



# Role of literacy in the empowerment of women in India

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**Abstract:** Education is not only the main pillar of nation-building, but through education, a nation moves towards progress. In a country, with different races of people, both men and women became uplifted towards development when illuminated by education. By the united force of men and women, especially women, a country leads its way to the path of success. Women's empowerment is the basic necessity for this success. Again, education is the most powerful instrument of empowerment as it generates consciousness that leads to empowerment. Hence, to pave the way for women's emancipation and empowerment, education plays a pivotal and inevitable role. According to **Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru** – "If you teach a male, you educate an individual If you educate a lady, you educate an entire family." Women who are educated and empowered succeed in society, business, and family life. So, Women empowerment refers to increasing women's social, economic, and educational power. It refers to an environment where there is no gender bias and equal rights in the community, society, and workplaces. Today, According to the GOI report, the male literacy rate is currently at 84%, while the female literacy rate is less than 70%. Again, the most recent labour force surveys conducted by the NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) published the female worker population ratio (%) on a status basis in the country during 2013-14 and 2015-16 are 29.6% and 25.8% respectively. Education helps women become aware of their rights, dignity, and opportunities. It gives them the chance to make a more meaningful decision in terms of political engagement and decision-making choices about life. Thus, education can benefit from building self-confidence, self-efficiency, and decision-making power and increasing gender parity in an organisation or institution.

**Key Words:** Women's Empowerment, Economic Empowerment, Education, Gender parity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

According to **Prof. A P J Abdul Kalam**(TOI), – "Responsible citizens, particularly women, are especially important for the nation because their perception, way of life, and value system will lead to the development of a good family, a good society, and, ultimately, a good nation." So, we must always remember that women are powerful, strong, and significant contributors to all societies. She carries the future generation of society, moulds the personalities of the children, and acts as a great workforce for the family as well as the nation. Women are an important human resource in a nation. All over the world, woman amenities and position still lag behind men. The commission on the status of Women(CSW), New York, 2020, states, "Identify challenges, set global standards and norms and formulate policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide." Education is the biggest weapon in this women's empowerment. Improvement in knowledge, self-assurance, and awareness of gender equity are indicators of the empowerment process. These components get developed through education. When educated women aware about their rights, they are not afraid to face any problem. Then the woman can achieve success in all areas of her life. Education plays an important role in making a woman a productive citizen. Hence, I believe, denying women and girls equality and fairness not only hurts them but also hinders the progress of rest of the society.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

This study focuses on the role of Education in Women's Empowerment in India. The following review has been made.

Sundaram M (2014) through the paper 'Women Empowerment: Role Of Education' – understood that such strength comes from the process of empowerment and empowerment will come from Education. The main objective of



this paper was to create awareness among women about different empowerment and identify the impact of education on women's overall empowerment.

Shetty S (2015) discussed their paper 'Role Of Education Women Empowerment And Development: Issue And Impact' – women empowerment is a process of enabling women to have access to and make a productive contribution to their economic autonomy, political involvement, and social development. And also discussed how to overcome challenges to women's empowerment through education.

Engida Y (2021) studied the 'The Three-Dimensional Role Of Education For Women Empowerment'. The main objectives of the study were to know that education is one of the most effective ways of encouraging women to engage fully in the growth process with awareness, skills, and self-confidence.

Mukhopadhyay H (2008) in the article, 'The Role Of Education In The Empowerment Of Women In A District Of West Bengal, India: Reflection On A Survey Of Women' highlighted that educated and economically empowered women said that dowry system as a superstition in the society.

Rahimain, Mirzamani & Zehtabi (2010) conducted a study on the 'Impact Model Of Women's Empowerment the objectives of the research is to know women's empowerment is an significant factor in alleviating world poverty and maintaining human rights. This concept is accompanied by, freedom, self-determination, and power, which are necessary for women all over the world.

### **3. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:**

Women in India are still far behind in the educational field. As a result that they could not become aware of their rights, dignity, and opportunities. Empowerment has not been possible because they are not aware of their rights, dignity, and opportunities. Education plays a vital role in unleashing this awareness among women for empowerment. So this present study focuses on the role of education in the empowerment of women in India. One of the unique parts of the study is to study the role of education in the awareness of rights, dignity, and opportunities for women. Educated women are the real source of happiness for the family. Education is one of the milestones for women's empowerment because it enables them to respond to challenges, confront their traditional roles, and change their lifestyles (Bhat, 2015).

