

The Empowering Force of Education: Why Women Need Education

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Abstracts: The significance of education for women is immeasurable. The impact of providing women with educational opportunities reverberates across societies, affecting not only the individual but also the community and the nation at large. This article will delve into the multifaceted reasons why women need education, spanning from personal empowerment to societal and economic development. Education is a fundamental right for all individuals, irrespective of their gender. However, women's access to education has historically been restricted in many parts of the world. In recent years, significant progress has been made to bridge this gap, but there is still work to be done. This article will delve into the importance of education for women and why it is crucial for their empowerment and the overall development of society.

Key words: Education, women empowerment, self- development

Introduction: Education is a fundamental human right and a critical catalyst for personal growth, empowerment, and societal progress. However, historically, women have faced numerous barriers to accessing education. Despite significant progress, gender disparities persist in educational opportunities worldwide. Addressing these disparities and advocating for women's education is crucial for a more equitable, prosperous, and inclusive society. Empowering women through education stands as a pivotal strategy for transforming societies, fostering equality, and driving overall progress (Jaysawal Neelmani & Saha Sudeshna. 2023). In today's world, the importance of educating women goes far beyond an individual's development. It reverberates across communities and nations, serving as a catalyst for societal advancement and sustainable change. This article examines the critical role that education plays in empowering women, dismantling barriers, and highlighting the transformative impact of educated women in various spheres of life. Only an educated woman can develop and guide her family, future generations and society. A developed country can be built only through women's education.

“You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of women in that nation.” (Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru) (Shri Satyanarayan Khagi 2022).

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental right and a potent instrument for personal growth and societal development. When extended to women, its impact extends beyond the classroom, fostering a ripple effect of positive change. Education equips women with the necessary tools to challenge norms, pursue opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to their communities (Ahmed, S., Suhag, A. K., Lashari, A. A., & Jamali, S. 2023). Educated women significantly contribute to the economic growth and stability of societies. Empowering women economically through education not only benefits their individual well-being but also fosters healthier, more prosperous communities (Llena-Nozal, A., Martin, N. & Murtin, F. 2019).

In exploring the historical context of the suppression of women's education, it is imperative to delve into the multifaceted facets that have historically impeded women from accessing learning opportunities. This suppression has been deeply entrenched in societal norms, cultural beliefs, and legal constraints that relegated women to subordinate roles, restricting their educational prospects for centuries. This historical analysis will shed light on the evolution of women's education, elucidating the challenges, resistance, and the slow progression towards achieving educational equity.

The historical background of women's education suppression

I. Early societal norms and restriction of women's education - From antiquity, societies across various civilizations imposed severe restrictions on women's education. Ancient cultures often considered women as bearers of children and homemakers, thus deeming education unnecessary for their roles. Greek and Roman

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societies, for instance, emphasized the education of men for public life, philosophy and governance while relegating women to domestic duties. In medieval Europe, the education of women was primarily centered around religious instruction or rudimentary skills necessary for managing households (Coulson A. 2017). The prevailing belief was that educating women beyond basic literacy threatened societal norms and male dominance. This perception was reinforced through religious doctrines and philosophical treatises that emphasized women's subservience and domestic roles.

II. Legal constraints and systemic discrimination - The legal framework in many historical societies institutionalized gender disparities in education. Laws often barred women from educational institutions, limiting their intellectual growth and denying them the opportunity to pursue learning on par with men. The legacy of legal barriers perpetuated the marginalization of women in academia and professional spheres for centuries (Citron M. J. 2000). For instance, during the Renaissance, while a cultural renaissance was underway, educational opportunities for women remained scarce. The few privileged women who received education primarily did so in private settings and were denied access to renowned institutions, which were exclusively reserved for men.

III. Resistance and pioneering figures in women's education - Throughout history, there were instances of resistance and pioneering figures who defied the norm to champion women's education. Remarkable women such as Christine de Pizan in the 14th and 15th centuries and Mary Wollstonecraft in the late 18th century challenged the prevalent ideologies by advocating for women's right to education (Wolloch, N. 2022).

IV. Enlightenment and women's education - The Enlightenment period brought new ideologies and intellectual revolutions. While this era saw a burgeoning interest in education and knowledge, women's educational prospects remained limited. The intellectual renaissance largely excluded women, perpetuating the conventional beliefs that education was unnecessary for their roles in society (Bolufer Peruga M. & Morant Deusa I. 1998).

