

# **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper shines a spotlight on the ways women empowerment affects India's evolving transition towards an economy fueled by the value created by knowledge instead of traditional means of production. The higher education policy affects and is quite interconnected with women empowerment. As the saying goes "Education in Emancipation". The government plays an instrumental role, and this paper aims to illuminate some avenues that policymakers can take which will prove to be useful towards guiding and nurturing women who are pursuing higher education, and then utilizing the value that is created by them in the national interest.

**KEYWORDS:** Women Empowerment, Education Policy, Knowledge Economy.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The world is changing, and we are now in uncharted waters, where for the first time in our species history, knowledge is now the primary generator of value for a nation. This interconnected global village we live in now, is communally realizing the worth and the untapped potential their populace has. The new knowledge economy brings with itself, both perils and pleasures. Its own survive or thrive mentality, and a new planet-wide appetite for being the one at the top of this new market. This is attained by attending to various ailments that prohibit a society to be more knowledge-drive, and excising them out. One of the most critical cog in all of this processes, is a renewed focus on higher education as the key that unlocks the gifts its inhabitants can bestow upon themselves.

While we should, as a country, stop and smell the roses, and pat ourselves on our back for having progressed at a breakneck pace, on the issue of our optimum utilization of human capital contained within us, we also have to remember that we have to continually strive to be better every day. We have to create a society that has the capabilities, and the drive to excel, and that could avail and access every opportunity provided by the governments. Such an economy can be characterized by skilled manpower, a democratic system of government, big population speaking English, stability at macroeconomic level, dynamic and ever growing private sector, the largest middle class market of the world and a rich cultural foundation that fosters a priceless wealth of ideas coupled with diversified science & technology infrastructure and global landmarks

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in terms of information technology. However, in order for this to materialize, governments need to invest heavily and with purpose, to improve the lot of women in our midst. Women empowerment is such an essential component of human resource development that without it, that field would be cut in half. Unless women are encourage from everyone, the society, government, institutions, and citizenry of the country, which country will never thrive in the world at large. Women should not be alienated from the decision making process as has been the case for centuries, but rather be provided a more inclusive platform to air their opinions, and have their voices heard.

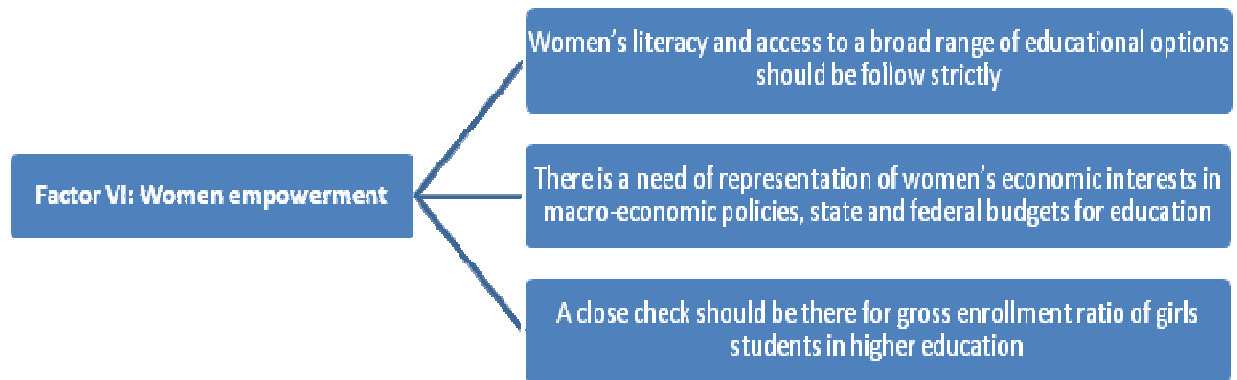
## **FINDINGS**

This is a conceptual paper that draws upon previous work done by the scholar, and shines a spotlight on an area that merited further attention. The work has been published in a peer-reviewed journal prior to this publication. The paper in question has been titled "Role of Education policy in emerging Knowledge Economy". The paper reflects on the vital importance that a government's education policy has on the creation and nurture of its knowledge economy. There were many factor that were considered and analyzed according to rigorous academic standards. The ensuing results revealed and illuminated the intricate, interconnectivities that higher education has with the knowledge economy, and how various factors assert their influence, directly or by proxy, on our knowledge society. One of these aforementioned factor was deemed to be in dire need of further clarification, which the scholar aims to achieve in this present research.

This factor constituted of women's literacy (factor load 0.6887), representation of women in economic interests (factor load 0.6535) and

girls' enrolment ratio in higher education (factor load 0.6439). The gross enrolment ration though has increased as compared with last century; the destination is away in reach. Women empowerment comes not merely through getting qualifications, but also including them in economic interests of the nation. The most successful women in the world have grabbed every opportunity afforded to them, and have created opportunities for themselves. Empowerment of women in education at all levels ensures all round progress of the society (Bhattacharya and Sharma, 2007). Unless women are given more say in education processes in India, the aim of creating a true knowledge economy cannot be achieved.

