

The Role of Higher Education in Empowerment of Women

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ABSTRACT

The knowledge economy of twenty first century is women friendly and as a result higher educational institutions has improved women enrolment in higher studies and work force as well. There are several policies, schemes and scholarships offered to women higher education. Higher education is a vital component of economies today and that the goal of Universal education for all is fast becoming a reality. Higher education has been recognized as an essential element for improving human life. The development of an economy depends on three categories of resources physical, natural and human. Higher education is an important factor contributing to human resource development. Women constitute about 48.5 percent of the population (2011 Census) but their participation in economic activity is only 34 percent. Inequality and vulnerability of women continue in all sectors i.e. economic, social, political, education, health care and legal etc. Women are burdened in all spheres of life. They need to be strengthened in all walks of life to fight against the Socially constructed gender basis. The development process, without the contribution of women, who form a substantial portion of the society, will be unbalanced. Empowerment provide women an avenue to acquire practical learning for their enhanced livelihoods. India will become an advanced country only if women contribute to the best of their capacity which is possible women are educated. The role of higher education assumes more importance today as attainment of changing world. Higher education develops skills, new technologies, and it is the centre of the whole sphere of a development cycle. It offers a great stance for employment, economic returns and develops human resources for different levels of the economy. Higher education transforms human beings into human capital.

Keywords: Development, Human. Empowerment, India, Women policies

Introduction:

Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom. Higher education has become the most powerful tool in the modern economy, which develops and trains skilled people with efficiency for individual and national development. All the countries on the global level accept the fact that economic development takes place only by the development of higher education. Higher education enhances people's capacity to work and their opportunities to work, it promotes innovation and increases productivity, thereby contributing to national development. The role of higher education assumes more important today as attainment literacy is not adequate to cope with the changing world. Higher education develops skills, new technologies, it is the center of the whole sphere of a development cycle. It offers a great stance for employment, economic returns and develops human

resources for different levels of the economy. Developing countries need to develop their education system internally to promote competent human resources. Higher education is both a result and determinant of income, as it benefits individuals in the form of better employment prospects, higher salaries, and a greater ability to save and invest which in turn leads to improvement consumption, the standard of living, productivity and life expectancy. Higher education transforms human beings into human capital. The system of higher education in India has been escalating satisfactorily in the recent past, and it has arisen as one of the major education systems in the world.

Purpose and Plan of the Study:

The study is planned, and it proceeds in the following way:

Objectives of the Study:

- I. To examine the role of higher education towards empowering women in Udupi district.
- II. To analyze the impact of higher education on decision making ability of women.

Methodology:

The present study is based on the collection of data from primary and secondary sources. Secondary data is obtained from various published and unpublished records, books, magazines and journals, both print and online. Primary data is collected through a pre-tested questionnaire from educated women respondents of the Udupi district. For the purpose of study, samples were randomly selected from women.

Conceptual And Operational Framework:**Higher Education:**

Higher education in India denotes a level of education that is imparted after the higher secondary education phase. It implies collegiate and university level education. It is the education system based on recommendations of the National Policy of Education I (NPE) 1986. After completing the higher secondary or the +2 education various streams are available at the option of the students pursuing higher education which includes different areas such as education provided at Colleges, Universities and other Institutes like Vocational schools, Trade schools and Career Colleges etc. India has the world's largest young population, but to reap advantage from the demographic dividend, there is a need for a change of the current higher education system in India. Based on students enrolment Indian higher education system is the third highest in the world, but according to Times world's University ranking 2015, no Indian Institutions were among the top two hundred. The Indian higher education system has several strengths such as economical both in terms of fees and cost of living. The government has taken the initiative of 'Educate India' aimed at empowering India, if India is able to provide capacity, the quality required for expanding the young population, then India will become a global competent attracting international student to Indian Higher education system.

"Indian higher education system is third largest in the world, but the enrolment ratio of women in higher education is not as per expectation? AISHE (2013). The report also highlights the prevalence of gender disparity in higher education as aggregate

enrolment of students in regular mode in higher education in India was around 241.8 lakh, with 55.7 per cent for male & 44.2 percent female enrolment.

Pujari (2006) has also examined a serious problem faced by the higher education system in India, he identifies the limited capacity of our institutions to meet the growing demand of post-graduate education, particularly in the fields of Business Management, Engineering, Mathematics, Computer Science etc. The globalisation of higher education will increase the cost of education and restrict its accessibility to students from weaker and less privileged sections of the population.

Empowerment of Women:

Empowerment is a dynamic task as it necessitates the cycle of consciousness, realization, and enlightenment. It is an unceasing complete course with dimensions of cognitive, psychological, economic and political, to achieve the liberation of individuals from domination and provide equal access to opportunities and resources to participate fully in the developmental process. It is a process enabling individuals to advance access over resources and capacity building leading to greater participation and higher decision-making power. The higher education institutions must ensure provision of mass women education, technology inputs for better access, remove the gender barrier, commitment to women empowering, provide research ambient and promote scholarships, incentives, mentoring, counseling and coaching to uplift women students. The environment must women friendly and safe.

