

Linkages between Education and women's Employment.

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INTRODUCTION –

In this paper, we discuss the history of education system in India along with the link between education and women's employment. We also analyze the relationships between each of the two aspects education and women's employment respectively. Higher education and employment are indisputably tightly connected. Changes in the education sector, in policy, funding and structure, directly impact the employment sector. At present the unemployment rate in India is increasing day by day. One of the various roots of the high unemployment rate lies in the higher education system and the lack of encouragement toward entrepreneurship. We define higher education as university education in different streams.

Education in India –

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state, and local.

Under various articles of the Indian Constitution, free and compulsory education is provided as a fundamental right to children between the ages of 6 and 14. The ratio of public schools to private schools in India is 7:5.

India has made progress in terms of increasing the primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately three-quarters of the population in the 7–10 age group, by 2011. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to its economic development. Much of the progress, especially in higher education and scientific research, has been credited to various public institutions. While enrolment in higher education has increased steadily over the past decade, reaching a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 24% in 2013, there still remains a significant distance to catch up with tertiary education enrolment levels of developed nations, a challenge that will be necessary to overcome in order to continue to reap

a demographic dividend from India's comparatively young population.

Women in India –

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. With a decline in their status from the ancient to medieval times, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In modern India, women have held high offices including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of the Opposition, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers and Governors.

Women's rights are secured under the Constitution of India — mainly, equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination; further, India has various statutes governing the rights of women.

The necessity of Women's Education in India -

For more than 2,000 years, from about BC 300, there was practically no education for women in India. Only a few women of the upper castes and upper classes were given some education at home. But, even here, there was tremendous social resistance.

Literacy of women at that time was looked upon as a disgrace. The notion of providing education to female children

never entered into the minds of parents. A superstitious feeling was alleged to exist in the majority of the Hindu families that a girl taught to read and write will soon become a widow after marriage.

According to the report of the National Committee on Women's Education (1959), 'It cannot be denied that the general picture of the education of women was the most unsatisfactory and women received practically no formal instruction whatever, except for the little domestic instruction that was available to the daughter of the upper class families.'

It was the American mission which first started a school for girls in Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1824. According to the figures available, by 1829 within five years as many as 400 girls were enrolled in this school. Then, in the first decade of the 19th century, with the efforts of the missionaries as well as the Indian voluntary organizations, some girls' primary schools, particularly in Bombay, Bengal and Madras states, started.

The government also took the responsibility to promote primary education in general and that of the girls in particular. However, government efforts could not go a long way due to the Indian War of Independence of 1857.

After the war municipal committees and other local bodies were encouraged to open primary schools. In the year 1870, training colleges for women were established for the first time and women were trained to become teachers in girls' schools. As a result of all these efforts, great progress was made in girl's education in the last quarter of the 19th century.

However, in spite of these, there was a great gap between the education of men and women. It was estimated that for every 1,000 boys at schools, the number of girls was only 46. At the beginning of the 19th century there was hardly any literate woman in the country excepting a few in the aristocratic houses. It astonishes that by the end of the century hundreds of thousands of girls were enrolled in the newly opened institutions all over the country.

Though girls and women have made much educational gains in recent years, but still have a long way to go before their historic educational disadvantage is eradicated. The education system of India, like many other social institutions, has long been discriminatory towards the women. In 1916 SNDT Women University in Bombay became the first institution of higher learning to admit female students.

The main hindrances in the women education in India are –

1. Rural residence,
2. Low caste,
3. Low economic standing
4. Traditional attitude towards women education as a whole.

These factors tend to deny opportunities of education to a girl. While broadly speaking (and as shown above) education of female students has made strides and it is not surprising that today in many faculties and departments of universities and colleges, more girls than boys are seen.

Linkages of Education and Women Employment in India –

India's economy has undergone a substantial transformation since the country's independence in 1947. India faced economic problems in the late 1980s and early 1990s that were exacerbated by the Persian Gulf Crisis. Starting in 1992, India began to implement trade liberalization measures.

Since the times immemorial, worth of the work done or services rendered by women has not been recognized. India is a multifaceted society where no generalization could apply to the entire nation's various regional, religious, social, and economic groups. Nevertheless,

certain broad circumstances in which Indian women live affect the ways they participate in the economy. Indian society is extremely hierarchical with virtually everyone ranked relative to others according to their caste (or caste-like group), class, wealth, and power. This ranking even exists in areas where it is not openly acknowledged, such as certain business settings. Though specific customs vary from region to region within the country, there are different standards of behavior for men and women that carry over into the work environment. Women are expected to be chaste and especially modest in all actions that may constrain their ability to perform in the workplace on an equal basis with men.

Another related aspect of life in India is that irrespective of level of education imparted, women are generally confined to home thus restricting their mobility and face seclusion. The women face constraints beyond those already placed on them by other hierarchical practices. These cultural rules place some Indian women, particularly those of lower caste, in a paradoxical situation: when a family suffers economically, people often think that a woman should go out and work, yet at the same time the woman's participation in employment outside the home is viewed as "slightly inappropriate, subtly wrong,

and definitely dangerous to their chastity and womanly virtue". When a family recovers from an economic crisis or attempts to improve its status, women may be kept at home as a demonstration of the family's morality and as a symbol of its financial security.

