



Review of Literature Impact of Education in Socio-Economic Development of Women

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Abstract: This is a review paper on the impact of education on economic development of women. From the literature review undertaken, it is clear that the contribution of education to economic development may be positive, negative or nothing. There are three distinctive ways of determining contribution of education to economic development: (a) rate of return analysis: education is an investment which enhances productivity and yield monetary and non-monetary returns; (b) human resource approach: through education future needs workers might be met to attain economic development; and (c) education and economic growth analyses: education has got a major multiplier role in economic analysis growth. There is lack of research on the impact / contribution of education on the economic development of the country. Whatever small amount of research projects are available on it in India; they are unable to convince our policymakers to invest in the education sector. Therefore, there is a need for research on the contribution of education to the economic development of India and convince our policymakers to increase the public spending on education – elementary, secondary and higher education and education research.

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Introduction:

Indian society has primarily been a fragmented society. Inequality has been a major problem. The society has differentiated people on their caste and class and even based on their gender i.e. male or female. In this context Wali (1984) remarked that in India, the cultural conditioning and the socialization pattern, customs, rituals, traditions, value systems, religious ethos have been different for males and females, where a female develops a voiceless minus personality. Miller (1981) went to the extent of observing that Indian culture maintains that women should not be given power and their views should not taken into account during decision-making process. Though women in India are worshipped as deities, having supreme powers, there does not seem to have been a perceptible change in the status of women over ages. Ilaiah (1981) opined that division of labour is artificially imposed by one sex on the other. It argues that though a women's work consumes the same amount of time and energy as a man's, yet the increased productivity in industry, has hardly improved her position. Deutsch (1944) remarked about the prevailing view of women and suggested that women were passive and dependent while men were active and assertive.

According to Friedan (1983), women have a single option to become wives and in due course mothers. Women, who realized this as an inadequate

goal, felt stirrings of independence, assertiveness and generally experienced tension. Many experts found, that being female they themselves did not realize their individuality adequately (Scarf, 1980).

Women came to be treated as second-class citizens with almost no rights and bereft of education. They have been neglected and relegated back in a male dominated society and the same might be true for all the societies in the world. Since the focus of the present study is India, the status of women has been viewed in the Indian set up. Some historical accounts project that Indian women had contributed to the development of society. In Vedic times, the women enjoyed a high status in society and there are evidences of existence of women scholars like Gargi, Maitreyi and Lopamudra. The great epics, the "Ramayana" and the "Mahabharata" are both heroine centric epics. However, if the status of women during ancient India is analysed one does find that it had been inferior to men. Draupadi for example was humiliated in the court, in the presence of all courtiers. Large number of such examples can be quoted from ancient history and culture. With the advent of foreign rule, the position further deteriorated regarding status of women. They were denied the right to face the men folk.

Educational Status :

Education, marriage employment and status are indirectly related to each other. Like all the

traditional societies, Indian women were not given access to knowledge until the middle of the nineteenth century. The social reformers were first to recognize the need to educate women if social change was to be ushered in. Kapadia et al. (1968) felt that rapid stride in education of women has created conditions for them to be self-reliant. In spite of the fact that society has accepted the value of imparting education to women, yet so many issues which require clarification such as objective behind women's education and its nature. In addition to this it is to be considered about the level of education and the nature of educational institution whether it should be coeducational or an exclusive female institution. Besides, the expectation of society from educated women, reaction of women themselves to such issues are also important factors.

On account of increase in the minimum age of marriage and likelihood of scope of employment in future, many parents were encouraged to send their daughters to school as well as to college. However, the possibility of marriage proves as a powerful motivational factor in the education of girls. The education of boys ordinarily extends upto the age of 24-26 years, which indirectly enhances the age of marriageable girls who are to be educated until they get a suitable match.

Toshiwal (1991) mentioned that education and modernization were positively related and female students were more modernized than males. According to Miyoo (1992), education has also contributed to social mobility. The policy on education (NPE 1986) is a landmark study in the evolution of the status of Indian women, wherein education has been given the mandate in bringing about women's equality and empowerment through revised curricula. Reorientation of educational personnel and making women's studies the drive arm for generating and supporting action was also enumerated. The NCERT took the initiative in 1988 to set the first chair in women's studies in the country. Nayar (1989) made a situational analysis of the Indian girl child from a gender equality perspective. The study revealed that the learning opportunities available to the Indian girl child in real life situations are very low. Nair et al. (1992) identified factors of continuance and discontinuance of girl's education in urban slums of Delhi. The major correlates of continuance were, better economic standing in the household, parental education, motivation and a supportive home climate. Dropouts occurred largely because of load of domestic work and sibling care. They expressed their feelings of being discriminated against their brothers. Gender discrimination was found evident in Intra household distribution of food, healthcare, education and recreation. Duggal (1992) made a micro study of SC girl's education in Haryana and found that parents

perceived male teachers discriminating, based on sex among students. This had a negative impact on the continuance of girls' education.

