

## **HOW EDUCATION CREATES WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THREE DISTRICTS OF PUNJAB**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Education is the only powerful tool which can alter the whole world scenario. It is an aid used for empowering every human being in the society especially the women. It provides equal status to both males and females. India being the second populous country in the world after China, comprises of 49% of women population. But if we compare the plight of women as regards other developed countries, then the picture is quite gloomy. They are facing various barriers at every step of life. Our society is basically a male dominated one, here woman enjoy secondary position. So, education play a very important role in the overall development of female growth and development. It however empowers women to respond to the challenges that they have to face and to gain status and respect in the society. In this paper,efforts have been made to discuss how the level of educational attainment affects the women empowerment.

**KEY WORDS:** Educational Attainment, Census, Development, Districts, Empowerment, Growth, Sample, Women

## INTRODUCTION

As it is said by our late Prime Minister Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, “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.”

It is widely noted that economic growth is the central part of development of mankind. It will continue to be so even in the future. The economies which record fast economic growth perceives it to be a matter of great pride and few economies which lag behind remain deprived in terms of self-respect and self-esteem. The phenomenon of economic growth and development has been fascinating economists since long. The classical and neo classical economists focused on factors like capital accumulation, labour, entrepreneurship and innovations. But human capital formation seems to have captured the central place in this regard in recent times. Schultz’s human investment revolution seeks to recognize education as a productive sector, and expenditure on education as an ‘investment’ which produces ‘human capital’. This is comparable with physical capital accumulation. Adam Smith, while recognizing the contribution of education in the process of development had, highlighted the economic ‘capital’ value of education. Other classical economists such as David Ricardo and Thomas Malthus favoured education as a means of inculcating good habits, a desire for self-improvement, moral commitments and individual responsibility.

Women account for roughly half of the world's population, perform two-thirds of the hours they worked, receive one-tenth of the world's income, and have less than one hundredth of the world's property registered in their names. Female deprivation is particularly acute in the developing countries with high levels of poverty found among them. But in affluent nations women also suffer low status due to conservative attitudes noticed in societies.

The most dramatic statistics that depicts women's status is the sex-ratio in the population. It is the number of females per 1000 males. It is a well-known fact that life-expectancy at birth

favors females. This appears to be a biological constraint. Yet, the proportion of females to males varies greatly across different regions of the world. For example, the proportion of females is 52.5% in the industrial world but in sub-Saharan region, the African women account for only 51% of the population. The figures are 48% of the population in East Asia and less than 47% in South Asia. Amartya Sen has estimated that there are 100 million women "missing" in the world. Sen describes the fate of these women as "one of the more momentous problems facing the contemporary world." This is a moral as well as a development-related problem. The reason why 100 million women are missing in the world is due to excess female mortality. In the developed world, women outlive men by an average of six years but in large parts of South Asia, men can expect to live longer than women.

Differential mortality is only of the most dramatic manifestation of systematic discrimination against females. Women and girls are more likely to be impoverished than men and boys. Studies have found that girls are fed less than their brothers and that their illnesses are less likely to be treated. It is not a matter of surprise that, in most regions of the world, women educational attainment fall far short of male education attainment.

### **Women Educational Attainment in Punjab**

Punjab, the land of 5 rivers, scores fairly well in agriculture but not so well when it comes to education. With the partition of British India in 1947, a large part of Punjab went to Pakistan and in 1966 some parts of Punjab went to Himachal Pradesh & Haryana. But now Punjab is having 50,400Km<sup>2</sup> of area with a population of roughly 2.8 crore people.

The overall literacy level in Punjab is 69.7% according to Census 2011 which is low as compared to the national average of 75%. The sex ratio is much skewed in Punjab with 876 females per 1000 males. The literacy levels of females is 63.4% which is also much lower than that of males whose literacy rate is 75.2%. This variation is visible across the districts as

