

# Innovations

## Role of Secondary Education in Women Empowerment: Issues and Impact

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**Abstract:** *Women's empowerment is an important issue in India as well as for all nations. It is because of mainly long exploitation, discrimination and dominance on women over the years together. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate how secondary girl students can combat against gender inequality and discrimination in access to their education at the secondary school level in India. The authors try to focus on different issues and challenges such as gender inequality, status of secondary girl students and other socio-economic matters. The authors attempt to highlight the role of secondary education of adolescent girl students in India for the empowerment of women. Different issues for influencing women empowerment status and impact of secondary education for increasing their strength and self confidence in home, society and walk place.*

**Keywords:** *Empowerment, Women, Secondary Education, Issues, Challenges and Impact*

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### Introduction:

Empowerment means the degree of liberty and self-determination in person and in their society. It is the process of obtaining basic opportunities, granting power, rights, or authority to someone to enable them to act and perform their duties. It helps people of becoming stronger and more confident in controlling different situations.

Women empowerment is the process of redistribution of power and control of natural, intellectual, human and financial resources. This dynamic process of empowerment enables women to gain greater access to education, knowledge, resources, liberation, freedom of choice, equality and bring greater changes in their family and social life. We must remember that the real purpose of all student' especially girl's, coming to school for the pupose of studying is to develop their thinking and and expand their reasoning in the development that thinking and reasoning, just as a teaching is very significant, so is the curriculum,

as well as the economic and social status. That is today girl's engage themselves in various social welfare organizations in the society with which they are associated in a united manner. Not only they are joining, but they are also constantly trying to explain how the rights of girl's in every family are protected and how they can express themselves in society based on reason. It can be said that involvement of secondary school student's and higher secondary school student's, I.e. Girls, in various ways in the social and economic activities of society is very significant. For example, girl's are building a Bratachari organization. In this Bratachari organization, they develop girl's who are younger than them or their peers through Bratachari ceremonies. They are being raised based on the ideal morality and social values of society. A structure in society within which people live. It is the responsibility of every person to manage or protect that structure in an orderly and beautiful manner. Today's women have taken a leading role in shaping society, maintaining social balance, and performing various social function without which people cannot live in society. That is to convey to people the politics or requirements that must be followed and to motivate people to come forward for the welfare of society through rationality. These tasks are being done contentiously by secondary girl student's at present. Through the songs and actions of the penance, the devotees discipline themselves, make themselves guided by the ideals of patriotism, and inspire the common people or those younger than them with this ideal. The next thing is that women are forming various welfare association, I.g, women's welfare associations, these days. Not only that, they have become particularly proactive in how to protect the health, safety and social security of women and girl's, and they are straightening them through special rules and politics. How they are strengthened the organization and increased membership in the organization. I can assure you the women's welfare association they have established, the rights of women, the protection of women that respect that women have, the social respect, and the cultural respect. The secondary and higher secondary student's are explaining this issues of respect and rights to girls and women in various ways through logic and their intellectual power. How women are gradually becoming aware in the villages about their rights, their health, their economic respect, social respect, social and educational respect.

Women empowerment is an important issue and a debatable matter in respect of national development as well as in the point of view of development of individual citizen for all nations of the world. It refers to the process through which women can make them able to increase and organize their participation in social, political, economical policies and decision making affairs as equal rights and footing of men. The main objectives of women empowerment are to ensure them to have equal opportunities, equal rights, and equal use of resources. Women empowerment enables women to make decision with self-confident, to have control their daily lives, and promoting participation in every aspect of society. The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, Austria, 1993, aimed to implement and strengthen the human rights in focusing women empowerment.

The main objective was ensure women enjoyment of human rights in full and equal with the men and also to recognize that the human rights of women are an unchallengeable, essential, and indivisible part of universal human rights. It also included the participation of women in development and strengthening their contribution for peace. More focused on objectives of World Conference of Human Rights, 1993 are:

**Women' Rights as the Human Rights:**

The world conference affirmed that the women's rights are not a separate issue; it is integral part of the universal human rights.

**Equal enjoyment of Human Rights:**

According to the objective of this conference the women should have equal access to full enjoyment of all human rights.

**Contribution of Women to peace:**

For strengthening world peace the women have the vital role in peace-building efforts.

**Eliminating Discrimination:**

This conference aimed to remove all forms of discrimination against women's life both in personal and public.

**Promoting Gender Equality:**

The conference searched to make advance gender equality by different means and ensuring the equal access of women to education, their employment and their participation in different social and political activities.

**Women' Participation in Development:**

This conference emphasized the importance of women's full participation and their integration as agents or as the beneficiaries in different developmental processes.

