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# Impact of Education on Women Empowerment in India

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**ABSTRACT:** Women's empowerment is the process in which women expand and recreate what it is that they can be, do, and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied. And, that is possible only when we educate a woman that does not only mean a school's conventional learning but also refers to every form of education that aims at improving the knowledge, and to develop the vocational skills. Women's education and their empowerment is still a very hot topic of discussion in India that needs to be addressed for the development of the country. According to the statistics released by the latest census of 2011, India's female literacy rate is 65.46%, significantly lower than the world average of 79.7% as well as approximately 15% lower than the literacy rate of men in India. China, India's neighbour and the other global human resource powerhouse, precedes with 82.7% female literacy rate. Though The Right to Education (RTE) Act, introduced in 2009 making elementary education free and compulsory in the country, has been a shot in the arm for many, still the statistics do not sound good at all. Indeed, India has seen a rapid growth and the development of Women for Education in past years after implementing some women-friendly campaigns such as "Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao" so well but the Indian development model has yet to completely incorporate the important role played by women for propelling the socio-economic growth. Rather the culture of many Indian families of spending much more money on the marriages of the girls more than their education especially in higher and specialized education is pulling our country back-foot. Here, a big question also arises that how many Indian women are encouraged and aware about the government plans also for fostering Vocational and Technical education for girls as well as for providing them with the employability in different areas.

**KEYWORDS:** Women Empowerment, Education, Employment, Policies for women, Female literacy rate

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**What is Education?** Education gives us a knowledge of the globe and makes it changed into something better. It helps us build opinions and have points of view on things in the life. It also develops in us a perspective of looking at life. Education can be **formal and informal. Formal education** usually have a structured curriculum and standard. School and University education is a good example of formal education. **Informal education** includes skills acquired without any structured curriculum and informal learning.

Education is a bundle of many benefits and has positive impact in our life. An educated person is always an asset for any country. In today's world, human capital is assumed the best national resource. On one hand, he can explore more & better opportunities for himself, and on the other hand, the entire Nation would get benefited from his works. There are always a number of factors in the society which are underprivileged of their basic rights in each & every society, state and nation, but these factors lack in the awareness of their rights. If we enlist such factors from the society, then women would be on the top in the list.

In fact, women are the most important factor of each and every society. Nobody is ready to accept this fact even though everybody is aware of this fact. As a result, the importance & the value which used to be given to every woman is declining in today's society. The need of empowering the women was felt due to this growing tendency of underestimating women such as to deny them of their basic rights, and to make them occupy a secondary position in society. Today, we enjoy the

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benefits of being citizens of a free nation, we take pride by saying that we live in a free country but we really need to think whether each of the citizens of our country is really enjoying the freedom, in the true manner. If we talk about India, each citizen is given certain basic rights. The Structure of India doesn't discriminate between men and women at all, but our society has delinked women of certain basic rights, which were bestowed upon them by our Constitution. It was needed to make women free from all the fetters and to empower them as well due to such situations. This is nothing but empowerment of women.

Women constitute almost half the human race. Education is considered as a potent instrument through which processes modernization and social change come to existence. Education exposes people to new ideas, thoughts and make them multi-skilled. Hence, thinking for harmonious development without educating women is quite impossible. Moreover, it has been rightly said that to educate a woman is to educate the whole family. Therefore, the emphasis with regard to women education should be to equip her multiple role as mother, citizens, housewives, contributor to family income, builders of new society and the nation.

Women's empowerment is not confined to the Indian society only. If we deliberate the global aspect in this regard, we see that women are being given equal treatment in developed nations that is the main key factor of attaining the targets in a shorter time. In fact, if we take a recapitulation of the history, we come to know that women have always been given secondary position in society, but the difference between men and women created by the Nature is but natural. It is education through which we realize this fact. In a study it was clearly mentioned that when American women realized this, they opposed this unfairness which was meted out to them by way of a huge movement, through which they asked for equal rights. For eliminating this injustice, the United Nations' Organization (UNO) framed an agreement which is called 'The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women' (CEDAW), which further led to the formation of Women's Commission.

It is quite noteworthy that women's empowerment has now become a topic of global discussion. Seeing all the aspects of this discussion, we will realize that education is the only means for empowerment of women. Therefore, literacy should spread amongst women. The literacy rate amongst the women in the post-Independent Era is not as per the expectations, for a better understanding of this fact, a detailed table is also being given in this paper. If we really want to be the superpower by 2020 then each element of our society/ nation should contribute in the nation building process for filling this dream, else, this won't be possible in any case. But women, who are a major factor of this society, aren't literate then we can't expect to become a superpower. Therefore, it is a need of the hour to know the importance of women's education, which would, in turn, give a motivation to the process of women's empowerment. This paper aims to create the awareness among the women's about different empowerment and identifying the impact of education in women overall empowerment including their employability.

