



## EDUCATION FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Skilled human resource is vital for inclusive growth. Skill development is not an isolated phenomenon. Skill development has to be an integral part of education. Lack of education and lack of skills is a pandemic that we need to overcome in the current scenario. According to UNESCO, women empowerment implies developing self- ingenuity among women for change and ability to learn skills the ability to make decisions of their own. It is not just saying yes or no but having a range of opinions and ability to change others perceptions. It is also having access to resources and involving in the growth process. Education opens the door to lead a life of liberty, but skill development enables liberty meaningful by allowing one to accomplish prosperity. Mainstreaming skills in education both in schools and colleges is the need of the hour. Educational attainment and economic involvement are the key elements in ensuring the empowerment of women. Economic empowerment develops women's capability to impact, transform or form a better nation. Even after seventy years of Independence, India's development is slow due to the lack of women's participation. Women are often invisible in the development scenario. Development process without the participation of women, who form a significant chunk of the society, will be lopsided. Education reduces inequalities, gender biases and encourages women to make a good society and to become the most active part of the economy. Education empowers women to equip with the ability to enable them to explore the world and partake fully in the development process. This paper attempts to study specifically the role of education in skill development and women empowerment in India.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Education, Women Empowerment, Skill Development*

**JEL Classification:** I25, I28, J16

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial determinant of the knowledge and skills required for the development of a nation. Education has occupied a prime place in the modern era. It enables an individual and thereby the society to transform towards a knowledge society, a civil society at that. Education, therefore, is no longer a choice either for an individual or for a state. It is a crucial tool to realise the knowledge economy and society. The development of human resource depends on quality education. The expenditure on education benefits to a Nation for stable economic growth, out space in technology and stability in the economy. It provides out space in technology and development of skills in human resources.

Education is essential for achieving all of the new Sustainable Development Goals which were adopted by the UN General Assembly in New York, 25-27 September 2015.

It was considered necessary to eradicate poverty, boost shared prosperity and broad-based economic growth, and build peaceful, tolerant societies. One of the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4) is related to education with the formulation "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all" (AIWEFA, 2015).

India is one amongst the fastest growing economies of the world. Skill development has been a critical programme of the Government of India since the Eleventh Five Year Plan. India is the second most populous country; it has the second largest labour force and the highest share of working age population. Women constitute 49% in total population. However, the status of Indian women is not pleasing. Development of women is decisive to the economic progress of any Nation. India being male dominated society women

generally faced all types of fences. For realising the objectives of the harmonious development of the country, women should go hand in hand with men, which necessitates empowerment of women and for empowering the women, education and skill development will play a vibrant role. The marginalised sections of the society, especially women, have inadequate admittance to education. In India, there are gender-based educational discrepancies. Education has been identified as an essential device for plummeting socio-economic disparities and building an inclusive society.

Moreover, these are times of “demographic dividend” for India. It must reap the best of young human resources through education and skill development by managing resources for growth in education and human development (Hans, 2013). At the same time, there are many areas of constraints and concerns, like women’s education in general and higher education for women, in particular. What is worse, this is happening when Indian higher education has taken a paradigm shift to provide more extensive opportunities to pursue higher education. Higher education suffers from poor access and inequity (Ramachandran & Ganesh, 2019).

**2.PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE STUDY**

The study is planned in the following way:

**2.1 Objectives of the Study**

- To study the role of education in the empowerment of women
- To analyse the benefit of skill development through education on women empowerment

**2.2 Methodology**

The present study is based on the collection of data from secondary sources. Secondary data are obtained from various published and unpublished records, books, magazines and journals, both print and online.

**3.CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

Swami Vivekananda once said, “There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing”.

Excluding women makes development process unjust and incomplete. In India, women constitute about 48.46% of the population (2011 census), but their participation in economic activity is only 34 per cent.

