

Vol 5 Issue 10 Nov 2015

ISSN No : 2230-7850

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International Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal

*Indian Streams  
Research Journal*

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**RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595**

**ISSN No.2230-7850**

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**GALAXY OF WOMEN EDUCATION, SKILL DEVELOPMENT  
AND INDIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH**



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**ABSTRACT:**

**W**oman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity"-  
**Mahatma Gandhi.**

The role of education in development of the economy is well established. Access, equity, women participation and empowerment have been an issue of deliberations all around the world. Higher education provided to women would mean independence in decision making and economic independence. The objective of the study is to highlight the trend of women enrolment in different faculties of higher education and understand its contribution towards women empowerment. Education is the key yardstick by which the growth and development of a country can be delineated and as such it has occupied an honored place in the society. None can deny that in the life of an individual as well as society education has a vital role. In the case of individual education helps to discipline the mind, sharpens the intellect and refines the spirit. Education is the nourishment of the mind with knowledge and as such it helps in the formation of an integrated personality of an individual.



Education has a special significance in the context of a quasi-traditional or transitional society like India. In this paper we the researcher try to delineate the present picture of higher education in India and women participation in it. In this paper we shall try to delineate the picture of women participation in higher education in India and also try to define the role of women in economic growth. We shall also mention the necessity and factors responsible for women participation in higher education. Finally effort will be made to give some suggestions which can accelerate women participation in higher education in India.

**KEY WORDS:** Women Education, Skill Development, Economic Growth.

**INTRODUCTION**

The need for women's empowerment arises from the subordinate position they have been accorded for a long time. Empowerment of women needs to begin with her participation in different spheres of life. Education is a great determinant in this regard. To achieve empowerment, women have to be educated to be aware of their rights and privileges in a modern

society. It is education which can bring about awareness in them related to their social status, injustice and differentiation meted out to them. Besides, economic independence is a major factor which can contribute in women empowerment. Women have always been contributing to enable the economy achieve tremendous progress. But it is the gender bias that still exists at every social stratum, even in the most educated and developed society, is unable to digest this visible contribution of women in all walks of life. In some regions, patriarchal societies diminish the role of women in important matters. This masochist thinking is, however, beginning to fade gradually with the passage of time. Women in rural India, despite suffering from the problems like health, malnutrition, repeated childbearing, and lack of education, engage themselves in direct and allied agricultural activities, run small shops, sell by-products or handcraft products and thus generate additional income for the family. A government of India study shows that more than 40 per cent of rural women directly or indirectly contribute to the uplift of their families and thereby bringing social change. Harriet Beecher Stowe rightly said, “Women are the real architects of society”.

In urban India, the lowest strata, women despite the lack of education and facing problems like shelter, have been catering to social changes and economic development by contributing as a substantial labour force in various industries like construction of residential & commercial buildings, roads, water bodies, engaging in various domestic and community services. Every now and then, we read in newspapers that a would-be bride refuses to marry a particular groom due to his demand for dowry or for the urge of higher education. Gone are the days when women were considered only the household entities commanded by males.

The contribution of women is omnipresent and all-pervasive in every sphere of life as India seeks to march steadily towards the path of growth. All these become possible only with the active participation of women who are the catalysts of qualitative growth of future generation as well. Efforts during the post-Independence era got a shot in the arm when Mrs. Indira Gandhi became the first lady Prime Minister. Women got empowered and moved to participate further in all spheres of services – financial, administrative, judicial and education to name a few. Women in India are playing an important role in the country’s governance. Many women have emerged as exemplary leaders at the policy level as well as the community level. The presence of women in various decision making bodies helped develop the confidence among other women, opening up possibilities for future.

It is important to note the critical role women have played in working together to forge solidarity, and unity among themselves. Together they have been able to lobby and influence the enactment of laws that protect and promote the rights of women. Women became a driving force of the socio-economic development of the country after the independence. Vast networks of women groups such as NGOs, associations and co-operatives at the grassroots level have played a pivotal role in providing empowerment initiatives which resulted in socio-economic development and income generating activities. This, in turn, paved the way for sustainable development and economic growth of the country.

