



**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION**

**\*Nagaraja, K.**

Teaching Assistant & Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Economics, Davangere University,  
Shivangothri-577002, Davangere, India

**ARTICLE INFO**

**Article History:**

Received 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2017  
Received in revised form  
10<sup>th</sup> December, 2017  
Accepted 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018  
Published online 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2018

**Key words:**

Empowerment,  
Women and Higher Education.

**ABSTRACT**

India stands second highest in density of population, in which 49% of female form a major human resource next to men. The role of women empowerment is always related with education. In fact higher education for women plays a vital role in making women an empowered. Here the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru are relevant to discuss. According to his words if a woman is educated, can able to make her family educated, thereby can become empowered. Indian women have undergone various problems like illiteracy, lack of support, gender bias, etc. in spite of many provisions in the constitutions of India such as mentioned about equality for women in its Preamble, fundamental rights and like. There has been dearth of women participation in public life even after the successful launch of Liberalisation, Globalisation and Privatisation concept. Hence, the present paper focuses on Indian women and their empowerment through higher education. For empowering women, higher education will play a vital role.

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**Citation:** Nagaraja, K. 2018. "Empowerment of women through higher education", *International Journal of Current Research*, 10, (02), 66113-66115.

**INTRODUCTION**

Always an empowered woman is independent because of the knowledge and skills. An empowered woman doesn't mean that she is highly educated with employment rather along with it she should be rational, intelligent and skilful. In India, since the time immemorial women is treated as inferior to men within the patriarchal system of the society. They were away from all the rights like, education, voting, participation in public life, etc. In general they were stucked on to the traditional role of women within in the four walls of a house because of the rigid system of traditions and customs. They always led secondary life. In this situation giving importance for female education was like a mirage. When a woman is empowered, can able to take any decisions based on her own ability. The Oxford Dictionary defines 'empowerment' as 'to make stronger and more confident especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights. Education is an important factor for the development of every nation and its human resource too. From the last few decades importance is given foreducating women out of her role as a home maker. This traditional role of women has undergone gradual change with primary education and higher education.

**Objectives**

- To study the necessity of higher education in women's life

- To analyse relationship between women empowerment and higher education in india
- To focus on women's role in building up of nation and its economy

**Methodology**

The present paper entitled 'Women empowerment through higher education' analyses secondary sources and presented in a descriptive way. Through the process of analysis it presents the role of higher education for women to be empowered and its significance.

**Meaning of Higher education**

It is commonly called as the education which is given after secondary education, which includes education being provided by institutions like professional schools, medicine training schools, universities, technological institutions, etc.

**Concept of Higher Education**

Education has attained a great value and respectable position in society and is considered as the main standard because of its direct relation to the growth and development of every nation. It nourishes every individual's psyche to make him as an integrated personality and indirectly supports the nation. Therefore Indian education commission (1964-66) reports the significance of education as "the realisations of the country's

**\*Corresponding author:** Nagaraja, K.

Teaching Assistant & Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Economics, Davangere University, Shivangothri-577002, Davangere, India

aspirations involve change in the knowledge, skills and values of the people as a whole. If this change is in a 'grand scale' is to be achieved there is one and only instrument that be used – education". Therefore education is an art of imparting knowledge in making an individual a personality with knowledge, discipline and a profession. Being developing country India has the density of population of 1.25 billion besides the credit of world's largest democracy. Meanwhile the growth rate of higher education of not only men, women is also bringing changes in the way of lives they lead. By constituting 48% of total population, they represent themselves as an important human resource of India in order to contribute to socio-economic development of nation. The Indian constitution granted equality for women in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles of State Policies. According to UN report on education for women, it can effectively bring changes in health and lives of people and women can guide their children in taking firm decision with respect to their life goals. By their guidance they behave as a pillar of their families. According to an article published in one of the leading Indian newspapers-enrolment of women for higher education has increased from 10% to 43.8%.