Sharma (1989) analysed the personal and social factors affecting the success and retention of girls in the field of science and concluded that women who enter scientific field, which is traditionally a male dominant area, crossed a social barrier and were found to be more successful and attitudinally better than men.

The department of women studies at NCERT has carried out several studies. Nayar et al. (1992) found in a sample study of 3000 urban and rural households that parents have substantially lower educational and occupational aspirations for their daughters as compared to sons. They also do not subscribe to equality between sexes. Sommers (1992) tried to assess the need for levels of achievements and gender identity and its impact on female students. He mentioned that those who chose female dominant paths found that the need to achieve was higher amongst females. Masculine and Rogynous identity was prominent among subjects proposing for male dominant fields.

Studies of Desai (1945) revealed that favourable attitude of educating girls had been already built up, yet the society was not ready to bestow higher education to girls. Following closely this phase was, Cormack's study of 1953, that a girl enhances her prospects of marriage by studying up to S.S.C. level. However, if she advances to higher levels of education she might have lesser chances of marriage. Girls were often imparted lesser education than boys and although when girls were educated, the aspirations of their parents and that too of the girls themselves were lower as compared to their male counterparts. For young girls, marriage and children were considered the primary activity and education was imparted only to make her a better wife and mother or to secure a better husband.

Her division of labour became characterized by maintenance activities and domestic work became her primary role. As productive workers, males left the household and became identified with public sphere therefore women were confined to the household, their work and surroundings became increasingly privatised and isolated. The recognition that domestic work was indeed an economic activity is interestingly reflected in the law relating to property allocation during divorce, where the wife's household activity was accounted as one of the forms of contribution, for which the law would take cognisance in liquidating matrimonial assets in settling divorce matters. Gray (1977), Oakley and Ann (1977) have extensively documented women's experience of housework and confirmed that most women found it monotonous,

fragmented and isolating. The low status of work served to confirm and reinforce the subordinate position of these women even though theirs was a full time job. Household production consisted of those unpaid activities, which are carried out by the members of the family, whose activities might be replaced by market goods or paid services. Clemont (1982) opined that if an activity is of a character that it could be delegated to a paid worker, then that activity shall be deemed productive. According to Nair (1966) the three ways in which wives and mothers could contribute to the economic situations of their families were, earning money out of household production, advancing welfare of her own and other family members and by participating in voluntary community services, Household production was a highly important component of the families' economic condition where a high proportion of womenpower was involved in either full-time or part-time vocation.

According to Radhakrishnan (1980), the educational backwardness among women may be attributed to the fact that in Indian society there was an over emphasis on the gender role i.e. a female should be submissive, dutiful and homely. Therefore, in India the social attitudes to girls' education varied from an acceptable to a level of indifference. Even today, people do not understand that education is a universal right, not a class or gender privilege.

Economic Status:

Traditionally, there is division of work amongst female members of a family wherein the main determining factor is the age. When women grow old, her part in division of labour becomes diverse. Traditionally, earning and giving economic support to their families is not her primary function. She undertakes these functions when circumstances compel her to do so. Mehta et al. (1982) said that women postponed their decision to work because of marriage and bringing up their children. There was a conflict between assigned social roles in the family and their own individual aspirations.

Merchant (1935) suggested a general question on the functions of women in society. Accordingly, 85.4% respondents replied that women's domain is home and she has a separate function to perform while 40.9% women did not believe so. They remarked that functions of both men and women should be equal.

Kannabiran (1987) made a study in evaluating women's labour. He refers to a low-value attached to women's work in practically all societies across the world citing the following two casual factors:

General inclination to regard women's work as secondary and subordinate to men's work.

Factual evaluation of women's work by certain agencies, which underestimates their contribution to and participation in economic activity.

