

# Women Consumer Perception with Mutual Fund: Opportunities and Challenges

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**Abstract:-** The perception of women consumers regarding mutual funds can vary widely, influenced by various factors including personal finance goals, financial literacy, cultural norms, and individual experiences. Women's empowerment in the fields of teaching, professional level, home and in society have been shown in this and other ways. Many governmental steps have been taken to empower women in developing and developed nations. Women empowerment means that they have equal rights to be within equality with men whatever benefits and avenues are there for men women avail the same things in every field. Every woman has the equal right to lead their life in the way they want and make their own decision. Currently, this paper deals with how empowered women are when they deal with the financial activity of the economy. Are they aware of mutual fund investment or not? What ideas do they have about mutual funds and how do they deal with their savings? In India, there are funds especially meant for women to invest in. Developed nations like Australia have mutual funds which only allow those companies to invest in which have women assets in their every designation of the firm. What are the hindrances faced by women when decide to become mutual fund managers in a country called India? The study is based on secondary data only. A conclusion is drawn that how progressive pace of women's empowerment is in financial fields like mutual funds is theirs. What might be the steps to encourage more women to come to this field?

**Keywords:-** Empowerment, Mutual Fund, Investment, Financial Activity.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Much has been said about giving equal rights to women. Women empowerment basically urges creating an environment for women where they are given rights to take their own decisions and work equally with men for the betterment of society. It requires increasing and improving the social, economic, political, and legal strength of women. Many people have written much about women's empowerment, and they have mentioned some rights for women, such as the right to live their lives freely with a sense

of self-worth, respect, and dignity. Have full control over every decision at home and at the workplace. Allowed to make their own choices and decisions, they have the right to participate equally in social, religious, and public activities. Their social status in society should be recognizable. Given the liberty to make their financial and economic decisions. Education, should be made compulsory, equal employment opportunities should be provided, and a safe and comfortable working environment should be created. So, these are some that try to describe what women's empowerment means. Currently, this paper deals with the question of how much women are empowered when they make their own financial decisions. How they behave while dealing with financial activities. How empowered women are when they decide to invest their savings. This paper states what difficulties there are for women when they invest in mutual funds. How many mutual fund managers are there in India? What difficulties have they been facing that hinder their empowerment? But before we move ahead, we need to understand the meaning of mutual funds. Mutual funds are fiscal interposers that collect the savings of investors and invest them in a large and well-diversified portfolio of securities similar as plutocrat request instruments, commercial and government bonds, and the equity shares of joint stock companies. Mutual funds can survive and thrive only if they can live up to the hope and trust of their individual members. Women, are an important demographic group in the mutual fund industry. Like any other investor group, women have unique financial goals, risk tolerances, and investment preferences. Here are some key considerations for mutual fund providers when targeting women as consumers:

- **\*\*Education and Awareness\*\*:** Mutual fund companies should focus on educating women about the benefits and risks of investing in mutual funds. Many women may not have had the same exposure to financial education as men, so providing resources and workshops specifically designed for women can be beneficial.
- **\*\*Risk Tolerance\*\*:** Recognize that women, on average, may have a different risk tolerance than men. While it's important not to make assumptions, offering a range of mutual fund options with varying risk profiles can cater to different preferences.

- **\*\*Long-Term Goals\*\***: Women often have unique long-term financial goals, such as saving for retirement, funding education for their children, or starting a business. Mutual fund providers can create targeted investment products that align with these goals.
- **\*\*Socially Responsible Investing\*\***: Many women are interested in socially responsible or ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) investing. Offering mutual funds that focus on ethical and sustainable investments can attract female investors who prioritize these factors.
- **\*\*Low Minimum Investments\*\***: Some women may be starting with smaller investment amounts. Offering mutual funds with low minimum investment requirements can make investing more accessible to a broader range of women.
- **\*\*Transparency and Trust\*\***: Mutual fund companies should prioritize transparency in their offerings, fees, and performance reporting. Building trust with female investors is crucial, as many women may be cautious about financial investments.
- **\*\*Online Tools and Apps\*\***: Develop user-friendly online platforms and mobile apps that cater to women's preferences for managing their investments. Providing easy access to account information, performance data, and customer support can enhance the user experience.
- **\*\*Diverse Representation\*\***: Ensure diversity in your company's leadership, marketing materials, and customer support teams. This can help women feel more comfortable and confident when choosing to invest in mutual funds with your company.
- **\*\*Customized Financial Planning\*\***: Offer personalized financial planning services that take into account women's unique financial situations, including income disparities, career interruptions, and longer life expectancies.
- **\*\*Women's Networks and Partnerships\*\***: Collaborate with women's organizations, associations, and networks to promote your mutual funds. Partnering with organizations that focus on women's financial empowerment can help build trust and credibility.

