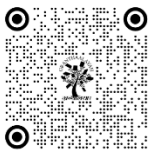


# THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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## ABSTRACT

One of the mechanisms that may be utilized to facilitate social transformation is empowerment. This is accomplished by cultivating an atmosphere that fosters critical thinking and informed decision-making. A person's natural ability can be enhanced through the accumulation of information, the development of resilience, and the acquisition of experience. A problem that is of utmost importance in our day is the empowerment of women. There should be no disparity between the opportunities available to men and those available to women in any aspect of life, including work, healthcare, and education. The education of women is a crucial factor that contributes to the continued development of society. "Educating a woman educates an entire family," said Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, underlining the gap between the concept of teaching a man, who is seen to be independent, and the idea of educating a daughter. In their respective works, some researchers argue that the empowerment of women bestows authority onto Mother India. Education is a crucial component of women's empowerment, as it equips them with the resources necessary to overcome obstacles, challenge established norms, and effect positive changes in their lives. Furthermore, it promotes equality while simultaneously elevating their standing within the family, community, political system, and economic system. The purpose of this research is to highlight various aspects of women's empowerment through education.

**Keywords:** Education, Women Empowerment, Life Aspects, Society, Social Transformation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to "Bhat & Kaur", empowerment is defined as the process of providing individuals with the autonomy to make their own decisions, pursue their initiatives, and manage their jobs. This represents the attainment of freedom from any form of slavery or captivity. Additionally, it guarantees freedom from a limitation that lasts for an entire year. To accommodate this, a complete reorganization of monetary and social institutions is required. Throughout the story, several characters compete for status, ultimately revealing themes related to emancipation and self-discovery. Liberating oneself from externally imposed concepts of identity is a necessary step. Witte states that for empowerment to be truly successful there must be mechanisms that encourage tolerance and acceptance of diversity, protect personal liberty within predetermined limitations, and facilitate individuals' ability to discover and cultivate their own "self". Due to regulations that permit unrestricted movement and the accompanying right to be free from discrimination based on nationality, individuals have access to a broader range of options for self-actualization. Rather than being a momentous act of freedom, it appears to be more of a turning point between the many forms of slavery and the enslavement of ethnic groups. The expression "autonomy in decision-making" is another means by which it may be described. There is liberation of the individual into a vast cultural world as well as an "imagined community" that is not limited by physical limits. On the other hand, empowerment requires conducting a power Analysis, which may inspire opposition and, as a result, destabilize the existing power structures. According to "Bhat & Kaur", it comprises taking responsibility for one's own life and determining one's fate. As a result, it enhances living conditions and contributes to the development of

human capital. According to this perspective, education is a crucial component in the process of fostering agency. As a result, we are presented with an alternative viewpoint.

“Education elucidates the distinction between good and evil – Jyotiba Phule”.

The possibility of a shift in public opinion is beneficial for the progress of the nation's political and social systems. Through the process of conscientisation, which is further helped by education, individuals have the opportunity to foster self-reflection. The term “education” refers to the act of passing on the information, beliefs, and culture of an organisation from one generation to the next. This can be accomplished through classroom instruction, supervised work experience, or independent study.

In her book “Empowering Women: An Alternative Strategy from Rural India - Sakuntala,” Nandhini defines the key causes that lead to women's disadvantage as their lack of knowledge, power, and safety. She says that these elements are the primary contributors to women's disadvantage. Women are better positioned to confront economic and social inequality when they have a better grasp of their legal rights and their levels of autonomy. According to Jha this is a vital component for improving both prosperity and well-being. Educated women lay the groundwork for their families' success in today's fast-paced and competitive world by laying the framework for their achievement. Through the cultivation of children who are healthier and better educated, she has been shown to have a good impact on the social and economic output of the home, according to research, the enhanced access to knowledge that a woman has results in an increase in her negotiating power, which in turn increases her level of autonomy. Education is a means by which women may improve the competitiveness of their families, communities, and nation. Education helps women broaden their perspectives and comprehension, which in turn enables them to become more competitive, significantly improving the economic situation of women.

## 1.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To comprehend the fundamental principles of women's empowerment.
- 2) To elucidate the function of education in enhancing the socio-economic and political standing of women.
- 3) To illuminate the many forms of women's empowerment via educational activities.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive. Journals, books, newspapers, government publications, and other secondary sources were employed for data collection. An approach known as content Analysis was utilised to examine the secondary data. Additionally, meta-analyses and systematic reviews were not included in the research. Books and publications that did not include verifiable material were excluded.

