

**The Impact of Education and Psychology in Empowering Women and Girls:
Narrative Review**

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Abstract

Empowerment, the process by which a person is enabled to increase control over decisions concerning their life, is a multidimensional construct that has been extensively discussed by various disciplines for more than four decades. Several empowerment models have been presented, based on different approaches. Women empowerment is one of the modalities of women equity. Psychological empowerment is needed for the inner self-empowerment of an individual woman. Until and unless women are mentally strong and psychologically sound, they will not be able to overcome the hindrances in the path of their empowerment.

A psychologically distressed woman would never be able to withstand the outlash of difficulties at home or at work because of low self-esteem and higher stress levels. The decision-making power and resilience in stressful situations may also get affected because of the low psychological empowerment levels. Thus, a need to psychologically empower women be they homemakers or working women is essential. Various psychological factors need to be given importance in women's psyche to improve their quality of life.

Key words: Women Empowerment, Education, psychology

تأثير التعليم وعلم النفس في تمكين النساء والفتيات

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الملخص

التمكين، العملية التي يتم من خلالها تمكين الشخص من زيادة السيطرة على القرارات المتعلقة بحياته، هو بناء متعدد الأبعاد تمت مناقشته على نطاق واسع من قبل مختلف التخصصات لأكثر من أربعة عقود. تم تقديم العديد من نماذج التمكين، استنادا إلى نهج مختلفة. تمكين المرأة هو أحد طرائق إنصاف المرأة. هناك حاجة إلى التمكين النفسي للتمكين الذاتي الداخلي للمرأة الفردية. حتى ما لم تكن النساء قويات عقليا. وسليمان نفسيًا، لن يتمكن من التغلب على العقبات في طريق تمكينهن .

لن تتمكن المرأة المتعثرة نفسيًا أبداً من تحمل رد فعل الصعوبات في المنزل أو في العمل بسبب تدني احترام الذات وارتفاع مستويات التوتر. قد تتأثر أيضا قوة صنع القرار والمرونة في المواقف العصبية بسبب انخفاض مستويات التمكين النفسي. وبالتالي، فإن الحاجة إلى تمكين النساء نفسيًا سواء كن ربات بيوت أو عاملات أمر ضروري. يجب إعطاء عوامل نفسية مختلفة أهمية في نفسية المرأة لتحسين نوعية حياتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية : تمكين المرأة ، التعليم ، علم النفس

Introduction

Historically, the need for empowerment has emerged from the fact that humans stratified to specific gender and race societal strata have been oppressed as a result of ruling powers exerted on them over the years, leading to discrimination and alienation, rendering them powerless. Facilitating the awareness of their situation and guiding them to take action toward self-determination were the first steps in the establishment of the empowerment theory [1,2]. Background of the study

“Empowering woman is a perquisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their value systems lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation”. Women constitute more than 50% of the population,

undertake most of the work (two thirds) but only receive one tenth of the total income rather than men. The working hours of women are longer than that of men, 12-16 hours per day. In addition to their domestic responsibilities in child care, women have to be responsible for housework, raising children, working...etc.

W – Wonderful gift of nature.

O – Originator of life.

M – Monitor of external and internal affairs.

E – Emotional incarnation.

N – Nightingale in the garden of humanity

Empowerment is the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities. This enables them to represent their interests in a responsible

and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. It is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights Empowerment as action refers both to the process of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which enables them to overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to recognize and use their resources

The Development of Women Empowerment

There has been a paradigm shift of focus on women, from the concept of “welfare” towards “development” and now towards “empowerment” from the nineties. Several fronts have taken up different initiatives to uplift rural, semi urban & urban woman and to bring them to the mainstream of a growing economy. As a part of these initiatives, the Government had declared the year 2001 as “Women’s empowerment year” to focus on a vision “Where women are equal partners like men”

Empowerment has 6 components:

- 1- Cognitive
- 2- Economic
- 3- Legal
- 4- Psychological
- 5- Political
- 6- Social

Here, we are selecting the psychological component of empowerment. The psychological component would include "the development of feelings that women can act upon to improve their condition.

