



Unlocking Women's Potential Through Education

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Abstract:

Despite progress, gender barriers persist, and it is imperative that we all join hands to promote women's rights and participation. Media watch groups and networks can ensure accurate representation and address gender biases. Education is vital for women's empowerment, and initiatives like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the National Program for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level aim to increase access to quality education. The Government has launched programs like the community polytechnic scheme and Indira Gandhi National Open University to promote skill development and connectivity. Self-help groups and credit facilities can provide economic empowerment. Empowering women is a multidimensional process requiring awareness, resource access, autonomy, and decision-making power. By working together, we can harness the transformative power of education and media to promote gender equality, challenge discrimination, and drive rural development.

Keywords: Education, Women, Empowerment, Gender, Equality, Development.

Introduction:

Education is critical to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Progress has been made in women's education globally, but more efforts are needed to reach marginalized groups. Alternative education systems and gender-neutral curricula can help promote inclusivity. The role of media watch groups and networks between women's organizations and media outlets is crucial in ensuring accurate representation and promoting women's rights. Every family member must educate women to drive rural development and address the challenges of remote locations and inadequate teacher compensation to ensure quality education for all.

Literature Review:

Strengthening of women is crucial for achieving gender equality and socio-economic development. Despite progress, gender barriers persist, and non-governmental organizations, professional associations, and the media must work together to promote women's rights and participation. Media watch groups and networks can ensure accurate representation and address gender biases. Education is vital for women's empowerment, and initiatives like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the National Program for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level aim to increase access to quality education. The Government has launched programs like the community polytechnic scheme and Indira Gandhi National Open University to promote skill development and connectivity. Self-help groups and credit facilities can provide economic empowerment. Empowering women is a

multidimensional process requiring awareness, resource access, autonomy, and decision-making power. Women are in for a new deal today as they are the focus of economic development. Non-governmental organizations and media professional associations must launch media watch groups, like the successful 'Women in Media initiative, which vigilantly monitors the media and engages in constructive dialogue, ensuring that women's needs and

concerns are accurately represented and addressed. They must forge powerful networks, like the 'Women's Media Consortium,' which brings together women's and professional media organizations to magnify women's voices and promote their full participation in the media, advancing women's human rights and gender equality. The media industry and training institutions must ensure accountability, as seen in the 'Media Diversity and Inclusion' campaign, which promotes respectful and inclusive language and upholds traditional and Indigenous value systems that safeguard women's and girls' dignity and rights. We must champion and educate women, like the 'Girls' Education Initiative,' which empowers them to drive rural development and improve their socio-economic status. We owe them to provide access to quality educational inputs, bridging the gender gap and unleashing their full potential."

Education is one factor that plays the most crucial role in empowering women. Schools, colleges, and other professional bodies persistently try to educate, motivate, and train women in their chosen career areas through curriculum, training, field

exposure, and other practical methods. Research and publication focus on addressing women's issues, eliminating social evils, empowering women through education, promoting their overall development and well-being, and ultimately creating a more just and equitable society where women can thrive and reach their full potential. Empowerment is one of the hot topics of the present. Media coverage aimed at attracting the attention of policymakers and authorities is at its highest level now.

Empowerment is a multidimensional process that should enable individuals or self-help groups to realize their identities and powers in all spheres of life and their societal potential. "The status of women is a barometer of the democratism of any state, an indicator of how human rights are respected," according to Mikhail Gorbachev. The root cause of women's oppression in India is patriarchy, which has snatched legitimate powers off. Females leave them wholly defenseless and weak. Empowerment of women strives to acquire: 1. Equal rights and opportunities. 2. Economic independence and security. 3. Education and skills development. 4. Autonomy and decision-making power. 5. Physical and mental well-being. 6. Social and political participation. 7. Freedom from discrimination and violence. 8. Access to resources and services. 9. A voice and platform for expression. 10. Higher literacy level and education. 11. Better health care for her and her children. 12. Equal ownership of productive resources. 13. They have increased women's participation in economic and commercial sectors, leading to financial independence and contributions to economic growth. 14. Awareness of their rights. 15. Improved standard of living. 16. Achieve self-reliance, self-confidence, and Self-respect among females.

Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be financially independent and personality self-reliant with positive self-esteem to enable them to face any brutal situation. Moreover, they should be able to contribute to the country's developmental activities. The empowered women should be able to participate in the decision-making process. Women's power is a dynamic process that consists of an awareness-actualization cycle. Again, it is a growth process that involves effectual enlightenment, economic enrichment, and social emancipation for women.

Education plays the most crucial role in strengthening women. Schools, colleges, and other professional bodies persistently try to educate, motivate, and train women in their chosen career areas through curriculum, training, exposure, and other practical methods. Research publications on women's problems, evils, their eradication, and women's empowerment are hot topics. Media coverage aimed at attracting the attention of

policymakers and authorities is at its highest level now.

The purpose of declaring the year 2001 as the Women's Empowerment year is as follows (in brief)

1. To create and raise large-scale awareness of women's issues with active participation and involvement of all women and men.
2. To initiate and accelerate action to improve women's access to and control of resources.
3. To create an enabling environment to enhance the self-confidence and autonomy of women. Education for All Education is a fundamental right for all children between 6-14 years old in India, thanks to the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002. The Government aims to achieve elementary education for all and bridge gender and social gaps by 2010. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the national program leading this effort, providing quality education through community-owned approaches. SSA offers flexible strategies like bridge courses, residential camps, and drop-in centers to bring out-of-school children into the education system. The National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) is a component of SSA, providing region-specific strategies to enable girls to attend school and receive remedial teaching. The National Policy of Education (1986) prioritizes women's equality and empowerment, addressing obstacles to their education. Various education programs are equal for males and females, aiming to empower rural children, particularly disadvantaged girls. The community polytechnic scheme promotes rural development through science and technology apprenticeships, with 43% of beneficiaries being women. The Indira Gandhi National Open University has established I.T. infrastructure in districts with low female literacy, promoting connectivity and information flow. Additionally, self-help groups and credit facilities are available to support women's economic empowerment. Several education programs from childhood to high education are equal for males and females. By taking this initiative, the Government aims to empower rural children, particularly girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, to reach their full potential. The community polytechnic scheme seeks to unite communities and encourage rural development through science and technology apprenticeship and skill-oriented non-formal training focused on women, minorities, S.C.s/S.T.s/OBCs, and other disadvantaged sections of society. Currently, 43% of the total beneficiaries are women. The Indira Gandhi National Open University identified 148 districts

with low female literacy and has provided those districts with I.T. infrastructure to establish connectivity in these regions with other parts of the country for the free flow of Information. Gainful Employment, Mental Revolution, Money is Strength, Formation of Self-Help Groups.Credit Facilities

Research Methodology:

The researcher collected primary data from Kalam village in Vasai Taluka, Palghar District, Maharashtra, India. She selected Kalam village for an in-depth, micro-level study. The researcher conducted interviews with a representative sample of women, comprising 20% (537) of the female population in the area, ensuring that female researchers conducted these interviews.

Objectives:

1. To study creating an environment through favorable economic and social policies for women's full development to realize their full potential.
2. To learn equal access to participation and decision-making for women in the nation's social, political, and economic life.
3. Women should have equal access to healthcare, quality education at all career and vocational guidance levels, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security, public office, Etc.
4. To study women's changing society's approach and society practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.

Hypotheses:

1. Eliminate gender differences in vocational and professional courses and search for natural talent in female students among rural girl children.
2. Promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations without discrimination and increase girls' involvement in SC/ST communities.
3. Increase women's engagement in existing and emerging technologies.
4. Provide quality education to girls from households below the poverty line.

Scope and Limitations:

Although our research focused explicitly on Kalam Village, we recognize that the need to address women's education status is a nationwide concern in India and globally. Therefore, we have undertaken a comprehensive, macro-level analysis of women's education status, transcending the local scope of our initial study to gain a broader understanding of this critical issue.