According to the statistics released by the latest census of 2011, India's female literacy rate is 65.46%, significantly lower than the world average of 79.7% as well as approximately 15% lower than the literacy rate of men in India. A country's economic development crucially depends upon the participation rates of its women as they constitute around 50 percent of its human resources (NIPCCD, 2010). Not only that, women's participation in the workforce as compared to men is also an important determinant of their social status (Mammen, 2000). Women's employment is crucial for raising their living standards and well-being. However, economic well-being and welfare of women may not improve if they are engaged in low-paying distress-driven work (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2009). Women's participation in the workforce assumes more importance in the case of developing countries. This is because of its positive effects on the level of output and negative effects on population growth (Collver & Langlois, 1962). Increasing rates of women's participation have enabled developed countries to embark on a path of higher growth (The Economist, 2006). It has been found that in developing countries like India, women's participation in the workforce has been remarkably low as compared to men. However, the role of women in economic activity has been increasing in recent years. Therefore, it is important to examine magnitude and nature of work taken up by women in India.

There are many more extensive studies that have looked at the issue of female employment in India which really gives us a thought to be looked upon seriously. Ghosh and Mukhopadhyay (1984) reported a drastic downfall in the number of female workers and their work participation rates. They deliberated this situation mainly in terms of the dominant position of the male in the workforce, the low level of overall employment, and the adverse sex-ratio of females in the population. They also examined the issue of inter-state variations in female employment. They found that northern States like Uttar Pradesh (UP), Haryana, and Punjab are characterized by low participation rates and southern states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu that show higher participation rates. Dunlop and Velkoff (1999) explained that despite the fact that most women in India work, most of their work does not get accounted in the official statistics. They argued that the recorded workforce participation of females is very low, and it is difficult to estimate unemployment in India. So, much of the unemployment data does not correctly reveal the participation rates of women. Unni and Rani (2000)

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have examined the issue of informalization of employed women. Their study finds rising informalization of the labour force in India and other South Asian countries. They argue that sub-contracting and loose contracts are primary reasons that are responsible for this trend.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

- To study the impact of education on empowerment of women in India.
- To study the obstacles on the employability of educated women in India.

## 3. DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the collection of data from secondary sources. Secondary data is obtained from various researches, published and unpublished records, books, magazines, surveys and journals. Some employment and unemployment surveys also have been used in this study which are procured from NSS data. NSSO carries out such surveys once in almost every five years covering about 5 lacs individuals.

## 4. Significance of Women Education

Getting education is the fundamental human right of every individual irrespective of the gender. But some of the people in our society do not understand this and make such a simple thing terribly complicated. We must be aware of the fact that if a woman is uneducated then close to half of the population of our country is uneducated. It is well said that educating a woman means educating the family and the nation.

Though 'Education for all' is one of the major & main tasks being carried out by the Government of India but still Ais is facing up with the lowest female literacy rate that is being given in the table below. India is working hard for that but the pace is little slow as we haven't achieved what we should have been so far and was expected. At the start of British Raj till independence just 2-6% of females were literate. The percentage went up to 15.3% in 1961 and 28.5% in 1981. Literacy rate crossed 50% in 2001. By 2011 female literacy rate in India stood at 65.46%. So there is an increase in the female literacy rate but India lack far behind as compared to other countries at global level. Female illiteracy rate varies with the state. In Kerala 86% of women are literate whereas literacy rate in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is just between 55-60%. Surprisingly, the India's rural areas have the lowest female literacy rate. Rural areas of Rajasthan has less than 12% female literacy rate.

Table – 1- Literacy Rate in India of last 5 years

| *Year* | *Persons* | *Males* | *Females* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***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* |

In table – 1, it is shown that last 5 years how the literacy rate changed. In 1971 where it was 18.7 and in 2011 it is 65.46.

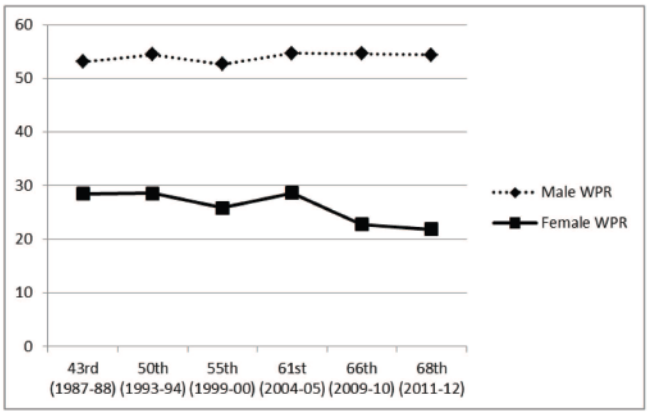
In table – 2, Kerala, Mizoram and Lakshadweep bagged top 3 ranks with 91.98%, 89.4% and 88.25 % respectively from the point of view of the literacy rate of Females in India. It is to note that the Ranks in the table – 2 is being placed according to the descending female literacy rate in India (Source: Census 2011).