The term "Empowerment is widely used but seldom defined; it encompasses several components buoyed by economic independence. The World Bank defines empowerment as "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make selections and transform those selections into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process is an action which both builds individual and collective assets and improves the efficiency and fairness of the organization and institutional context which govern the use of these assets". Empowerment is a process of change, both internal and external change. The internal process is the person's sense of belief in her ability to make decisions and to solve her problems. The external change discovers expression in the ability to act and implement the practical knowledge, the

information, the skills, the capabilities and the other new resources acquired in the course of the process.

Women have been so long used as cheaply available resources which is always readily available. But now, the world has to realize that women are an asset to the world. Women are not permanent shock absorber, they must not be featured as the absorber, but as partners (Bhatt, 2016). Economically, women are not treated on par with men. It is due to the patriarchal male-dominant structure of the family system existing in the country. There is an urgent call to improve women's economic status as they form fundamental to the process of economic development of the country. The challenge for creating suitable employment opportunities for the on-going youth bulge, is likely to accumulate sharply in future. It is much more daunting for females, who, unlike most of the males, are unable to migrate freely in search of jobs due to patriarchal nature of the society (Sharma, 2015). Empowering women brings a radical change in economic development. Eradicating gender inequality and empowering women are hallowed as global development.

National Policy of Education (NPE) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education, improve the quality of education and was focused on providing education facilities to all the citizens of the nation ambitions within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the 2000s. Women contribute to family and society as producers of food, managers of resources, caretakers of children, entrepreneurs and employees in family businesses; despite the contributions to the economy, they do not have equal access to rights, opportunities, financial resources, inheritance and property rights.

Higher Education and Economic Empowerment

Higher education raises women's status, whether she contributes to the income of the family or not. The majority of the women in our country are uneducated, that is why they are suppressed. Only an educated woman can run her house well and make it a paradise on earth. The development of human resources depends to a greater extent on the attainment of higher education. Higher education empowers women to make conversant choices about their lives, clutching opportunities and expands employment opportunities. The expenditure on education benefits the economy for knowledge, skills,

essential for the inclusive development of an economy. Therefore, higher education is much valued as human capability-endorsing, opportunity enhancing and empowerment revealing human development dimension. Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom. Higher education has become the most powerful tool in the modern economy, which develops and trains skilled people with efficiency for individual and national development. All the countries on the global level accept the fact that economic development takes place only by the development of higher education.

Education - Base of empowerment:

explains education as a base of empowerment as it can have a series of paybacks within the households. As educated women can get a job easily, command higher wages, overcome the barriers imposed by the society. It is a general observation that investing more in educating women, rather than in men, will indeed have a more positive impact on child health. Education is the base for empowerment, which enables women to overcome barriers of their life, leading to improved access to financial services, also extends support to others who need assistance and also increases mobility.

Higher education is also responsible for the generation of employment opportunities, increased standard of living, raising socio-economic standards and attains economic growth. Higher education liberates women from ignorance and enhances their self-esteem. Higher education is identified as a key device for human resource development, particularly in developing countries like India.

Finding of the Study:

Women empowerment in Udupi District:

Karnataka is situated in the Southwest of India, with four natural provinces encompassing over 700 Km beginning North to South and 400 km from East to West. The state has 30 districts, Udupi, popular as one of the coastal districts of the Karnataka, is located between the foothills of the Western Ghats in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west was formed on 25th August 1997 and was carved out of the Dakshina Kannada district. Udupi district is vibrant with the diverse topographical environment and natural resources, it is identified as a centre for religious, educational, cultural, tourism and trading activities. The district is popular as the temple town in the state. Udupi is a prominent exporter

of various commodities like cashew kernels, shell oil, coconut oil, pepper etc. Further the district concentrates highly on fish processing viz, fish meals, fish oils, fishery products etc. Udupi is a home for several prominent educational institutions. Manipal University, an international educational institution widespread in fields randomly selected from women folk of different households from towns and villages of the district based on the total population, educational attainment of the respondents, standard of living of the people. 314 educated women were studied in which 104 (33,1%) from Kundapura, 102 (32.5%) from Karkala and 34.4 percent (108) were from Udupi taluks.

such as Medicine, Engineering and Management in Udupi is having a is global recognition, attracting students across the nation and globe.

The sample consists of 314 employed women belonging Udupi district, and respondents are chosen across different educational status. Study samples were

Table - 1
Sampling Structure

Level of Education	Kundapur		Karkala		Udupi	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Graduate	40	38.5	40	39.2	17	15.7
Post graduate	57	54.8	56	54.9	81	75.0
Professional	7	6.7	4	3.9	9	8.3
Others	0	0.0	2	2.0	1	0.9

