

# KNOWLEDGE AS POWER: UNRAVELLING THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

Since educated women can significantly contribute to the growth of their nation, women's education is a vital concern for both the government and civil society in India. Education is a key component of women's empowerment since it gives them the tools to face obstacles, accept their conventional roles, and make changes in their lives. In light of India's recent ascent to prominence and the significance of education for women's empowerment, we cannot undervalue it. Women's education is the most effective means of influencing their status in society. Given that education is the cornerstone of women's empowerment, women's education has become increasingly important in India. Additionally, education reduces inequality, enhances a person's standing within the family, and fosters the idea of involvement.

**Citation of this paper:** Tokdar, S. (2024). Knowledge as power: unravelling the impact of education on women's empowerment in India. VLEARNY Journal of Business, 1(1), 38–41. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10541254>

## INTRODUCTION

A way to create a social climate where people can make decisions and choices for social transformation, either individually or collectively, is through empowerment. Through the acquisition of information, skills, and experience, empowerment fortifies natural ability (Hashemi Schuler and Riley, 1996). The process of giving someone the freedom to think, act, and manage their work independently is known as empowerment. It is the method via which people can take charge of their life and their destiny. In every culture, state, and country, there are always a number of people who are deprived of their

fundamental rights; nevertheless, these people are not aware of their rights. If we include members of the society in this category, women would come in first. In actuality, women constitute the most vital component of any community. Despite the fact that everyone is aware of this fact, nobody is prepared to embrace it. As a result, women are becoming less important in today's society than they were in the past. The necessity for women's empowerment became apparent as a result of the growing trend of undervaluing women, which includes depriving them of their fundamental rights and placing them in a secondary place within society. Globally, there is a lot of talk and attention focused on the empowerment of women.

We take pleasure in the freedoms that come with living in a free country today, but we should consider whether all of our country's residents truly enjoy freedom and freedom in the true sense of the word. Around the world, discrimination against women and gender inequality are long-standing problems. The pursuit of gender equality by women is therefore a universal phenomenon. In terms of politics, work, inheritance, marriage, and education, among other things, women and men ought to be treated equally. Their pursuit of equality has sparked movements and the creation of numerous women's associations. Although our country's Constitution does not discriminate against men and women, our society has denied women access to many fundamental rights that the Constitution guaranteed them. People who feel empowered are able to realize their full potential, participate more actively in politics and society, and have confidence in their own talents.

### **Importance of women education**

"You educate a man, and you educate that person; but you educate a woman, and you educate the entire family. "Mother India is empowered when women are empowered. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, PT. In India, the education of women is crucial to the nation's overall development. It contributes to both the improvement of living conditions both inside and outside the home as well as the development of half of the human resource pool. It won't be incorrect if it is claimed that education is the solution to every issue. Many definitions of education have been offered by intellectuals, but M. Phule's definition is the most significant of them all. "Education is that which demonstrates the difference between what is good and what is evil," asserts M. Phule. Upon examining the aforementioned definition, it becomes evident that education has been a fundamental component of every major historical upheaval. Education entails changing behaviour in all spheres, including mindset, perspective, attitude, and so forth. Not only do educated women favour their daughters' education, but they are also better able to guide all of their children. Additionally, educated women can contribute to population increase and a decrease in the infant mortality rate. Challenges: There is still a lot of work to be done in the area of women's education in India, and gender prejudice still exists there. The

disparity in the literacy rates of men and women is merely one basic sign. In contrast, the female literacy rate is under 65.46%, while the male rate is above 82.14%. The women were viewed as only housewives, and it was preferable for them to reside there.

### **Women empowerment through education**

The key component of any society, state, or nation is the empowerment of women. In a child's everyday existence, women have a dominant role. A significant portion of our society is made up of women. A shift in attitude toward women's empowerment through education is possible. For India's political and social development, it is consequently essential. The Indian Constitution gives the state the authority to enact affirmative action policies that encourage women's empowerment. Women's lifestyles vary considerably depending on their level of education.<sup>3</sup> Women's political rights are a global issue, and discussions about them are at the forefront of numerous official and unofficial initiatives across the globe. During the 1985 international women's conference held in NAROI, the idea of women's empowerment was first presented. Education is a crucial component of women's empowerment since it gives them the tools, they need to face obstacles, question their traditional roles, and make life changes. Therefore, in terms of women's empowerment, we cannot undervalue the significance of education. Given the advancements in women's education, India is predicted to become a global superpower in the near future. The primary factor in defining women's position is now acknowledged to be the growing shift in women's education and empowerment. In order to become a superpower, we must prioritize the education of women. which it will compel women's emancipation. Women's empowerment is defined by the United Nations Population Fund for Women (UNIFEM) as Gaining knowledge and comprehension of gender relations and the means by which these relations may be altered. Gaining the ability to make decisions and use bargaining power; gaining the confidence to believe that one can bring about the changes one wants and the autonomy to govern one's life; gaining the capacity to coordinate and shape social change in order to establish a more equitable social and economic structure on a

national and worldwide scale. Therefore, empowerment refers to both a concern for actual social influence, political authority, and legal rights as well as a psychological sense of personal control or influence. It is a multi-level concept that encompasses people, groups, and communities. Through mutual respect, introspection, compassion, and group engagement, this global, continuous process with a local focus allows those who do not have an equal share of valuable resources to become more involved in controlling them.