**Objectives of the study:**

1. To find out the growth of Women’s participation in Higher Education.
2. To analyse the role of Women in Economic Growth of India.
3. To establish the positive relationship between Higher Education, Skill Development and Economic Growth.
4. To suggest some remedial measures to tackle the problem involved in Higher Education particularly for Women in Indian context.



**Research Methodology:**

The information collected in this paper is based on the secondary data by using internet, websites, magazines, books and journals and gives a qualitative approach towards this research framework.

**Hypothesis:**

1. Women participation in higher education leads to economic growth of the country.
2. Education, skill development and Economic Growth are interlinked together.
3. Women can play a positive role with the help of parameters like Education, Skill Development and Economic Growth.

**Key Concepts:** Women Education, Skill Development, Economic Growth.

**Historical Prospective:**

After independence women's education, especially higher education, took off. Education started playing a great role in the liberation of women from traditional dependencies. Women became more vocal, articulate and assertive. Our constitution granted equal rights to women and that included the Right to education. Jawahar Lal Nehru said, "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women." He understood that higher education for women was the need of the hour.

In 1950-51 there were nine women per hundred men pursuing higher education. In 1984-85 the situation improved to 28 women per hundred men. The National Policy of 1968 marked a significant step in the history of education in Post-Independence India. It aimed to promote national progress, a sense of common citizenship and culture, and to strengthen national integration. It was acknowledged that the growth of our population needed to be brought down significantly over the coming decades. The largest single factor that could help achieve this was the spread of literacy and education among women. This Policy laid special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity for men and women.

Historically women have participated in all spheres of life with courage and gusto. Indian Higher Education system is no exception. Indian mythology is rich with stories of highly educated and evolved women. So much so that our deity of learning is also a woman. One can trace the historical evidence of ancient Indian Education to the 3rd century BC. Those days education was imparted orally and many women scholars participated in this. When Buddhism spread to India, some world famous educational institutions such as Nalanda, Vikramshila and Takshila were established.

After independence women's education, especially higher education, took off. Education started playing a great role in the emancipation of women from traditional dependencies. Women became more vocal, articulate and assertive. Our constitution granted equal rights to women and that included the Right to education. Jawahar Lal Nehru said, "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women." He understood that higher education for women was the need of the hour. Education was to be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there was a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System played (and continues to play) a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It fostered the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. This was to be an act of faith and social engineering. Women's studies were promoted and educational institutions were encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development. The system worked vigorously to eliminate sex stereo-typing in

vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non- traditional occupations, as well as in existing and emergent technologies.

Today Indian women's participation in higher education is quite high and growing. This is due to high job aspirations and parental support. However, most women still attend local universities as their parents want them to stay at home and study. A lot depends upon their social class, and parental educational status. Today 53.5% of young women below 30 have University degrees. These times in India are the kind of times when everything seems within reach, anything is possible with hard work and determination. The achievements of women during these times are so significant that that they have altered the gender landscape of schools, colleges, offices, courts, police stations, hospitals, hotels and business establishments. Women are everywhere making their mark in every field. This revolution has been brought about surprisingly, without there being an organized women's movement in the country. Women have begun to take the possibilities for their careers for granted. The faith reposed by parents in their daughters and giving them the freedom is indicative of how the times have changed!

As women receive greater education and training, they will earn more money. As women earn more money, they will spend it in the further education and health of their children. As women rise in economic status, they will gain greater social standing in the household, and will have greater voice. As women gain influence, they will make stronger claims to their entitlements - gaining further training, and better access to higher incomes. As women's economic power grows, it will be easier to overcome the tradition of "son preference" and thus put an end to the evil of dowry. As son preference declines, families will be more likely to educate their daughters, and age of marriage will rise.

**Present scenario:**

Women have a much lower literacy rate than men. Far fewer girls are enrolled in the schools, and many of them drop out. In the patriarchal setting of the Indian family, girls have lower status and fewer privileges than boy children. [Conservative cultural attitudes prevents some girls from attending school.

The number of literate women among the female population of India was between 2–6% from the British Raj onwards to the formation of the Republic of India in 1947. Concerted efforts led to improvement from 15.3% in 1961 to 28.5% in 1981. By 2001 literacy for women had exceeded 50% of the overall female population, though these statistics were still very low compared to world standards and even male literacy within India.

