

A Study on Impact of Education on Women's Empowerment

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Abstract

Education is considered the most important tool for empowering women in society. It is not only limited to developing the personality of an individual but also plays an important role in economic, social and cultural development. The UNESCO put its effort to achieve equal opportunity of education regardless of age, gender, race or any other difference in social and economic status.

The study was carried out to assess the direct and indirect impact of women's education on their empowerment. A sample of 1000 women of age ranged from 21-49 years participated in the study. A convenient sampling strategy was used to collect the data. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design and it was a correlation survey. A demographic data sheet, Composite Women's Empowerment Index, and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were used to measure the study variables and self-esteem fully mediated in the relationship between education and women's empowerment. It is concluded that education was a pre-requisite to enhance women's empowerment, but it appeared to boost up women's empowerment through increasing their income and elevated self-esteem. Implications of the study were also discussed.

Introduction

Education appeared to be insignificant in predicting the empowerment of women without jobs in some studies (e.g., Swain & Wallentin, 2008). Education has been supported to escalate the chances of employability, enables women to boost their self-esteem, self-reliance, decision-making confidence and makes them aware of their rights. Empowerment of women takes place when they engage in productive activities which provide them with a fair degree of financial autonomy. It would also refer to their ability to organize and mobilize for social change (Tandon, 2016). Empowering women is fraught with numerous impediments and challenges, given the social settings in a country like India,

Research Methodology

The present study was designed to assess the mediating role of income and self-esteem in the relationship between education and women's empowerment.

Method

Sample-- We sampled 100 women age range 21 and 49 years (Meanage= 35.5, $SD = 7.80$) with varying levels of education that ranged between 5 and 18 years of education (see Table 1). The participants were selected from two districts (Gadga and Dharwad) of Karnataka, which was purposively selected and the participants were approached conveniently at homes and workplaces for data collection.

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria-- Married women with at least one child were selected for the study. We selected married women because the dependent variable in the study measures bargaining power (empowerment) between husband and wife (Lee, 2009). Divorced, separated and issueless (having no child) women were not included in the sample.

Measures

Demographic Datasheet-- Data regarding age, education, employment status, and monthly income were collected via demographic datasheet

Result and Discussion

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the Demographic Variables (N=100)

Variablea		Frequencies	Percentages
Age	21-30	34	34
	31-40	35	35
	41-49	31	31
Education	Primary	19	19
	High School	28	28
	PUC	23	23
	UG	17	17
	PG	13	13
Income Annual Thousand Rupees	No Income	34	34
	10-25	28	28
	26-50	18	18
	Above 50	20	20

Composite Women's Empowerment Index (CWEI: Batool, 2017) The CWEI measures four dimensions of women's empowerment: economic, familial, social, and psychological. The CWEI consists of 33-items. Some items are phrased positively (e.g., I feel that life is very rewarding) and some are negatively phrased (e.g., I do not feel particularly pleased with the way I am). A five-point Likert-type scale was used (5 = strongly to 1 = not at all agree. Cronbach alphas for economic ($\alpha = .77$), familial ($\alpha = .84$), social ($\alpha = .74$), psychological ($\alpha = .72$) subscales and composite ($\alpha = .88$) empowerments for the present study. Prominence in personality research and has good psychometric properties (Hatcher & Hall, 2009). The responses are measured on a four-point Likert scale (4 = *strongly agree* to 1 = *strongly disagree*). Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem and vice versa. The Cronbach's alpha for the present study is .77.

Procedure

The first author approached women personally through personal contacts at their homes and workplaces and sought their consent to take part in the study. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) -- It is an extensively used scale that offers a uni-dimensional evaluation of global self-esteem. The instrument remains the most esteemed measure due to its high validity and prominence in personality research and has good psychometric properties (Hatcher & Hall, 2009). The responses are measured on a four-point Likert scale (4 = *strongly agree* to 1 = *strongly disagree*). Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem and vice versa. The Cronbach's alpha for the present study is .77.

Data Analysis and Results

Before running meditational analysis, simple linear regressions were run to see the direct relationship between the variables

Table- 2

Summary of Simple Regression Equations of the Study Variables

Equations	Paths	B	S.E	β	P	R2
1	Education→Women'sEmpowerment	4.17	.62	.21**	.000	.04
2	Income→ Women's Empowerment	.49	.09	.1515** 0	.0002	.02
3	Self-esteem → Women's Empowerment	1.47	.14	.30**	.000	.09
4	Education → Income	.47	.04	.33**	.000	.11
5	Education →Self-esteem	.28	.03	.30**	.000	.09
6	Income → Self-esteem	.05	.02	.07	.23	.00

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 2 shows that all the study variables have significant linear relationships with each other all the way from education-income ($\beta = .33, p < .000$) to income-women's empowerment ($\beta = .15, p < .02$); income-self-esteem ($\beta = .07, p > .05$) relationship was not significant. Since high variance was revealed in women's empowerment accounted for by self-esteem ($R^2 = .09$), we carried out meditational analysis in the subsequent step (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Table-3 Decomposition Standardized Effect of Independent Variables on Women's Empowerment in Path Analysis

Predictors	Indirect Effects	Direct Effects	Total Effects
Education	.12	.06	.18
Income	.00	.12	.12
Self-esteem	.00	.28	.28

Table- 3 shows standardized direct (unmediated) impact of women's education, on women's empowerment is .06, and the standardized indirect (mediated) effects are .12. The indirect effect of education = .12 on women's empowerment is due to income and self-esteem of women in the

study. This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that women's education has on their empowerment

Table-4 Determine the Significance of Mediation

Meditational Paths	Test- Values	S.E	P-Values
Education → Income→ Women's Empowerment	3.50	.04	.000
Education→ Self-esteem→ Women's Empowerment	6.60	.05	.000

Note: $p < .01$

Table 4 shows that income and education significantly mediate the relationship between education and women's empowerment.

Suggestions

The findings of the present study support the indirect role of education in women's empowerment and provide additional arguments for the continuity of actions in favour of opportunities for women to earn money for their economic independence and enhancement of their self-esteem by commending their role. The formulation of national policies and programs that target to substantially grow women's status in rural. The results have implications for the experts in gender issues, economists and policymakers that women are not empowered just by getting higher and higher education unless they do not have opportunities to materialize their knowledge and earn money to have financial autonomy. Education appears to be dynamic in enhancing the self-esteem of women that carry the impact of their education in empowering them.

Conclusion

Women to focus on their empowerment through the process to analytically evaluate their own conditions and outline changes in society. So to say, the strategy for women to be empowered must make available the necessary space for women to act themselves as agents of transformation in gender relations (Siwal, 2009). The indirect relationship between education and women's empowerment through the full mediation of personal income and self-esteem has also been established in the study. However, supplementary studies are required to better pinpoint the dynamics that

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