

Study of Present Economical Status of Educated Women in India

Shilpy Kumari, Jai Ranjan Das
Teachers' Training College, Bhagalpur

Abstract: This paper explores the current economic status of educated women in India, examining their participation in the workforce, income levels, career advancement, and the challenges they face. Utilizing recent data and research studies, the paper analyzes the factors influencing their economic position and highlights the progress made as well as the persistent gaps. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the economic landscape for educated women in India and offer recommendations for enhancing their economic empowerment.

Key points: Economical Status, Women, Women Education, India, Career.

Introduction

The economic empowerment of women is crucial for the overall development of a nation. In India, significant strides have been made in improving the education levels of women. However, the translation of educational attainment into economic prosperity remains inconsistent. This paper seeks to analyze the present economic status of educated women in India, identifying key trends, challenges, and areas for improvement.

Educational Attainment of Women in India

Historical Context and Progress

Over the past few decades, India has seen a substantial increase in the educational attainment of women. Government initiatives, policy reforms, and societal changes have contributed to higher enrollment rates of girls in schools and universities. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the literacy rate for women increased from 53.7% in 2001 to 70.3% in 2011, with further improvements in the subsequent years (NSSO, 2011).

Higher Education and Professional Courses

More women are pursuing higher education and professional courses in fields such as engineering, medicine, law, and management. The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) reported that the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for women in higher education reached 27.3% in 2019-20 (AISHE, 2020). This increase reflects a growing pool of educated women poised to enter the workforce.

Economic Participation of Educated Women

Labor Force Participation Rate

Despite advancements in education, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) for women remains low. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2018-19, the female LFPR was only 23.3% compared to 57.4% for men (PLFS, 2019). Various factors, including social norms, familial responsibilities, and workplace discrimination, contribute to this disparity.

Employment Sectors

Educated women in India are employed across diverse sectors, including education, healthcare, IT, finance, and public administration. However, there is a significant concentration in certain fields such as education and healthcare, which are traditionally seen as more suitable for women. The IT and corporate sectors have also seen an increasing number of women, but representation at senior levels remains limited.

Income Levels and Wage Disparities

Income Levels

The income levels of educated women in India vary widely based on their qualifications, experience, industry, and geographical location. On average, women earn less than their male counterparts, even with similar educational backgrounds. The Gender Pay Gap (GPG) in India stands at around 19%, with higher disparities in certain sectors (Monster Salary Index, 2019).

Wage Disparities

Wage disparities are a significant issue, influenced by factors such as occupational segregation, bias in hiring and promotions, and differences in work experience due to career breaks. The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 mandates equal pay for equal work, but enforcement and compliance remain challenges.

Career Advancement and Leadership Roles

Barriers to Advancement

Educated women face several barriers to career advancement, including gender bias, lack of mentorship, and insufficient support for work-life balance. The "glass ceiling" effect is evident, with fewer women in senior management and leadership positions. According to a study by Catalyst, women hold only 15% of board seats in Indian companies (Catalyst, 2020).

Initiatives and Progress

There have been positive developments, with initiatives aimed at promoting gender diversity in the workplace. Companies are increasingly implementing policies for flexible work arrangements, leadership training, and mentorship programs for women. Government schemes like MUDRA and Stand-Up India also support women entrepreneurs.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Socio-Cultural Factors

Socio-cultural factors, including traditional gender roles and family expectations, significantly impact the economic participation of educated women. Women often face pressure to prioritize domestic responsibilities over professional aspirations, leading to career interruptions and limited economic opportunities.

Workplace Policies

Inadequate workplace policies, including lack of maternity benefits, childcare facilities, and support for work-life balance, hinder the economic progress of educated women. Enhancing these policies can improve retention and career growth for women.

Skill Development and Training

Continuous skill development and training are crucial for the economic empowerment of women. Access to relevant training programs, especially in emerging fields like digital technology, can enhance employability and income levels for educated women.

Conclusion

The economic status of educated women in India has improved over the years, but significant challenges remain. Addressing socio-cultural barriers, enforcing equal pay, enhancing workplace

policies, and promoting skill development are essential for fostering economic empowerment. By creating an inclusive and supportive environment, India can harness the full potential of its educated women, contributing to the nation's overall development.

References

1. All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE). (2020). *AISHE Report 2019-20*. Ministry of Education, Government of India.
2. Catalyst. (2020). *Women in Management in India*. Catalyst.
3. Monster Salary Index. (2019). *Gender Pay Gap in India*. Monster India.
4. National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). (2011). *India in Figures 2011*. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.
5. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). (2019). *Annual Report 2018-19*. National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.