Now, our law, plan, programmes, democratic policies, development policy are all focused on women's empowerment along with their education. Before independence, women literacy was poor in our country. Five years plan also approaches for women development. From our first five years plan to till now different five years plans mentioned about women development and their various issues. In our constitution also the 73rd and 74th Amendment (1993) mentioned about the reservation of seats in Panchayat and Municipalities for women. This helps them to involve in decision making process.

Now-a-days various banks are coming forward for helping the women by giving loans for set up their own business. Various NGOs are now helping women in their empowerment. In 1990 National Commission of Women was set up/ it ensures women to safe guard their rights and legal entitlement. In our constitution, village Panchayat and Municipalities women reservation is applied where they contribute their duties, for the society.

## 5. Need of Women's Employability

In almost all countries especially in the developing parts, the male participation rates are significantly higher than females. Same is also evident in India as well; women participation rates in employment are almost half as compared to men. Figure 1 shows that at the all-India level male WPR range between 50-55percent from 43rd round (1987-88) to 68th NSS round (2011-12). Corresponding rates for females are in the range of 22 29percent. Male WPR has remained more or less stable during the entire study period.




*Source: Employment and Unemployment Surveys of NSS*

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Table 2 –Comparative chart of the literacy rate of Male and Female India: Census 2011

| Rank | States/UT | Total Literacy Rate | Male Literacy rate | Female Literacy Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | INDIA | 74.04 | 82.14 | 65.46 |
| **1** | Kerala | 93.91 | 96.02 | 91.98 |
| **2** | Mizoram | 91.58 | 93.72 | 89.4 |
| **3** | Lakshadweep | 92.28 | 96.11 | 88.25 |
| **4** | Tripura | 87.75 | 92.18 | 83.15 |
| **5** | Goa | 87.4 | 92.81 | 81.84 |
| **6** | Andaman & Nicobar Islands # | 86.27 | 90.11 | 81.84 |
| **7** | Chandigarh # | 86.43 | 90.54 | 81.38 |
| **8** | Puducherry | 86.55 | 92.12 | 81.22 |
| **9** | NCT of Delhi # | 86.34 | 91.03 | 80.93 |
| **10** | Daman & Diu | 87.07 | 91.48 | 79.59 |
| **11** | Nagaland | 80.11 | 83.29 | 76.69 |
| **12** | Himachal Pradesh | 83.78 | 90.83 | 76.6 |
| **13** | Sikkim | 82.2 | 87.29 | 76.43 |
| **14** | Maharashtra | 82.91 | 89.82 | 75.48 |
| **15** | Tamil Nadu | 80.33 | 86.81 | 73.86 |
| **16** | Meghalaya | 75.48 | 77.17 | 73.78 |
| **17** | Manipur | 79.85 | 86.49 | 73.17 |
| **18** | Punjab | 76.68 | 81.48 | 71.34 |
| **19** | West Bengal | 77.08 | 82.67 | 71.16 |
| **20** | Gujarat | 79.31 | 87.23 | 70.73 |
| **21** | Uttarakhand | 79.63 | 88.33 | 70.7 |
| **22** | Karnataka | 75.6 | 82.85 | 68.13 |
| **23** | Assam | 73.18 | 78.81 | 67.27 |
| **24** | Haryana | 76.64 | 85.38 | 66.77 |
| **25** | Dadra & Nagar Haveli | 77.65 | 86.46 | 65.93 |
| **26** | Orissa | 73.45 | 82.4 | 64.36 |
| **27** | Chhattisgarh | 71.04 | 81.45 | 60.59 |
| **28** | Madhya Pradesh | 70.63 | 80.53 | 60.02 |
| **29** | Andhra Pradesh | 67.66 | 75.56 | 59.74 |
| **30** | Arunachal Pradesh | 66.95 | 73.69 | 59.57 |
| **31** | Uttar Pradesh | 69.72 | 79.24 | 59.26 |
| **32** | Jammu & Kashmir | 68.74 | 78.26 | 58.01 |
| **33** | Jharkhand | 67.63 | 78.45 | 56.21 |
| **34** | Bihar | 63.82 | 73.39 | 53.33 |
| **35** | Rajasthan | 67.06 | 80.51 | 52.66 |

In the above table, In comparison to the male WPR, female WPR reveals a slightly more fluctuating trend. Female WPR has declined from 28.5 percent in 43rd round to 21.9 percent in the 68th round.