This means formation of the belief that they can succeed in change efforts". The participation of women in business enables them to acquire inimitable psychological benefits to rise up psychologically powerful which are an essential for women empowerment in any socio- cultural and economic environment and situations. The confidence and courage understanding the rights, privileges, roles a responsibilities, poster of self determination, positive attitude, risk taking ability, the power to face challenges of daily life, gaining knowledge and new ideas and skills, great relief from mental stress and anxiety, leading a happy and satisfied life and so on .(9) (15)

Women's empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development(humanity) and economics. Economic empowerment allows women to control and benefit from resources, assets and income. It also aids in the ability to manage risks and improve women's well-being.[4] It can result in approaches to support trivialized genders in a particular political or social context.[5] While often interchangeably used, the more comprehensive concept of gender Women empowerment helps boost women's status through literacy, education, training and awareness creation.[6] Furthermore, women's empowerment refers to women's ability to make strategic life choices that were previously denied them.[7]

Nations, businesses, communities and groups may benefit from implementing programs and policies that adopt the notion of female empowerment.[8] Women's empowerment enhances the quality and the quantity of human resources available for development.[9] Empowerment is one of the main procedural

concerns when addressing human rights and development Women's empowerment is key to economic and social outcomes. Benefits from projects that empower women are higher than those that just mainstream gender .If half of small-scale producers benefited from development interventions that focused on empowering women, it would significantly raise the incomes of an additional 58 million people and increase the resilience of an additional 235 million people.[10]

Importance of Women Education

"If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother empowered". PT. Jawaharlal Nehru. Women education in general plays a very important role in the overall development of the countries .(1)

It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. If it is said that education is the key to all problems, then it won't be improper. Thinkers have given a number of definitions of education but out of these definitions, the most important definition is "Education is that which demonstrates the difference between what is good and what is evil". If we consider the above definition, we come to know that whatever revolutions that have taken place in our history, education is at the base of them. (3)

Education means modification of behaviour in every aspect, such as mentality, outlook, attitude etc.

Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

Raising Consciousness

To create women empowerment, feminists randomly use consciousness raising. When raising consciousness, women not only become knowledgeable about their personal struggles but how it is related to political and economical issues. Raising consciousness allows marginalized individuals to see where they are placed in the larger social structure and pinpoint the root of their oppression. Awareness of their problems will initiate self-mobilization which precisely creates empowerment.

Building Relationships

In addition, feminists, specifically feminist organizers, focus on building relationships as a medium for creating women empowerment. Scholars claim that building relationships results in empowerment because the increasing presence of power gaps in society are due to the lack of relationships that are needed to bridge them. When it comes to forming and maintaining relationships, there needs to be a balance of both collaboration and conflict between the two parties. Conflict commonly arises in situations where community members attempt to build relationships with external power figures like government representatives. (6) Fostering a space for collaboration as well as deliberation of conflicting ideas is important because sorting out disagreements allows for the formation of trust between the parties. In addition, conflict individually benefits the women participants because it fosters problem-solving skills and opens them to a new pool of knowledge and perspectives on society. Scholars observe that building relationships has a depoliticizing tendency as the activity does not directly challenge the oppressive structures affecting women. A specific observation of this depoliticizing tendency is story telling. When building relationships, feminists encourage women participants to share their personal experiences involving

gender oppression, rather than deliberate about strategies to approach the oppressive system.(5)

Role of Education

Education plays a vital role in empowering women and girls. It provides them with the knowledge and skills necessary to gain autonomy, participate in decision-making processes and contribute to their communities. However, despite the recognized importance of education, women and girls continue to face significant challenges and barriers in achieving equal access to education. (15)

Globally, women and girls face persistent barriers to education. These barriers can stem from cultural, social and economic factors, and they often lead to disparities in educational opportunities between girls and boys. For example, in many developing countries, gender disparities in education persist due to traditional social norms and practices, such as early marriages and the burden of household responsibilities. Additionally, factors such as poverty, conflict and limited access to resources also contribute to these disparities. As a result, women and girls are denied the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to society on an equal footing with their male counterparts.