Desai (1969) inquired about household activities, where husbands could co-operate. It was found that though husbands helped in the educational activities of wives, majority of them did not share the household work. Ramanamma (1968) suggested that out of 415 workingwomen, only 7 women were such, who did not have to do any household work whereas in 24 cases, their husbands shared their household work. The remaining respondent women had to manage on their own.

Thus, it may be concluded that in the traditional normative structure any additional role entails extra burden on women. In a society where norms do not permit husbands to participate in domestic chores, the plight of workingwomen is understandable.

Dubey (1958) remarked that according to the traditional norm of society the husband is expected to be an authoritarian figure whose will should prevail in the domestic scene. As the head of household, he should demand respect and obedience from his wife and children. The conclusion is that the husband is 'superior', and his wife is his 'subordinate.'

Often husbands are pleased to have educated wives who although have traditional outlook yet can perform the wifely duties in a smart manner.

Two or three features marked the employment of women after industrial revolution. The pre-industrial occupation did not mean dichotomy between home and work place. A woman could look after her baby, supervise her kitchen and yet go on working.

Gainful employment in industrial societies, snatch away women from home and problems of performing dual roles emerge. Ahuja (1985) studied women and economic activities and discussed intrahousehold distribution of work and income as well as the impact of technology on status of women.

In the last three or four decades, Indian middle class women have entered the working arena. Women are seen employed as clerks, typists, receptionists, secretaries, field workers, research workers etc. Khobragade (1985) reported that the girls took education to gain status in the society and for gaining economic and personal independence to improve one's personality. Vohra (1986) advocated that education leading to gainful employment could enhance the status of women.

Though social norms accept a woman's work role, may be out of sheer economic necessity yet the society is not ready to accept the full implication of her new role dimensions. The society's attitude is that so long as her work role does not interfere with her family

role, it has no objection. However, no positive effort is being made to co-operate in her work role.

Women in job situations are also accepted as junior workers, who may carry out orders but are not supposed to give orders. This feeling is more acute when a woman enters a male dominated occupation. She may not face opposition in the traditionally recognized female occupations. This situation makes it difficult for a woman to feel satisfied in her work role. According to Hate (1969) there were various arguments put forward to permit women in lower rungs of the corporate ladder. It has been observed that even if she were not married today and continuing in her job, she would leave eventually after marriage.

Had she been married, there was always an apprehension that she would leave her job as soon as a child is born to her. It was also felt that she lacked qualities, which were necessary for occupying higher positions. These qualities men consider are lack of initiative, lack of decision-making, shyness, lack of ambition and inferiority complex. They all come in the way of women elevated to higher posts.

Stalin (1978) observed that the class or social group plays the principal role in social enhancement. This group performs the main functions and in course of time takes control of social enhancement. This is very true in case of women. Most of the primitive societies were generally considered matriarchal societies in which women played the principal role of earning family income, ran the household work, and earned family income.

Claims of today's society are two fold; the need of the society to perpetrate and to regenerate itself. These together put a relatively greater burden on women. Goldstein (1972) observed that employed women act both as an educated person who can mix with men and women of different castes and religions and at home as an obedient, subservient and somewhat neglected young female. The possibility of role conflict is growing. Kapur (1974) observed that the system required and utilized the work of women as they have been working both for maintenance, satisfaction as human beings as also members of society. These women are compelled by stress of economic condition to take up a career or a job in order to add to family income. Reed (1947) recognized the fact that married women are increasingly employed in gainful work. Singh (1972) reported that women who work on their own initiative do not perceive employment as interference to childcare.

Whereas women who were forced into employment often experienced a conflict of roles to be fulfilled. Devi (1982) reported that seeking participation in decision making by working women was accepted. They also exercised more freedom in

spending family income and they received help in executing household responsibilities.

Social Status:

Rao (1983) observed that the social status of women is usually determined by the position of her husband or family and her individual achievements were rarely considered. The wife of a well placed man enjoys higher status than a woman who herself is highly qualified and competent in her job. Therefore, the 'ascribed status' dominated over the 'achieved status', which was a part of the total social system.

Vedlankari (1983) observed that there is a small section of brilliant women at the apex of politics, education, medicine, administration, public health, law, nursing, journalism, writing, advertising and the fine arts whereas on the other hand the great mass of Indian women, are still illiterate and oppressed. This explains that few women have managed to acquire top positions in different fields of specializations while the majority of women lag behind due to their poor socio-economic status.

