

FEMALE EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT: NEED FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Abstract

The economic development of a country depends upon the best recourse of its human resources with natural resources. Out of the two, human resources are important. Because, these are the living ones and with their skill, they can use the natural resources in the best manner. Thus, the development of human resources was also paid attention. Human resources include men, women, children, and the young and old people of the nation. But it is unfortunate to note that our society remained gender biased all through the history of mankind. The prime objective of the present study is to analyse the effectiveness of female education and skill development on economic development as well as societal development; to identify the various determinants of women's development and the study also highlights the of government's educational and skill development programmes for their empowerment and gender equality. This study is an assessment which are based on reviews of various literature, books, reports, articles and journals etc.

Keywords:

*Female Education; Skill Development;
Economic Growth; Gender Equality*

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I- Introduction:

“Man for the field and women for the hearth
Man for the sword and for the needle she
Man with the head and women with the heart
Men to command and women to obey
Or else confusion.”

- Lord Tennyson (as quoted by A. M. Sinha)

God created Adam and Eve as equals. But down the ages, women have been downtrodden and neglected to an inferior position in the social set-up. This is true not only of developing countries like India but of developed countries as well.

Women are almost half of the world’s population having enormous potential but being underutilised or unutilised for the economic development of the nation. Indian society has always been a male-dominated society and women have always been rated very low. Women for no reason have been denied their due in society at all. In all the religions and in all the sects of the society, women have always been less privileged, undervalued, low-placed and overworked in Indian society. Males do have a natural preference for their female counterparts and society has been sex-biased.

Through the ages, the women’s role in society has been constantly changing. In ancient times, when “Adam delved and Eve span” women were confined to the hearth and home, and in bearing and rearing children. However, they enjoyed a high status in society. In Vedic times Indian women were looked upon as “sahadharmini” and equal partners of men in all walks of life. Gradually, with the passage of time, the position of women began to decline in the society. Women came to be relegated to the background and treated as second-class citizens. Manu, the first codifier of Hindu law, wrote-”From the cradle to the grave, a woman is dependent on a male childhood on her father, in youth on her husband, and in old age, her son.” Their education suffered and they had very little role to play in the outside world.

But, after independence it was seriously taken into consideration by the national leaders and social reformers that if the situation persisted and the women were not included in the mainstream, the pace of economic development could not be achieved. In our country, women have almost equal numbers to their counterparts the men in the population. To join this large population in the process of economic development. The Constitution of India and other progressive laws of the land stressed on removal of disparities between males and females and have renewed many disabilities against women in Indian society. India was one of the first countries in the world to grant voting rights to women.

Despite of strong guarantee of the Indian Constitution and various measures gender inequality does exist in our nation. There are many reasons behind this discrimination for e.g., the muscle power of men; men being the earners of the bread of the family and women, by and large were illiterates in our country. Some other factors which are also responsible such as Human poverty are income, Illiteracy, Education, Employment, Knowledge of Food Intake, Nutrition and Health Hazards. Gradually, with the growth of modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation women began to come out of their house and work outside.

Table-1: Women Development Indicators

<p>Socio-Economic Indicators: - Income & Earnings; Employment, Labour Force Participation in different sectors, Agricultural Dominance, Work Participation Rate, HDI, GDI, GEI, Skilled Labour, Own Business/ Self Employed, Own land & Pucca House, Ownership of assets, Family support, Infrastructure Facilities such as road, transport etc.; Knowledge of loaning facilities and financial sectors like Banking, Postal and LICs, Microfinance, Self- help groups, MSMEs, DIC, Awareness of Government Development Schemes especially for females and girl child; Ability to take childbearing decisions, Freedom from gender-based domestic violence etc. Child labour and Domestic Chores; and Living Standard.</p>
<p>Educational Indicators: - Education and Literacy attainments: (Primary, secondary and Higher Education), Adult Education; Skill development and training, Nos. of Girls schools, Colleges or Higher Institutions: - Technical, Professional and Vocational Institutions etc.; Enrolment Ratio and Drop-out, School Environment; Curriculum; Proper separate facilities in school; Equal Treatment in in school & Domestic life, Relationship with spouse; Participation and Decision Making in Household Management;</p>
<p>Cultural Indicators: - Social Customs & Religious believes; Total Fertility Rate, Age at Marriage, Child Marriage; Dowry System; Female infanticides; Sex Selective Abortions etc. Post Puberty Practices, Gender Disparity.</p>
<p>Health Indicators: Maternal Literacy, Mortality Rate, Birth Rate and Death Rate, Life Expectancy, Family Planning; No. of Children, Good Health, Sufficient food; Nutrition /Balanced Diet, Health care and Sanitation Facilities etc.</p>
<p>Legal and Political Indicators: Knowledge of Political and Electoral system from local governance to National Governance, Right to Vote and Right to Choose, Political Empowerment, Social Justice and Freedom; Knowledge of Legal Rights and Women’s Rights, Land & Property Rights; Raise to voice against crime and harassment at home and work place etc.</p>