well, with some districts having high literacy levels while others having a very contrast picture. Hoshiarpur District tops the list with 81% literacy rate whereas Mansa district is at the bottom with 52.4% literacy rate. There are 13,397 primary schools in the state benefitting 1.3 million kids studying there. According to the Annual Status of Education Report 2006, 52% of the students in standard 3 could not read a standard 1 text book which improved slightly to 46% in 2010. About 1.7% of the total children in the age group 6-14 years are not going to schools.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Carolyn L. McMillan, Kevin D. O'Gorman, Andrew C. MacLaren, (2011)** examined the study titled "Commercial hospitality: A vehicle for the sustainable empowerment of Nepali women". The aim of writing this paper is to study how commercial hospitality lead to social change in Nepal and it remained for long and resulted due to empowerment among women. All the already developed theories were collected and integrated and a new outline was created. This model was used to depict empowerment among women who were either owners of tea houses or who were its employees at managerial posts. It took them 3 months to collect data from central areas of Nepal and it was collected through general observation method and by conducting interviews. When females started doing job in hospitality industry, the results of tea owners showed that women got decision making power and even the future generation also attained facilities with respect to education, employment opportunities and other alternatives. To understand the permanent effects of women empowerment through hospitality, there is a need to conduct similar study in some other region also. Women who work in such industries do bring change in them and there is always some room for betterment.

**Nessrin Shaya, Rawan Abu Khait, (2017)** examined the study under title “Feminizing leadership in the Middle East: Emirati women empowerment and leadership style”. This paper plans to formulate an experimental investigation which originates from a Middle-Eastern areas, that how women can be empowered by eradicating discrimination between males and females. A framework was developed keeping in mind socio-cultural factors which lead to success of women from Emirates who reached at top hierarchy of management and how they transformed their roles according to the environment. Data was collected from 4 women from Emirates and a structured interview was conducted. Later on thematic analysis was conducted to get the desired results. Women empowerment and their leadership qualities were influenced by government, ethics related to Muslim religion in addition to family. It is concluded that socio economic situation of nation along with financial position of family and other ethics involved in business influence the decision-making power of females. The challenges faced by these women from UAE is not the same as experienced by other women from Middle East. Many studies of this kind have been conducted in European countries but they are not applicable here as there is a lot of difference in the culture and customs of these two areas. The study has created confidence amongst the females from UAE as they feel that they can also do challenging jobs.

**Paul (1970)** in his study tries to trace the emancipation and education of women since 1829 and to determine the factors that have shaped the course of this development and directed its trends. Before the Muslim conquest, which brought the Purdah system, child-marriage, polygamy and divorce, the Hindu woman’s status had changed from equality of men to complete slavery. He argued that the factors that have influenced the present emancipated status of the women are more political than social and economic and these are the influence of English education and efforts of Christian missions. Three developments are important in the modern period. First there has been important influx of female Christian missionaries

from 1819-1854. Second, a government policy of grant-in-aid to voluntary associations had been pursued between the period 1854-1884. And third, from 1884 onwards, the government's direct share in girls' education has been larger.

**Rifat Akhter, Kathryn B. Ward, (2009)** examined the study with title "Globalization and gender equality: A critical analysis of women's empowerment in the global economy". The primary motive behind writing this paper is to find the consequences of globalization on decision making power of women. It makes use of technique that combines lagged cross-sectional and cross-sectional investigations. The author collects sample from 48 to 70 countries and makes use of least square method of regression. It is found that the female gets empowerment as soon as she gets educated and attains the decisionmaking power. Various external forces do affect empowerment in case of women. Foreign Direct Investment decreases the share of women in labour force participation but on the other hand it increases the share in secondary education. In this various aspects of experiences which females have earned are taken into consideration. Some decisions have positive while others have negatives effects on empowerment of women. All the research works undertaken earlier have taken one or the other aspects while this one is complete in every aspect. The reason being that empowerment amongst females depends on education, formal labour force, informal labour force and other scores related to gender empowerment.

**Shah (2011)** in her study tries to examine a national girls' education program and its role in addressing gender inequality in the Indian state of Gujarat. In 2004, the Ministry of Education, Government of India, enacted the Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyala (KGBV) program. It is a national program designed to increase educational access for the most marginalized girls, the KGBV program innovatively partners with the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) CARE India and employs a curriculum focused on fostering girls'

"empowerment". Empowerment, a process relating to an increase in individuals' power over resources and decisions in their life, relies upon education as the key institution to provide the tools to expand women's access to the economic and political spheres of society. Employing an ethnographic and institutional approach, this study empirically investigates the education-empowerment link by examining how institutional form impacts the social processes that both define and characterize empowerment. In other words, it investigates how empowerment is manifested in one KGBV school. It presents an ethnographic study of a KGBV in Gujarat, and identifies findings related to the ability of KGBV program to create a unique "space" that fosters empowerment of women.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER**

If there is any significant difference between the two categories of females, first being Graduate and less and second being Post Graduate and above as regards women empowerment in the three chosen districts ie Hoshiarpur, Patiala and Mansa.