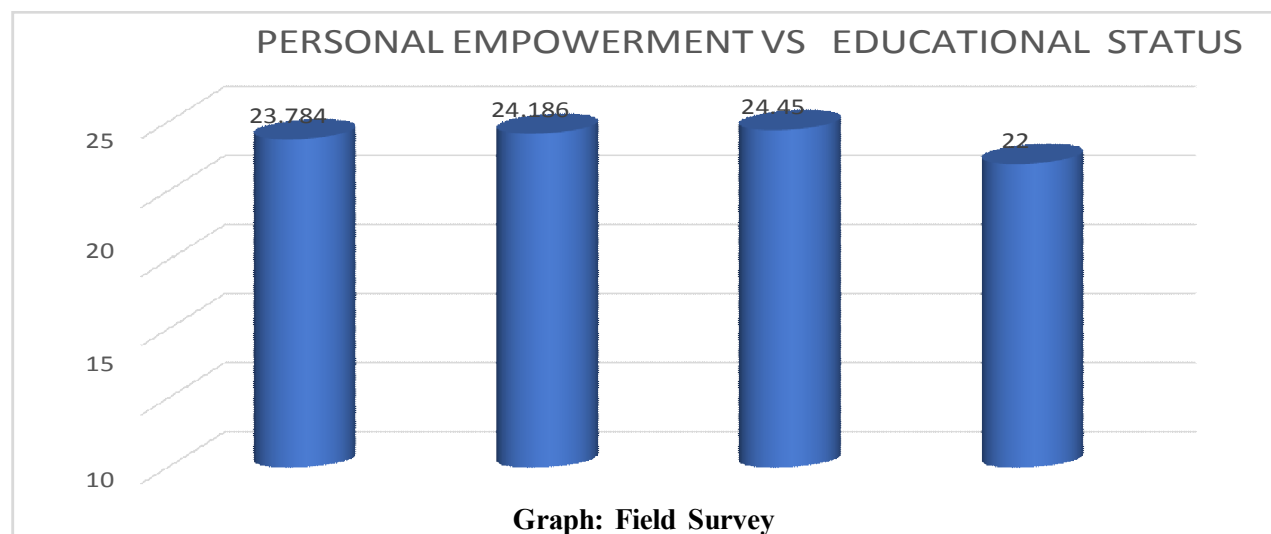
$X^2=20.605$ $p=0.002$ hs **Source: Field Survey**

When the educational status of the respondents was associated with the different taluks, it was found to be highly significant ($p=0.002$). 61.8 per cent on the total were postgraduates, among whom Udupi had the highest percentage (75 per cent), followed by Karkala (54.9 per cent) and Kundapur (54.8 per cent). Professionals were less in Karkala (3.9 per cent), Graduates are less (15.7%) in Udupi while comparing other two taluks where they have on an average of 38 -39 per cent. I could interpret that Udupi had a greater number of Post graduates and Professional when compared to other taluks. This difference was found to be significant ($p=0.002$).

The sample is drawn from women belonging to

different age groups across the district from three taluks. The age-wise classification was seen in the previous table. The mean age between the people of three taluks of Kundapur, Karkala and Udupi were compared. The mean age of the subjects of Kundapur was seen as 38.71, whereas the mean age of subjects of Karkala was 39.53. Similarly, the mean age of the subjects of the Udupi was 34.47. In Kundapur, the people were in the age group of 23 to 62 and the maximum age in Udupi was 58 years.

The sample is drawn equally from women belonging to four categories of educational status viz,



graduation, post-graduation, professional education and others. The number of graduates is less in Udupi taluk in comparison with other taluks its because maximum number of the respondents go for higher study as a result there is increase in the number of post graduates in Bihar.

Personal empowerment index was estimated by adding the questions on Self-image, Leadership quality, Communication skills, Positive attitude etc. The impact of educational status on personal empowerment was analysed by applying ANOVA. It could be seen that among graduates, mean value of personal empowerment was 23.784 whereas for the Post graduates its slightly more as 24.186. Even for the professionals the mean value for personal empowerment was seen as 24.45 and this difference between the educational status was found to be significant ($p=0.023$).

To find the decision-making ability of the subjects, information is collected about how women take decisions on different occasions. While asking about the spending of the salary they earn, it was found that nearly 64 per cent agreed that it is according to their will, but 3.5 percent said that they dont have the chance to spend according to their wish. Respondents were asked whether the decision about their life was taken by themselves, it was found that almost 70 per cent agreed on that. Only 2.2 percent were against that. Regarding this decision, there was statistically significant difference among the three taluks ($p<0.001$). But it was found women cannot take any decision individually about taking their child to hospital or visiting family or friends house. Only 16 percent agreed that they can have the freedom to take their children to the hospital, but the majority (60 percent) had told that their decision on this aspect is nil as they discussed with family members regarding this aspect. The same situation was there in all the taluk. So, the comparison of this aspect among the three taluks was found to be not significant. ($p=0.223$). It is found that nearly 40 percent of the women were hesitant to take any decision on the emotional aspect. 66 percent of the people say that they are ready to take any decision in most of the occasions.

Conclusion:

Women education brings cultural, socio-economic development not only self but also to the family and nation. The government and society transform towards women education. Womens empowerment is needed to bring improvement in the ability of women to access right in education, employment, health, social status and participation in all the spheres of life. Education empowers women with the knowledge, skill and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. Enabling them their rights and developing the confidence to claim them. Educated women have higher income goals over their less- educated counterparts. It is found that the level of education is positively related to job hunt intent among women.

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