A section of Indian women- the elite and the upper middle class have gained by the exposure to the global network. Having a good exposure to education, more women are engaged in business enterprises, in international platforms like the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and have greater career opportunities as a result of international network. Freer movement of goods and capital is helpful to this section. But most women continue to remain marginalized as they are generally employed in a chain of work and seldom allowed independent charge of her job. Sharing of responsibility at work place or taking independent decisions is still a remote possibility for them. Economic independence of women is important as it enhances their ability to take decisions and exercise freedom of choice, action.

Many of the workingwomen, who control their own income, do contribute towards the economic needs of family as and when required. They often participate in discussions at their work place and their views are given due weightage before any

final decision. Workingwomen do use and spend their income at their own sweet will but sometimes permission of the husband becomes necessary for the purpose. However when it comes to making investments, they often leave it to their husband or other male member of the family to invest on their behalf. Many of them do not take decision even in case of important investments, like, life insurance, national saving schemes or other tax saving investments.

Globalization has resulted into higher demand for well educated women employees. It has indeed raised hopes of women for a better and elevated status arising out of increased chances to work but, at the same time, it has put them in a highly contradictory situation where they have the label of economically independent paid workers but are not able to enjoy their economic liberty in real sense of the term. After globalization women are able to get more jobs but the work they get is more casual in nature or is the one that men do not prefer to do or is left by them to move to higher or better jobs.

India is the first among countries to give women equal franchise and has a highly credible record with regard to the enactment of laws to protect and promote the interests of women, but women continue to be denied economic, social and

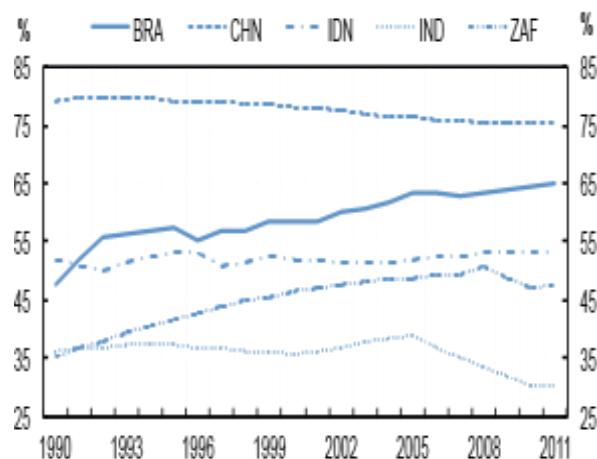
legal rights and privileges. Though they are considered to be equal partners in progress, yet they remain subjected to repression, marginalization and exploitation. It has been advocated by many researchers (Amartya Sen, 1990) that independent earning opportunities reduce the economic dependence of woman on men and increase her bargaining power in the family. This bargaining power depends on the nature of work she is employed in. But the income earning activities increase the workload of a woman unless the man accepts an increased share in domestic work. Since globalization is introducing technological inputs, women are being marginalized in economic activities, men traditionally being offered new scopes of learning and training. Consequently, female workers are joining the informal sector or casual labor force more than ever before. For instance, while new rice technology has given rise to higher use of female labor, the increased work-load for women is in operations that are unrecorded, and often unpaid, since these fall within the category of home production activities. The weaker sections, especially the women, are denied the physical care they deserve. There is, thus, hardly any ability for the majority of Indian women to do valuable functioning; the "capability" to choose from alternatives is conspicuous by absence.

An increasing number of Indian women have dropped out of the labor market

Less than a third of working age women in India have jobs, which is low among the BRICs (Figure 1). (Klasen and Peters 2013).

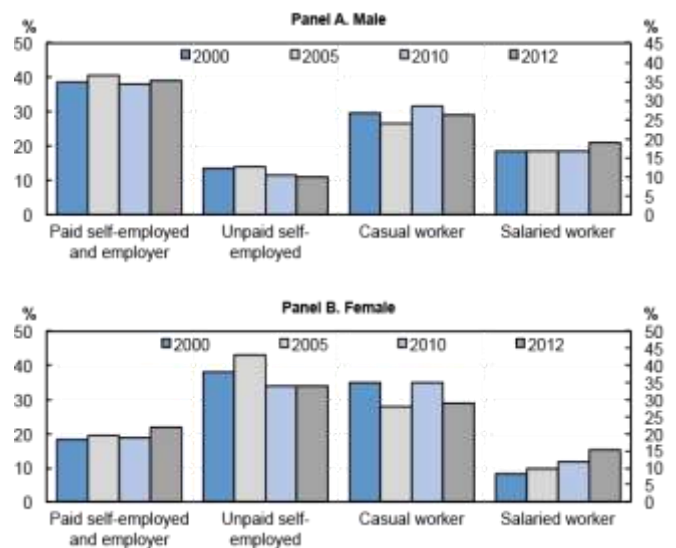
Female participation has dropped over the past decade in contrast to other emerging markets. Much of the decline, especially since 2005, reflects a drop in unpaid female self-employment in agriculture upon a rise in agricultural incomes (Figure 2).

Figure-1. Female labour force participation in BRICs (% of working age population)



Note: Data refer to working age population (15 to 64 years).
Source: ILO, Economically Active Population, Estimates and Projections (6th edition, October 2011)

Figure-2. Worker status by gender



Source: NSSO, Employment and unemployment survey, rounds no. 55, 61, 66 and 68.

Conclusion –

Education for women in India has evolved over a long period of time. Right from its inception, it has helped women getting employment. Even though education plays vital role in women employment, there are multiple other factors that affect women employment. There is a direct linkage between education and women's employment. Considering the importance of gender equality, more the female labor workforce, better from diversity perspective.

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