
PERCEPTION OF PEOPLE TOWARDS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT STEPPED UP BY HIGHER EDUCATION
(A case study of Patiala district)

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ABSTRACT

India is second highest populated country in the world. There are approximately 49% of female in the total population of it. However, status of Indian women as compare to other countries of the world is not satisfactory. An Indian woman is facing all type of barriers to success like illiteracy, domestic violence and lack of motivations etc. Education is a milestone of women empowerment because educated women can play an important role in development of the country. The aim of this paper is to know the perception of people about role of higher education in empowerment of women and to analyze the role of higher education in empowerment of the women psychologically, economically and sociologically. Convenience sampling design is used and 100 respondents from Patiala district are taken for study. Five point Likert scale and descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), correlation and T test are used for data analysis. Finding and conclusion of this study reveal that higher education is playing vital role in process of upliftment of social, Psychological, economical status of women which have positive correlation with women empowerment.

Key words: Economical, Higher Education, Psychological, Sociological, Women Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

"If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered".

PT. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Women Empowerment is a global issue. Women empowerment is a very sensitive issue in developing countries like India. The rise of feminist ideas has brought tremendous improvement of women's condition throughout the world in recent times. Access to education has been one of the most pressing demands of these women's rights movements. Education of women in India has been a major issue for both the government and civil society, as the educated women play a very important role in the development of the country. India, at present has largest number of illiterates in the world.

Meaning of women empowerment

According to the Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power." It is the ability to direct and control one's life. It is a process in which women gain control over their own lives of knowing and claiming their right at all levels of society at the international, local and household levels. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROI in 1985. Women Empowerment has five components: -

- Women's sense of self worth
- Their right to have and to determine choices
- Their right to have access to opportunities and resources

- Their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home
- And their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally

Meaning of Higher Education

Higher Education is the aggregate of systematized knowledge and practical skills that allow theoretical and practical problems to be solved by a given type of training, utilizing and creatively developing the modern achievements of science, technology, and culture.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recently, there has been a lot of research and articles published on the role of higher education in women empowerment.

Rupali Sharma and Zia Afroz (2014), aim of this paper is to describe the role of higher education in women empowerment. This study's results shows that education is very important tool for women to know their duties and rights but only literacy is not ultimate solution there should be proper implementations of government policies, which are made for it.

Kingdom, G.G. (2002), conducted the research on *Education of women and socio-economic development, Reason and Revaluation*. This research paper shows the findings of some recent research on the social and the economic benefits of female education and emphasize on giving importance on the ways through which women's schooling leads to social gains.

M. Suguna (2011), this paper highlights the relation of education and women empowerment. Education is most powerful tool to change the position of women in society. It also helps to reduce the inequalities and improve the status of women in family.

S.Sarumathi¹ and Dr.K.Mohan (2011), this paper describes the role of micro finance in women empowerment. The study concludes that microfinance brought psychological and social empowerment than economic empowerment. Impact of micro finance is appreciable in bringing confidence, courage, skill development and empowerment. The SHG members feel free to move with their groups and leaders.

M.M.Munshi and Shaheeda Banu S. (2013), in their paper attempts to explore the role of education in women empowerment. Education plays a crucial role in accelerating the women empowerment .Thus education seen as "Unique investment" in present and future in reference to Women Empowerment. Offer a girl education and she has the power to make choices.

Duflo, E. (2011), *Women's Empowerment and Economic Development*. The study argues that the inter-relationships of the empowerment and development are probably too weak to be self-sustaining and that continuous policy commitment to equality for its own sake may be needed to bring about equality between men and women.

Sethuraman, K. (2008), This research paper explores the relationship between women's empowerment, domestic violence, maternal nutritional status, and the nutritional status and growth over six months in children aged 6 to 24 months in a rural and tribal community. This longitudinal observational study undertaken in rural Karnataka, India included tribal and rural subjects.

Frenette, and Coulombe (2007), This research paper examine the role of rapidly rising educational attainment among young women in raising their relative position in the labour market and suggests that the educational trends have not contributed towards a decline in the full-time employment gap.