V. 19th and 20th Century: struggles and progress - The 19th and 20th centuries marked significant strides towards women's education. Movements for women's suffrage and rights advocated for broader educational opportunities. Landmark events like the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 in the United States and the suffragette movements in the United Kingdom pushed for women's rights to education and broader societal participation (Hewitt N. A. 2001).

Regulatory sources of women's education in India (Sarma B. K. 1996).

A- Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948-49

- Educational facilities should be increased for women.
- There cannot be educated people without educated women.
- The curriculum should be such that it can give girls a high position and respect in the society.

B- National Committee for Women's Education (1958)

- The government should arrange for well-equipped schools in every state to progress women's education.
- Special efforts should be made to spread women's education in villages.
- State Councils for Girls and Women's Education should be formed in the states to spread women's education.

C- Kothari Commission (1964-66)

- Arrangements should be made for short-term and vocational education for girls.
- Research units should be established for women's education.
- The State and the Center should jointly make decisions to eliminate all the difficulties coming in the way of women's education.

D- National Education Policy (1986)

- Issues arising like gender discrimination should be rooted out.
- The portfolio should be exposed to various art skills for the fiddle to progress. Important study chapters on various types of women's education should be included in the text material.
- Arrangements should be made to solve the questions coming in the way of the primary education of the assistant.

E- Mahila Samakhya (1989)

- The prime point is to give equality to women through education.
- Presently, this program is being run in 104 districts of 10 states.
- The Criminal Code Act was enacted in 1983 and the Indecent Representation of Women Act was passed in 1986.

- For the development of women's education, the Hindu Marriage Act was made in 1955 and the Special Marriage Act was made in 1952.

F- National education policies (2005)

- The goal of this policy is to make empowering women so that women can realize their full potential and women and girls have equal access to participation and decision making. Accordingly, special measures to eliminate discrimination, universal education, elimination of illiteracy; Create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrollment and graduation rates and improve the quality of education to facilitate lifelong learning, as well as develop business/business/technical skills of the professions, they found helpful.

G- Women empowerment schemes of Government of India

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme
- Nari Shakti Puraskar
- Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)
- UJJAWALA: A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- One Stop Centre Scheme
- SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances)
- Nirbhaya

Need of women education:

1. Empowerment and self-development - Economic empowerment is a critical dimension in the overall progress of women, and education plays a pivotal role in this transformation. This section will explore the multifaceted ways education serves as a catalyst for the economic empowerment of women, enhancing their opportunities for financial independence, career advancement, and societal contribution. Education serves as a powerful tool for self-empowerment. When women have access to quality education, they gain knowledge, skills, and confidence, enabling them to make informed decisions about their lives (World Health Organization. 2003). It fosters critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and independence. Educated women are more likely to have control over their lives, understand their rights, and actively participate in decision-making processes. Education has shown to be instrumental in narrowing the gender pay gap. Women with higher education tend to earn more than their less-educated counterparts. Studies from the World Bank and OECD report that increased educational attainment is associated with reduced wage disparities between men and women (Docquier F., Lowell B. L. & Marfouk A. 2007).

2. Economic opportunities and financial independence - One of the most compelling reasons for women to pursue education is its correlation with economic opportunities. Education significantly enhances women's ability to secure better employment, earn higher incomes, and contribute to their families' financial stability (Mammen, K., & Paxson, C. 2000). Moreover, educated women are more likely to invest in their children's education, breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

A. Encouraging entrepreneurship - Educated women are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities, starting their own businesses and contributing to local and national economies. Education not only provides the necessary skills for entrepreneurship but also fosters confidence and critical thinking, crucial for entrepreneurial success (Razmi M. J., & Firoozabadi S. R. 2016).

If we talk about the empirical Evidence: Impact of Education on Women's Economic Status according to several empirical studies from various regions demonstrate a direct correlation between education and women's economic empowerment. These studies provide statistical evidence indicating higher education levels among women leading to increased workforce participation, higher incomes, and reduced poverty rates.