### **RESEARCH METHDOLOGY**

The present study will be based on primary data as it is increasingly believed that the generation of relevant data forms an integral part of any data- based investigation. It is quite evident that to carry out the empirical investigations, the objectives must be achieved and the hypothesis must be formulated and tested with the help of appropriate statistics so as to draw scientific inferences. Hence each type of data has its own advantages as well as disadvantages. In our present study three districts have been selected with the help of information collected through secondary sources as generated by the Directorate of Census Operations, Punjab. According to Census 2011 out of 22 districts of Punjab, Hoshiarpur is at the top with the highest female literacy level of 80.3% and Mansa is at the bottom with the lowest female literacy level of 55.7%. Patiala is included as third state in the present study as

it has a moderate female literacy level of 69.8% as per census 2011. Special attention is given here to theoretical and empirical literature on how education as human capital affects living standards, economic growth and empowerment among females of the society in Punjab. Thus, female education has an impact on female work force participation rates as well. Women empowerment will be used as a dependent factor, while female literacy rate will be used as an independent factor.

In population study, sampling is necessary as well as advantageous as depending on complete census is difficult, costly as well as time consuming. There are many sampling techniques but here random stratified sampling technique is used. The results of random stratified sampling technique is more reliable and valid as the whole population will be divided into several groups that are individually more homogeneous than the whole population. In random sampling, every person has an equal chance of being selected in a sample. As there is no standardized tool to test the hypothesis that high level of educational attainment among women leads to economic development, so it was decided to construct a tool to test the hypothesis. A questionnaire was prepared to collect information from the subjects to meet the requirements of the study.

In the present study, three districts of Punjab ie Hoshiarpur, Mansa and Patiala have been taken. Further from each district there was selection of two blocks according to the level of development. One block selected was the most developed one and another was the least developed one. Then from each block one village was selected and from each village 50 respondents were taken. These 50 respondents were 10 from SC category, 10 from BC category and 30 from General category. In all a sample of 600 respondents was taken.

After making groups and preparing the questionnaire, next step in the present research paper was to collect the primary data. The primary data was collected through personal interview method. All the interviews were conducted either at home or at work place so that the

respondents may feel comfortable and relaxed while giving the needed information. Mostly questions were translated in Punjabi verbally so that respondents may feel comfortable to answer them in the stipulated time. In the process of data collection, certain hurdles were faced. They felt difficult to answer questions regarding their status at home and their role in decision making. The individual upon whom the questionnaire was to be administered was clearly explained the motive behind getting the requisite information and assured that the information collected from her would be used only for the purpose of research and would never be used for any other purpose.

After collecting the data, the information was put into the tables. The collected data was analyzed on the desired lines and necessary interpretations were made regarding empowerment enjoyed by females after getting educated. Comparison among the various groups that were formed was made. Descriptive statistics was used while analyzing the data that is collected. Frequencies, mean and standard deviations of all the values that are taken were calculated. Further use of t- test and F- test ie ANOVA was made as the study involved the comparison of three districts. Software program was used to derive the test results.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

## Empowerment Amongst Females after Attaining Education

.	STATEMENT	GRADUATION AND LESS N=106		POST GRADUATION AND ABOVE N=494		t-value	p-value
		MEAN	S D	MEAN	SD		
1	Women created self employment	3.88	0.87	3.73	0.73	1.75	0.080
2	Women created employment opportunities	3.65	0.55	3.63	0.54	0.44	0.660
3	Women generated extra income	3.72	0.56	3.68	0.55	0.59	0.557
4	Women have changed their lifestyle	3.99	0.79	3.86	0.69	1.67	0.096
5	Women contributed to poverty reduction	3.52	0.52	3.55	0.56	-0.51	0.614
6	Women reduced discrimination	3.57	0.52	3.56	0.53	0.17	0.868
7	Women upgraded social status	3.89	0.77	3.78	0.69	1.41	0.158
8	Women established institutions	3.25	0.45	3.29	0.53	-0.98	0.329
9	Women reduced self dependence	3.42	0.53	3.41	0.54	0.11	0.915
10	Women enhanced economic freedom	3.53	0.57	3.48	0.58	0.75	0.452
11	Women have power to take family decision	2.27	0.52	2.82	0.62	-1.12	0.263
12	Women give their children better education	3.64	0.76	3.46	0.71	1.28	0.202
13	Women enhanced their standard of living	3.46	0.77	3.44	0.75	0.91	0.363
14	Women made savings	3.23	0.48	3.22	0.57	-0.79	0.432
15	Women have a decision making on community	2.34	0.52	2.49	0.56	-2.14	0.033