Education has countless benefits for women and girls. Firstly, it allows women and girls to gain knowledge, develop skills and make informed decisions. Education empowers women and girls to challenge societal norms and stereotypes, enabling them to advocate for their rights and participate in the public sphere. Additionally, education provides women and girls with opportunities to secure better jobs, earn higher incomes and support their families financially. Education also allows women and girls to become agents of change within their communities, promoting gender equality and social justice.

Despite the recognized benefits of education, women and girls continue to face significant challenges and barriers in achieving equal access to education. These challenges include:

Gender inequality : It persists in many societies, with women and girls often facing discrimination and marginalization.

Cultural barriers : These can include traditional practices, such as early marriages, that restrict girls' educational opportunities.

Poverty : Often acts as a barrier to education, as families cannot afford the costs of education, uniforms and transportation.

Violence and discrimination: Violence, both physical and sexual, against women and girls in educational institutions remains a significant concern.

Educated women contribute to economy : Imagine a nation where women are qualified and are able to get jobs. The contribution to the workforce will enhance the output, and therefore, the economy will develop And I'm not just talking about industries and corporations, but also about healthcare, the education sector itself, arts, science, literature etc. This will contribute greatly to the advancement of any society, both culturally and economically, and also help its human development indicators. Women can help, through their work,

Education empowers women. Educated girls and young women are more likely to know their rights and to have the confidence to claim them.

Education promotes tolerance : Education helps people to understand democracy, promotes the tolerance and trust that underpin it, and motivates people to participate in the political life of their societies.

Education equality improves job opportunities and increases economic growth : If all children, had equal access to education, productivity gains would boost economic

Education is part of the solution to environmental problems. People with more education are more likely to use energy and water more efficiently and to recycle household waste.

Educating women avoids early marriages: -If education is provided to more number of women it will be helpful in avoiding child marriage.

Education saves mother's lives. In some countries, many women still die because of complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Education can prevent these deaths. (9)(15)

Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multi-level construct referring to individuals, organizations and community. It is an international, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to the control over these resources. (9)

To address these challenges and empower women and girls through education, it is crucial to implement comprehensive strategies. Firstly, it is essential to promote gender equality and advocate for the rights of women and girls. Governments, international organizations and civil society organizations must work together to create policies and legislation that promote equal access to education for women and girls. This includes providing resources, such as educational facilities, textbooks & scholarships, and ensuring the safety of girls and women in educational settings.(8) (15)

Secondly, it is essential to involve men and boys in the fight for gender equality in education. Engaging men and boys as advocates for women and girls' education can play a crucial role in challenging traditional gender norms and stereotypes. This can include awareness campaigns, educational programs and initiatives that promote gender equality and gender equality in education.

Furthermore, it is crucial to educate women and girls about their rights, including their right to education. Educating women and girls about the importance of education can create a sense of agency and encourage them to pursue educational opportunities. This can be done through awareness campaigns, mentoring programs and community-based education initiatives. (8)

Finally, it is crucial to address the structural barriers that limit women and girls' access to education. This includes tackling poverty, providing access to educational opportunities in remote and rural areas and ensuring the safety of women and girls in educational institutions. This can be done by implementing targeted programs, such as cash transfers, education programs and infrastructure development. (7)

In conclusion, education plays a crucial role in empowering women and girls. It provides them with the knowledge and skills necessary to gain autonomy, participate in decision-making processes and contribute to their communities. However, women and girls continue to face significant challenges and barriers in achieving equal access to education. By promoting gender equality, advocating for the rights of women and girls, addressing the structural barriers and empowering them through education, we can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive society for women and girls.

Education fosters independence: Most young, educated women of today are coming into their own being.

They know about their autonomy over their lives– they no longer bow down to moronic social factors

They live life on their own terms. They live how they want to, they date who they like, they also chose their life–partners and just about everything else.