### History of higher education in India

The concept of higher education in India is rooted in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C through the establishment of Taxila and Nalanda, which have the credit of oldest university system of education in the world. India stands 3<sup>rd</sup> position in the field of higher education next to United States and China. Besides its 3<sup>rd</sup> position, the roots of higher education for female are existed since British rule. According to the recent report of UGC, India consists of 43 central universities, 312 state universities, 183 private universities, 115 deemed universities, institutions of national importance such as AIIMS, IITs, IIMs and NITs IITs, IIMs, and thousands together colleges, women's colleges. In the beginning education was confined only to rich class people with the literacy rate of 0.2% and as the time passed, the change is seen with the literacy growth rate of 6% in 1947. Thus, in 1958 the government of India appointed national committee for the education of women by noticing female literacy rate of 8.9% and the very committee gave many recommendations in favour of women education. In the academic year 2010-11 up to 41.5% women enrolled for higher education.

### Women empowerment through higher education

According to the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, an individual is educated by educating a man, but a family can be educated only by making women to get educated. Therefore according to his words if a woman is empowered means mother India is empowered. These few words of Nehru will elucidate the clear relationship of women empowerment and higher education for women. As half of the population is women and they can strengthen the national economy to move towards progress by being empowered.

Higher education represents itself as a milestone for women to empower by facing many challenges to come out of their traditional role of woman. Their increasing access to higher education makes women to free of rigid practices of gender inequalities through their potentialities. 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
- Post School Diploma provides skill development strategies
- UGCs and AICTEs-initiatives for women education
- 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
- Post-Doctoral fellowships for women
- Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)

### Higher education and its necessity for women

As discussed above, half of the population is women and for many years they were unable to involve completely in society. As modern period arrived, they started gaining education in such a way that today number of women identified themselves as Business women, Politicians, Bureaucrats, Scientists, Doctors, Engineers and Vice Chancellors. Moreover they are considered as empowered women. Their empowerment is the contribution of higher education which is always inseparable by which the economic growth of a nation is made stable. The very role of higher education can support in two modes as traditional and modern. The traditional mode of higher education make women to be equipped with capacity to exercise the role of wife and mother and the significance of latter kind is very relevant in this globalized era to be strong enough in their lives. Henceforth the necessity of higher education is not only for male rather women too. As the present paper presents the significance of higher education for women to be empowered, the words of famous philosopher, educationist and president of India S. Radhakrishnan are very important. According to him female education is more important than that of male; it is because there is always an educated woman behind the educated man. Thus, education can make women to solve all sorts of familial problems and find individual and personal identity. Being educated they have the capacity to understand the problems of child marriage and fight against it. Thus, society can expect a better society based on higher education for women. Therefore in 1979, the commission on the higher education observes that higher education is necessary for both men and women for character formation, ability to earn, create self-expression and development of personality.

### Suggestions for promotion of higher education for women

- Encouraging women for higher education through scholarships for poor and meritorious students in order to assist them financially and to create encouragement both among students and parents, and to make them free from economic burden.
- Designing education policies and imparting skill-oriented education. Meanwhile facilitating by counselling to know the importance of higher education.
- Establishing educational organisations in every places like remote, urban and rural areas to access education easily by women from the pint of security

- Arrangement of bank loan with less or no interest for women and establishment of colleges and universities for women and also appointment of women teachers comparing to men teachers
- Launch of other special schemes for welfare of women like Pradhan Manthri Sukanya Samridhi (PMSSY)

### Conclusion

In the present male dominated society also there are women who are taking lead role in various disciplines including education that too from education to astronomy, all the fields wherein women have made their own mark. Hence in the history of women and their move towards identity is remarkable one, in fact their journey can be considered as a journey of individuals towards perfection. Through higher education women find their identity with all creative skills which are necessary. In India the ratio of women towards higher education is increasing comparing to earlier years. When women can find their identity and contribute to national economy through their empowerment then certainly the government need to implement more schemes and scholarships and awareness programmes related to higher education.

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