

## Women Empowerment: The Role of Education in Women Empowerment

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### Abstract

*“Empowerment of women” is a topic that has been debated and deliberated world over. The half of the population of the world is women, they reach in the top of the sky but till we are taking about women empowerment. Empowerment of women means equipping them to be self reliant, confident and economically independent with a positive self-esteem, ability to take decisions to participate in developmental process and social change. According to Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development defines empowerment as a process that aims at creating the conditions for the self-determination of a particular people or group. Gender inequality is very common not only in our society but also it’s a major challenge in front of the world community. Education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men throughout the world. Every person is benefited with educational opportunities which are designed to meet the needs of the life. To empower women education can plays a very important role, education is empowerment. India still has one of the lowest female literacy rates; low level of literacy has negative impact on women’s lives and also on their family and the economic and social development of our country. In here we are discussing about women empowerment through education; the problems, the historical background of women education, constitutional provision and also forwarded some suggestions. Hope that our paper will help about to understanding the women educational scenario and importance of education in her development and empowerment.*

### INTRODUCTION.

Empowerment which means “becoming powerful” is a process through which individuals, groups, societies, communities are able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their goals. Power is the key word of the term ‘empowerment’, which means having control over material assets like land and finance, intellectual resources like knowledge, information and ideas and to generate sustain and propagates an ideology. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps human beings to gain control over their own lives. Empowerment as a concept encompasses their social upliftment, political decision-making and economic independence. Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building to greater participation and decision making.

Women’s empowerment begins with the awareness about their rights and capabilities and the understanding as to how the socio-economic and political forces affect them. Women empowerment is a common word in Indian context. Women are the world’s largest excluded group and the first oppressed group in the history of mankind. Women’s oppression is the widest form of oppression in the world. The process of empowerment of women enables them to realize their full potential and empowers them in all spheres of life. The issue of empowerment of women moved centre-stage with the global paradigm shift from a growth oriented issue to a human development approach. The very issue of Women empowerment arises because of the stark reality that even today a large section of women are marginalized and sidelined from the mainstream of the society.

### INDIAN CONTEXT:

India is a democratic and a developing country but its fact that still there is deep ignorance in the society about the values of women. Women’s are deprived and discriminated by our society. There was much

progress in our society in everywhere but gender inequality exist in many dimensions of life, not only in India but many countries of the world. There still exist a wide gap in between male and female. In Indian mythology women is treated as divine, holy and pure, the position of women in “Vedas” and “Upanishads” was put on a high pedestal but now, in actual we know the position and status of women in our progressive society because still we are talking about “Women empowerment”, India has a strong written constitution proclaiming laws for equality and welfare of women, barbaric and cruel practices still continue to haunt women in the form of female feticide, infanticide, girl child labour, Dowry related death, molestation, sexual harassment, rape, eve-teasing, gender inequality, domestic violence etc. are very common in Indian counterpart. Still a large section of women specially the rural women face increasingly violent from of gender bias. Perhaps the highest form of violence against the women is to deny life on gender basis, data shows that there is still a very high preference for a male child in states like Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh etc. Women empowerment refers to the self-determination and self confidence that allows them to play an active role in the society.

We must remember that girls are indispensable part of our society and an asset to our family and nation. We need to constructively work against the outdated traditions, prejudices, practices, superstitions and customs which lower the status of the women. Economic, social and political empowerment can be achieved to a great extent through education.

### **ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:**

Empowerment would become more relevant if women are educated, well informed and can take and part in decision making effectively. Women empowerment will not translate in reality till girl’s education is given predominance because only an educated mother can build an educated nation.

Education is empowerment, “education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men throughout the world”. Education is the key to establish and reinforce democracy to development. Everyone is benefited from educational opportunities. Education is the light that annihilates the darkness of ignorance. the need of the hour is to improve female literacy as education holds the key to development. Education is essential for ameliorating the present condition of women of India. In spite of the different steps taken by the govt. for promoting the girl’s education today, the situation is still far from satisfactory. It has also been felt that empowerment of women can contribute immensely to the success or universalisation of elementary education. Such empowerment not only promotes girl’s education but also boots their morale through liberty and equality of sex.

