

## CRITICAL STUDY ON EDUCATION AS EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Education is a milestone of empowerment of women because it helps them to adapt to difficulties, face their established roles, and transform their lives. It helps to bring equality and works to better their status within the family, society, and political-economic system. One of the most essential ways to empower women with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence they need to actively engage in the development process is through education. Despite tremendous efforts by countries around the world to greatly expand access to basic education, the world has so many people illiterate, with women forming two-thirds of the total. More than one-third of the world's adults, mostly women, lack access to written knowledge, new skills or technology that could improve their lives and enable them to shape and adapt to social and economic change.

**Keywords:** education, technology, dependent, enormous, creativeness

### **1. Education for Women:**

In order to bring about substantial improvements in the lives of illiterate, unskilled, disabled, and misinformed women, education is the most innovative and clever platform available to women. Education gives women access to the enormous global knowledge base. Learning boosts women's intellect and creativity, makes them aware of the value of their own humanity and enables them to pursue the differentiation that patriarchal cultural norms and antiquated customs have denied them. When women are aware of and empowered by their rights and positions, the remaining half of the sky, according to population, becomes clear, which ultimately has a positive impact on every sector of a nation.

### **2. Empowerment: Concept and its Meaning**

Women today have a unique status of equality with males in India, thanks to constitutional and statutory protections. However, Indian women have made great strides to get where they are now. History shows that women were made to dance for men in both public and private settings. Second, a girl in Indian society was historically reliant on her male family members at all times. Third, a woman was not allowed to speak aloud in front of her in-laws' or senior citizens. She was responsible for every error in the household. The process of creating a social setting in which one can make decisions and choices for social transformation, either individually or collectively, is known as empowerment. Gaining information, strength, and experience enhances intrinsic ability. The process of giving someone the freedom to think,

act, and manage is known as empowerment. It is the process of taking charge of one's circumstances and destiny. Empowerment includes having control over material (physical, human, intellectual, and financial) and ideological (beliefs, values, and attitudes) resources. It is not merely a feeling of enhanced extrinsic control; it is also an increase in intrinsic ability, self-confidence, and an internal change of one's awareness, enabling one to overcome obstacles to resources or ingrained ways of thinking that are external to oneself. Empowering women is essential for society's development. People who have the freedom to think and behave as they like, to make their own decisions, and to reach their full potential as equal and complete members of society are empowered.

As per the United National Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the term women's empowerment means-

- i. Gaining knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the potential for change in these relations.
- ii. Acquiring a sense of worth, the conviction that one has the power to bring about desired changes, and the right to direct one's own life.
- iii. Increasing one's capacity for planning and directing social change.
- iv. To establish a more equitable social and economic system on a national and international level.

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Empowering women is essential for society's development. The term "personal empowerment" refers to people being given the freedom to think and behave as they like, to make their own decisions, and to reach their full potential as equal and complete members of society. So, empowerment also refers to a desire for genuine social influence, political power, and legal rights as well as a psychological sense of personal control or influence. It is a multi-level idea that involves people, groups, and communities. It is a global, ongoing process that has its roots in the local community and calls for cooperation, understanding, empathy and group participation in order to help those who do not have an equitable access to valuable resources achieve more control over them.

### **3. Empowerment and Education**

The ability to educate women has the capacity to change how women are perceived in society. It is thought to be just to protect women's rights against all types of violence that occur in the modern society.

#### **3.1 Education as Empowerment for Women**

Education exposes every woman to the practical issues that society faces and acts as a weapon to combat them in a more dignified manner until she selects the path that is important to her and her decisions are accepted and appreciated by her surrounds.

It is so critical for India's socioeconomic and political progress, as well as an open challenge to the world, what a woman cannot achieve in terms of positive development growth.

According to the Indian Constitution, the government may take positive steps to support strategies for empowering women. Women's lives are greatly impacted by education. Both direct and indirect ones may apply.

Women's political, social, and economic possibilities are increased through education. It gives women immediate financial advantages in the form of higher lifetime earnings. The community and society both gain from the labor force's enhanced productivity. Along with improving human capital and spurring economic growth, female education also reduces fertility rates.

Certainly, the lack of literacy among women inhibits economic development. Slower growth and poorer earnings are the price societies who do not invest in the education of women pay. Investing in the education of women kickstarts a positive cycle that promotes progress, prosperity, and gender equality. Similar to a tax that misallocates resources and slows economic progress is education inequality.

### **3.2 Perspectives on Women's Empowerment**

Recent discussions on women's empowerment through adult learning have aired a variety of perspectives on women's advancement. One perspective of view recommends elevating women's status and equity without substantially altering the foundation for gender interactions that exists now. This frame of view includes what is known as the self-reliant empowerment model. This viewpoint views self-reliance as making the most of the current system. This point of view claims that a woman is "empowered" when she is read, educated, and has useful skills in addition to having access to riches and self-assurance. This definition of empowerment as personal independence ignores or undervalues the possibility that a woman can have greater access to resources in the face of ongoing gender inequality. It disregards the political and ideological dimensions of the fight for women. According to the opposing viewpoint, changing a society that is too dominated by men is necessary for the growth of women. To do this, it is necessary to take collective action and work as a team to get rid of gender inequality and discriminatory practices. The term "gender equity" is used by proponents of this point of view to denote their interest in structural change to further justice as well as their goal for a new kind of gender justice within an egalitarian society. They contend that chronic discrimination against women prevents them from achieving equality with men since there is no equality of opportunity.

