

# Impact of Education on Economic Empowerment of Women: A Comparative Analysis (1964-2016)

## Abstract

Lack of education is one of the strongest factors for poverty among women which is the most debilitating form of social violence. For the millions of boys and girls who are denied access to school or who drop out of school in search of livelihood for themselves and their deprived families thereby, being denied the capacity to read or write, turnout to be less productive compared to those who are accomplished. Inadequate education affects the ability to find remunerative employment and become substantially productive if the person is self-employed.

**Keywords:** Education, Economic Empowerment, Patriarchal Structure.

## Introduction

Women are passive and powerless victims of patriarchal structure of society. Constant subordination of women in almost every sphere of life has led to the emergence of gender studies globally. This had created awareness about women's rights and opportunities and the importance of women empowerment there by creating a suitable base for development of the marginalised segments of our society. Adam Smith, the Father of Economics has highlighted efficiency of women in dealing with members of the family or society through education which men seldom do. Similarly, Harriet Taylor Mill reflects the reason why women have been considered as a "mere appendage to a man" and that is because "men like it that way". The analysis shows that women accept their role in accordance to the wishes of the man who is the master or the bread earner of the household.

## Education and Economic Empowerment

Meron Zenaselase Rata (2016), Female poverty is not only resulting of lack of income or livelihood but also the consequence of deprivation of capabilities opportunities and gender bias. The study by Rata show in Ethiopia women belonging to female headed household suffer from acute poverty social discrimination, cultural differences and suppression of dignity and human work. This paper uses the Tobit model to explore the possible determination of women economic empowerment and livelihood choice by using an overt test. It recommends that economic empowerment of rural women of Woreda, Ethiopia could improve by removing negative factors such as choice of livelihood like farming, trade and daily labour, which would finally reduce the poverty level.

Kiffy, Josef F (2016) has emphasized the investment in women as an initiative towards gender equality and promotion of women leadership. He further establishes from various case studies that "When women are at the table the discussion is richer, the decision making process is better, the management is more innovative and collaborative and the organization is stronger".

Vanajamma, K.H., Raju, G. and Sathyanarayana, G. (2014) Socio-Economic Dimensions of Rural Women this study is significant as it focuses on the socio economic conditions of rural women who hardly have the basic means for survival. They belong to the extreme backward and drought prone area of Anantapuramu in Andhra Pradesh. Women live here with the barest of amenities sans empowerment.

Bhat, Zameer Ahmed (2014) this article based on secondary data especially 2011 census study analyses the socio-economic issues of women in India. It gives importance to education, training for increasing capacity for gainful economic participation of women in India. It gives a rural urban comparison and discussing the socio economic issues of women primarily empowerment.

Batra, Bikash (2013) in the article "Man and Development" has assessed the effectiveness of programs on social and economic



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empowerment of women in their personal and household levels. The decision making capacity, skills and confidence of the 90 SHG members in the three districts of Haryana was unsatisfactory as they claimed no or joint control over the loans and earned income when they are illiterate or less educated. Level of education is a significant factor in empowering women which was established by the econometric analysis. The economic significance of education however has been ignored which creates a gap in assessing empowerment of women adequately.

Navaira and Zunigo (2012) in the Soroptimist have described women's economic empowerment as the single most important factor that helps achieving gender equality. At its core it is human rights and social justice issue. Women's economic empowerment specifically refers to women's power over their own finance and financial well being and moreover to have a voice in the financial decision making. Women's economic empowerment has numerous public policy benefits as well, such as enhancement of human development and reduced effects of violence (SIDA 2009). In order to achieve women's economic empowerment structural gender inequalities in the form of values, norms, and practices including access to and opportunity for formal education result in unequal division of power and economic resources between men and women.