In the first question “Women created self -employment”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.88 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.73. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.87 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.73. The t-value is 1.75 and p- value is 0.080. As the p-value  $0.080 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the second question “Women created employment opportunities”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.65 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.63. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.55 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.54. The t-value is 0.44 and p- value is 0.66. As the p-value  $0.66 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the third question “Women generated extra income”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.72 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.68. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.56 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.55. The t-value is 0.59 and p- value is 0.56. As the p-value  $0.56 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the fourth question “Women have changed their life style”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.99 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.86. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.79 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.69. The t-value is 1.67 and p- value is 0.09. As the p-value  $0.09 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the fifth question “Women contributed to poverty reduction”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.52 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.55. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.52 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.56. The t-value is -0.51 and p- value is 0.61. As the p-value  $0.61 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the sixth question “Women reduced discrimination”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.57 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.56. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.52 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.53. The t-value is 0.17 and p- value is 0.87. As the p-value  $0.87 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the seventh question “Women upgraded social status”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.89 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.78. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.77 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.69. The t-value is 1.41 and p- value is 0.16. As the p-value  $0.16 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the eighth question “Women established institutions”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.25 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.29. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.45 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.53. The t-value is -0.98 and p- value is 0.33. As the p-value  $0.33 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the ninth question “Women reduced selfdependence”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.42 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.41. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.53 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.54. The t-value is 0.11 and p- value is 0.92. As the p-value  $0.92 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the tenth question “Women enhanced economic freedom”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.53 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.48. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.57 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.58. The t-value is 0.75 and p- value is 0.45. As the p-value  $0.45 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the eleventh question “Women have power to take family decisions”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 2.27 while that of Post Graduate and above is 2.82. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.52 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.62. The t-value is -1.12 and p- value is 0.26. As the p-value  $0.26 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the twelfth question “Women give their children better education”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.64 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.46. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.76 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.71. The t-value is 1.28 and p- value is 0.20. As the p-value  $0.20 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the thirteenth question “Women enhanced their living standard”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.46 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.44. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.77 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.75. The t-value is 0.91 and p-value is 0.36. As the p-value  $0.36 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the fourteenth question “Women made savings”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 3.23 while that of Post Graduate and above is 3.22. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.48 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.57. The t-value is -0.79 and p-value is 0.43. As the p-value  $0.43 > 0.05$ , so the value is not significant and there is no significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

In the fifteenth question “Women have a decision making on community”, the mean of Graduate and less females which are 106 in number is 2.34 while that of Post Graduate and above is 2.49. The standard deviation of Graduate and less is 0.52 while that of Post Graduate and above which are 494 in number is 0.56. The t-value is -2.14 and p-value is 0.03. As the p-value  $0.03 < 0.05$ , so the value is significant and there is a significant difference between the Graduate and less and Post Graduate and above category females.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In this research paper, the effect of female educational attainment on the women empowerment in rural areas of three districts of Punjab has been studied. The purpose of this study was to see if there is any significant difference between the two categories of females, first being Graduate and less and second being Post Graduate and above in the three chosen districts ie Hoshiarpur, Patiala and Mansa. The main focus was to have an insight into the

factors that affect the level of education among females and how education further affect the decision-making power of the females.

There was a general view in the given sample that the male is always treated superior to females or few think that they are treated equally. But very few of them say that women have upper hand in society. They feel that they should get equal opportunities in life as given to men. There will be better governance if women enter in political field. But there are certain controversial views also as females from Mansa district feels that male child is essential in family. They feel that a lady is better recognized in the society if she gives birth to a son. It shows a lack of confidence among female population as they feel that they are in some way or the other inferior to the males. But few ladies were so bold that when they were asked about their rebirth, they don't regret being women next time. They are happy to be either male or female as they can manage their life either way. Various questions were asked as to what extent their decision making power improved after education, to what extent they feel empowered after getting educated and which factors influenced them to attain education level. All the results received through statistical tools show no significant difference among these three districts except the last question.

These results are in conformity with the premises of the prevalent theories according to which women who are well educated and those who are employed enjoy better social status. They also enjoy good living standard and are provided with all the luxuries of life. Hardwork made once is paid for the lifetime. Thus, war to get women empowerment be won only by education, work participation and from economic fronts.

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