❖ Each individual is born unique in all his/her human characteristics. Therefore, equality and inequality, only when properly comprehended, are both engines of liberty. One should analyse and respond with the right action to the present situation of gender differences in all areas of the higher education institution. Academic women are most commonly found on the faculties of junior colleges, liberal arts colleges and the like rather than at high prestige universities. Women faculty members tend to cluster in a few fields of study - education, home economics, the health professions library science etc. Predictably, women professors are extremely rare in those fields which our society has sex-typed as male, such as law and engineering.

❖ Through increase in women representations in decision making bodies of higher educational institutions we can promote them to that level to an extent. One development of interest is the share of women parliamentarians to 10.96% in 2011. The share of women in the person days employed through MGNREGA stood at 51.0% in 2012-13 (all districts with rural areas).

❖ A total of 20.5% women were employed in the organized sector in 2011 with 18.1% working in the public sector and 24.3% in the private. ( Women and Men in India 2013-15th Issue- Central Statistics

## GALAXY OF WOMEN EDUCATION, SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND INDIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Office ,National Statistical Organisation, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation ,Government of India ). Statistics show that women are getting empowered today and the belief of dependency has reduced over the years. This will have a positive effect in the economic development of the country.

❖ Make skill-oriented higher education. Institutions of higher education must help all students develop a new image of women as human beings, capable of substantial contributions to the academic, scientific, and political world around them.

### Education as a way to Skill development:

The objective of Skill Development is to create a workforce empowered with the necessary and continuously upgraded skills, knowledge and internationally recognized qualifications to gain access to decent employment and ensure India's competitiveness in the dynamic global market. It aims at increasing the productivity and employability of workforce (wage and self-employed) both in the organized and the unorganized sectors. It seeks increased participation of youth, women, disabled and other disadvantaged sections and to synergize efforts of various sectors and reform the present system with the enhanced capability to adapt to changing technologies and labour market demands.

Skills development can help build a "virtuous circle" in which the quality and relevance of education and training for women and men fuels the innovation, investment, technological change, enterprise development, economic diversification and competitiveness that economies need to accelerate the creation of more jobs.

### Higher Education Today: The Challenges:

Five issues are of particular significance:

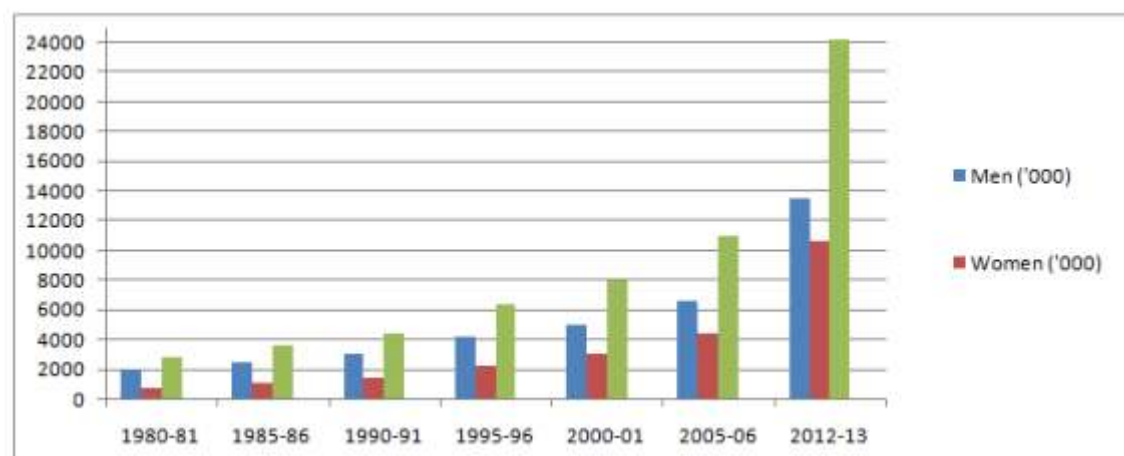
- ❖ The continued demand for access which has doubled and even tripled in some countries, necessitating a shift from elite to mass higher education.
- ❖ The continued reduction of financial resources and growing accountability measures imposed by governments.
- ❖ The maintenance of quality and relevance and the measures required for their assessment. This problem will grow since student numbers could reach 120 million by the year 2050.
- ❖ The ongoing problem of graduate employment which is forcing a reassessment of academic degrees and diplomas.
- ❖ The growing reality of internationalization in higher education teaching, training and research which deals with the mobility of both people and knowledge.

