

# Gender and Education – Education for Woman Empowerment

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**Abstract:** The ability to respond to obstacles that arise from challenging their established roles and changing their lives is what makes education a key component of women's empowerment. This can only happen when women in this country started to experience empowerment, which is now just a few years away. A woman can develop physical strength through education by learning about good physical health, which will ultimately improve her mental health. Women's empowerment is essential for development in the fields of business, education, family, religion, morality, and the arts. Women are empowered through literacy and education. A community can only achieve economic progress and prosperity through investing in education, particularly among its female residents. Therefore, this article talks about the inequalities and prejudices that have been there in the society. Especially, women empowerment and how it can be achieved with the help of quality education.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, education, exploitation, constitution.

## 1. Introduction

Gender disparities in educational outcomes, such as achievement, attainment, and experiences within the educational system, are covered by the study of gender and education. This topic also includes how these disparities affect job opportunities, family structure, and health outcomes, moving beyond the study of how gender affects educational outcomes.

The question of whether biological variations between men and women's educational outcomes were the subject of early studies on gender and education. The biological variations between genders are typically fewer than those within gender, according to research that has been conducted over time. Therefore, socialization and the disparities in expectations between males and female may have a greater impact on educational outcomes than biological differences.

SDG 4 and SDG 5 of the Education 2030 Framework for Action are to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" and "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," respectively.

Gender equality calls for a strategy that "ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education," according to the school 2030 agenda.

In many contexts, there are significant gender differences in terms of access to, success in, and continuation in school. These gaps primarily disadvantage girls, while in certain places they also disadvantage males. Despite advancements, 16 million girls will never enter a classroom (UNESCO Institute for Statistics), and women make up two-thirds of the 750 million adults worldwide who lack basic literacy abilities.

The many barriers that prevent women and girls from fully exercising their right to participate in, complete, and benefit from education include poverty, geographic isolation, minority status, disability, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, and traditional attitudes about the status and role of women.

### A. Gender Disparity in Early Childhood Education

Given India's commitment to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education, gender inequality and the resulting societal and financial barriers that hinder girls from accessing primary school are the country's biggest concern.

Disparities in education can be shown through a variety of distributions, including caste, religion, and gender, among others, in a culture as profoundly stratified as India. It's intriguing; nevertheless, that broad gender inequality in educational achievement persists even in such underprivileged regions. The gender gap in schooling for girls from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is over 30% at the primary level and 26% at the upper primary stage. To close this gap, a daring and innovative policy will be required. The Indian government has prioritized female education in response to this. Female education and achieving gender parity are given special attention in its flagship programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which aims to attain universal primary education. One may notice that both wealthy states like Punjab and Haryana and poor ones like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have the strongest anti-female bias.

## 2. Empowerment of Women

The process of empowering women is known as women's empowerment. 'Woman empowerment' has come to be connected with women's fights for equality and social justice. According to the Government of India's Country Report, "empowerment involves transitioning from a state of imposed

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impotence to one of power. It would encourage women's natural resilience and self-confidence.

In contrast to what is sometimes believed, empowering women does not entail giving them the ability to dominate others or to use that authority to prove their superiority. But in truth, women's empowerment is about empowering themselves, not dominating men.

In order to focus on women's issues, the UNO General Assembly declared 1975 to be International Women's Year in 1972. The importance of empowering women has been stressed by the National Policy of Education (1986). The definition of empowerment has been set out explicitly as:

- Increasing women's self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Acquiring the capacity for critical thought.
- Enhancing women's status by recognizing their contributions to society, politics, and the economy.
- Supplying the data, know-how, and abilities necessary for financial independence.

The Year of Women's Empowerment was declared by the Indian government in 2001. The National Policy for Women's Empowerment was introduced by the government that same year in an effort to raise women's status.

#### A. Women's Empowerment Goals

- To pinpoint any gaps in children's and adolescents development, as well as women's empowerment.
- Establish a nationwide network of public, private, and non-profit organizations (NGO) centres to provide free reproductive and child health services to any client.
- To establish a supportive environment through programme convergence.
- To provide more childcare facilities for working parents and increase access to secure abortion services.
- To deploy energy-saving technology to free women from tedious tasks.
- To determine how policy and programmatic efforts to advance women's empowerment have been measured in terms of their results.
- To build health management and health packages at all levels.
- To increase accessibility and quality of maternity and child health care services.
- To improve access to sanitation, drinking water, fuel, wood, and fodder for women.
- To locate data demonstrating the impact of women's empowerment on key development outcomes like health, education, fertility patterns, income levels, etc.