Thus from the review of literature, it has been found that there are many conceptual and theoretical studies on role of education in women's empowerment. However, there is lack of empirical research and not much focus is given on role of higher education in women's empowerment. So, in this study

empirical research is undertaken to know the perception of people that how higher education helps in empowering the women and how it plays the role in improving the social, economical and psychological status of women. It has been also highlighted in the past studies that there is educational equality gap between men and women. Therefore, this study focuses on identifying the hindrance in the path of women empowerment in higher education.

Statement of the Problem

In old days, women were restricted to take part in any social activities and not given roles in decision making in her family. The situation was even more worsening in rural and remote areas. Now the situation has been changed. She is given freedom to do what she wishes. Today more and more women are getting the education and they have awareness about their rights and duties. Aim of the education is to empower the women. Therefore, this paper includes the role of higher education in empowering the women.

OBJECTIVES

- To know the perception of people regarding the role of higher education in women's empowerment
- To analyze the role of higher education in improving the psychological, economical and sociological status of women

HYPOTHESIS

Based on the research questions the following hypotheses are derive:

- Ho₁: There is no significance difference between the mean of female students and women workers regarding role of higher education to improve the social status of women?
- Ho₂: There is no significance difference between the mean of female students and women workers regarding role of higher education to improve the economically status of women?
- Ho₃: There is no significance difference between the mean of female students and women workers regarding role of higher education to improve the psychologically status of women?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Study Design**
This study is based on descriptive research design that describes the behavior of subjects without influencing them in any way.
- **Sample Design**
In this study convenience sampling design is used to know Role higher education in women empowerment. Patiala district is selected for study. 100 respondents include female students who are getting higher education and women workers are selected from different departments of Punjabi University Patiala.
- **Survey Instrument**
This study is based on primary data and questionnaire is used to know the response from respondents. Five point Likert scale is used as measurement scale for example strongly agree=1, agree=2, uncertain=3, disagree=4, strongly disagree=5.
- **Data Analysis Tools**
In this study, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) is used. Further correlation, T test are used for data analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:**Table1:** Occupation

Occupation	Number	Percent
Female students	54	54.00
Working women	46	46.00
Total	100	100

➤ Perception of People about Role of Higher Education in Empowerment of Women

Table2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Statements	N	SA	A	U	D	SD	M	SD
Social status and higher education (M=2.18, D=.557)	Higher education helps in raising the status of women in family?	100	26	43	23	4	4	2.1700	.9954
	Higher education helps in improving the standard of living.	100	22	53	22	1	2	2.0800	.8125
	Higher education helps the women in increasing their role in decision making of family.	100	21	44	29	4	2	2.2200	.8942
	Higher education helps the women to move independently. (Banks, market etc.)	100	18	46	27	8	1	2.2800	.8885
Psychologically status and higher education (M=2.23, D=.680)	Higher education helps in increasing the self-confidence in women.	100	28	46	21	1	4	2.0700	.99554
	Higher education helps in bringing the awareness in children education.	100	26	46	17	7	4	2.1700	1.0254
	Higher education helps in increasing the self-esteem in women.	100	7	50	53	6	2	2.4600	.7967
Economically status and higher education (m=2.41, d=.67)	Higher education helps in reducing the poverty level.	100	9	40	40	10	1	2.54	.8338
	Higher education helps the women in reducing their dependency.	100	16	48	3	2	3	2.28	.8655
Empowerment and higher	Higher education helps in bringing the awareness in women about	100	34	45	14	7	0	1.9400	.8740

education (m=2.15, d=.7066)	their rights.								
	Higher education helps in opening the career opportunities.	100	28	43	22	2	5	2.1300	1.011
	Higher education helps in empowering the women.	100	16	44	30	4	6	2.400	1.0050

*Scale 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=uncertain, 4disagree, 5=strongly disagree, (M=mean, D=st.dev.)

Table 1 indicates that mean of social status and higher education is 2.18 and respondents deviate from their mean is equal to .5577 and result lies between 2.0800-2.2800 which shows that respondents are strongly agree that higher education helps in raising the status of women in family and in increasing their role in decision making of family.

Mean of the psychologically status and higher education is 2.23, respondents deviate from their mean is equal to .680, and result lies between 2.0700-2.146 and respondents lie between strongly agree to agree. Respondents are agree that higher education helps in increasing the self-confidence in women and strongly agree that higher education helps in increasing the self-esteem in women.