To promote the women and to empower the women, Government of India is coming forward to with some wonderful schemes for India women though some schemes may not be relates to this paper's theme but somehow empowering the women that indeed supports a woman to let her empowered. As there are so many things which create obstacles in the path of them so there is the need of the hour to remove all such barriers. Here are those schemes for empowering the women are as follows:

- *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme*
- *One Stop Centre Scheme*
- *Women Helpline Scheme*

UJJAWALA : A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation. Ministry approves new projects under Ujjawala Scheme and continues existing projects

SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances): Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)

NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR: Awardees of Stree Shakti Puruskar, 2014 & Awardees of Nari Shakti Puruskar

Awardees of Rajya Mahila Samman & Zila Mahila Samman

NIRBHAYA

- *Mahila police Volunteers*
- *Mahila E-Haat*
- *Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)*

In the first four months of 2017, a nugget of information went by unnoticed: while jobs for men increased by 0.9 million, 2.4 million women fell off the employment map,

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according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), a think tank.

Mahesh Vyas, CMIE managing director and CEO said that "Only women suffer when there's an employment problem,".

The trend for this year points to a continuing story of Indian women increasingly clocking out of the workplace. It might not seem like it at first glance. You see women employed everywhere, in advertisement agencies and start-ups, on construction sites and in fields, in shops and restaurants, in schools and A*nganwadis*, flying airplanes and driving taxis.

Yet, if the number of women who quit jobs in India between 2004-05 and 2011-12 (the last year for which census data is available), was a city, it would, at 19.6 million, be the third-most populated in the world, after Shanghai and Beijing.

Only 27% Indian women are currently in the labour force. Among G-20 countries, only Saudi Arabia is worse, *India Spend* reported on April 9, 2016. Within South Asia in 2013, India had the lowest rate of female employment after Pakistan. In over two decades preceding 2013, female labour force participation in India fell from 34.8% to 27%, according to an April 2017 World Bank report.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS

Following measures may be suggested to overcome the problems which are found in the study.

- Proper care should be taken for development of women education in rural and remote areas of India for encouraging the girls to school. Guardian, teachers, NGO officials and govt. will have to take bold steps for empowerment of women in general and women of SC, ST communities in particular.
- Attendance scholarships for girl students which serve as a compensation to the parents should be given. This will also ensure reduction of wastage and stagnation.
- Women reservation policy should strictly be maintained in all aspects like appointment in govt. and semi govt. offices, admission in to the educational institutions, participating in the politics etc.
- For fostering Vocational courses amongst women, women of rural areas should be trained up in such courses like handloom and textile, fashion and designing, food and nutrition, and beauty parlour etc.
- General awareness programmes should be taken among the women of village area to sensitize them about the modern development of science and technology so that they could give up superstitious believes and attitudes.
- The Govt. department should adopt proper policies and proper implementation of govt. scheme for the benefit of rural masses and rural development.
- Variety of incentives should be provided to the learners like free distribution of text book and stationery, mid-day meal, uniform, attendance scholarship, free transportation facility to attract the children towards the education,
- There should be opening the large number of adult school with facilities of sewing, knitting, handicrafts, animal husbandry etc., and basic knowledge of health care and food habit.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Educating women is very essential for a Nation. It is one of the most powerful tools to change the position and to uplift the status of the women not only in the society but also in the families. Education can play a vital role for reducing the inequalities between man and woman. Many women try their best to be equal as men and education help them in this regard. As per the researches done so far it is found that 50% of girls do not get the chance to attend school in the poorest countries of this world. Development of our country or society mostly depends on the empowerment of women. Man and woman are like two wheels of a cart. It is only possible for the cart to move faster and safely if both the wheels pull properly at the same time and also in the same direction with their same strength. By establishing schools, colleges, universities for women will help them to provide knowledge and education. Free text books, scholarship, school uniforms, hostel facility, boarding and lodging will help for more. Mid-day meals, stipend for BPL (Below Poverty Line) families related girls, Attendance based scholarship will help in girl's education. The female workers have much lower participation rates than their male counterparts and hence comprise a marginalized section. The share of rural women in the workforce is much higher than those in urban. However, women in rural India are clearly in an inferior position in the labour market vis-à-vis their urban counterparts. This is evident from the fact the most of the rural women are casually employed and are engaged in low-paying agricultural work. During 2011-12, more than 35 percent of rural women were casually employed while this figure stood at less than 15 percent for urban women. This implies that most rural women work long hours in poor working conditions. There is continued in equality and vulnerability of women in all sectors – Economic, Social, Political, Educational, Health-Care, Nutrition, Right and Legal etc. Education is the key factor for women empowerment and rural development. "Education for all" programme is providing different facilities to uplift education for woman. These will help in women education specially women empowerment in our society. No society can ignore the role of a woman. If woman gets education it will help the whole family. In this way woman will move towards her empowerment.

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