### Men & Women student growth in higher education from 1980-1981 to 2012-2013:

Year	Men ('000)	Women ('000)	Total Enrolment ('000)	Women as percent of all Students
1980-81	2003	749	2752	27.20
1985-86	2512	1059	3571	29.60
1990-91	2986	1439	4425	32.50
1995-96	4235	2191	6426	34.10
2000-01	4988	3012	8001	37.60
2005-06	6562	4466	11028	40.50
2012-13	13468	10687	24180	44.20

Source: Enrolment of women in higher education (Selected Educational Statistics 2005-06; University Grants Commission, Annual Report of various years). \*Statistical Report

registrar.uoregon.edu/statistics/reports.



Source: Enrolment of women in higher education (Selected Educational Statistics 2005–06; University Grants Commission, Annual Report of various years). \*Statistical Report-registrar.uoregon.edu/statistics/reports.

#### Remedial Measures in order to tackle the problem of women in Higher Education:

Education policy has to be taken in the right form and kind to facilitate women participation in higher education in order to reduce the inequality in the gender gap prevalent in our country. It is found that there exist varying quality standards of education provided in institutes with low level of accreditation. This may be a hindrance to tapping the quality of the skill portrayed by the potential in our economy. On analysis the following are some of the measures that can be viewed in order to reduce the gender inequality gap and promote economic growth.

- ❖ Introduce attractive scholarships for both financially poor students and meritorious students to encourage women students in higher education.
- ❖ Provide counseling for both family and person concerned at the secondary stage of education.
- ❖ Make skill-oriented higher education.
- ❖ Establish non-traditional curricular for women and extend state support for this.
- ❖ Improve transport facilities for women students.
- ❖ Education policy has to be taken to facilitate women participation in higher education.
- ❖ Establish more female educational institutions.
- ❖ Provide Bank loan facilities for women students.
- ❖ Establish higher educational institutions in rural and tribal areas.
- ❖ Check sexual harassment within and outside institutions.
- ❖ Increase women teachers in co-educational institutions of higher education.
- ❖ Increase women representations in decision making bodies of higher educational institutions.
- ❖ Establish equal opportunity commissions for higher educational institutions.

#### CONCLUSION:

The Education of Women in India plays a significant role in improving living standards in the country. A higher women literacy rate improves the quality of life both at home and outside the home, by encouraging and promoting education of children, especially female children, and in reducing the

infant mortality rate. Several studies have shown that a lower level of women literacy rates results in higher levels of fertility and infant mortality, poorer nutrition, lower earning potential and the lack of an ability to make decisions within a household. Women's lower educational levels are also shown to adversely affect the health and living conditions of children. A survey that was conducted in India showed results which support the fact that infant mortality rate was inversely related to female literacy rate and educational level. Thus the present study suggests a positive relationship between education and economic growth particularly in the context of Indian Women.

Education is widely recognized as the gateway to economic security and opportunity particularly for girls and women. There is little denying in the fact that investing in human capital is one of the most effective means of reducing poverty and encouraging sustainable development. The foremost factor limits female education due to the existence of poverty at large. An educated woman has the skills, the self-confidence and the information she needs to become a better parent, worker and citizen. One of the most significant worldwide transformations in education over the past several decades has been the drastic increase in women's access to colleges and universities. It must be admitted that Women are in no way inferior to men. They have all the power and capacity as that of men but they fail to manifest themselves amongst different opportunities.

Social and economic scenario of India has undergone a huge change, and so has the status of women. The women of today have made significant contributions in several fields. They have broken the prejudice that women are a homemaker and that they cannot compete with men. Along with being homemakers, women have also become great achievers in the outside world

Women have made their presence felt in all fields be it Business, Education, Fashion, Entertainment, Finance, Information Technology. Earlier it was said that if a woman is working she is just fit to do administrative or lower management jobs. But women have proved them wrong and they have been successful leaders and mentors. The sharp mind and sympathetic nature of women has helped them achieve success in the business world. They successfully overcome any challenge posed their way.

Thus we can conclude that there is always a positive relationship between women education, skill development and the economic growth.

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