As already referred to earlier, Mukherjee and Verma (1987) studied the socio-economic backwardness in women and found that social indicators show that the social status of lower class women is not static but it is passing through transition stage where they are neither socially backward nor fully advanced, while economic indicators show an absolute economic backwardness. Majority of women are engaged in household activities such as knitting or sewing. Bahuguna (1987) studied that Garhwali women still live in abject poverty and are sidetracked whenever developmental needs of society and methods of implementation are discussed. Mangal and Pankaj (1988) studied women and development processes in India. They argued that though the role of women has undergone a marked change over the years, the concept of women as earners has so far been eclipsed by the concept of a 'nurturer'. They examined the impact of rapidly changing patterns of female employment on social status of women.

Chandana (1989) compared the social context of women's higher education and found that even after a decade, higher education was still the preserve of higher castes within the middle and upper strata of society. The proportion of those pursuing higher education because of their interest in studies increased manifold and those who joined for no special reasons showed a marked decline. The study revealed that 90% of women would continue to work after marriage, subject to certain conditions. In addition, a large proportion of women have been planning a career before marriage. Choudhary (1988) found that educated women are by and large aware of their rights but have only partial knowledge of the laws and acts concerning their rights. Although awareness

about the minimum age at marriage, dowry, inter-caste, inter religious marriage is there yet comprehensive knowledge of the legal provisions for widow marriage, divorce, maintenance etc. is not there. Educated girls are inclined towards equality between sexes and participation in decision making. Amongst them, there is a positive attitude towards female education, co-education, and female employment. They also believe that education and employment provide higher capabilities to women for adjustment in adverse situation. In the erosion of old values educated women are likely to be prime movers. Mutalik (1991) found that education has a significant correlation with the acquisition of social awareness. Gokhale (1991) found that industrialization and technological advancement have brought changes in women's attitudes. Fatima (1989) found that women with higher education had a favourable attitude towards girl's education and shedding the social evils of dowry. Kakati (1989) found that though husbands and parents were in favour of employment of their wives and daughters respectively, yet household work was still considered the responsibility of the workingwomen herself. The positive gains of employment were perceived to be that working women played the role of decision maker to a great extent and enjoyed freedom of movement outside their homes. This whole ambience created a new awareness in their minds, which in turn strengthened their claims towards equality. Rajvanshi (1991) on the other hand states that inspite of improved education and status; the employment of women has had only a marginal influence on the patriarchal structure of the family. In workingwomen, the study however indicated a direct relation between higher education and better occupational aspirations. Besides, the higher education of girls resulted in late marriages and employed girls seemed more choosy in selecting their marital partners. Workingwomen enjoyed a better status compared to a non-working woman but the former also suffered greater role conflict. Sundaram (1991) made a study of women entrepreneurs who had established a body with the title "Women industrialists of Maharashtra Association." The members of this association generally followed stereotyped trades, which were in fact largely home based. It was evident from this study that education and training definitely improved women entrepreneurs in business.

Kantamma (1990) found that higher the education of women. Greater is their participation in decision making and they acquire progressive opinion on different issues. Jaiswal (1989) in a comparative study of male and female scientists and engineers found that women have yet to achieve equal status with men. These women despite their high technical educational and occupational status continue to be

subservient to traditional male authority. This shows the continuance of patriarchy. Louis (1989) made a study of women's position and found that they possess high aspirations, excellence in academic performance, better self-confidence, positive self-image, independence, sincerity, hard work and duty consciousness.

Education and technology

As per convergence theories every country needs to prepare itself to face advanced technological improvements (Levin, 1998). Education prepares the country to face it confidently (Karatzia-Stavlioti & Lambropoulos, 2009) in the fields of science and technology (Bloom et al., 2005). With growing pressure on natural resources and automation, man can produce more than he can consume because of education (Lang, 1965). Solow (1957) studied the US economy from 1909 to 1949 with respect to the shift in production function and its cause. He found that 87.5 percent of the change was due to technical change. He included "improvements in the education of the labour force" as one of the factors for technical change. During liberalization, a country experiences higher technology transfers. An increase in the relative demand for trained labour generates the advantage of trained over untrained labour (Pissarides, 1997). Jones & Hatcher (1994) based their theory on Marx's Capitalist theory and said "to understand the nature of change in capitalist society, it is necessary not only to appreciate the nectar of technical progress, and the genuine advances that it offers to large groups of people, but also to calculate the costs of the modernising project". Thus, an investment in the field of education can increase the receptive ability of the youth labour force.

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