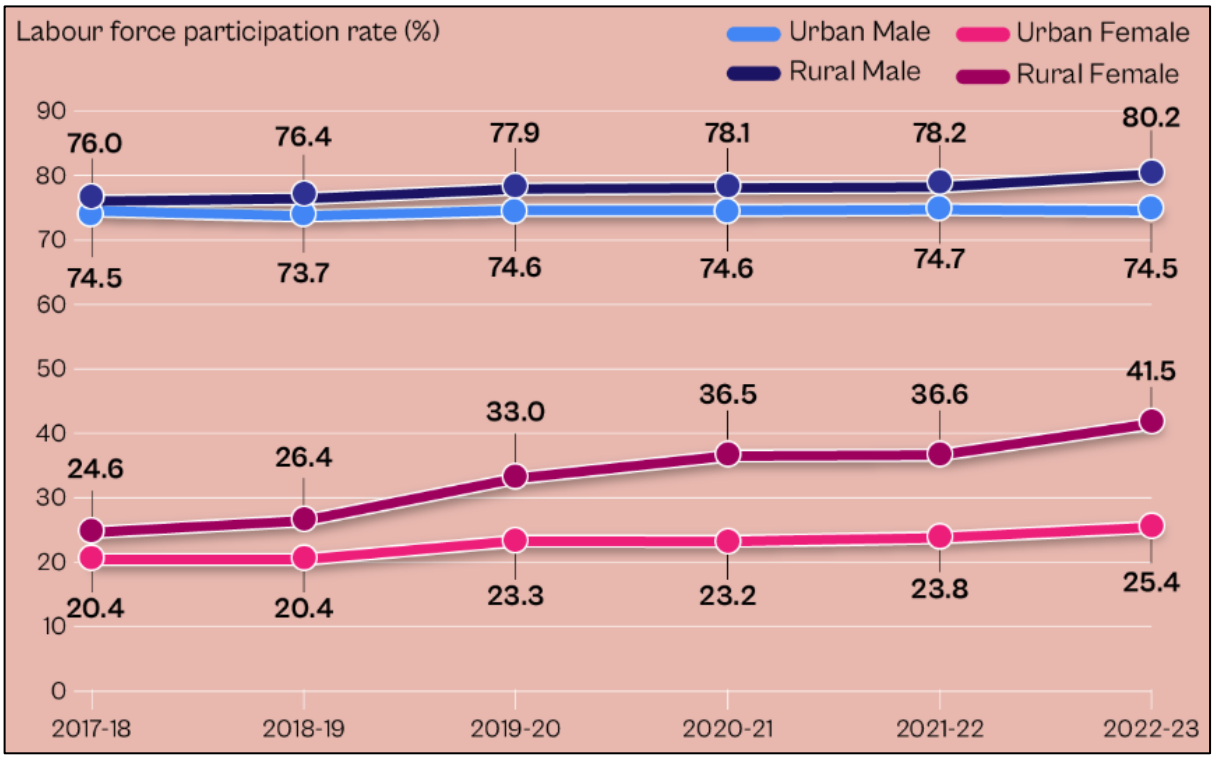


Figure 4: Labour force participation rate of rural women rises than urban women (Source: Periodic labour force survey (PLFS))

From 2019 to 2024, the graph shows a consistent increase trend in both entrepreneurship engagement and higher education. The rise of higher education is steady, rising yearly and peaking in 2024. As interest in business and self-employment grows, entrepreneurship similarly increases over time, albeit more quickly [21]. The growing disparity indicates that entrepreneurship is gaining traction while education continues to have a dominant position. The bars support the general rise in participation rates over time. This pattern is a reflection of growing opportunities, awareness, and support in the fields of entrepreneurship and education. Overall, the data shows that these two crucial areas are developing positively and steadily. [22–24]