**Women's Empowerment:**

The world conference on human rights, 1993, aimed to empower women by encouraging full and effective participation in every region of social, political, and economical life for decision making.

**Review of Related Literatures:**

**Dr. Manuj Kumar Chutia** (2019) of nowgong Girls' College, Nagaon, Assam of India studies on "Empowerment of Secondary School Girls – A Study". This study attempts to highlight the empowerment status of women in general and adolescent girls in particular with reference to Nagaon sub-division area of Assam. The objectives of the present study are to (1) study the awareness status

of empowerment of adolescent girls, (ii) study the empowerment status of tribal of tribal and Non-tribal adolescent girls, and (iii) study the decision making capability of tribal and Non-tribal adolescent girls. The Author considers 217 randomly selected adolescent girls of class-XII from 50 educational institutions of Nagaon sub-division area as sample of the study, among which 119 adolescent girls selected from Non-tribal and 98 from tribal community. “Adolescent Girls Empowerment Scale” prepared by Dr. Devedra Singh Sisodia and Dr. Alpana Singh is considered as the tool of this study. Data are collected by applying descriptive survey method and analyzed statistically. This study reveals that (i) most of the adolescent girls in general and tribal adolescent girls in particular have high empowerment status, (ii) most of the Non-tribal adolescent girls have average empowerment status, and (iii) tribal adolescent girls have high empowerment status than non-tribal adolescent girls.

**Sanjukta Sahoo** (2016), M.Phil scholar of Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar, India studies on “Girls’ Education in India: Status and Challenges. The main objectives of this study are: (i) to ascertain recent status and challenges of girls’ education in India, (ii) to provide possible suggestions to overcome the challenges of girls’ education in India. In present study the author uses different type of articles, research studies, reports, books, and official websites to conduct the study. This study highlights the background and importance of girls’ education in India and concludes (i) the girls’ education in India is very poor in elementary and secondary level than that of higher education, (ii) the enrolment ratio decreases during the period 2012 – 2015 at the elementary and secondary stage but increases at the higher level of education. Parental attitude, lack of security and infrastructure, superstitions related to girls, parental socio-economic conditions are the major challenges for nurturing girls’ education in India.

**Alabi T. Bahah M. Alabi S.O.** (2014) Department of Sociology, University of Abuja, Nigeria studied on The Girl – Child: A Sociological View on the Problems of Girl-Child Education in Nigeria. This study examined the general problems faced by the girls’ students and the peculiar challenges facing their education opportunities in Nigeria. All information was collected from text, published articles & papers, including internet resources. This study revealed that the cultural and traditional beliefs and practices in Nigeria which comprise major barriers to the education opportunities of girl-students. The author suggested some ways of holistic approach for enhancing girl-education.

**Subramanian Uma Bala, Research Scholar; Vasantha S., Research Scholar,** Vels University, Chennai, (2011), studied on “Role of Education towards Women Empowerment”. This paper endeavored to highlights the initiatives adopted by our country for the promotion of women’s education towards their empowerment in India. Women in India are more than 50% of human resources and their

outstanding contribution enhanced our nation's progress. According to 2011 census the women literacy was 65.46 %. In spite of rapid expansion of education the gender gap in literacy is conspicuous. Equal rights and opportunities are conferred in Indian constitution through several plans, programmes and policies. In despite of so many steps women in India have not taken full advantages as like as men in respect of rights and opportunities in practice.

According to **Dr. Thresiamma Varghese (2011)**, Faculty of business, Sohar University, Oman, who studied on "Women Empowerment in Oman: A Study Based on Women Empowerment Index" The key objectives of the present study was to (i) measure the women empowerment in Oman by identifying the household decision making ability of women, (ii) assess the economic decision making capability of women, and (iii) evaluate the freedom of mobility of women for giving recommendation and suggestions to boost women empowerment in Oman. The author considered 150 women as sample of study from sohar region. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data were analyzed using SPSS. For quantitative analysis of data regression model was used. The author considered the women empowerment as dependent variable and five other variables as independent variables. This study revealed that (i) total women empowerment index showed women in Sohar are good decision makers, (ii) women in Oman are better in household decision making and economic decision making than social empowerment, (iii) the majority of women in Sohar are well aware about their rights and duties.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To know the concepts of women's empowerment.
2. To analyze the different issues that affect women's empowerment.
3. To identify the various challenges for women empowerment.
4. To study the impact of secondary education on women empowerment.

### **Research Questions:**

1. What are the basic concepts of women's education?
2. What are the different issues (factors) that affect women's empowerment?
3. What are the challenges that hinder women's empowerment?
4. What are the impacts of secondary education on women empowerment?