Mean of Economically status and higher education is 2.41 and respondents deviate from their mean is equal to .67. Respondents are agree that Higher education helps the women in reducing their dependency (48%, M=2.28) and are uncertain regarding higher education helps in reducing the poverty level (40%, M= 2. 54).

Mean of Empowerment and higher education is 2.15 and respondents deviate from their mean is equal to .7066 and result lie between 1.96-2.46 and this shows that response of respondents lie between strongly agree to agree. Respondents are agree that Higher education helps in bringing the awareness in women about their rights (45%) and Higher education helps in empowering the women.

Table3: Correlations

		Social status	Psychological status	Economical status	Empowerment
Social status	Pearson Correlation	1	.529**	.507**	.544**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Psychological status	Pearson Correlation	.529**	1	.370**	.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Economical status	Pearson Correlation	.507**	.370**	1	.470**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100	100
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.544**	.609**	.470**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 indicates that there is positive correlation (.544) between social status and empowerment and between psychological status and empowerment (.609) and economical aspect and women empowerment (.470). This shows that strong social, psychological and economical status of women leads to women empowerment.

INDEPENDENT t – TEST

Hypothesis:

Ho₁: There is no significance difference between the mean of female students and women workers regarding role of higher education to improve the social status of women?

Table 4 : Independent t Test Table

Occupation		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
social	Students	54	2.2917	.51338	.06986
	working women	46	2.0652	.58792	.08668

Variables	T	Df	Sig. value
Social	2.056	98	.042

Table t shows that sig. value is .042 ($p > 0.05$). We accept the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean of female students and women workers regarding role of higher education to improve the social status of women

Ho₂: There is no significance difference between the mean of female students and women workers regarding role of higher education to improve the economically status of women?

Table 5 : Independent t Test Table

Occupation		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
economical	Students	54	2.4722	.65457	.08908
	working women	46	2.3370	.69165	.10198

Variables	T	df	Sig. value
Economical	1.003	98	.318

Table t shows that sig. value is .318 ($p > 0.05$). We accept the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean of female students and working women regarding role of higher education to improve the economically status of women

Ho₃: There is no significance difference between the mean of female students and women workers regarding role of higher education to improve the psychologically status of women?

Table 6 : Independent t Test Table

Occupation		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
psychological	Students	54	2.2654	.71339	.09708
	working women	46	2.1957	.64627	.09529

Variables	T	Df	Sig. value
Psychological	.509	98	.612

Table t shows that sig. value is .612 ($p > 0.05$). We accept the null hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean of female students and women workers regarding role of higher education to improve the psychologically status of women.

OVERALL FINDINGS FROM THE PRIMARY DATA ANALYSIS

The following findings have been summarized based on the primary data analysis.

- It is noticed that all respondents are agree that higher education helps in raising the status of women in family and helps in increasing the self esteem in women
- Respondents (44%) are agreeing that higher education also helps the women in increasing their role in decision making of family and 45% agree that Higher education helps in bringing the awareness in women about their right.
- It is found that higher education helps in improving the socially, psychologically and economically aspect of the women these aspects help in women empowerment.
- There is positive correlation between social, psychological and economical aspects and women empowerment. This shows that strong social, psychological and economical status of women leads to women empowerment.
- It is also found that female students and working women have same mean regarding role of higher education to improve the socially, economically and psychologically status of women.

CONCLUSION

It must be admitted that women are in no way lesser than men are. They have all the power and capacity as that of men. Higher education plays a vital role in process of upliftment of economic, social, psychological and political status of women. Education is most powerful tool to change the position of women in society. It also helps to reduce the inequalities and improve the status of women in family.

There is positive correlation between social, psychological and economical aspects and women empowerment. This shows that strong social, psychological and economical aspects of women leads to women empowerment.

This study's results show that education is very important tool for women to know their duties and rights but only literacy is not ultimate solution there should be proper implementations of government policies that are made for it.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is limited to only female students and women workers in one university of Punjab. The other limitation is the self-report scales were used to measure variables for analysis. This could affect the

result of the study. For future study, similar quantitative research can be carried out in professional institutions in Punjab. In addition, sample size can be increased for study.

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