### **4. OBJECTIVES:**

The following objectives have been framed to get a better understanding of the role of education in the empowerment of women in India:

1. To study the present status of women's empowerment through education.
2. To study the literacy rate and employment rate of women in India.
3. To ascertain the impact of education on the socioeconomic empowerment of Indian women.

### **Women Empowerment Through Education:**

Women's empowerment is the most important part of a nation for development and progress. Because empowerment means power and women's empowerment means that women have power, which will make her able to participate in the process of decision-making. Education attainment and economic participation are the constituents in ensuring the empowerment of women. Women's education is extremely important since it is a human right and is required for the flourishing of many capacities. Women empowerment generally has five components: 1) women's sense of self-worth. 2) their rights to have the power to control their own lives. 3) their rights to have the power to control their own home. 4) their rights to have the power of control outside of home. 5) their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a just social and economic order nationally, internationally, and universally. Each of the above elements plays a vital role in women empowerment. And through education, women are able to achieve the above five elements.

Education acts as an important element in the development of women's empowerment in any country. So, women education is very important for the country to develop fully. Education also helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain the confidence to claim them. Moreover, educated women can help also in the reduction of the infant mortality rate and the growth of the population. Education is the most powerful weapon of women's empowerment because it is capable of them to decision-making power, facing their traditional roles, and diversity in their life. GOI



developed policies, plans, and programs for women’s empowerment in India. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments(1993) to India's constitution have provided for women's reservation seats in the local bodies of panchayats and municipalities. The idea of women empowerment was enforced at the international women conference at Nairobi in 1985.

The empowerment of women is vital for the socioeconomic development of society, government focus on bringing women into the mainstream of national development. Through education, women are able to make their own decision. It is possible to emancipate thought among women through education. It is possible to develop libertarian thinking among women through education. So, educated women will also be liberated women. All barriers ( like social, political, religious, linguistic, and geographical ) are broken down through education. Through education they are able to make their choice, in everything-whether it be a lifestyle, career, life partner, sexuality, food, etc.

It can be concluded from the above discussion that the importance of education in women’s empowerment is immense. Women empowerment and education are two sides of the same coin.

### **Indian Women Status Basis on The Literacy Rate And Employment Rate:**

Women empowerment and women education are closely related to each other. And both are interdependent. In a non-discriminatory society, there can be no discrimination between men and women. Both of them can enjoy wealth and benefit from society. The most important issue in the world today is the equal rights of men and women. Women education is the most powerful factor for gender equality in the nation. The economic, social, political and cultural development of women in a society is never possible without proper education. As mentioned in the National Education Policy of 1992, “The National Educational system will play a positive interventionalist role empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigning curricula, and textbooks. The importance of women empowerment in the sustainable development of education is very important. That education is the real education for a woman, the education that has the power to educate every family member of her family. It is only possible for an educated woman to educate other members of the family to give a society with moral values. If women can be empowered by ensuring good education, they can actively contribute to building society and sustainable development of education. Educated women can freely express their opinions and make quick decisions by determining what is good or bad for society. So women literacy is very important for women empowerment in the nation.

The Indian constitution provides free and compulsory education for every child up to 14 years. But currently, the literacy rate of women is slower to men. Educational levels increasing for women, but still there is a gap between male and female literacy rates which following in the table. According to the Indian census:

**Table 1: The Literacy Rate In India 1951-2011(Census Of India)**

Census year	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

The Press Information Bureau, GOI shows that –

**Table 2: Female Employment Rate**

Name of state / all India	YEAR (%)		
	2012-13	2013-14	2015-16
WEST BENGAL	20.6	17.2	20.5
ALL INDIA	25.0	29.6	25.8



This gap in employment is mainly due to the rate of literacy as well as education that empowers a person to be a productive and useful.

## 5. CONCLUSION :

To conclude the present scenario, women are deprived of opportunities in various aspects like nutrition, education, employment etc. Overall this study confirms that women are inferior to men in India. So women education is very important for women empowerment. Because education can give women fair rights, dignity, and opportunities. There is an effective relationship between education and women's empowerment. Another important aspect in this regard is that, in these societies, the issue of women's empowerment has been facing certain serious challenges, which are the outcome some certain evil norms and attitudes such as child worker, child marriage, illiteracy, the partial attitude of the parents, female feticides, etc. and in such a situation women empowerment urgent necessity. So to eliminate all these problems in women empowerment Indian government has adopted various schemes. They are – 1) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP-2015). 2) Mahila Sakti Kendra (MSK – 2017). 3) Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY-2017). We can hope for better days while all women our country enlightened and educated.

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