**3.1 Empowerment**

Empowerment means a shift from a delicate situation to accomplish supremacy. Empowerment enables greater access to knowledge and resources. Empowerment liberates women easing their mobility, decision-making capacity, awareness of rights and opportunities. Women carry accurate perceptions, priorities and strengths resulting from their life experiences, which are frequently diverse from men’s they are likely to make different choices. Empowerment includes higher levels of literacy, educational attainment, awareness of rights and responsibilities, active participation in economic activities, better healthcare and equal access to productive resources and improvement in the standard of living.

**3.2 Skill Development**

India’s demographic dividend has been a global talking point, while the whole world is ageing. India has a significant percentage of the population in the young age category. This demographic dividend would prove to be an asset to achieve prosperity and become world economic power shortly. However, to harness this young population, it has to be provided with facilities for skill formation and training. This task invites ideas for a curriculum that helps develop skills of girl students. The task starts with the identification of the skill sets and then moulding them into a curriculum that can be beneficial for girl students.

Skill training will be vital in addressing some of the most pressing challenges related to inclusion, gender equality and access. Education contributes to skill development. Skills and human capital have become the backbone of economic prosperity and social well-being in the 21-st-century. Education represents a critical factor in innovation and human capital development and plays a vital role in the stability and sustainability of the knowledge economy (Dill & Van Vught, 2010). There is also a need for creating opportunities in the labour market to harness the skills of women.

**Table 1: Skill gap forecast for 2012-22 for selected States (in Millions)**

State	Skilled			Semi -Skilled			Unskilled		
	Increase in demand	Increase in supply	Supply deficit	Increase in demand	Increase in supply	Supply deficit	Increase in demand	Increase in supply	Supply deficit
Delhi	0.85	2.27	1.42	0.53	0.36	-0.17	3.00	3.41	0.41
Jharkhand	0.73	0.55	-0.18	0.95	0.55	-0.40	2.71	3.51	0.80
Karnataka	2.15	1.44	-0.71	3.60	3.22	-0.38	2.28	3.46	1.18
Maharashtra	5.57	2.41	-3.36	5.36	4.29	-1.07	4.40	3.94	-0.45
Tamil Nadu	4.70	2.20	-2.49	3.95	0.54	-3.42	5.03	4.70	-0.35
Kerala	4.99	4.48	-0.51	5.66	5.65	-0.01	4.24	6.21	1.97

Source: Retrieved from Aneesh 2016 NSDC Skill Gap Analysis Reports

Table 1 reveals that there is a wide gap in skilled and semi-skilled workforce required in most of the states in India. However, there is a mismatch between demand and supply of skilled workforce. Skill India is a daunting task of keeping sight on the workforce requirements of the industry and the infrastructure needed for achieving the targets of skilling. Skill is a bridge between jobs and workforce (Gianchandani, 2015).

The term ‘skill development’ refers to the productive capacities acquired through education and training in formal,

non-formal and on-the-job settings. Skills development initiatives enable individuals at all economic levels to engage productively in livelihoods. The gap between demand and supply of skilled labour has to be filled by making necessary structural changes in the education system. There is a need for including various aspects like life skills, Enterprise development skills, technical skills, soft skills in the education system. Mainstreaming Skills in Education in Schools and Colleges is the need of the hour. Ensuring the inclusion of women’s talents, skills, experience and energies requires

intentional actions and deliberate policies. To make the skill development process aspirational, accommodating and flexible to encourage women to enrol, there has to be enhanced focus on soft skills, entrepreneurship, financial and digital literacy,

#### 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Frenette, M., Coulombe, S. (2007) examine the role of rapidly rising educational attainment among young women in raising their relative position in the labour market and suggests that the educational reforms have not sufficiently contributed towards a decline in the full-time employment gap.

Gender Gap index 2013 (GGI) measures the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories – economic participation & opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. India ranks among the lowest 101 in 136 Countries, below Countries like China, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. This mirrors the status of women in India and gender discrimination in all aspects of life-education, economic activity and empowerment (Balve, 2015).

Women play a very significant role in the development of the country. We cannot ignore the role of education, in women empowerment. Sandhya (2015) states that the empowerment of women in India has been obstructed for centuries owing to various reasons amongst which the initial blow was in the form of depriving women of basic educational facilities.