### **Methodology of the study:**

The present study is descriptive in nature. In this theoretical paper qualitative research study method is used which includes describing and analyzing of the collected materials. The author goes through both the primary and secondary sources for the collection of appropriate evidence. Various national and international journals, books, e-content, authentic websites and various policies & commissions' reports relating to the issues and challenges as per the requirement of the study are used in present study. The author conducts this

study relating to the impact of secondary education on women empowerment. The author utilizes different available resources and carries through the present study.

### **Different Issues and Challenges for Women's Empowerment:**

Women empowerment in India at the secondary school level faces various issues and challenges including inequality in gender and inadequate healthcare in secondary education, child marriage, violence, workplace inequality and different social activities and representation.

### **Major issues at the secondary school level hindering women empowerment include the followings:**

- **Gender Inequality in Education:**  
With the progress of education at the secondary level the gender disparities persist mainly in rural areas, deep - rooted patriarchal attitudes and social inequality make limit to access secondary education.
- **Stereotypes of Gender Issues:**  
There have been different types of gender stereotyping in text-books and learning materials at the secondary curriculum. Thus, the gender stereotyping is one of the fundamental issues that hinder the progress of gender equality in secondary education. Various research papers show that men are mostly used in text-books while the women's character is rarely recognized. POA (1992) played an important role in shaping Indian system of education including expansion and improving of secondary schools and promoting social equality. POA also mentioned the issue of non-availability of Science and Mathematics teachers in girls secondary schools.
- **Gender Based Violence:**  
Gender – based violence is a prevalent issue in secondary level of education. This can manifest as sexual harassment, domestic violence, psychological violence, sexual abuse and limiting opportunities.
- **Economical Constraints:**  
Due to poor family financial resources and facing poverty the secondary girl students can avert from entering and completing their education successfully.
- **Forced Early Marriage:**  
Forceful child marriage, early marriage of girl students before reaching 18 years of age completing at least their secondary education can disturb their education and hamper their future prospect of life.

### **Key Challenges in Empowering the Women in India:**

The empowerment of women at the secondary school level in India faces various significant challenges. There are so many challenging issues of women's rights which will target for direct benefit of women's empowerment in India. Such as,

**Patriarchal Society:**

It is one of the major challenges for women empowerment. In patriarchal society the men are the primary authority, occupying roles of social and political leadership, control the property and moral authority over the women as well as the girl children.

**Poverty:**

It is the largest threat towards women. It leads to the exploitation of school girls as domestic helpers. Eradication of poverty by providing financial assistance and scholarships to the girls covers their cost of education and increases their access to education.

**Investment in Education:**

Enhancement of funding for secondary education, especially for girl's education, is decisive.

**Education:**

Enrolment gap.....

**Health and Safety:**

The health and safety of women are the foremost issues in the interest of the nation and these are the important factors in the rating of women empowerment in India. Sexual harassment, violence and unreliable transportation to their school can discourage girls from attending school and face them antagonistic environment.

**Gender Inequality:**

Long-established gender roles and discrimination against girls including violence can restrict secondary girls' educational opportunities and lead to dropout.

**Economic Constraints:**

Poor family condition, cost of schooling, cost of transport and uniforms can make the girl students difficult for attending school.

**Child Marriage:**

Child marriage is deep - rooted gender inequality and violates girls' rights to education, their health and financial opportunities. It places the girls at high risk of exploitation, assault and abuse.

**Unbearable Situations:**

Uneducated women are more likely faced to divorce. They will have to live with fear. Sometime they have to end their lives due to unbearable situations.



### **Unemployment:**

It is very much difficult for women to find suitable job for themselves. They are more attackable to exploitation and harassment in their workplace.

### **Socio-Cultural Barriers:**

The socio-cultural factors such as educational performance, involvement in earning pursuits and types of family may have decisive role in increasing decision-making capacity and leading towards empowerment of the women.

### **Impact of secondary education on women's empowerment:**

Secondary education is essential for the process of women's empowerment by increasing their self-confidence, economic independence, skills, enhancing their knowledge of reproductive health and family planning, and promoting greater socio-political involvement. Education at the secondary level provides the opportunities for better employment and allows them to overcome their poverty. It helps them for decision making towards her family as well as for the society.

Today's girl secondary school student will be the responsible women of tomorrow. The wholesome development of the country (nation) depends mainly on the development of the individual citizen. If the equal rights and opportunities are provided to both the boys and girls secondary students then the future women will be empowered and given authority for growing confidence and strength in their various social, educational, political walks of life and simultaneously prevent themselves from all forms of discrimination like unfairness, inequity, unfavorable bias, bigotry, injustice, partiality, fanaticism, religion, race, intolerance, and violence against them. Girls and Women are facing both the domestic and social violence, workplace violence, verbal violence including hating speech, sexual harassment, socio-economic violence, psychological violence and child early forceful marriage.

