

Role of Education in Women Empowerment

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"... a forward-looking education system is needed... that removes preconceived gender roles or bias"

- Charmaine Hogan

Yes, education and literacy empowers women. The only way a society or nation can move forward, and aspire to economic growth and development is not just through education- but especially education among the women citizens.

There are several reasons for this. Let's look at them one by one :

Education liberates : Education liberates the mind. Whether you're studying the sciences, history, literature, languages or social sciences, you are gaining knowledge. You are educating yourself about the world, about how nature, people and nations work. Books which educate open up our minds to places, people and possibilities we'd never have thought of otherwise. Therefore, an educated woman will also be a liberated woman.

Education breaks down barriers : Education enables us to break down all barriers- religious, linguistic, cultural, political, gender and geographical. An educated woman will not discriminate others on the basis of these barriers- she will treat everyone the same, and work with them. She might also chose a husband neglecting such barriers, and can bring families from different backgrounds together. This can form a nice way of fostering both national and international integration.

Education allows the privilege of choice : As education opens up new worlds to women, it will enable them to make their own choices, in everything- whether it be lifestyle, career, life-partner, sexuality, food etc. Education will teach them to discriminate between wrong and right, and make the correct choices in life. Plus it will also teach them to be independent, make their own choices and not bow down to anyone, or society's asinine norms.

Education mobilizes : Education will galvanize women into fighting against the social evils which still plague Indian society. An intellectually enlightened woman will actively fight against dowry, bride-burning, marital rape, rape in general, molestation and sexual harassment, and objectification of women. She will also fight misogyny and patriarchy. Look at the widespread protests after the December 2012 Delhi gang-rape. Most women who protested were young and educated.

Education fosters independence : Most young, educated women of today are coming into their own being. They know about their autonomy over their lives- they no longer bow down to moronic societal diktats. They live life on their own terms. They live how they want to, they date who they like, they also chose their life-partners and just about everything else.

Education helps choose a career and gets financial independence : This is an extension of my previous point. Education, today, is enabling women to go beyond professions considered traditionally good for them- like medicine, nursing, teaching, librarian etc. Today, women are becoming models, actors, fighter pilots, gym instructors, cops, writers, engineers, architects, journalists, scientists, corporate, law, filmmaking and whatnot- they are breaking the glass ceiling. Today's intellectually liberated and emancipated woman is also earning her own keep. Now she doesn't have to depend on a man to give her a house, food, clothing and shelter. She can earn her own

keep, and buy her own house and feed herself. Today, women are leading good lives sans men- they are no longer forced to play second fiddle to males who treat them, in many cases, like doormats.

Educated women contributes to economy : Imagine a nation where women are qualified and are able to get jobs. The contribution to the workforce will enhance the output, and therefore, the economy will develop. And I'm not just talking about industries and corporations, but also about healthcare, the education sector itself, arts, science, literature etc. This will contribute greatly to the advancement of any society, both culturally and economically, and also help its human development indicators. Women can help, through their work, get rid of problems like India's high maternal mortality rate, high rates of gender violence and other crimes against women, child sex abuse, female feticide, implement family planning and other schemes etc.

Apart from these seven reasons listed above, there is a much deeper reason that women must be educated, and they must be encouraged to learn as much as they want. Paraphrasing a popular saying here – educate a man and you will educate one person, educate a woman and you will educate a whole family. I would add that educating a woman can, in fact, educate more generations.

A highly educated, liberal-minded, independent and professionally successful and sensible woman will choose an educated husband. Then she will also educate her kids, and make them into wise, responsible citizens, who will push forward their kids, and so on. Only a society that educates, empowers and respects its women can become an advanced society. Education is a woman's birthright- and her parents and society better start acknowledging that

Women empowerment through education

Women empowerment is the pivotal part in any society, state or country. It is a woman who plays a dominant role in the basic life of a child. Women are an important section of our society. Education as means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. It is therefore, crucial for the socioeconomic and political progress of India. The Constitution of India empowers the state to adopt affirmative measures for prompting ways and means to empower women. Education significantly makes difference in the lives of women.³ Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women 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 NAROI in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment. To see the development in women education India is supposed to upcoming super power of the world in recent years. The increasing change in women education, the empowerment of women has been recognised as the central issue in determining the status of women. For becoming super power we have mostly to concentrate upon the women's education. By which it will force on women's empowerment. As per United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) the term women's empowerment means:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed.
- Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.
- Gaining the ability to generate choices exercise bargaining power.
- Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multi level construct referring to individuals, organizations and community. It is an international, ongoing process centred in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to the control over these resources.

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