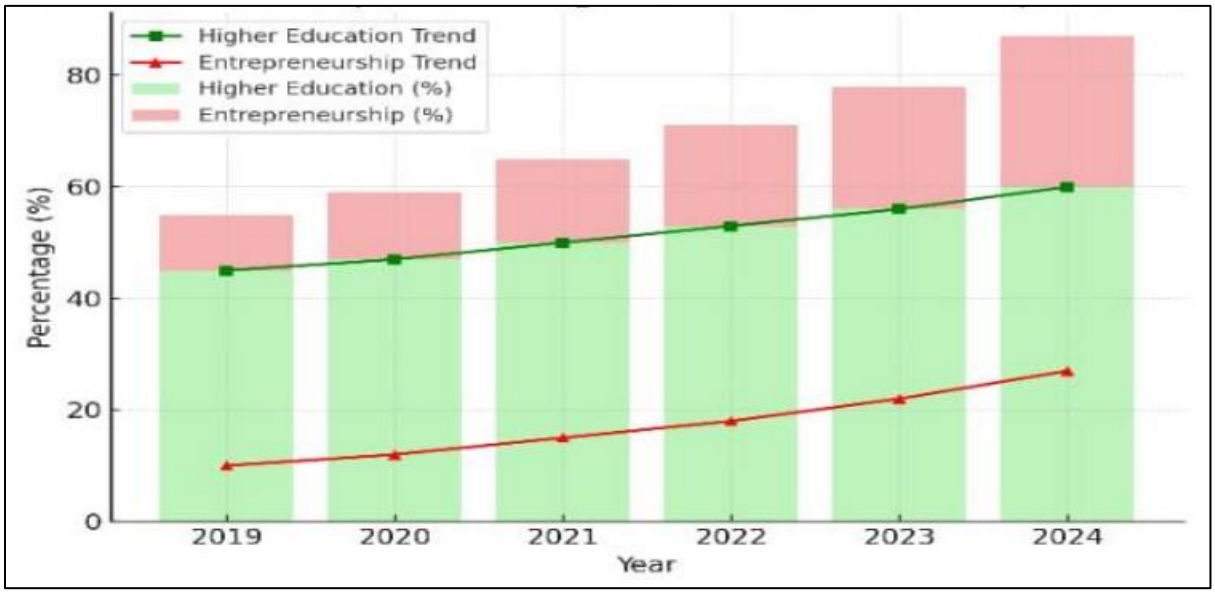


Figure 5: Women participation in higher education and entrepreneurship

(Source: Principal (Dr.) Savinder Pal, Ms. Swati, VIKSIT BHARAT @2047: STRATEGIES FOR SELFRELIANCE ESPECIALLY WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, https://www.gapgyan.org/)

Long-term projections vary in their assumptions, but they all agree that India has a lot of potential provided policy is disciplined. One of Viksit Bharat's frequently stated objectives is to have an economy that is close to $26 trillion (market exchange terms) by 2047, the third largest by 2027, and the second largest by 2075. These figures are conditional promises, contingent on human capital, investment efficiency, and the rule of law. India has gradually ascended the growth mountain, frequently hampered more by the effectiveness of capital than by its availability. The conditions for 7% growth are present, with savings close to one-third of GDP and a youthful labour force [25]. Fiscal restraint, stable regulations, competitive marketplaces, and an unwavering emphasis on human capital are all necessary to achieve it. The Viksit Bharat 2047 milestone will be distinguished not only by scale but also by shared prosperity if policy transforms resources into results—lowering ICOR, expanding opportunity, and creating jobs.

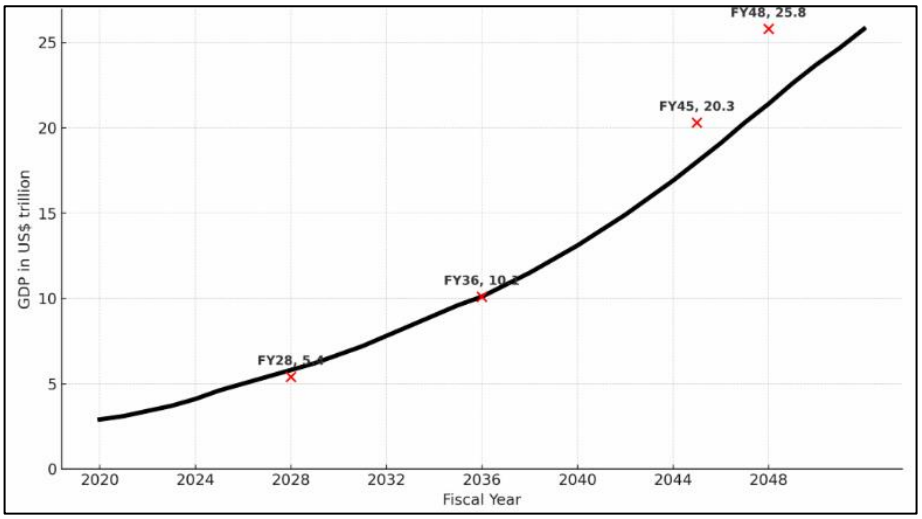


Figure 6: India's Amrit Kaal: Projected Economic Milestones

(Source: Viksit Bharat @2047: Can efficiency match ambition? by Policy Circle Bureau published on August 19, 2025 https://www.policycircle.org/)

Future and Scope of the Study

Future research could focus on developing specific policy recommendations to address gender disparities in education, healthcare, and workforce participation, and evaluating the impact of these policies over time. Longitudinal studies could examine how targeted interventions, such as skills development programs, access to credit, and gender-sensitive workplace policies, affect women's economic participation and

leadership roles. Additionally, there is a need for region- specific studies to understand the unique cultural and socioeconomic factors influencing women's empowerment in different parts of India.

Conclusion

From a strategic and moral perspective, women's empowerment is crucial to Viksit Bharat 2047. It will require persistent perseverance and intentional action to eradicate enduring gender gaps in employment, education, and decision-making. If India guarantees equal economic opportunities, increases educational opportunities, and supports laws that support gender equality, it can make the most of its female population. In addition to economic benefits, empowering women has a favourable impact on more inclusive governance structures and better communities. In the end, attaining gender parity develops and fortifies Viksit Bharat.

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