Sowjanya & Hans (2015) opine that education is one of the most important means of empowering women and giving them knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to be a full partner in the development process).

Barbosa & Dujo (2016) from their study on the role of social actors in the struggle for recognition found that education gives opportunities to women to get their due recognition and rewards in society, economy and polity, besides resisting the wave of insecurity and evanescence. We need to combine education with empowerment, since it is through the latter that education can support pro-people struggles for recognition, even legally.

Along with the role of organisation nation also has an equal responsibility towards breaking the glass ceiling and encouraging women to come up. This is the view of Sharma & Mishra (2019).

India is in urgent need to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), for its emancipation and people's empowerment. Otherwise, we will remain as a country with high population growth with low quality of human resources. Our GER is currently 20 per cent, and we could not reach the target of 30 per cent set for the 12th Five Year Plan. Literacy and educational levels are increasing for Indian women still there is a gap between male and female literacy rate which can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate in India (per cent)**

Year	Persons	Male	Female
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	39.2
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

*Source: Census Data*

Table 2 shows the literacy rate for women in pre-Independence time where the literacy rate of women was abysmal in comparison to the male literacy rate. The government has undertaken various programmes to increase the literacy rate of women, and as an impact, there is an increase in the female literacy rate has increased. During the decade 1981 -2001 rise in female literacy rate is faster than the male literacy rate. However, despite the efforts of the government only about half of the female population is literate and lagging behind three fourth of the literate male population. Education is one of the most important basic needs that can change the complete picture of development. The government operates many education and skill enhancement schemes to improve the status of women. However, unfortunately, due to the lack of awareness people are unable to take advantage of those schemes

#### 5.CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN EDUCATION

Women lack awareness and insight into their circumstances to abridge their powerlessness. They endure and accept the blissful ignorance believing they are incompetent to change their situation. Their low efficacy to

control and influence their own lives and of others is due to lack of education. There are various constraints to the education of women, which includes:

- Limited access to quality education in rural areas
- Long distance schools and lack of public transport
- Lack of motivated teachers
- Non-availability of basic infrastructure like buildings, electricity etc.
- Overcrowded classrooms
- Non-availability of basic facilities -lack running water and toilets
- Lack of sanitary facilities
- Early marriage
- Restrictions on mobility
- False perceptions
- Limited employment opportunities
- Limited access to appropriate reading materials.
- Wage differentials

The World Declaration on Education for All, drafted at the international conference in Jomtien in March 1990, which acknowledged the need for women to benefit from education and contemplates that the “most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and

women, and to undo every obstacle that hampers their active participation” (Inter-Agency Commission, WCEFA 1990).

Empowerment through education is a continuous holistic process which involves intellectual, psychological, economic dimensions in order to achieve emancipation. Strategic policies on education, research, and training must be made to eliminate constraints in the way of women education.

### 5.1 Promotion of education

Education is the basis for a robust economy. Education enables having positive thinking on the ability to make the change and also brings the ability to learn skills for improving life situations. Education has been found to have a significant relationship with Human Development.

Gender inequalities in education and employment have intensely damaging consequences for the life probabilities of individuals and national economies. Education and training must be provided to women ensuring that they feel respected, confident and safe so that they can develop to their full potential. Investing in educational policies and programmes opens rich avenues for the advancement of women at all levels, across all business areas, which encourage women to enter the non-traditional sector. Education enables women to become more productive both inside and outside the household. Empowered women will be able to face the challenges of society and could stand for right happenings and against wrong happenings, so women education has a significant relation to women empowerment.