Examining "The Role of Education in Women Empowerment: A Cross-Cultural Perspective", a qualitative research technique that stresses community participation and cultural sensitivity was utilized. By using the Research Activity Engagement approach, participants and researchers collaborated to identify problems and propose solutions. By raising women's voices in the creation of educational programs, RAE guarantees that research addresses women's unique needs and cultural circumstances, therefore empowering them. Equipped exchanges between researchers and community people throughout the project are underlined in community-based participatory research (CBPR). By incorporating local knowledge and aims into the research design and execution, this approach effectively understood how educational programs can be adjusted to empower women within their cultural settings. Examining civilisations from numerous angles requires balancing and frames of view. Through compiling women's accounts of their educational and empowering experiences, this approach helps facilitate cross-cultural comparison and Analysis, thereby broadening our knowledge of how education can affect women's empowerment worldwide. Understanding how education shapes women's emancipation across cultures requires both unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Participants in this interview style can freely express their experiences and perspectives. This method aims to balance the dynamics between the interviewer and respondent, thereby encouraging more honest and open communication, and is especially appropriate for feminist research. Scholars of educational studies examine how schools help students develop their identities and pass on culture to the next generation. Understanding how educational approaches shape women's roles and status in various cultural settings helps empower them. Ethnographic techniques, such as participant observation,

can facilitate this process. By applying these qualitative research approaches, one can offer a more comprehensive and culturally sensitive understanding of how education benefits women in various spheres.

### 3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The table below provides descriptive information about the female participants from Gujarat in the sample. From what we can see, only 18% of the female population is actively participating in the study, while 82% have opted out. Among the female participants, 28% have never attended school, 22% have completed elementary school, 40% have completed high school, 7.6% have completed college, and 2.6% have completed a university degree. All the sample participants earn an average of 378 rupees each month.

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics: Summary

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Dependent variable</b>					
Female labor force	33,451	.1767062	.3814256	0	1
<b>Independent variables</b>					
No education	33,451	.2789752	.448502	0	1
Primary education	33,451	.2153	.4110364	0	1
Secondary education	33,451	.4019013	.4902895	0	1
Higher secondary education	33,451	.0760515	.2650845	0	1
Tertiary education	33,451	.0261278	.1595176	0	1
Own land	33,451	.8746824	.3310837	0	1
Total wage (monthly)	33,451	272.217	3171.127	0	425000

According to the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test, the model is well-fitting, with a probability value (Prob > chi2) of 0.6261.

Results demonstrate a statistically significant and favourable correlation between educational attainment and women's health. Greater educational attainment is associated with improved health outcomes for women. The female with a postsecondary education is more likely to have life stability compared to the female without a degree, according to the tertiary education estimate coefficient (2.91), which is significant at the  $P < .01$  level. A positive link between female well-being and the variable's total pay and ownership of land is also indicated by the coefficient estimate.

**Table 2** Results of the Logistic Regression on FLF Involvement

Female labor force	Coef.	St. Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]
No education	1.978*	1.01	1.96	.05	-.002	3.957
Primary	2.408**	1.01	2.38	.017	.429	4.387
Secondary	2.367**	1.01	2.34	.019	.388	4.346
Higher secondary	2.718***	1.01	2.69	.007	.737	4.698
Tertiary	2.912***	1.013	2.88	.004	.928	4.897
Own land	.422***	.053	8.01	0	.319	.525
Total wage	.003***	0	7.90	0	.002	.004
Constant	-4.385***	1.011	-4.34	0	-6.366	-2.405
Pseudo r-squared	0.102		Number of observations		33451.000	
Chi-square	3172.519		Prob > chi2		0.000	

Significant level \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$

Table 2 summarizes the outcomes of the hypothesis testing, showing the impact on women's well-being of not having any education, having primary, secondary, upper secondary, or university education, owning land, and total pay.

#### 4. DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIAN WOMEN'S EDUCATION

When it comes to the research of the Vedas, women in ancient India were afforded the same privileges as males. This included the opportunity to take part in the sacred ritual of Upanayana. Unfortunately, their access to Vedic education was restricted during later centuries, “Korishetti”. There is evidence that women in India were receiving formal education as early as the third century B.C., with the majority of their instruction being transmitted verbally. According to “Jenefa”, during that period, researchers at institutes such as Nalanda, Vikramshila, and Takshila solicited the participation of women. In the 11th century, Muslim monarchs established several institutions in the cities of Delhi, Lucknow, and Allahabad. These institutions enabled women to participate in a range of academic activities. It was the responsibility of the Mughal kings to guarantee that the princesses obtained a well-rounded education. Gul-Badan Begum, the author of the Humayun Namah; Nur Jahan, the valued wife of Jahangir; Mumtaz Mahal, the spouse of Shah Jahan; Jahanara Begum, the eldest daughter of Shah Jahan; and Zibunnisa Begum, the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb, were some of the noteworthy women who were members of the royal family. During this period, the daughters of Rajput monarchs and certain Bengali zamindars gained the ability to read and write. A new chapter is turned in India's educational history with the end of British influence. There was an attempt made by the British government to take a ceremonial approach to the education of women. In the early nineteenth century, during a time when the United Kingdom was still a colonial power, missionaries and the educational institutions they established began to advocate for the education of women. In 1819, the Female Juvenile Society, a secular organisation, established schools for young women. In 1824, the Ladies' Society for Native Female Education was established with the support of Lady Amherst, who was in charge of thirty organisations that provided education to women.

