



## Women in society: Past, present, and future

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### Abstract

This article discusses the role and status of women in society from the past to the present and looks toward their future. It highlights the struggles women have faced due to social, cultural, and economic barriers, as well as the progress achieved through education, reform movements, and empowerment initiatives. The article also examines the challenges that women continue to face, such as gender inequality, safety concerns, and limited opportunities. By emphasizing the importance of education, awareness, and equal participation, this study shows that empowering women is essential for the development of families, communities, and nations. The overall aim is to create understanding about women's contributions and the need for continued efforts toward gender equality.

**Keywords:** Women, gender equality, empowerment, education, social reform, women's rights, economic participation, leadership, discrimination, feminism, social change, development, safety, employment, health, political participation, society, sustainable development

### Introduction

Women have always been an essential part of human civilization. From managing households and nurturing families to leading nations and shaping scientific discoveries, women have contributed significantly to the progress of society. However, for a long time, their efforts remained unrecognized and undervalued. Over centuries, women have struggled against discrimination, inequality, and social restrictions to claim their rightful place in the world.

Today, although remarkable progress has been made, the journey towards complete equality is still ongoing.

This article explores the role of women in society by examining their position in the past, their achievements in the present, and the possibilities and challenges that lie ahead. Understanding this journey helps us appreciate the strength, resilience, and potential of women in shaping a better future.

### Status of women in the past

In ancient and medieval societies, women were largely confined to domestic roles. Their primary responsibilities included taking care of children, managing the household, and supporting male family members. Education for girls was limited, and most women were denied opportunities to develop their talents and skills. In many cultures, women were considered dependent on men and had little say in important family or social decisions.

Despite these limitations, history records many strong and influential women. Figures such as Rani Lakshmi Bai, Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, and Razia Sultana proved that women were capable of leadership and courage. However, such examples were rare and often faced resistance from society. The majority of women continued to live under strict social norms and traditions.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, social reform movements began to challenge the traditional status of women. Reformers advocated for female education, abolition of harmful practices, and women's rights. In India, leaders like Savitribai Phule, Pandita Ramabai, and Raja

Ram Mohan Roy worked towards improving the condition of women. These efforts laid the foundation for future progress.

### Role of women in the present era

In the modern world, women have made remarkable advancements in almost every field. They are now doctors, engineers, teachers, scientists, pilots, athletes, entrepreneurs, and political leaders. Education has empowered women to become independent and confident. Today, millions of girls attend schools and colleges, preparing themselves for professional careers.

Women also play a crucial role in the economy. They contribute to industries, agriculture, business, and services. Many women run successful enterprises and provide employment to others. Their financial independence has improved their social status and decision-making power within families.

In politics and governance, women are increasingly participating in leadership roles. From local self-government to national and international platforms, women are voicing concerns related to health, education, environment, and social justice. Leaders such as Indira Gandhi, Angela Merkel, and Jacinda Ardern have shown that women can govern with strength and compassion.

At home, modern women balance multiple responsibilities. They manage professional duties along with family care, proving their ability to handle complex roles. Men are also slowly sharing domestic responsibilities, leading to more balanced family structures.

However, despite progress, challenges remain. Gender discrimination, unequal wages, workplace harassment, and limited opportunities still affect many women. In some areas, girls are denied education and forced into early marriages. These issues highlight the need for continued efforts towards equality and justice.

### Education and Empowerment of Women

Education is the most powerful tool for empowering women. An educated woman is aware of her rights,

responsibilities, and potential. She can make informed decisions about her health, career, and family. Education also enables women to contribute positively to society and the economy.

Governments and organizations across the world have launched various schemes to promote girls' education. Scholarships, free textbooks, mid-day meals, and digital learning platforms have helped increase school enrollment. In India, initiatives such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao focus on improving the status of girls through education and awareness.

Skill development and vocational training further enhance women's employability. Programs that teach technical, financial, and entrepreneurial skills enable women to become self-reliant. Empowered women not only improve their own lives but also uplift their families and communities.

Social awareness is equally important. Changing mindsets about gender roles is necessary for true empowerment. Society must recognize that both men and women are equally capable and deserving of respect.

### Challenges faced by women today

Even in the twenty-first century, women face several obstacles in their personal and professional lives. One major challenge is gender inequality. In many workplaces, women are paid less than men for similar work. They are often overlooked for promotions and leadership positions.

Safety is another serious concern. Crimes such as harassment, domestic violence, and human trafficking restrict women's freedom and confidence. Fear and insecurity prevent many women from pursuing education or employment opportunities.

Health issues also affect women significantly. Limited access to healthcare, poor nutrition, and lack of awareness about reproductive health can have long-term consequences. Mental health problems caused by stress, discrimination, and social pressure are often ignored.

Cultural traditions and stereotypes further restrict women's choices. Expectations regarding marriage, appearance, and behavior can limit personal growth. Breaking these barriers requires collective effort from families, schools, and communities.

### The Future of Women

The future of women depends on the actions taken today. With proper education, legal protection, and social support, women can achieve their full potential. Technology and digital platforms are creating new opportunities for learning, employment, and entrepreneurship.

Women's participation in science, innovation, and leadership is expected to grow. As more girls are encouraged to pursue careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), they will contribute to solving global challenges such as climate change, healthcare, and sustainable development.

Men also play a vital role in shaping this future. Supporting gender equality, sharing responsibilities, and respecting women's choices are essential steps. True progress can be achieved only when both genders work together as equal partners.

### Conclusion

Women are the backbone of society. Their contributions as mothers, professionals, leaders, and citizens are invaluable.

From overcoming historical limitations to achieving modern success, women have shown extraordinary strength and determination. Although significant progress has been made, the journey towards complete equality is not yet finished.

By promoting education, ensuring safety, eliminating discrimination, and changing social attitudes, society can create an environment where every woman can thrive. Empowered women lead to empowered families, communities, and nations. Investing in women is not just a moral responsibility but also a key to sustainable development and a brighter future for all.

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