### 5.2 Government and NGO Initiatives

For India to march forward, skilled human resources across all levels are a must. Skilling initiative in India is helmed by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). The government has taken initiatives to empower women through skill development by launching different schemes like Support to Training & Employment Program STEP, Priyadarshini, Swadhar Greh/ Short Stay Scheme, SABLA, Skill Up gradation and Training Programme for women in border/ Backward/Tribal Districts etc. Further National Skill Development Mission was launched on July 15, 2015, to provide the overall institutional framework to implement and scaleup skill development efforts across India rapidly. The Mudra Yojana launched by the Government of India helps to improve the status of women by providing loans and encouraging them to start new ventures and thereby empowering them with individual financial security. The Make in India campaign has promised some enterprise-oriented policies among two highlighted industries in the Make in India campaign are garments and food processing which are popular among women entrepreneurs.

SEWA Bharat offers a variety of training projects (both trade and soft skills), based on the needs of women and employment opportunities in the area. These include:

- Computer and Digital Literacy
- Entrepreneurship and Business
- Advanced Garment Making
- Hospitality and Housekeeping
- Beauty Culture
- Construction and Building
- Nurse Care and Domestic Work
- Personality Development
- Diverse Exposure Visits
- Career and Guidance Counselling
- Confidence Building

## 6.POLICY PERSPECTIVES

The higher rate of illiteracy of women is attributing for women to play a subordinate role. To break the barriers in the way of empowerment, it necessitates structural adjustment policies from the grassroots level to reach marginalised women who need initial support. In India within the framework of a democratic polity, our legislation, has framed policies, plan and programmes aimed for the advancement of women in different spheres which includes National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, The *Mahila Samakhya* Programme (Education for Women’s Empowerment)1987. The National Commission for Women through Act of Parliament in 1990. The National Policy on Education (1986, revised in 1992). The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994. The 86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment made free and compulsory education a fundamental right for all children in the 6-14years, The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA – Education for All), 2001-02 are the popular ones (Sowjanya and Hans2016).

Apart from the government initiative, the plan of action also demands new partners, including NGO’s, SHGs and other voluntary organisations. Organising and Networking among women community are needed to bring change in the position of women. Education enables to break contradictions affecting women empowerment. Moreover, realising their inherent abilities. Educated women should be able to stop and transform ongoing undesirable/ unfair practices against women folks, and also to create new visions to empower disadvantaged group. Education enables to perceive a better situation. Change in perception demands the attention of policymakers, to engender appropriate positive responses, reduce vulnerability, access and avail resources.

### 6.1 Suggestions

Empowerment of women should be the goal to authenticate the pro-people policies and programmes in the country, including ‘Jhan-Dhan’, ‘Skill India’ and ‘Start-up India, Stand up India’ ‘Make in India’. Providing quality education, equipping girls with the skills to secure a livelihood and participate in society is the best way to ensure progress and enable them to joins the labour market to contribute towards the development of Nation. Gender inequality could be plugged by creating awareness about constitutional rights which is possible through education and training. Women must realise that their total asset are themselves. Some suggestions in this regard are -

- Removal of gender inequality should get the priority
- Improve and set precedence to develop education for all including girls, ensuring equitable and inclusive access to education for all - children, youth and adults at all levels from early childhood care and education to tertiary education
- Improving the need to access post-school and higher education for girls so that they
- can be prepared for high paying jobs and better skills
- Addressing the industry demand for skilled labour
- Eliminate wage differentials between men and women for the same work.
- Promote women entrepreneurial activities
- Promotes skills for income generation- support for self -employment
- Awareness and encouragement of a daughter’s education is essential

- Building a team of vocational trainers from educated women who are readily acceptable among women in the process of imparting skills
- Leveraging existing government schemes for women skill development
- Improved quality of school education curriculum, both in content and pedagogy, for preparing young girls for the job market through training of relevant, appropriate skills
- Awareness generation about vocational education at the school level.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Empowerment includes higher levels of literacy, educational attainment, awareness of rights and responsibilities, active participation in economic activities, better healthcare and equal access to productive resources and improvement in the standard of living. Skills can be acquired in many ways. Skill development takes place, through vocational courses run by government and NGOs but real and sustainable growth of India depends on positive socio-economic transformation with men and women as partners in progress, reinforcing each other's effort in removing barriers to inclusive growth.

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