The development of towns and the local fund cess were two factors that significantly contributed to the advancement of women's education. Three presidencies, namely Bombay (now known as Mumbai), Calcutta (now known as Kolkata), and Madras (now known as Chennai), were responsible for establishing universities in 1857. A larger percentage of Christian and Parsi women engaged in the pursuit of a college degree in comparison to Hindu women. This was the case, even though they encountered personal hurdles along the way. The Indian National Congress was an organization that played a significant role in the fight for women's liberation. Over the first year (1885), a Ladies' Association was established. During the 1890s, a growing number of women who had completed their college education began making public appearances. Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Rameshwari Nehru, Aruna Asif Ali, Sucheta Kriplani, Usha Mehta, and Vilasini Devi Shenai were among the renowned Indian women who played key roles in society and politics during the final decades of the country's history. In 1913, in response to the growing demand from the Indian subcontinent, the British government developed a new plan for the education of girls and women. The plan emphasized subjects such as music, needlework, and practical skills. Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University, and the University of Delhi each established centres for women's freedom in 1916, 1920, and 1922, respectively. These centres were founded in the year 1916. Following the country's attainment of independence, women's education, particularly at the postsecondary level, flourished.

#### 5. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The purpose of education is to reawaken people to the realisation that they are not powerless. Both individuals and nations must have access to education. Investing in education is beneficial for both individuals and governments when it enhances women's capacities across various domains, including socio-cultural, economic, interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological dimensions. According to Freire, education is essentially built on a dialogical vision of knowledge. This concept of knowledge is founded on a critical understanding of knowing and attempts to modify the world deliberately. According to Siqueira, this type of education has the potential to support personal growth, autonomy, and ultimately, human liberation when it is appropriately implemented. A populace that is educated is better equipped to evaluate their surroundings, recognise the distinction between scientific and political objectivity, and uphold universal human norms and standards. In several works, Freire elucidates his vision of popular education in connection with collaborative projects that include groups who are marginalized. Through the implementation of an all-encompassing educational program, the goal is to bring about a change in patriarchal views. Individuals who advocate for women's rights must take over the intellectual frameworks that are the foundation of patriarchal domination. Education is a clear factor that contributes to reducing the wage gap between men and women in the workplace, and it has the potential to influence



the decrease in wage inequality significantly. The promotion of educational opportunities for young women is not only a fundamental human right but also a social and economic gain. This is a goal that is pursued on a global scale. We found that males continue to have a significant amount of influence over decisions that affect Indian women, particularly in the areas that we investigated. The conventional educational paradigm equips women with the skills necessary to fulfil their essential roles as mothers and spouses, which are particularly important in the modern, globalized world. According to Nagaraja, education is becoming increasingly important for people of both sexes, not just for men. It is the responsibility of the educational system to ensure that women can develop equitably.

## **6. PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

The pursuit of education is a crucial step towards achieving independence for women in various ways. The provision of coaching on character development is made easier for women as a result of this. Examine the different characteristics that it possesses.

### **1) Engaging in Public Policy**

Women have the potential to impact public policy if they possess the necessary information and actively use it. In this particular place, women are guaranteed the opportunity to participate economically and culturally, in addition to their civil and political rights. If they have access to reliable information, their ability to combat all forms of exploitation will be enhanced. Achieving self-awareness is essential for women to exercise their political agency. It may allow them to make crucial decisions regarding their personal and public lives. Their agency is enhanced by the fact that they can vote, run for public office, and participate in projects related to public policy. This may also make it easier for them to participate in local self-governance. The purpose of education for women was to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for active participation in society. This would enable them to have an impact on the formulation of policies that affect their lives and to advocate for their interests.

### **2) Empowerment of Women in Society**

Education has the potential to help promote the social growth of women. At the same time, it is a significant tool for reducing poverty, illiteracy, and marginalization; it also has a catalytic impact on a nation's socio-economic growth. According to Singh et al., education needs to be recognized for the value it possesses as a foundational component for a future that is professional, research-driven, and career-focused. Although many feel it might potentially establish a culture in which women are protected from any abuse, some believe it would guarantee that there would be sufficient representation of women in positions of responsibility. Women's advancement and empowerment can only be acknowledged when their participation in decision-making increases their impact on production variables, resource accessibility, and benefit allocation. This is the only way that women's progress and empowerment can be acknowledged. According to Aslam, research that investigates how education affects the values, attitudes, and outcomes of women might potentially make a substantial contribution to the debate on education and empowerment.