Education is a milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to opportunities, to challenge their traditional roles and to change their lives. It was accepted that education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. Educating women benefits the whole society. It has a more significant impact on poverty and development than men’s education. It is also one of the most influential factors in improving child health and reducing infant mortality. Educated women can be of immense help in different ways for her family. It is true that a woman has to play a significant role in the development of family life. Women can also contribute significantly to the social and economic reconstruction of the country.

### **PROBLEMS AND ISSUES OF GIRLS; EDUCATION:**

There is lot of problems related with the girls’ education. Indian society is conservative in nature so, it was seen that girls’ education are always neglected.

Table 1: Literacy rate in India

year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1961	24.0	34.4	13.0
1971	29.5	39.5	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source: census of India 2011

From the above table we got a picture of women education in our country. This higher rate of illiteracy of women is undoubtedly attributing for women dependence on men and lack of education is the root cause of many exploitation and negligence against women. Below we discuss some of the problems related with women education.

(1) We know that majority of Indians are belonging from the poor family, there economic condition are very pathetic so, they cannot think for education because education now a day's become costly affair. So, if possible the guardian only tries to send their boys in to school then girls.

(2) one of the problem is our parents are also not aware about girl's education. We saw that from a very early age, girls are engage in different household works and they spend their time to look after their younger brothers and sisters to relieve their parents to go out for work. Thus lack of parental awareness towards girl's education holds back the girl's at home.

(3) Another problem in front of girl's education is the conservative look of our society about girl's education. Parents are generally not interested in girl's education they think that girl's are burden for them. Because of this conservatism they are not awakened to the modern trends. The "Prada system" and early marriages are hire hindrance in the expansion of girl's education.

(4) Lack of transport facilities is also one of the reason of poor rate of women literacy. Some of the area there was no such type of schools are available, for schooling girl's need to travel a long distance but due to lack of proper transport and communication facilities they are unable to go.

(5) Another major problem is that lack of separate school for girls. we already talk about conservative nature of our society, so some parents are not ready to send their girl child in a co-educational institution with boys'.

(6) It was also seen that the curriculum of the schools are also not attractive for girls', they are not in accordance with the specific needs of women. As a result the girls' and parents both are not feeling enthusiastic to come and study in the school.

(7) Law and order situation is also responsible for poor rate of girl's education. Parents are not ready to send their girl to school because they feel insecurity. Occurrence of cases of eve-teasing, rape, abduction and molestation of girl's often dampens the enthusiasm of girl's in pursuing education beyond a certain age, when their parents restricted them inside home.

(8) Fixed schooling hours are also responsible for poor enrollment of girl's in school. Most of the girl's specially the rural area girl's, they need to perform domestic work at home also so, fixed schooling schedule create problems for them. This is one of the causes of lower participation rates of girl's in school. With this, another problem is that lack of physical facilities and congenial environments in schools, particularly in case of co-education institution.

### **BENEFITS OF EMPOWERING A WOMAN BY EDUCATION:**

An educated mother can only lead a good family. Educational opportunities and the empowerment of women go hand-in-hand. Education contributes to the empowerment of women and the empowerment of women makes it possible for women to benefit from educational opportunities. There are lot of benefits are seen when women are educated, in here we discuss some of them.

(1) Girls' education helps education for the next generation. If educated girls' become mothers they are much more likely to send their children to school, thereby passing on and multiplying benefits both for themselves and society in a positive intergenerational effects. The more schooling the women have received, the more probable it is that their children will also benefit from education.

(2) Girls' education helps in women economic empowerment. As the primary enrolment rate for girls' increases, so does gross domestic product per capita. Through women education they are able to apply in different govt. and non govt. jobs and compete with men for the same and progress themselves. Economic development, and hence higher income per family, can help in convincing reluctant parents to forgo the quick economic benefit of their daughters' work, and instead send them to school. This leads to producing long term benefits for a country like India.

(3) Empowering women through education also benefited because through it they become more health conscious not only for them but also for her family. They are understood about the benefit about the small size family. When a society ensures that mothers are educated, children will be healthier and fewer will die because they better know about child health and nutrition. Women education also reduces the rate of maternal mortality. Research has shown that maternal mortality is also reduced by better knowledge about health-care practices, use of health services during pregnancy and birth.