Source: Own analysis based on Review of Literature

II- Objectives and Methodology of the Study:

The prime objective of the present study is to analyse the effectiveness of female education and skill development on economic development as well as societal development; to identify the various determinants of women's development and study also highlights the of government's educational and skill development programmes for their empowerment and gender equality. This study is an assessment which are based on reviews of various literature, books, reports, articles and journals etc.

III- Literature Review

Economic development of a country depends upon best recourse of its human resources with natural resources. Out of the two, human resources are important. Because, these are the living one and with their skill, they can use the natural resources in best manner Thus, the development of human resources was also paid the attention Human resources includes men, women, the children, the young and old people of the nation. But it is unfortunate to note that our society remained gender biased all through the history of mankind. Education is a gateway to fuller participation of every one in social, cultural, political and economic life. Literacy has been long perceived and projected as the indicator of a nation's progress. In fact, it is an important criterion for determination of human development index. Spread and diffusion of literacy is generally association with essential traits of today's civilization such as modernization, urbanization, industrialization, communication and commerce (DAE, 2002). Higher levels of education and literacy lead to greater awareness and contribute to improve economic conditions.

According to Gunnar Myrdal, 'Advances in literacy and advances in economic development are interconnected'. They influence on each other must be mutual and cumulative. Studies shows on pattern of literacy and economic development show possible corelation between literacy and per capita income. Reddy has established the relationship between literacy and socio-economic demographic factors in his study. Reddy advocates in his study that Literacy and education improve the social standing of an individual and contribute to his well-being. There is evidence to suggest that the education helps in the achievement of good health and prevention of diseases. Reddy concluded that literacy is an essential to every woman in the society and finds that literacy can motivationally factor for strong Panchayati Raj System. Literacy also impacts on industrialisation, modernisation, urbanisation and productivity. Mukerji (1971) observed that the spatial patterns of literacy are directly

related to the regional variations in the socio-economic development.

The females were also provided second grade place from the nourishment and nutrition point in their diet. They were compelled to eat the residues of male members of the family. The residue which she took, generally was insufficient in quantity and had no concern with the nutrition. The story of differentiation started from the childhood among the boys and girls and last for the whole life. Saroj Saxena finds in her study that Food and nutrition have the important impact on human being with regards to diseases, health and human resource development. To achieve good health, the nourishment of the human body is the perquisition. No doubt, a society is a set of persons, but the development of the society rests upon the healthy persons. Therefore, it is also important that the people may get well-nourished food. To make the food useful and to achieve the good health, the diet taken by the people whether men and women should be containing essential nutrients in balanced amount. The nutrients are commonly categorised as. (i) Carbohydrates, (ii) Proteins, (iii) Fats, (iv) Vitamins, (v) Minerals, and (vi) Water.

In her study Dr. Sr. Rosa K.D. highlights the important role played by employment in empowering women in the family, with the help of the results of a sample study of employed women in various categories of employment. The power relation in family is a very important aspect from the point of view of empowerment of woman. An employed woman may be very powerful and efficient in an organization. But the situation at home may be different. She said that the empowerment achieved through employment is analysed through eight elements of empowerment such as self-esteem, importance in the family, role in deciding the number of children, decision making in family matters, role of employment in keeping up individuality, increase in self-dependence and family income, and in securing the respect of husband and in-laws. In addition, greater literacy and basic education help people to understand their needs and demand services.