Hilbert (2011) recognizes and indicates a gender divide that exists in use of digital device in the society. Women's access to and use of digital information and communication technology in developing countries shows a clear digital gender divide. Fewer women access ICT due to unfavourable conditions relating to education, employment and income. If these variables can be controlled in developing economies (the paper analyses data set from 12 Latin American and 13 African countries from 2005-08). Women can become more active in digital tools than men. This would give an opportunity to tackle challenges of gender inequality in developing countries including access to income, employment and health facilities.

Matsushita, Siddique and Giles (2006) have used data from 1969 to 2003 to study the contribution of education to economic growth measured in terms of per capita Real Domestic Product in Australia. Their findings show that an increase in higher education enrolments of 1% will increase the real GDP per capita by 0.041%. Studies conducted by other researchers like NallaGounden (1967) used the rate of return approach to estimate that about 7% of the growth of income in India was accounted for by education.

Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) and Alsop et al (2006) provide a conceptual framework for women's economic empowerment in which they identify agency and opportunity structure and assets for achieving economic empowerment, where agency influences empowerment outcome i.e. determined by opportunity structure and assets which further influences agency. The monitoring mechanisms adopted in this case are

focus group discussions and analysis of indicators at the household and local level.

Modi, K.R. (2005), in his article 'Education Girls has Higher Returns' analyses the situation of developing countries to lack behind in education their girls despite the fact that returns are highest from girls' education in terms of income, productivity and social well-being of the family and community. He further discusses that every additional year of schooling reduces the IMR and MMR by almost 5-10%. Modi thereby co-relates lack of education to low health awareness and social development especially of women. The necessity of government policies executed diligently would be the only answer.

White (2004), The study comes as a 'reality check' to assess the success of the affirmative action approach for women. It analyses the role of women in their personal lives and their public lives.

According to Stacki, Sandra, (2002), 'Women teachers empowered in India: Teacher training through a gender lens', has argued that for the women teachers to be the true role models and to pass on the values of gender equity to girls and boys, they need to facilitate their own empowerment in both their private and public lives.

Klasen, Stephan (2002) in his article in the World Bank economic review investigates how gender inequality in education affects long term economic growth by lowering the average human capital. He has studied East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, midlist to show that gender in equality affects investment and population growth. He also a gender gap in education lead to differences in annual per-capita growth rate from 0.4-0.9% points.

Ilhan, Ozturk (2001) in his article gives an analytical prospective of the relationship between education and economic development. It links education with creation of skilled human capital that leads to increased productivity. It has investigated that detourment of income distribution in 36 countries found that secondary enrolment rate to be significant (Bourguignon, 1995). The article further highlights the global prospective of education in variable improving trade and quality of human capital.

Kingdon, Geeta Gandhi (1999) in the article, 'Education of women and socio economic development' describes two main reasons for reducing gender imbalances in education. One being the intrinsic (equity reason) and the other being the instrumental (social economic efficiency reason) based on Baha'i Teachings.

Bridsall, Ross and Sabot (1997) in their article on School Enrolment as a measure of human capital stock investigated the impact of Gender difference in education and suggested that increasing girls primary school enrolment is equally effective in stimulating development as primary enrolment of boys.

Tiwari, K (1997), says in his research work titled 'Structural change and status of women' that during the 19th century, it was not a commonly accepted idea that women should go out to earn for the family, but gradually such restriction loosened

because of increasing economic pressures and increase in the cost of living.

Amarnath R. and Ch., Umamohan (1996) conducted a study on '*Gender and Work*' have described the consequences of middle-class women taking up economically productive roles. The study examines whether the gender bias of men has undergone some change in the recent past.

Hill, M. Annie and King, Elizabeth M (1995) in their paper Women's education and economic well-being analyse the cost-benefit aspects of educating women. Women attain lower levels of education compared to men. The rate of return on education is equal for both men and women at the margin. This research has addressed the benefits of educating girls and women in terms of social and economic well being.