#### B. Current Prejudices Concerning Women

India's gender ratio demonstrates that there is still discrimination against women in Indian society. In India, there are 933 females for every 1,000 males, according to the 2001 census. Although women's standing has significantly improved in contemporary India compared to women in the past, there is still a long way to go. There are several obstacles on their way. All of these issues are brought on by the prevalent prejudices towards women in Indian society. These prejudices include:

#### 1) Education options that isn't equal

Children in India are more likely to be literate than girls, with 82% of boys being literate and only 65% of girls being able to read and write, according to the 2011 Census of India. According to statistics, by 2019 there were approximately 10% more girls attending secondary school in India than there were in 2011.

#### 2) Discrimination against girls

Daughters often experience two losses. The first is that a daughter leaves her birth family when she marries, and the gains from the investments made in her upbringing go to the new family, leaving the birth family with a loss. The strain of her marriage's costs only makes matters worse. Sons, however, are regarded as assets deserving of both short- and long-term investment.

#### 3) Deliberate restriction in nutrition and health

Parents make distinctions between their daughters and sons in terms of nutrition and health. For instance, recent data from the National Family Health Survey, India 2009, conducted by Nutrition in India, reveals that in Assam, more than 60% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are anaemic. The survey also finds that more than half of Assam's female population is undernourished.

#### 4) Financial discrimination

Women's economic dependence on men is one of the main reasons why they are exploited. In the modern era, women have taken an active role in the economy and labour force. For instance, 74% of the workforce in agriculture is made up of women.

#### 5) Violence against women and sexual exploitation

In India, sexual violence against women is widespread. India registered 88 rape cases per day in 2019, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)'s most recent data. Rajasthan, a state in the northwest, reported nearly 6,000 rape incidents in 2019, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 3,065 incidents. In India, the term "violence against women" refers to acts of physical or sexual assault on a woman, usually by a man. Domestic violence, sexual assault, and murder are all frequent types of violence against women in India. The act must be performed purely because the victim is female in order for it to qualify as violence against women.

#### 6) Limited decision-making authority

The capacity of women to participate in household decision-making is influenced by a variety of circumstances. Some of these variables have to do with the decision-making process, while others are related to the women's backgrounds. In India, women are not allowed to make independent decisions regarding their own lives. For each and every issue, they must rely on the male members to make decisions. Even literate women with education are expected to be submissive.

#### 7) Political unfairness

One of the key elements in the empowering of women is their engagement in politics. In India, women make up roughly 50% of the population, while they make up less than 10% of the administrative workforce.

The low degree of understanding and participation of women in politics is due to a number of causes, including ignorance,

family responsibilities, social restrictions, and apathy in politics.

These are some of the most prevalent stereotypes of women in India today.

### 3. Indian Constitution Which Provides Equality to Woman

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of specific importance in this regard.

### 4. Education's Part in Women's Empowerment

The fundamental component of any society, state, or nation is the empowerment of women. In a child's everyday existence, a woman is the one who has the most influence. Women have a significant role in our culture. Using education to empower women can result in a shift in attitudes for the better. Therefore, it is essential for India's economic and political development. The Indian Constitution gives the state the authority to adopt positive actions that encourage women's emancipation. Women's lives are considerably improved by education.

Women's empowerment is a global problem, and many formal and unofficial movements around the world place a focus on women's political rights. In 1985, the worldwide women's summit in Nairobi popularized the idea of women's empowerment. The ability to adapt to difficulties, to challenge their established roles, and to transform their lives is what makes education a significant step in the empowerment of women.

The role of education in helping women to be empowered can be understood in the following points:

1. In order to easily live and acquire information through education, education must manumit the thinking, mind, thoughts, imagination, power, and principles in a variety of sectors.

2. Education removes barriers: Education ensures that women have equal rights in social, political, cultural, gender, and religious spheres. She will bring equality with males, which is why we should encourage both national and global integration.
3. Education gives people the ability to make choices based on their preferences, whether they are related to their lifestyle, life partner, employment, career, eating habits, sexual orientation, etc.
4. Education teaches students to discern between good and wrong. Education encourages students to maintain their independence.
5. Education Gains: Education will help women acquire protection against crime, social deviance, sexual harassment, marital rape, and other stressors.
6. Educated women support the economy. If a woman is able to support her family financially and is qualified to do so, she can improve the financial situation of the family as well as its formation.

### 5. Conclusion

For the residents of any country, education is seen as a fundamental right and a basic demand. It can enable people to become independent, making it an effective strategy for eliminating inequality. Women who experience discrimination in all areas need this in particular. Because it gives women the confidence to take on difficulties, question their old roles, and transforms their lives, education is viewed as a crucial step towards the empowerment of women. The most crucial instrument for changing women's status in society is education.

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