(4) we seen that in developing countries like India children are spend more time with their mother and families are the world smallest school, mother are the first teacher. So, when women are educated they tend to encourage and advice their children to become educated as well.

(5) Another important point is when one women become educated she can take decision independently without pressure from her family and male counterpart. She can take decision not only for her family but also different economic and political decision relating to her society and nation. Education is essential for political participation.

(6) Girls' education important to their protection and carries its influence beyond classroom. Girls' education makes them conscious and aware about their rights and powering them to protect it. Education helps them to fight against exploitation, women trafficking, assaults, eve-teasing etc. most of the rural women are exploited because lack of knowledge about their rights.

(7) Educated women have knowledge, and information and self-confidence to enable them to take greater part in decision making at the household and community levels. The higher the level of education, the more opportunities women generally have to participate in decision making.

(8) Lastly, Girls' education is important because knowledge help them to fight against different social evils and make them social awareness. We know that most of the social evils are practicing against women and her rights and all these degrade her dignity as a women in the society, for it its very essential to make her empowered with education.

### **SUGGESTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN EDUCATION:**

From the above, we understand the importance of the women education in the empowerment of women. We know that the picture of girls' education in our society is not so impressive, it needs to be improved. A well integrated and holistic approach is an essential to promote the condition of women empowerment. Priority must be given for development of girls' education. Educating women is high return investment in socio economic development of a society. By educating women we educate the society and one can say nation.

(1) the first thing is to popularized the girls' education, for improvement of girls' education it's the responsibility of the society and the duty of the govt. to make girls' education excess able to all, one may understand the importance of girls' education in her life. So, efforts from all essential to make the campaign successful. Suitable measure should be taken for educating public opinion in favour of girls' and women education.

(2) For development of girls' education the govt. must provide the minimum infrastructure, Good school building, hostel facilities, toilet etc. We saw that lack of separate educational institution for girls' is one of the causes of less enrolment, because of conservative look of our society many guardians are not willing to send their girls' in a co-educational institute.

(3) Another factor is poverty; many guardians are unable to bear the expenses of their child education so in spite of sending their child to school they send them to work. The govt. must provide economic security to them, at least to their child, i.e. mid day meal, bearing school expenses is good example. There should be provision of adequate number of scholarships to encourage the girls' to continue their education.

(4) Co-operation of various organizations-semi-official organizations etc. should be secured for the development and expansion of women education. Publicity programme should be launched to awaken the people towards the need of women education.

(5) The curriculum must be made such a way which attract girls and help them in their future life. Generally there should be common course for both boys and girls but with this some vocational courses should be introduced. One more thing the curriculum must be according to the need of the time and flexible.

(6) More and more women teachers should be appointed in all level of school. In co-educational institutions, the number of female teachers should be more than that of male teachers. Such a provision will create confidence in parents and they will feel encouraged to send their girls to school.

(7) Women candidates, particularly from rural areas should be given preference in admission to training courses as well as in recruitment in jobs. When other women saw it then they are more attract towards education. There should be the provision of reservation of seats for girls in different disciplines; it will certainly motivate the parents to send their daughters for education.

(8) Lastly, the state govt. should strictly enforce the existing legislation on the age of marriage of girls, dowry system and compulsory education. Simultaneously, the govt. should encourage social workers, community, girls youth leaders to undertake a drive against social prejudices for girls' education and break through the apathy of the parents towards girls particularly in the rural areas. The people also ready to accept the changes in terms of girls' education. The mindset of the society must be changed towards girls' education.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Women education is very important for the empowering women and gender equality. There is lot of obstacles in front of the women education; it's the duty of the state and responsibility of the society to provide space and opportunity for girls' education. Maximum mobilization of human and material resources for qualitative and quantitative development of women's education through formal and non formal approach will go a long way in women empowerment. The speech of "Gender mainstreaming" is meaningless without empowering women, so, in this education plays a very important role. Without education of women, we can't raise social and educational standard in the country.

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