



# Indian Higher Education and Women Empowerment

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## ABSTRACT

India's higher education system is widely regarded globally. Since India is a leading democratic country, the government arranges education at various levels for all sections of the country. The system of higher education of women in such major democratic countries has to be carried out primarily by the government and the Indian Constitution is helpful for that. As the status and problems of women are different in different states of our country, educational measures are planned for women by implementing different types of activities at the state level. From the village level to the country level, maximum higher education plays a role in the development of women. The high position of women in various sectors of our country is obviously due to their higher education. In it, the elements of governance, political class, administrative officers and general public are constantly active. Since India is a developing country, women in the country are also seen as leaders in this work. As women are the main factor in the society, the role of women in the development of the society remains important. In this related research article, there is a discussion about the higher education system in India and the empowerment of women through it.

**Keywords :** Role of Higher Education in Women Empowerment in India, Participation of Women in Management of higher Education, Current Status of Women in Higher Education in India.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. The empowerment strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience. Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individual to think, take action and control work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's lives. There are always a number of elements in the society which are deprived of their basic rights in every society, state and nation, but these elements lack in the awareness of their rights. If we enlist such elements from the society, then women would top this list. In fact, women are the most important factor of every society. Even though everybody is aware of this fact, but nobody is ready to accept this fact. As a result, the importance which used to be given to women is declining in today's society. As a consequence of this growing tendency of underestimating women such as to make them occupy a secondary position in society and to deprive them of their basic rights, the need for empowering women was felt. Empowering women has become the focus of considerable discussion and

attention all over the world. Today we enjoy the benefits of being citizens of a free nation, but we really need to think whether each of the citizens of our country is really free or enjoying freedom, in the true sense of the term. The inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women are an age-old issue all over the world. Thus women quest for equality with man is a universal phenomenon. Women should equal with men in matters of education, employment, inheritance, marriage, and politics etc. Their quest for equality has given birth to the formation of many women's associations and launching of movements. The Constitution of our nation doesn't discriminate between men and women, but our society has deprived women of certain basic rights, which were bestowed upon them by our Constitution. Empowerment allows individuals to reach their full potential, to improve their political and social participation, and to believe in their own capabilities.

### **Participation of Women in Management of Higher Education :**

In the area of higher education, both in teaching and management, women are still along way from participating on the same footing as men. Women have made some Progress in achieving parity in teaching but are grossly under-represented in higher Education management. In India the female education has its roots in the British Regime. In 1854 the East India Company acknowledged women's education and employment. Initially this education was limited only to primary school level education and only the richer section of the society enjoyed this facility. Thus as it was confined only for a small section of people in society so the literacy rate for women increased from 0.2% in 1882 to 6% only in 1947. It is very unfortunate to say that for centuries higher education for women has been neglected. In this connection I may refer the suggestions given by the University Education Commission in 1947. The report of the said com-mission revealed that they were against female education. In their recommendation they wrote "women's pre-sent education is entirely irrelevant to the life they have to lead. It is not only a waste but often a definite disability" (Report of the University Education Commission, Government of India, 1948-49, Vol.(i), chapter XII) But in spite of this, it is fact that in post independence period the female literacy rate was 8.9%. Thus in 1958, the government of India appointed a national committee for the education of women. The committee submitted report in favour of women education. The government of India accepted most of the recommendations of the committee. There are two different views on the question of women participation in higher education - traditional and modern. The traditional view supports women's education to equip them to become better wives and mother. This view believes that women's present education is entirely irrelevant in their lives. It is only waste of time and this does not help them to solve the problems of their daily life. This view believes that modern educated women are neither happy nor contended nor socially useful. She is misfit in life and needs opportunities for self expression. But modern attitude visualizes education as an instrument for women's equality and development. Theoretically the need of higher education for both males and females is the same. But practically it could be said that female education is more important than that of male. In this connection I may refer a statement of philosopher-president and noted educationist Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1948) He says "there cannot be educated people without educated women. If general education has to be limited to men or women, the opportunity should be given to women. From them it would most surely be passed on to the next generation."