Adolescence girls are in the foundation stage of women which is very much authoritative, crucial, rigorous and permeable stage of one's life. The predominant gender discrimination in the society of girls adolescent place them at risk for their healthy and secure change of human stage from adolescent to adult women. The self-assurance and strength can be building up among the adolescent girl students through education, various social support and awareness including training on different life skills.

There are various impacts of secondary education on women's education. Such as:

- ❖ **Reduction of Gender Inequality:**
- ❖ **Reproductive Health and Family Planning:**
- ❖ **Improvement of Child Health and their Education:**
- ❖ **Social and Political Involvement:**
- ❖ **Empowerment on Economical Growth:**
- ❖ **Enhancing Self- Confidence and Self-Esteem:**



- ❖ **Understanding their discrimination:**
- ❖ **Overcoming Violence:**
- ❖ **Awareness of Different Life Skills:**

### **Schemes for women education as adopted by the Government of India:**

The central government of India has prescribed a lot of educational schemes for women. These are -

- ♣ Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana
- ♣ CBSE scholarship scheme for girl students after passing class-X.
- ♣ Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is the scheme for providing equal educational opportunities to the girl- child.
- ♣ The National scheme of incentives for secondary SC / ST girl students.
- ♣ Balika Samriddhi Yojana is a scheme for the young girl living below poverty line.
- ♣ A scheme for girl child protection
- ♣ Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)

### **Findings of the study:**

1. From the above study the author focuses the concepts of women's empowerment as the movement seeking equal rights and status of women from the injurious effects of gender discrimination, caste & class, social, economical and political status. It provides liberty of choices and self-confidence to make their family and social life. Women's empowerment means equality rather than masculinity; it does not signify "Empowering of women". It is a multidisciplinary process having various aspects in this regard.
2. For the elimination of all the major issues at the secondary school level confronted by women particularly in rural areas is to provide adequate and suitable education to all as because education is the dynamic factor of social change.
3. All the key challenges in empowering women in India can be eradicated by providing an important aspect of adequate secondary education to the girls.
4. The present study reveals that the education at the secondary level is the most important aspect for women's empowerment. The easily available adequate education to the girl students can influence the various impacts of secondary education for women empowerment.

### **Suggestive Measures:**

The author suggested the following measures to the concerned authority for the improvement of women's empowerment through secondary education.

- Proper implementation of government schemes for girls education
- No political instigation towards women empowerment

- Adequate funding for secondary education must be provided and proper implementation of fund should be established.
- Common masses must be well aware regarding women's empowerment.
- Gender sensitivity must be developed.

### **Conclusion:**

In this way, secondary girls students have formed various organizations for various social welfare and charitable works. Not only that, they are increasing the number of members in order to establish themselves properly within those organizations. Through their activities, they are making girls in villages and other areas aware of them. This is to make them aware so that they can stand on their own feet in society and establish themselves as one of the most important people in society. They have taken various measures to ensure that all girls in the Sultanate society become aware of their freedom and rights. Especially, through the various programs and songs of Bratachari, thoughts of patriotism and ideas of social welfare and social formation are being expressed through one of their bridges.

On the other hand, they have formed women welfare associations and women development associations within the society and through them, women can be improved and their sense of reason and responsibility towards their society can be developed, the girls are trying hard in that regard. They are uniting girls from different walks of life in a bond of solidarity. At the same time, they can express their full human potential through rationality and nationalism. Women are appealing to be involved in economic and other activities within society. Not only that the last leaders are raising awareness by standing on the foundation of self-respect and humanity and are developing a sense of respect for themselves. Women's freedom is about women's liberation and women's rights, and how to empower women by building self-esteem.

The Indian constitution guarantees the right to equality to all citizens of the country, but despite it bears a big question in reality. Therefore, the policy implementation must aim to attain the target not only as suggestion concerning enrolment and retention of girl students in school but also with regard to the process and practice ensuring relative performance at all levels of secondary education. There needs of eagerness to promote girls' education and support them to overcome all the barriers and hurdles confronted by various issues and factors for women's empowerment such as poverty, gender discrimination, household responsibility, early marriage, engagement in socio-economic activity, and indifference of girls' education, etc. The empowerment of women lies in the ability of girls to control their own fate. Educated girls are more and more effective for improving their well-being in family and also in society. Education makes the girls equipped to extract the best outcome from existing services and opportunities. The secondary education can remove the issues and challenges which are the main barriers for women's empowerment. Girls'

education can fight against the injustices, gender discrimination and old habits that hinder their progress and development.

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