### **3) Achieving Financial Security**

Education not only improves women's social position but also their ability to make their own economic decisions. Their credibility is enhanced as a result of their demonstrated competence in financial management. According to Varghese, women with a strong educational background typically possess a significant amount of financial acumen. Women can't fight for equality and justice if they do not have access to the essential resources; they are unable to exercise their rights and entitlements if they lack financial certainty. Varghese contends that individuals are unable to build a sense of social responsibility or make logical decisions in the absence of a stable income guarantee. As a result of their increased financial understanding, women are generally better equipped to handle the finances of both their households and the nation. The economic power of a woman can be evaluated based on her level of influence, her accomplishments, and her level of autonomy over her resources. The availability of microfinance services is a significant factor in determining the degree to which women are financially independent. They can see an increase in their purchasing power as an additional benefit that comes along with it. Throughout history, education for women has been viewed as both fundamentally revolutionary and dangerous. In many parts of the globe, education is commonly seen to be the most critical factor in achieving a more "modern," or Westernised, way of life, as well as a road to a more secure financial future.

#### **4) Psychological Independence**

Educational opportunities have the potential to enhance an individual's psychological capacity to deal with personal challenges. When it comes to psychological empowerment, self-confidence and self-assurance are essential components. According to Meera, psychological empowerment gives women the ability to modify their subjectivities and identities while simultaneously destroying outdated patriarchal societal norms and taboos. Through the facilitation of collectivisation, it helps women become less atomised, isolated, and fragmented in their daily lives. There is a correlation between women's increased access to higher education, political representation, and decision-making positions, as well as their increased autonomy over their bodies and finances, and higher levels of psychological empowerment, self-confidence, and self-esteem. For this reason, youngsters in today's society are equipped with the self-assurance, pride, maturity, and resilience necessary to navigate their endeavours successfully on their own. One more thing that children learn is how to manage their lives and adapt to different situations as they become older. When women have an education, they are less likely to have large families, which may potentially contribute to population growth regulation.

#### **5) Political Development**

Women are more politically empowered when they have access to education. For women to be truly empowered, there is an urgent need for their involvement in all tiers of government. The right to accountability, a fundamental principle of governance, is violated when citizens' opinions are not considered in government and public policy debates. Across the globe, women have been fighting for equality and liberation from a variety of forms of oppression, including but not limited to domestic violence and sexual assault. It is tough for women to survive unless they are allowed access to the corridors of power, where they can create and execute policies and programs. Obtaining an education enhances a woman's self-esteem and empowers her to address her concerns. "A woman's empowerment in reality is to empower herself and not overpower men," as correctly observed by Promilla Kapur. This is one way in which women's political empowerment liberates them from oppression. As a result of taking action on issues that they personally and collectively deem essential, it empowers individuals to make a difference in their own lives, as well as those of their neighbours and the larger community. Power and strength may be achieved through this multi-pronged method. It is challenging to envision a robust democratic society that excludes women at all levels. To guarantee better living circumstances, involvement is crucial.

### **7. CONCLUSION**

The discussion of development must always include the empowerment of women as an essential component. The empowerment of women is necessary to bring about positive change and transform a society lacking justice. Even though our country successfully achieved its freedom, women continue to face restrictions imposed by society. When compared to women in wealthy nations, the challenges that our women face are far more severe. According to Mandal, the concept of gender equity refers to the achievement of comprehensive equality across all societal dimensions, regardless of gender. To achieve full gender equality in society, males need to completely abstain from any forms of power, oppression, and discrimination directed against women. Several countries consider empowering women to be a crucial component of sustainable development. According to Huis et al., governments and other organisations throughout the world are working to empower women by supporting sustainable development, human rights, and access to financial services. For the sake of progress, gender equality, and the complete personal development of both men and women, educational institutions have a responsibility to eradicate gender stereotypes. Men and women must work together to achieve success when participating in developmental projects. The empowerment of women is a belief-mediated process in which their propensity to cultivate emancipatory ideas acts as a mediator between the influence of objective societal conditions, such as the strength of the knowledge economy. When it comes to economic progress, collaboration between the sexes is essential, and women, in particular, should make the most of their potential. According to Dominic and Jothi, collective action for development is beneficial to women's empowerment, as it benefits not only individual women and organisations that advocate for women, but also families and communities. Consequently, the education of women is a powerful technique of empowering women.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

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