### **Importance of Women participation**

Women's involvement can be employed by legislators as a tool for control as well as by an agency to provide support. Engagement can take various forms: direct, indirect, formal, casual, political, social, or administrative. Women may participate in Panchayat Raj organizations in a variety of ways. It refers to all the activities that demonstrate women's participation in administrative processes, such as their involvement in the planning, execution, and assessment of policies and programs intended for development target groups. Indian women have long been involved in politics, dating back to the time before independence. They participated in the independence movement as leaders as well as volunteers. Article 15 of the Indian Constitution guaranteed women's legal equality at the time of independence. Despite the Indian Constitution's guarantee of equal rights for all citizens, women's representation in politics in India remains relatively low. The truth is that women now hold little authority at the federal and state levels. The unfortunate situation is that almost half of In the Lok Sabha, just 10% of India's population is represented. Out of the 233 MPs in the Rajya Sabha currently in office, 21 are women. This is only 9% of the total, which is even less than in the Lok Sabha. Even while it is frequently said that women in political leadership will lead to a more cooperative and less conflict-prone society, male dominance in the Army, Parliament, bureaucracy, court, and police all indicate gender disparity at the societal level. Women's submissive and unequal status is further compounded by their lack of economic and political authority. Even with its own constitution, India was unable to attain moral principles like social justice, equality, and

fairness after independence. Even when a woman served as prime minister for a short while, the situation for women did not change. The United Nations (UN) designated 1975 as the "International Women's Year" in the middle of the 1970s, marking the beginning of the global recognition of women's presence in politics. The UN's decade for women, which ran from 1976 to 1985 with the theme "Equality, Development, and Peace," came next. Women's involvement in politics in India has remained relatively low even up to this day, but the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment acts have improved the status of women in politics by allowing them to participate in the decision-making process. The Indian constitution's 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) established the provision for women to hold seats in panchayats and municipalities, establishing a solid basis for female involvement in local decision-making. Enrolment of boys and girls in schools is another area where women's equality has significantly improved as a result of adult literacy programs. The gender disparity in reading levels is progressively closing as a result of women's increased involvement in literacy programs. What's even more noteworthy is the significantly smaller gender enrolment gap between boys and girls in neo-literate households than in non-literate households. Girls and boys now receive equal education in primary school across the globe. However, very few nations have reached this goal in terms of education across the board. Women are increasingly participating in politics. In January 2014, women made up over 30% of parliamentarians in at least one chamber in 46 different countries. Gender equality is still present in many nations, and women are still subject to discrimination when it comes to their access to economic resources, employment opportunities, education, and government involvement. In every industry that we operate in, women and girls encounter obstacles and disadvantages. 62 million girls do not attend school worldwide. One in three women worldwide may encounter gender-based violence at some point in their lives. One in seven girls in underdeveloped nations get married before turning fifteen, with some becoming child brides as early as eight or nine. Over 287,000 women a year, 99 percent of whom live in underdeveloped nations, pass away from complications related to

pregnancy and childbirth. Though they comprise over 40% of the agricultural labor force, just 3 to 20% of landholders are women. Women-owned businesses account for as little as 10% of all firms in Africa. That percentage is merely 3% in South Asia. Furthermore, women only make up 20% of lawmakers worldwide, although making up half of the population. Every industry in which we operate has the potential to change when women and girls are treated equally with men and boys. Development is centered on gender equality and women's empowerment, not just a component of it. In order to eradicate this, we must create educational awareness campaigns about gender equality and women's empowerment in order to reaffirm our dedication to assisting women and girls.

## CONCLUSIONS

Women are vital to a nation's advancement and development because they lead it in those directions. Giving women access to education must be a top priority if we want to see a bright future for them in our nation since they are vital human resources needed for progress. Empowerment entails assuming a position of strength and executing it. The most effective means of influencing societal change is women's education. Inequalities are also lessened by education, which also helps people's standing within the family. Schools, colleges, and universities in the state were founded specifically for women in order to support women's education at all levels and to lessen gender prejudice in the dissemination of knowledge and education. The idea of taking part in panchayats, the government, public affairs, etc. is developed through education in order to end gender discrimination.

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