About Kalam Village: (in brief)

As of Census 2011, we have identified Kalamb village with the location code 552404. Our research has located Kalamb village in Vasai tehsil, Thane district, Maharashtra, India, 23km from the

sub-district Vasai and 55km from the district headquarters Thane. As of 2009, we have confirmed that Kalamb village functions as a gram panchayat. Our data shows that the town spans a total geographical area of 246.48 hectares, with a population of 5,329 individuals, comprising 2,644 males and 2,685 females. We have calculated the literacy rate of Kalamb village to be 79.64%, with male literacy at 83.13% and female literacy at 76.20%. Our survey has counted 1,169 houses in the town, with the pin code 401304. We have identified Vasai-Virar City, approximately 10km away, as the nearest town for major economic activities.

A total of 537 females were surveyed. Among them, 409 women were educated, working in offices and schools in nearby towns and in Mumbai. Nearby, 128 women were found illiterate; they were busy farming, and some were selling vegetables in nearby areas and in Mumbai.

Micro Findings:

1. Women are actively engaged in various activities.
2. Most women are from Schedule Castes and are socio-economically weak.
3. Educated women make informed reproductive choices.
4. Educated women participate in decision-making and community discussions.
5. Women drive economic growth through farming, entrepreneurship, and various jobs.
6. Women invest in their children's education and future.
7. Educated females are more focused on savings and planning.
8. Women prioritize their children's health, hygiene, and nutrition.
9. Higher-educated women focus on health and well-being.
10. Migrating women blend traditional values with modern innovations.
11. Younger generations may migrate for education and jobs.
12. Early marriages are no longer common.
13. Girls are pursuing higher education at nearby colleges.
14. College girls' students focus on skill-based training programs, e.g., Computer and other helpful training.

Macro Findings:

Today, 70% of the population still lives in rural and suburban areas. Various initiatives are underway to uplift the rural community. The Government has taken laudable steps to promote women's education, recognizing its transformative potential. The Government reserves one-third of the seats in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas for girls, and the University Grants Commission actively implements schemes to promote women's education in higher education institutions.

Initiatives include grants for technical courses, funding for women's hostels, establishing Women's Study Centers, and promoting polytechnic participation. These efforts aim to increase women's access to education, empower them, and bridge the gender gap in various fields. By collaborating and pooling their resources, the Government and the public can create a powerful synergy that fosters women's empowerment, driving rapid progress and achieving phenomenal success in a condensed timeframe. This progress is indeed a remarkable sign of development and empowerment through education.

Recommendation:

1. Empowering women through education is crucial for rural development and bridging the gender gap.
2. The Government and NGOs should collaborate to establish more educational institutions and programs tailored to rural women's needs.
3. Scholarships and financial aid should be provided to encourage women to pursue higher education and vocational training.
4. Awareness campaigns should be launched to highlight the importance of women's education and its impact on socio-economic development.
5. We must prioritize women's empowerment through education and actively explore innovative approaches to reach remote and underserved areas.
6. Education should be accessible and affordable, emphasizing gender equality and inclusivity.
7. Community involvement and participation are essential in promoting women's education and addressing cultural and societal barriers.
8. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of educational schemes are necessary to ensure their effectiveness and impact.

By taking these steps, the Government can create an awareness that values women's voices and promotes inclusive and empowered communication. Women will lead to better participation in national development efforts and enable women to lead in the social and economic system.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, non-governmental organizations and media professional associations must promote gender equality and empower women. Let us set up media watch groups, create networks, and encourage inclusive content to give women a platform to express themselves and have their concerns addressed. By providing literacy and education, we can equip women with the skills and knowledge required to drive rural development and combat discrimination. By working together, we can harness the transformative power of education and media to build a more equitable and just society where women's rights are valued and respected. This collective effort will give a better and brighter

future, where women's empowerment is a catalyst for sustainable development and gender equality is a reality for the world.

"Women's education and empowerment are critical for building a more just, equitable, and peaceful world." - Ban Ki-moon. These quotes highlight the significance of women's education and empowerment in bringing about positive change and progress in individuals, communities, and societies.

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