Table 2: Government's Programmes for Women Development

<p>Socio-Economic: ICDS, Kishori Balika Yojna, Balika Samridhi Yojna; PM Rojgar Protsahan Yojna(PMRPY); Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojna; P.M.Kaushal Vikas Yojna; PM Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan (PMGKRA); Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojna (DDU-GKY); Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs); Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA); PM Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP); Skill India Mission; Ujjawala Yojna; Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojna; PM Matra Vandana Yojna; Local to Vocal Yojna; PM Mudra Yojna (PMMY); PM Street Vendors Atma Nirbhar Nidhi Scheme (PMSVA Nidhi); PM Avas Yojna; Microfinance facilities to set up an enterprises;</p>
<p>Educational and Skill Development: National Literacy Mission 1988; Early Child Care Education Centre, National Programmer on Education for Girls at Elementary Level, Kishori Balika Yojna, Beti Padhao Beti Bachao; Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBY); Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan; Special Scholarship; School Chalo Abhiyan; PM Sri School Yojna; Mid-Day Meal, RTE, Compulsory and Free Education, Free Books, School Bags and dresses etc. and many more schemes are running, Scholarship, Open School System like NIOS, Different types of aids, Scholarships & Fellowships for every group or sections of the students, Mob./Tablet distribution for digital empowerment, Ministry of skill development and Entrepreneurship, NSDC M/o Labour and Employment, Vocational Training Programmes, Creches, Condensed Courses for Women, Short-stay homes for Women through Social Welfare Board, SHGs, Make in India, Mudra Loan, MSME, M/o Textiles, Health, Rural Development, and MHRD initiate EDP Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojna etc. Local to Vocal, National Skill Mission, Uddan, etc. for making Atam Nirbhar Bharat</p>
<p>Health: Janni Suraksha Yojna; Ayushman Health Card; National Health Mission; Har Ghar Nal Jal Yojna for safe drinking water etc.</p>
<p>Legal and Political: Constitutional Rights and Remedies; Hostel for Working Women, Women's Helpline Family Counseling Centres, Equal rights, cultural freedom and opportunities in political, economic and social spheres, Maternity benefits, Medical terminancy of Pregnancy Act, Equal pay for equal work, Protection for Human Rights, Dowry Prohibition Act; Age at Marriage; Mahila Thana; Rights to Property; Rights to Education; Rights to Vote; Mahila Help Line; Dial 1090; Matra Shakti Vandana for Reservation in Parliament etc.</p>

Source: Own activity based on Review of Literature

V- Concluding Remarks:

The study shows that education has been found to have a direct and positive impact not only on raising the status of women but the socio-economic development of the country also. Female Education acts as a catalyst for their socio-economic upliftment and the women's development of the society indicates the socio-economic development of the country. Literacy or education among females enhances their knowledge and awareness about environmental degradation, health, nutrition and hygiene, family planning, childbirth and child care, depresses fertility or population control etc. Female education plays a significant role in giving them strength and empowerment which allows them to lead a dignified life with equality of their male counterparts.

An educated and skilled female workforce is a critical component of the new emphasis on labor markets and their performance. The talent shortages are clearly a problem and it deserves special attention. The skill development has such a lot of potential in terms of employment generation. Skill development among females has a key role in both economic growth, social progress and individual incomes and access to jobs. Skill development or training promotes them to migrate to cities in search of new jobs and some gainful employment as well as open new avenues for entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Ultimately says that the progress of a family, society, community and country can be measured by the progress of the women of that society or country. We may recall Subramanya Bharti's stirring call- "The realm of knowledge we shall explore, we shall not lag behind men, Knowledge shall be ours as well, We shall join in the making of the laws, We shall grow food for the world, We shall beget Gods for the world." (as quoted by A.M. Sinha)

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