



## Empowering Women in Higher Education

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### ***Abstract:***

*Education of women is recognized as one of the critical elements of the national development effort and higher education, in particular, is of vital importance for the nation, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Higher Education of women plays a crucial role in releasing their energy and creativity and enabling them to meet the complex challenges of the present world. In acknowledging them as potential human resources, investment must be made in developing their capacity in terms or education, skill development, and technology transfers through technical training. By extending women's visibility and their self-sustaining ability, Higher Education must train them to become leaders with decision-making capacities to achieve the best for themselves and the country.*

***Key words:*** Higher Education, empowerment, equal opportunity

### **Introduction**

The Indian National Policy of Education recognizes this when it states, 'Wider women' access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels, breaking gender stereotypes, will ensure better financial stability for women and lead to national development'. India is poised to emerge as one of the most developed nations by 2020. No doubt, women will play a vital role in contributing to the country's development as women play a central role in the social-economic development of any society. But yet, little has been achieved in the area of women empowerment. Women constitute almost half of the population in the world, so educating them is necessary condition to ensure the development of the Nation itself.

### **Women Empowerment**

Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power. It is the ability to direct and control one's life. It is a process in which women gain

control over their own lives of knowing and claiming their right at all levels of society at the international, local and household levels. The Oxford American Dictionary defines "empowerment" as "to make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights."

Gender discrimination has been a major obstacle in granting equal opportunity for women in Higher Education. It has been identified as a crucial category and deserves attention in the education-equality paradigm. Empowerment is the manifestation of a redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology, transforming the institutions that reinforce or perpetuate gender discrimination. The parameters of empowerment have been identifies as:

1. Developing ability for critical thinking
2. Fostering decision-making and action through collective processes



3. Ensuring equal participation in developmental process
4. Enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence in women

### **Relationship between Higher Education and Women Empowerment**

Higher education definitely raises the status of women. Higher Education can bring phenomenal change in women's life resulting in social transformation in the long run by inculcating following attributes among them:

1. Enhancing their confidence
2. Raising their status in the family and society
3. Bring awareness about their rights
4. Boosting their esteem
5. Increasing their-efficacy
6. Reducing their dependency
7. Better upbringing of their children
8. Enhancing their mobility
9. Opening career opportunities

### **Hindrances of Women Empowerment & In Higher Education**

There are many hindrances in the path of women empowerment and in higher education. Some of them are as follows:

1. Lack of education
2. Financial constraints
3. Family responsibility
4. Low mobility
5. Low ability to bear risk
6. Low need for achievement
7. Absence of Ambitions for the Achievement

8. Social status

### **Women Empowerment through Education**

Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women's political right are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at Nairobi in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment. India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020. The year 2020 s fast approaching; it is just 6 year away. This can become reality only when the women of this nation get empowerment. Despite the importance of women education only 65.46% of women are literate in India.

### **Strategies of Empowerment: Higher Education and the Indian Perspective**

The Indian National Policy on Education (NPE) is a landmark in the approach to women's education when it proclaims that the Education System will pay a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, training and orientation of teachers, decision makers and administrators. The program implementation explains women's empowerment though collective reflection and decision-making. For this, Higher Education needs to take responsibility for:

1. Cultivation of positive self-image and self-confidence



2. Developing capacity for critical thinking
3. Achieving group cohesion and fostering decision-making and action
4. Providing women's centers in Agricultural and Home Science Colleges
5. Providing Continuing Education and Correspondence Centers for organizing vocational and literary skills.
6. Revamping the Industrial Training Institutes in terms of diversification of trades and courses, keeping in view the job potential, facilities for vocational counseling, imparting information about credit, banking, entrepreneurial development and access to women's technical education.
7. Providing Women's Studies Research centers to identify issues and areas and organize seminars and workshops to discuss and analyze women-related issues and disseminate information and encourage interaction with students and the general public through the media.
8. Providing classes on legal literacy, programs for women's socioeconomic development delivered via media, adult education and information and training support.
9. A more relevant and responsive curriculum catering to the cultural and occupational needs of women
10. Meeting the expenses of higher education for the rural, backward sections with incentives like scholarships and frees places.
11. Meeting the requirement of achieving full integration of women within the democratic and developmental efforts of the country.

Curricular reform should include compulsory exposure and engagement with different kinds of work in the form of summer jobs or internships, according to the circumstances and needs of the female population. Training must include manual and technical exposure to master operational techniques.

#### **Impact of Higher Education in India: The Road to Comprehensive Development**

The focuses goal of Indian Higher Education is to acquire, generate, supplement and transmit knowledge that builds up leadership qualities. It has already to some extent empowered women to compete better, perform with precision and efficiency and achieve excellence in multi-tasking. Empowered women challenge men in their workplace and are visible in all forms of powerful corporate positions. Politically and economically women are now in a more commanding situation than fifty years ago. Indian women have made their presence felt in industry, technology, literature, art, banking, insurance and pharmaceutical centers. Educated women are also there in international business and administrative roles. Our vision of a better India free from multiple maladies can only be achieved when educated empowered women take up the mantle of responsibility and commit themselves to restructuring and advancing the development of India. The time has arrived to realize the relevance, in a rapidly developing country like India, of education for leadership-building, especially for women-something which can be achieved only through Higher Education.



### **Conclusion**

Education of women is recognized as one of the critical elements of the national development effort and higher education, in particular, is of vital importance for the nation, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Higher Education of women plays a crucial role in releasing their energy and creativity and enabling them to meet the complex challenges of the present world. In acknowledging them as potential human resources, investment must be made in developing their capacity in terms of education, skill development, and technology transfers through technical training. By extending women's visibility and their self-sustaining ability, Higher Education must train them to become leaders with decision-making capacities to achieve the best for themselves and the country.

Empowerment requires self-help, confidence, daring knowledge and skill. All these are facilitated by education especially higher education. Thus higher education is pathway of women empowerment. it is the duty of higher education institutions to make provision of training, employment and income generation activities for women. This would help women to take off themselves. Indian women are as capable as any women in any part of the world. So, the time has arrived that Indian women especially in part of the world. So, the time has arrived that Indian women especially in rural areas have to wake up and realize their potential of being intelligent talented and rational. Then there will be no limit for women except the sky.

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