The idea behind the word empowerment is that power comes before everything else. We talk about the political power distribution and involvement of women in politics. One of the key issues pertaining to women's empowerment is the allocation of seats for women in the state legislature and union parliament. 33% of the seats in Panchayats and local bodies were given to women under the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992. Indian Panchayat Raj Institutions' experience has benefited a million women.

Since the implementation of the quota system, local women—the vast majority of whom are illiterate and poor—have increased their share of seats to as high as 43%, which has led to an increase in the number of women elected to district, provincial, and national offices. Since the founding of the PRI, women's participation in politics has expanded from 4-5 percent to 25-40 percent at various levels.

According to Indian author and activist Devaki Jain, the panchayat raj institutions' positive discrimination has sparked a wave of transformation. The myth that women are uninterested in politics and lack the time to attend meetings or complete the other tasks necessary in political party processes has been disproved by the large number of women entering local government, frequently exceeding the required 33 percent, and their electoral success, which includes defeating male candidates. We are reminded of a fundamental reality by panchayat raj institutions: power cannot be handed away; it must be bargained for and occasionally, wrested from the powerful. Since the time of the freedom struggle, women's political engagement in India has actually declined by 10%. In 1984 presidential election, it reached a peak of 8%. Since, this number has never been surpassed.

The government of India is concerned with enhancing the social and economic status of women so that they can take an active part in the process of advancing the country, as shown by the account of the steps taken for their empowerment. Women's political participation is not taken seriously by the government, according to data, and they are underrepresented in politics.

### **3.3 Women Empowerment through Education**

Discussions about women's political rights are at the forefront of many formal and informal initiatives around the world, despite the fact that women's empowerment is a worldwide issue. During the International Women's Conference in NAROIBI in 1985, the idea of women's empowerment was introduced. Due to its ability to help women adapt to challenges, face their traditional responsibilities, and change their lives, education represents a turning point in women's emancipation. As a result, given that India is on pace to become a superpower, we must not undervalue the role that education plays in empowering women in this country. This won't actually happen until the women of this nation are empowered. Currently, India has the greatest percentage of illiterates in the entire globe. From 18.3 percent in 1951 to 64.8 percent in 2001, India's literacy rate increased significantly, with female enrolment rising by 7% to 54.16 percent. Despite the significance of women's education, just 39% of women and 64% of males are literate. Within the framework of a democratic democracy, our laws, development strategies, plans, and programs have all made an effort to advance women in a variety of fields. Since the fifth five-year plan (1974–1988), the focus on women's issues has switched from welfare to development. Women's empowerment has been identified as the key concern in developing women's position in recent years. In 1990, a law passed by the parliament created the National Commission on Women to defend the legal rights and privileges of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution guaranteed seats for women in Panchayats and Municipalities, providing a strong foundation for female involvement in local decision-making.

The cornerstone upon which everything else must be constructed is education for women.

Education improves people's status and helps them overcome obstacles that divide and isolate them on the basis of gender, sex, caste, race, and other factors. When it works well, education breaks the chains of isolation and exclusion. One is still significantly disadvantageous without a high-quality education. A world of opportunities has always been opened up by education.

According to the 2011 census, male literacy in India is 82.14% and female literacy is 65.46%. The lives of women and their families are significantly impacted by this low literacy rate.

Additionally, it hinders the nation's economic development. Numerous studies show that illiterate women have a high rate of fertility and mortality, poor nutrition, limited economic potential, and little autonomy within the home. A woman's ignorance negatively affects the health and wellbeing of her children. For instance, a study in India found that infant mortality was inversely related to the mother's level of education. Constitutional clauses show how committed the Indian government is to empowering women. All Indian women are guaranteed equality by the Constitution (Article 14), non-discrimination by the state (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). Additionally, it renounces practices that are demeaning to women's dignity (Article 51(A)(e)), permits the State to make provisions for securing just and humane working conditions and maternity relief (Article 42), and permits the State to make special provisions in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)).

Under the Rights to Education Act, which went into effect in 2009, every kid between the ages of 6 and 14 was given access to a free and required education and enrolment rates hit a record high of 98%. Between states and regions, there is still a considerable gap in literacy rates.

And last, society gains when women thrive. A survey of 60 developing countries found that not educating girls to the same level as boys costs the global economy \$90 billion annually. Women are more likely to spend money on their health and education, benefiting future generations and society as a whole. One study found that women invest up to 90% of their income in this way, compared to men who only contribute 30% to 40%.

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#### **4. CONCLUSION:**

The foundation of education is the basis for all transformation. It empowers women to take care of themselves and escape the restrictions of exclusion. Half of the world's population is made up of women. However, they only represent a tiny fraction of all economic activity. Some countries have much lower per capita income because women are not given equal chances. Numerous studies show that illiterate women have a high rate of fertility and mortality, poor nutrition, limited economic potential, and little autonomy within the home. A woman's ignorance negatively affects the health and wellbeing of her children. For instance, a recent study in India found that infant mortality was inversely related to the mother's level of education. Women are more likely to spend money on health and education, which has a big impact on generations of people in society. One study found that women invest up to 90% of their income in this way, compared to men who only contribute 30% to 40%. Thus, women's empowerment through education can contribute to the growth of a strong nation.

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