Today, women in India are present equally with men in all areas like services, education, manufacturing, army, police, and also politics, and is increasingly exploring creative and challenging careers. More number of women is getting enrolled into professional education. In India, women are going into professions which were once the privilege of men. While many women still pursue more common careers like-public relations, there are women who are doing well in armed forces, heads of government departments and educational institutions and in corporations. Since the last decades, working women have reached higher and higher in India. Women's literacy programs have to be followed strictly at all levels. Though the government has been largely successful in providing education to many women, but scenes are different in rural areas, where girls are deprived of the primary education. When women's economic interests are represented properly in macroeconomic policies in various budgets for education, the women empowerment goals can be achieved.



## INTERPRETATION

Women empowerment has been at the forefront of national policy discussions. The urgent need to encourage more women participation in the decision making process at all levels has to be decisively addressed. While there have been improvements in this regard, there are still a lot of persistent problems that we need to rectify.

Women empowerment has been at the forefront of a national discussion, and has been on the most highly prioritized issues of governance, both nationally and internationally, and rightly so. The improvement is slow, but sure. We now are moving towards a more inclusive and diverse society, where women have been acquiring a greater say in affairs that influence them, both personally and nationally. We are also seeing an increase in the productivity and revenue generation overall, as a result of such policies. But, there is a very long road that we as a country need to travel. There are three policy recommendations that this paper puts forward as a way to bridge the gap between equitable participation of men and women in society. These are:

- Women's access to a wide variety of programs that aid them in getting literate and provide them with different options that they could choose from according to their aptitude, and not societal acceptance.

For instance, we desperately need more women in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), but women have been historically discouraged from pursuing careers in these fields. Government needs to introduce national-level policies and programmes that provide assistance to meritorious students in these fields, and others too, so that they are not disenfranchised from entering the fields of their choices anymore.

- A national level thrust towards revitalizing old policies lying dormant that were created to support women empowerment, whilst introducing new schemes that do the same. If this is followed meticulously, we will enter into a new gear racing towards a society where sexism is absent. When a country invests in cultivating their human resources, it ultimately pays off in the long run. There are countless studies that back up this assertion. This is true across the board. Schemes and programmes could include scholarships, school admission drives, segregated colleges, reservations etc. All these aforementioned policies and more are necessary, and should be implemented urgently. This way, the country can ensure that its place in the knowledge race is insured in the future.
- The government should rectify the current situation, and bring the gross enrollment ratio to equilibrium and maintain it such.

There are various factors that impede the attainment of this goal, such as lack of access to girls at an early age by the government, age old prejudices, participation of girls in unpaid domestic work in contrast with boys, lack of infrastructure that ensures quality education, affordable education and safety etc. These are grave issues that we face as a nation and only the government cannot adequately address them. For this dream to materialize, society and culture revolving around women empowerment needs to change and a new attitude need be developed.

## **CONCLUSION**

India needs a structured policy and implementation mechanism for skill enhancement and training of women primarily along two lines:

1. To meet the requirements of the international job market targeting the employable skilled and semi-skilled urban educated population with linguistic, interactive, and communicative competency to match international standards.
2. To support its own economic base and promote social inclusion targeting the literate, semi-literate, and illiterate employable population from rural areas and suburbs through small and medium-sized enterprises, self-employment initiatives, and public employment guarantee schemes.

The knowledge economy could conceivably provide a solution for an age old problem, that still persists, that of empowering women and making them an equal partner in the future development of the country, and utilizing optimally, the innate talents and capabilities

that they possess. For too long, women have been deprived of the opportunities that they should otherwise possess in an equal, egalitarian world. The way that this goal is now being attained, is through the higher education policy of the country. With the active participation of the government, women are being given access to the prospect of being able to finally break free of the shackles of patriarchy and write their own destinies, and be the masters of their own ships.

The only way a country can now stay ahead in this global village is to be constantly innovative, and generate revenue through accumulated knowledge of its populace and converting it into value. Women empowerment ties intricately and intimately with this goal. If half the population in the country is held back for some reason or another, this would mean a handicap on the growth and potential of the country. Therefore, in today's global economy, which is based on knowledge as the primary driver of growth and revenue generation, this situation needs to be rectified. Women empowerment should figure prominently in any future developmental goals and aspirations of the government.

The higher education policy is the panacea for a lot of our ailments, which impede our metamorphosis into a super-power by leveraging the abundance of human capital we could avail. In order to save our efforts from being in vain, we must not let anything encumber us. Right now, the situation, while not as dire as even a decade ago, still needs to be remedied. Over half of the public has been subjugated historically, and have only now began to be included, their voices only now being heard. Society had a whole needs to change its ways. Education is the silver bullet, the best hand we can play to have women empowerment accelerating its development pace.

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