### **Need for Higher Education for Women Empowerment in India :**

Women in the Vedic age got most honored positions in the society. They had the right to education and were free to remain unmarried and devote their whole life to the pursuit of knowledge and self realization (Seth, 2001). But during the course of civilization women lost her prominence and accepted secondary status to men.

Though, women constitute about 48% of total population, they lost their status due to socio-cultural discrimination. At present women are playing many role in the society in decision making and developmental processes but still their participation is less. Since women can play a very important role in the development of society and country therefore identification of skills and occupations suitable for women are required. For woman empowerment means able to take decisions, can fight for her rights and become self dependent. An empowered woman has been able to develop ability for critical thinking, decision-making and action through collective processes; Ensuring equal participation in developmental processes; Enhancing self-esteem and self confidence. According to Sen and Batliwala (2000) empowerment leads to a growing intrinsic capability greater self confidence, and an inner transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barrier. Higher Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence. It brings a reduction in inequalities and helps in improving their status within the family. Higher educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. The year 2001 was celebrated as women's empowerment year, which recognized women as agents of socio-economic change and development in the country. Indian Government continues to encourage higher education for women through programmes like, Indira Gandhi scholarship for single girl child for pursuing higher and in order to support higher education through scholarships and by constructing women hostels and by capacity building for women managers in higher education. Women Leader Women appointed as Chairpersons, Board of Governors of apex technical education institutes and in National Institutes of Technology . For the first time in the history of IITs, two women scientist nominated on the IIT council. The Indian National Policy on Education (NPE) is a landmark in empowering the women through education. For better outcomes Higher Education needs to take responsibility for:

1. Cultivation of positive self-image and self-confidence, Developing capacity for critical thinking and decision-making.
2. Providing Continuing Education and Correspondence Centers for organizing vocational and literary skills, Efficiency in Agricultural and Home Science Colleges.
3. Industrial Training Institutes with diverse courses, keeping in view the job potential, facilities for vocational counseling.
4. Imparting information about credit, banking, entrepreneurial development and access to women's technical education.
5. Providing Women's Studies Research centers and organize seminars and workshops to discuss women-related issues.
6. Disseminate information and encourage interaction with students and the general public through the media. Providing classes on legal literacy, programmes for women's socio- economic development via media, adult education and information and training support.
7. A more relevant and responsive curriculum catering to the cultural and occupational needs of women.

#### **Some Essential Suggestions for Empowerment of Women in Higher Education :**

- The current situation of women in all the states of India should be studied in a detailed manner and activities should be implemented through the government.
- To involve women from village level to country level for development in various fields.
- Women should get full benefit of various welfare schemes of the government.
- Study the backwardness of women and determine the direction of empowerment.

- The participation of women in higher education system as professors, principals, researchers, students should be increased and plans and activities should be implemented at the government level for that.
- Women should be given reservation in political and administrative matters in higher education institutions of the country.
- Various scholarships should be implemented for women for higher education abroad.
- There should be reserved seats for women in the entrance examination for Doctorate degree and other higher education degrees.
- Women should take initiative in various departments, political level, welfare activities, schemes at university level.
- Women should be specially considered in all the modern changes of higher education.

## II. CONCLUSION

Looking at the condition of women in our country, we cannot forget that our country is in a developing state. In today's modern times, the educational facilities available to women are sufficient, so the women of our country also get sufficient opportunities in various fields. As higher education is considered as a means to promote the overall development of women, it is important for women to look at higher education from a positive point of view. Efforts are made at the government level to increase the literacy rate of women in India, which is rich in diversity, but it does not show any real effect. Overall, it is important for women to play their role in the development of the country by increasing their participation in higher education. The issue of higher education and empowerment of women is important in today's times and it will be useful for each and every entity to strive for it at every level. The interest and attitude of higher education towards women has been revealed.

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