Education helps choose a career and gets financial independence: This is an extension of my previous point. Education, today, is enabling women to go beyond professions considered traditionally good for them–like medicine, nursing, teaching, librarian etc. Today, women are becoming models, actors, fighter pilots, gym instructors, cops, writers, engineers, architects, journalists, scientists, corporate, law, filmmaking and whatnot– they are breaking the glass ceiling.

Today's intellectually liberated and emancipated woman is also earning her own keep. Now she doesn't have to depend on a man to give her a house, food, clothing and shelter. She can earn her own keep, and buy her own house and feed herself. Today, women are leading good lives same men– they are no longer forced to play second fiddle to males who treat them, in many cases, like doormats. (5)

Psychological Factors

Empowerment: A Psychological Catalyst for Change: Empowerment, in the psychological context, refers to the process of gaining control over one's life, acquiring the skills to influence public policy and societal norms, and improving one's self–esteem and inner strength.

For women, empowerment is not just about achieving external goals but also about internal growth and development. It involves recognizing their own worth and capabilities, challenging societal stereotypes, and advocating for their rights and well–being. (8)

The Role of Resilience:

Resilience, the ability to bounce back from adversity, plays a pivotal role in women's psychological health. Women across the globe face unique challenges, including gender-based violence, discrimination, and disproportionate caregiving responsibilities.

(10)(12)

Developing resilience enables women to navigate these challenges effectively, maintaining their mental health and pursuing their goals despite obstacles. It involves fostering a supportive community, cultivating a positive mindset , and employing coping strategies that promote recovery and growth. Psychological levels play an important role in women's self-confidence. In contrast, age, marital-status, and income-level play an important role in women's awareness of their rights. In addition, education level strengthens leadership skills, while age, education-level, employment sector, and monthly-income increase compatibility. In contrast, age, education level, and monthly income strengthen personal autonomy. The findings also revealed that amongst the five *psychological magnitudes of empowerment, capability* is identified as the core dimension that increases the level of women's empowerment followed by leadership ability, *personal autonomy, confidence level*, and lastly, *Women's awareness of their rights*. The findings obtained from this research can help to propose an innovative psychological-dimensional model for women; it's, indeed, an avenue for researchers to understand women's psychological needs. Thus, this is crucial to provide suitable suggestions on planning the next course of action on how to close the psychological gender gap among women (14)

Empowerment and Resilience

Empowerment and resilience are not fixed or static attributes, but rather dynamic and relational processes that involve interactions between individuals, groups, and environments. Empowerment can be defined as the ability of people to gain control over their lives and influence the decisions that affect them, while resilience can be defined as the ability of people to adapt and cope with adversity and stress. Empowerment and resilience are interrelated, as empowerment can enhance resilience, and resilience can enable empowerment. (11)

Celebrating Achievements and Acknowledging Challenges: International Women's Day serves as a reminder of the achievements of women in various spheres of life. It is a day to celebrate the resilience and strength of women who have overcome barriers to make significant contributions to society.

However, it is also a day to acknowledge the ongoing challenges that women face, particularly in terms of mental health disparities. Women are more likely to experience certain mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety, partly due to societal pressures and gender-based violence.

Enhancing Well-being Through Support and Solidarity: One of the key ways to enhance psychological well-being among women is through support and solidarity. Creating safe spaces where women can share their experiences, offer support, and access mental health resources is crucial.

Community programs, support groups, and awareness campaigns can play a significant role in addressing mental health issues ,and promoting empowerment and resilience among women.

As we observe **International Women's Day**, it is essential to focus not only on the social and economic aspects of women's rights but also on the psychological dimensions of empowerment and resilience.

By fostering environments that support women's mental health and well-being, society can make significant strides toward gender equality. Empowering women psychologically enables them to face challenges with strength and confidence, paving the way for a more equitable and resilient future. (15)

Conclusion

Women play an imperative role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development.

They are essential possessions of a lively humanity required for national improvement, so if we have to see a bright future of women in our country, giving education to them must be a pre-occupation Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women

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