It's important to note that women's financial needs and preferences can vary widely, so it's essential for mutual fund providers to conduct market research and engage with female investors to better understand their specific requirements and tailor their offerings accordingly. Additionally, all financial products and services should comply with relevant regulations and be offered in an ethical and responsible manner.

#### ➤ STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A mutual fund is a trust that collects the savings of various investors who share a common financial goal and pools them together to create large amounts of money. What is the contribution women make to mutual fund investments? It is considered that women's empowerment is shown only in investing in gold because it is considered the only resource in which women invest their savings.

#### ➤ OBJECTIVES

- what are the funds which provide investing opportunities ?
- what are the challenges faced by the women while dealing in mutual fund ?

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper is descriptive in nature, and the data has been collected from secondary sources like government websites, books and magazines related to mutual trust, historical documents and other sources of public information, journals related to mutual fund functioning, reports, and publications of various associations connected to business and mutual funds.

## III. REVIEW OF LITRATURE

**Khatri, Yogita(2017)** It has been studied that women make better investments than men. There have been five case studies that state how women from different areas became good investors with even less knowledge. It has been observed that women are more willing to make decisions than men. It has been advised that investing regularly and looking for investments to achieve goals is the main focus for many women. Women are considered more disciplined and cautioned by the fact that men have become overconfident, and to trade more, they pay more. Men are also driven by market news and take instant decisions, which do turn unfavourable for them. Women, on the other hand, are said to be more patient and calmer decision-makers when investing.

**Funds India desk (2014)** It is said that investment can be fruitful only when it is done in a systematic, disciplined, and goal-oriented way. And this statement is very much applicable to women investors as well. It has been observed that women have the tendency to save, and they only need to channel their savings in the right direction. But reality says that women still fear making investments other than in gold or fixed deposits. They still go with the traditional way of saving. Which is why Fund India designed the special mutual funds for women so as to channelize their savings.

## IV. FINDINGS

### A. OPPORTUNITIES

#### ➤ FUND INDIA SMART WOMEN'S PORTFOLIO

To make more and more women participate in mutual fund opportunities, a fund called Funds India Smart Women Portfolio got opened up so that women's empowerment could be strengthened. Women are considered risk-bearers; they have a good saving pattern, and to generate an inflation-beating and tax-efficient return, these portfolios are considered very suitable. This fund allows women to invest in funds like equity, debt, and gold, which generate high returns and help women become equal to men when it comes to investment decisions.

➤ *SAHA FUND*

Observing the parity between women and men knowledge Ankita Vashistha launched “SAHA FUND”, a venture capital fund. This fund is basically for business-run women. Ankita, an electronic and communications engineer from Cranfield School of Management in the UK, did her masters in finance. She now advises business-oriented women on mutual fund investments and helps them earn a high amount. Developed countries have brought out some mutual funds, which are especially for the companies that are working towards the path of empowering women. These funds, if developed in India, will definitely empower women. Some of them are as follows:

➤ *CAIVERT INVESTMENT*

This company is engaged in empowering women, promoting diversity, and engaging in socially responsible investing. By investing in this company, high returns can be fetched because they are socially responsible institutions.

➤ *DOMINI SOCIAL INVESTMENT*

This company includes women in their management-level positions, including senior-line executives. They have Domini's Proxy Guidelines, which state that the company will stand against the board of trustees if they do not include women in it.

➤ *NEUBERGER BERMAN*

This fund encourages companies to have diverse boards of directors and senior management. These funds urge investors to invest in companies that are leaders in promoting diversity in the workplace.

➤ *PARANASSUS*

This fund does consider the same pattern of asking for diversity and equality in the workplace. It includes policies and practices towards employees from different groups, including women and racial minorities. PARNASSUS fund includes four mutual funds: Paranassus Fund, Paranassus Endeavour Fund, Paranassus Mid Cap Fund, and Paranassus Asia Fund.

➤ *PAX WORLD INVESTMENT*

They promote women's empowerment and diversity through investment. In October 2007, PAX World brought the women's equity fund, and after that, they named it the PAX World Global Women's Equality Fund (PXWER).

➤ *PRAXIS MUTUAL FUND*

They are the funds managed by Everence Capital Management. It provides investment in funds like the Growth Index Fund, the Intermediate Income Fund, the Small Cap Fund, and the Value Index Fund.

➤ *WALDEN ASSET MANAGEMENT*

It manages portfolios for companies that are interested in generating social and environmental impact with their

investments. Some of the mutual funds available in India allow women to invest so as to enhance their empowerment in the finance sector.

➤ *ABN AMRO Mutual Fund*

Mutual fund named ABN AMRO formed on April 15, 2004 as a trustee company. The AMC, ABN AMRO Asset Management (India) Ltd., was incorporated on November 4, 2003. Deutsche Bank AG is the custodian of the ABN AMRO Mutual Fund.

