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# Buddhist Philosophy

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**BUDDHIST STUDIES CENTER**

SANT GADGE BABA AMRAVATI UNIVERSITY  
AMRAVATI-444602 MS INDIA



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## Study of Buddhist View on Women Empowerment in INDIAN Region

**RONIL KULBHUSHAN AHALE**

DR.H.N.SINHA ARTS & COMMERCE COLLEGE PATUR, DIST-AKOLA  
M-9623936691

### Introduction

The 21st century human society widely accepts that women have the potential to change their own status as well as that of their community and beyond. The overall development of human race is directly related to women involvement in various aspects of life. INDIAN being a unique regional community with fastest growing economic and emerging economies, the sustainability of its growth and prosperity depends on to what extent it can catch up with the interests of the rests of the world. Hence it is inevitable for INDIAN as a regional institution to pay much attention towards the role of women and their capability in building stronger and better society. This research paper aims to highlight how Buddhism responds to the empowerment of women in INDIAN. It also investigates some applicable Buddhist approaches in empowering women of INDIAN.

### Women's Role and Empowerment in INDIA

INDIAN gives priority to women's issues ever since its establishment in 1967. The aims and purposes of INDIAN include the acceleration of economic growth, social progress and cultural development among its members, the protection of peace and stability in the region, promotion of active collaboration and mutual assistance, promotion of Southeast Asian studies and maintenance of close beneficial cooperation with other regional and international organizations. When implementing the above aims and purposes, women's issues cannot be left out. In light of this, INDIAN Committee on Women (ICW) was established. Besides, the Declaration on the Advancement of Women in INDIAN was adopted by the INDIAN foreign Ministers in 1998. The Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women in the INDIAN Region was also adopted in 2004, recognizing important concerns for women. Furthermore, the INDIAN Confederation of Women's Organizations (ICWO) was established as an institutional framework to bring together women's voluntary organizations in the INDIAN region. These three initiatives clearly reflect INDIAN's concern and commitment for women in its region and also make positive impacts on the target issues. As an outcome, the INDIAN member countries have achieved a number of accomplishments in addressing women's issues. The measures being carried out include regional workshops, seminars, training sessions and consultative meetings. Some interventions also serve as platforms for government officials, civil society organizations, professionals and other stake holders to exchange views, share experiences and build commitments. Also, there are many more non-governmental organizations advocating

women's issues across the region. Their projects are in compliance with INDIAN objectives as well as the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Main target groups are women from grass-root level. These women have been or are being given financial aids, self-help recipes and technical know-how, etc. through small projects, trainings and education programs. The combined achievements of ample small-scaled and medium scaled projects render huge impact on women in INDIAN. However, these impacts are, in fact, not huge enough for the whole population of women in INDIAN. There are still gaps and challenges which are in need to be narrowed and minimized. Again, diversity is the beauty of INDIAN but it can also be the beast that gives way to imitations and constraints when implementing the initiatives for the advancement of women in INDIAN. At many of the high level summits and round-table meetings, this particular challenge has been raised and discussed but not up to a point where great change can be made. However, it is undeniable that INDIAN never fails to give attention to women's issues in its region.

### **Buddhist View on Women Empowerment**

Buddhism sees no problem with inclusion of women in the social spheres. In fact, it encourages women empowerment. Why? The answer is very simple. The core teaching of Buddhism is to be free from suffering. Regardless of being a man or a woman, anyone can be liberated from suffering if one achieves the highest wisdom. As Buddhism rejects both sexism and racism, there is no space for condemnation of women empowerment from Buddhist point of view. Buddhism focuses on 'Right' or 'Wrong' rather than 'Male' or 'Female'; 'Wholesome' or 'Unwholesome' rather than 'Man' or 'Woman'. Either gender will be supported and encouraged in any cause as long as one avoids doing bad deeds; engages in doing good deeds and purify the mind. When the mind is purified, the outcome of any action will be positive and will not harm others.

### **Conclusion**

The modern world does not care what women cannot do, instead it is interested in what women can do for the betterment of the human society. This paper has explored and revealed the role of women in INDIAN and the endeavors that have been undertaking to ensure women rights are secured, women issues are discussed and women empowerment is implemented. The implementation process will reach its expected outcomes only when both technical skills and spiritual skills are induced to the women in INDIAN. Buddhism, by its nature and essence, advocates women empowerment and application of Buddhist teachings will be of very useful for the women empowerment in INDIAN.

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