



# Impact of Higher Education on Women Empowerment

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**ABSTRACT:** Higher Education refers the education at the degree level and above. Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence. For empowering the women, higher education will play a vital role. India holds the second position in the world of having highest population. There are approximately 49% female in total population of it. Indian women generally faced all types of barriers to success like illiteracy, domestic violence, lack of motivation and support and many more. 'Empowerment' is 'to make (someone) stronger and more confident in controlling their life and claiming their rights.' It is very essential for the harmonious development of the country that women should go hand by hand and shoulder to shoulder with men. And for empowering the women, higher education will play a vital role. Education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position in society. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family and develops the concept of participation.

**KEYWORDS:** higher education, women empowerment, country, shoulder with men, reducing inequalities, participation

## I.INTRODUCTION

Education is the right of all the citizens of a Nation. Education primary, secondary or higher must be provided to all categories<sup>1</sup> of citizens by breaking down constraints and barriers. Literacy is the basic building block of education. Education is the most powerful instrument to enhance capabilities of an individual and to achieve the desired objectives for the social and economic development of a country<sup>2</sup>. Education enables individuals to broaden their horizons and provide opportunities to raise voice in decision making. Unfortunately, since independence, women in India remained marginal beneficiaries of the Education system.<sup>3</sup> The first Open University was established in 1969 in United Kingdom in which first students enrolled in 1971. The idea behind was to bring high quality in learning to the people who had not got the opportunities to study in formally set up universities<sup>4</sup>. Open universities provides diplomas & degrees in education through their open enrolment, distance and internet based education programmes. Dr.B.R. Ambedkar University was the first Distance Education University established in 1982 in Hyderabad<sup>5</sup>,India.In the present times, open universities have become an invaluable component of National Educational programmes<sup>6</sup> and policies in both developed and developing countries. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) plays an important role in empowering women in the developing countries of the world<sup>7</sup>. In present times, Distance education has come out as an advantage to women to furnish them through acquisition of knowledge, leading towards new ways of thinking and to be autonomous and liberated.<sup>8</sup>

"If you educate the man, you educate the person but if you educate the woman, you educate the nation." Mahatma Gandhi<sup>9</sup>

"If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered". (PT. Jawahar Lal Nehru).<sup>10</sup>

Higher Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence. It brings a reduction in inequalities and helps in improving their status within the family. Universities and colleges have to offer add-on courses together with degree courses. Presently the target of Higher Education is to provide women's access to vocational, technical and professional education. There are many policies and programmes for the betterment of women.<sup>11</sup>

For this purpose there is need for identification of skills and occupations suitable for women. Moreover there should be proper implementations of Govt. policies and different programmes of government of India regarding women



empowerment and higher education. It helps to analyse the relevance of higher education in empowering the women. Literacy alone cannot help women in self dependence but higher education helps women to become more capable. It is only higher education that makes them aware of their rights and duties and use their rights as per need.<sup>12</sup>

“The higher education is that which does not merely give us information, but makes life in harmony with all existence” (Ravindranath Tagore)<sup>13</sup>

Empowerment for woman means she becomes independent and able to take decisions about every aspect of life herself and ensuring equal participation in developmental processes. In this way women develop ability for critical thinking and enhancing self-esteem and self confidence in themselves. Higher education represents itself as a milestone for women to empower by facing many challenges to come out of their traditional role of woman.<sup>14</sup>

## II.DISCUSSION

There are various schemes taken under Higher education for women Higher education for women through Open and distance Learning (ODL) Mode imparts distance learning system where teachers and learners can be flexible with respect to place and time.<sup>15</sup>

- Post School Diploma provides skill development strategies
- UGCs and AICTEs-initiatives for women education<sup>16</sup>
- Post Graduate Indira Gandhi scholarship for single girl child for pursuing higher and technical education
- Construction of women’s hostels for colleges, etc
- Introduction of women’s studies in universities and colleges<sup>17</sup>
- Post-Doctoral fellowships for women
- Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)

Higher education represents itself as a milestone for women to empower by facing many challenges to come out of their traditional role of woman.<sup>18</sup>

Higher education leads a woman to ‘Complete living’ with:

1. Self-confidence:- Higher Education helps the women not only in gaining knowledge but also enables her to earn a living.
2. Necessity of life: – Money is necessity in maintaining life and education helps in preserving Life.
3. Family welfare:-An educated women plays an important role in a family, dealing with both health care and financial support to the family.
4. Involvement in Social and political activities :- Higher education helps women to have a better understanding of social and political processes beyond the home in far reaching social structure and makes her a wise citizen with effective social and political action.<sup>19</sup>
5. Complete Living:- Complete living includes being physically strong , earning a living , being a responsible parent and an earned citizen.

Relationship Between Higher Education and Women Empowerment

Higher education definitely raises women’s status whether she contribute in the income of the family or not.<sup>20</sup>

- Enhancing their confidence



- Raising their status in the family and society
- Bring awareness about their rights
- Boosting their self-esteem<sup>21</sup>
- Increasing their self-efficacy
- Reducing their dependency
- Better upbringing of their children
- Enhancing their mobility
- Opening career opportunities<sup>22</sup>

#### Hindrances of Women Empowerment & in Higher Education

There are many hindrances in the path of women empowerment and in higher education. Some of them are as follows-

- Lack of education
- Financial constraints
- Family responsibility
- Low mobility
- Low ability to bear risk
- Low need for Achievement
- Absence of Ambitions for the Achievement
- Social status<sup>19</sup>

### III.RESULTS

The present paper is an attempt to analyze the "Women Empowerment through Higher Education in India". Women in India have been experiencing different status since the inception of the civilization. Though women form half of the population, yet the masculine principles made the women suffer a lot. They were denied equal opportunities and importance as men.<sup>17</sup> India was no different from the rest of the world. Indian women have been struggling for equal rights over the past millennium. Hence, the history of women in India has been very eventful. The uprising of various female reform movements all over the country resolved the condition of women India gradually. However, in India women were assigned to certain rights in the ancient days. Interestingly, Women Education in Ancient India augmented. India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China.<sup>22</sup> The higher education system in India has grown in a remarkable way, particularly in the post-independence period, to become one of the largest systems of its kind in the world. However, the system has many issues of concern at present, like financing and management including access, equity and relevance, reorientation of programmes by laying emphasis on health consciousness, values and ethics and quality of higher education together with the assessment of institutions and their accreditation.<sup>20</sup> These issues are important for the country, as it is now engaged in the use of higher education as a powerful tool to build a knowledge-based information society of the 21st Century. In India the female education has its roots in the British Regime. In 1854 the East India Company acknowledged women's education and employment. Initially this education was limited only to primary school level education and only the richer section of the society enjoyed this facility.<sup>11</sup> There is a possibility of revolutionary change in India's higher education system and this is women participation. In some elite institutions we find that number of female students is more than male students and there is a possibility to increase this trend. It is true that number of males is outnumbered in comparison with female. India is country where man dominance in the society prevails. It is very essential for the harmonious development of the country



that women should go hand by hand and shoulder to shoulder with men. And for empowering the women, higher education will play a vital role.<sup>18</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Women play an imperative role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels. The education develops the idea of participation in government, panchayats, public matters etc. for elimination of gender discrimination.<sup>22</sup>

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