➤ *Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund*

A joint venture of Aditya Birla Group and Sun Life Financial Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund is a great mutual funds. Sun Life Financial is a global organisation that evolved in 1871 and is represented in Canada, the US, the Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, and Bermuda, apart from India. It has investment techniques which is has time period of long time and very conserve. Recently, it crossed the AUM of Rs. 10,000 crore.

➤ *Bank of Baroda Mutual Fund (BOB Mutual Fund)*

The Bank of Baroda Mutual Fund, or BOB Mutual Fund, was setup on October 30, 1992, under the sponsorship of Bank of Baroda. Develop in the year 1922 on 5<sup>th</sup> November BOB mutual fund is fund of BOB Asset Management Company Limited. Deutsche Bank AG is the custodian.

➤ *Sahara Mutual Fund*

The Sahara Mutual Fund's AMC is Sahara Asset Management Company Private Limited, which was established on August 31, 1995. The AMC has a paid-up capital of Rs 25.8 crore.

**B. CHALLENGES**

To create wealth, one has to follow systematic rules and be able to take challenges, but in reality, women become conservative when it comes to investment. They only stick to traditional schemes such as FD's, RD's, and saving accounts. Women's empowerment is declined due to the fact that they find it troublesome to choose the investment plan, which appears to be complex. The supply of women fund managers is limited, or, to say it, is at a shrinking stage. In colleges, many let go of finance as their specialisation as they are not able to cope with the tedious tasks that involve a lot of time. Women are reluctant to take up the career of fund manager because it becomes difficult for women to strike a work-life balance. This industry actually grinds people up. Women have to face discrimination in the fund management process, which drags them back. According to the studies conducted at various levels husbands dominate investment decisions among working and non-working women. Women depend on their husbands and fathers for investment decisions. Even it is stated that women are indecisive when it comes to investing in mutual funds due to difficult terms of market fluctuation, risk and return patterns, and a lack of knowledge about investment protection. Some studies have been done to evaluate how

many women fund managers there are in India, what problems they have faced, and how they are leading their lives. Though women's strength loses out when it comes to investing in mutual funds, Because of a lack of information about how to invest in mutual funds and how they work, it becomes difficult for women to show their strength when it comes to mutual funds.

From the case studies, it will be evident that women do have knowledge of mutual funds and are ready to take up the challenges of investing in mutual funds.

Swati Kulkarni, 48, is currently working as executive vice president and fund manager at UTI Mutual Fund. She started her career at UTI. She was the only woman in that company, which made her fight more to be noticed. Circumstances over there were difficult, but Kulkarni didn't stop and made her way out. In her career, she has gone from managing a fund of Rs. 50 crore to Rs. 6500 crore across multiple funds. She now smoothly sails between work and home. She is currently the financial advisor to her husband.

Roshi Jain, 36, present: vice president and portfolio manager, equities, Franklin Templeton India AMC, She herself faced many challenges while working as a fund manager, but she managed to overcome these challenges and move forward to become one of the top portfolio managers in India. She sometimes has to face situations where it becomes difficult to behave in the right direction, but by overcoming these tough times, she showed her empowerment and moved ahead.

Jyoti Vaswani, 43, present: fund management Aviva She has face gender bias in her career, but she passed all that hurdle and made her way, and she became the next big fund manager in India.

Sohini Andani, 42, present: SBI Mutual Fund She started her career with KR Choksey shares and securities in 1995. After that, she joined the SBI Mutual Fund as a research head. She didn't take too long to reach the position of fund manager.

## V. CONCLUSION

From all this evidence it is evident that women are less empowered while investing in mutual funds. There is about 51 mutual fund in India in which women can actively participate but most of the women are dependent on men (spouse/father) which hinder them from investing in funds like mutual fund. Women empowerment is slowly strengthening in the fund manager's category. But with the ratio of 4:10, it becomes difficult for Indian women to empower the financial sector. Most of the women invest a very low percentage of their income as they lack the knowledge of investing in mutual funds. Developed country have developed mutual funds which are especially for the company that are involved in women empowerment India need to become more and more like that

so that India is not able to fall behind. Women are required to have more and more knowledge about how to invest their savings correctly. It is the need of the hour that more and more women should be encouraged to become mutual fund advisors so that more and more women are empowered to invest. Though there are funds which encourage women to invest and many women have shown fruitful changes after investing in mutual funds much has to be done to encourage more women to invest their savings in mutual funds showing that they are financially strong as well. The dependency of women will be erased only when they are aware of the benefits of the mutual fund investment and the fear of the complication of investing their savings in mutual funds is not that difficult to solve.

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