3. Health and well-being - Education plays a pivotal role in improving women's health and well-being. Educated women are more likely to have better access to healthcare information, make healthier lifestyle choices, and seek medical care for themselves and their families. They can contribute to reducing maternal and child mortality rates by understanding and implementing proper healthcare practices (Daraz U., Nawab H. U. & Mulk J. U. 2023).

4. Social and political participation - Educated women are essential contributors to the social and political landscape. Education equips women with the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in civic activities, advocate for their rights, and participate in political processes. Their involvement is critical for the development and sustainability of democratic societies.

B. Socio-Cultural barriers and stereotypes - Deep-seated societal norms and stereotypes can impede women's education, thereby limiting their economic opportunities. Addressing cultural biases and fostering a conducive environment that values and promotes education for women is critical

5. Gender equality and societal development - Promoting women's education is pivotal in achieving gender equality. Education helps challenge gender stereotypes and biases (Sharda, A. 2014). It fosters a more inclusive and diverse society by empowering women to break barriers and pursue careers and roles traditionally reserved for men. Gender-equal societies tend to experience greater stability, progress, and innovation. Despite acknowledging the importance of women's education, numerous challenges persist, including cultural barriers, poverty, lack of access to schools, and societal norms that prioritize boys' education. To address these challenges, it's imperative to implement policies and initiatives that prioritize and facilitate girls' education, eliminate gender-based discrimination, and invest in infrastructure that ensures equal access to education.

Discussion: - The suppression of women's education has been deeply rooted in historical societal norms, legal constraints, and cultural beliefs. Despite these challenges, there have been movements, individuals, and incremental changes that have paved the way for greater access to education for women. The struggle for educational equity continues to this day, as efforts persist to dismantle the systemic barriers and advocate for inclusive and equal education opportunities for women worldwide. Education is a catalyst for gender equality. Amartya Sen argues that education empowers women by providing them with the capability to make informed choices and participate actively in societal development. Empowered women contribute to the dismantling of patriarchal structures and foster an environment of equality, positively impacting families and communities (United Nations Development Programme. 2020; Sen A. 2001).

Women's education is not just a matter of justice and equality; it's an investment in a better future for humanity. By providing women with educational opportunities, we unlock their potential and create a ripple effect that positively impacts families, communities, and entire nations. The journey toward achieving universal education for women is ongoing, but the benefits it promises are boundless and indispensable for a more equitable and thriving world. India's economic trajectory is intricately linked to the status of its women. Educated women contribute significantly to the workforce, fostering economic growth. The World Bank notes that countries with higher female labor force participation rates tend to have higher economic growth. Investing in women's education ensures a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, thus driving India's economic development (World bank 2018; International labour organization 2017).

Educated women are more likely to have better health knowledge, access healthcare services, and make informed decisions regarding their well-being and that of their families. Improving women's education contributes to lower maternal and child mortality rates, positively impacting the overall health of the nation (Caldwell J. C. 1986; Bloom D. E. & Canning D. 2008). As education delays marriage and childbirth, it contributes to a demographic transition characterized by a larger working-age population relative to dependents. This demographic advantage can fuel economic growth, provided adequate education and employment opportunities are available. Bloom et al., 2003; Brandon, A. J. 1993). Educated women play a pivotal role in fostering social harmony and community development. Maternal education is linked to improved child health and educational outcomes. Additionally, educated women often contribute to community development through their involvement in social and economic activities, thereby creating a ripple effect that benefits society as a whole. (Desai S. & Alva S. 1998; Raju S. & Leonard A. 2011). To address these challenges, it is crucial for governments, NGOs, and the international community to invest in policies and initiatives that prioritize women's education. By dismantling socio-cultural barriers, providing economic support, and ensuring women's safety, we can pave the way for a future where women are not just recipients of education but active participants in shaping a brighter world.

Conclusion: The transformative potential of education for women is undeniable. To achieve a more equitable and progressive world, it is essential to address the existing barriers that hinder women's access to education. The empowerment of women through education is not just an abstract concept but a tangible force that can drive meaningful change in the world. When women are educated, they become architects of their own destiny, break free from the constraints of gender inequality, and contribute to the betterment of society. However, significant challenges and barriers persist, hindering access to education for millions of women globally. Empowering women through education is not merely a moral imperative; it is a strategic investment in the future of societies and nations.

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