According to UNICEF 60% out of 130 million children aged 6 to 11 years who are not in school throughout the world are girls. It is seen that in the Caribbean region the school performance of boys is below that of girls: this clearly indicates reverse gender inequality. In case of Latin American countries it was studied that children from the indigenous population are less likely to enter school and retain schooling or even perform well academically than the rest of the population.

Browne Angela W. and Barrett Hazel R (1991) in the case study of '*Female education in Sub Saharan Africa: The Key to development*' assumed that a nation's people are its most important assets for the achievement of development. The Sub Saharan Africa has the poorest record of human development indicators with low life expectancy, highest infant mortality and highest levels of illiteracy (World Bank 1990). This paper shows that female education potentially has a double role: it promotes various areas of human development and also contributes both directly and indirectly to economic advancement of poor countries. The case study of Gambia confirms that education of women and economic development are interconnected. Educated women have improved negotiating ability with govt. and other officials. Literacy amongst women also raises the agricultural productivity in the poorer countries.

The study by Vianello, Mino and Siemienka Renata (1990), '*Gender Inequality: A comparative study of discrimination and participation*' showed that a husband's power within marriage tended to increase in proportion to the resources that he could muster viz. education, income, prestige, social status and so on. They also found that the husband's power was associated with the stage in the life cycle and with the presence of children in the home. More importantly, wives who worked for pay had more power than wives not gainfully employed.

Vashist B.K. and Rana, R.K., (1988) conducted the study taking 204 samples to determine the relative influence of women education on fertility female earnings and per-capita family income using linear regression equations for working and nonworking women. The major findings of the study review that education is a significant determinate of fertility of both working and nonworking

women due to higher opportunity cost of time devoted to child bearing and child rearing. He also stress upon that women education improves prospects of female labour market participation that contributes to increase in per-capita family.

Gupta R and Gupta BK (1987) in their article '*Role of women in economic development*' revealed that the women's contribution was generally found more in two fields-household activities and in agricultural labour. It was an indirect contribution of economic activity in the society that has not been counted since time immemorial. The study conducted by Gopalan. S (1987) titled '*Why are Women Lagging Behind*' highlighted that the evidence of women's work apart from their low paid work is that they have to spend almost 10 to 12 hours per day on household chores, cooking, child care etc besides their contribution to agricultural production animal husbandry and other related activities of the household for which the economic work of their labour is not valued.

Psacharopolous (1972) has measured the marginal contribution of every level of education to economic growth in the state of Hawaii. Using Denison's growth accounting equation he found that the contribution to economic growth increases with improvement in the quality of labour. The quality of labour improves significantly with secondary and higher levels of education. The findings corroborate with those of Schultz model (1962) that have produced similar results.

Denison (1964) has conducted a brilliant work where the components of economic growth were listed and the contribution of each component was measured in USA during the period 1929-1957. The different components identified were increased employment, Education, capital input, advanced knowledge and economies of scale in economic growth. The contribution of education to economic growth was calculated in three different time periods: 1909-1929, 1929-1957 and 1960-1980 by applying the wage differentials in different levels of education. The contribution of education alone to economic growth was calculated to be 12%, 23% and 10% respectively. The author also used the Alpha coefficient to calculate the contribution of education to labour productivity per worker as 10.9%, 30.3%, 19% respectively for the same period as above.

### **Conclusion**

Most of the literature, journal and books reviewed have emphasised on multiple factors that bring about empowerment amongst women, few studies show the impact education has on gender disparity from the rural urban perspective. There lies a tremendous need for empowering women in India and all over the world. The dynamic role of education in empowering women has received consistent weight age by all theorists, researchers and economists as well as social scientists. Education of women suffers from various constraints and inadequacies and to empower them both in rural as well as urban areas is necessary. Education is undoubtedly a crucial tool for economic well being of women. Since empowerment is a complex interaction among several aspects of an

individual's existence and the choices she makes given the opportunities and resources at her disposal it becomes imperative to make a 360 degree holistic analysis of the impact education has on achievement of empowerment of women.

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