

## Education: A Catalyst for Women Empowerment and Sustainable Business Practices

Dr Asha Singh<sup>1</sup>, Vijay Kumar Saini<sup>2</sup>, Dr Jalal Kumar Bhardwaj<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Glocal University, Commerce and Business

Email ID: [ashanikitha@gmail.com](mailto:ashanikitha@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Department of Commerce, Government Commerce College Sikar

Email ID: [vijaysikarsaini@gmail.com](mailto:vijaysikarsaini@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>ICSSR Post Doctoral Fellow, Department of Business Administration, Rajasthan University, Jaipur

Email ID: [Jalaj29@gmail.com](mailto:Jalaj29@gmail.com)

Cite this paper as: Dr Asha Singh, Vijay Kumar Saini, Dr Jalal Kumar Bhardwaj, (2025) Education: A Catalyst for Women Empowerment and Sustainable Business Practices. *Journal of Neonatal Surgery*, 14 (14s), 504-512.

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of education on women's economic empowerment and the ways in which this empowerment manifests in the form of sustainable business practices. In order for a society to thrive, education is essential. It has a major bearing on the development of people, groups, and countries. Gaining an education not only helps the disadvantaged, but it also boosts productivity, understanding, and competence. Changes in mindset are possible outcomes of educational opportunities for women. Many rural women have spoken out about wanting to be financially independent since joining SHGs. Financial independence is the main objective of SHGs. Better health care, higher literacy rates, and improved family planning are just a few of the many externalities that result from financially independent self-employment. It improves one's overall health and social status as well. The essay delves into the ideas of education, specifically women's education and high-quality education, as means to achieve sustainable development. Sustainable development and the empowerment of women are also addressed. Furthermore, it demonstrates that education tremendously empowers women, which in turn supports sustainable development. This article suggests high-quality educational opportunities to empower women to participate more actively in sustainable development on all fronts: social, economic, and political.

**Keywords:** Education, Women empowerment, Sustainable development, Self Help Groups.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Empowerment refers to the steps taken to create a social environment where individuals or groups can make decisions that impact society. Empowerment strengthens inherent ability via the gain of knowledge, power, and experience (Hashemi Schuler and Riley, 1996). A person is empowered when you give them the freedom to make their own decisions, take initiative, and handle their job on their own. It is the way to stop letting life happen to you and start making your own choices.

Some people are deprived of basic rights in every culture, nation, and state, and these people sometimes do not even know they have rights. If we were to include such social factors, women would naturally be ranked highest. Actually, women are the backbone of every civilisation. A lot of people are talking about and thinking about women's empowerment these days. Even if we are fortunate to live in a free nation right now, we should ask ourselves if everyone here is really free and enjoying freedom in its broadest meaning. The globe has always had issues with gender inequality and discrimination against women. Therefore, the call for gender parity is a global phenomenon.

Politics, marriage, inheritance, the workplace, and the classroom are just a few places where men and women should enjoy equal treatment. The fight for gender parity has inspired the formation of several women's groups and initiatives. Our society has stripped women of numerous rights promised to them by the Constitution, despite the fact that our nation's Constitution does not discriminate based on gender. When people have faith in themselves, their abilities, and their potential, they are more likely to take part in society and politics.

### *The significance of women's education*

"You educate a person when you teach a man, but you educate an entire family when you educate a woman. Mother India is empowered when women are empowered" Jawaharlal Nehru PT. For India to flourish as a whole, it is essential that its women have an education. It helps grow half the human resources while also raising the quality of life in and out of the house. Though many philosophers have attempted to define education, none have been as influential as M. Phule.

"Education is that which demonstrates the difference between what is good and what is evil," M. Phule says. The preceding idea states that education has been the bedrock of every historical upheaval. A person's perspective, attitude, and thinking are just a few areas that might be impacted by their educational experiences. Mothers who have completed their education are not only more equipped to guide their daughters, but also their other children. The birth rate can be reduced and the population can grow thanks to educated women.

### *Indian statistics on women's education*

According to the Global Gender Gap Report for 2023, India ranked 127th. The present Lok Sabha's representation of women is 14%, which is lower than the worldwide average and remains a problem even after 75 years of independence. Despite the low percentage of female political engagement in other states, Nagaland's first female representative, Hekani Jakhalu, was elected in the most recent election. A number of sad statistics highlight the plight of Indian women, including a poor literacy rate, child marriage, son-meta preference, female infanticide, and so on.

While holding the position of G20 Presidency, India pushed forward its women-led development strategy through G20 EMPOWER 2023. A win-win for equity and economy: women's empowerment was the theme of the second EMPOWER meeting, which took place in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. This G20 Presidency is the perfect opportunity to accelerate the global discourse on women's empowerment because it is inclusive, ambitious, and proactive.

A decent family, society, and nation can only flourish when women are given the tools they need to succeed. When a woman is pleased, her home is nice. When everyone is happy at home, it ripples out to the community, the state, and eventually the nation as a whole, resulting in greater stability and more rapid economic growth. I am Abdul Kalam APJ.

### *Indian Women's Profile*

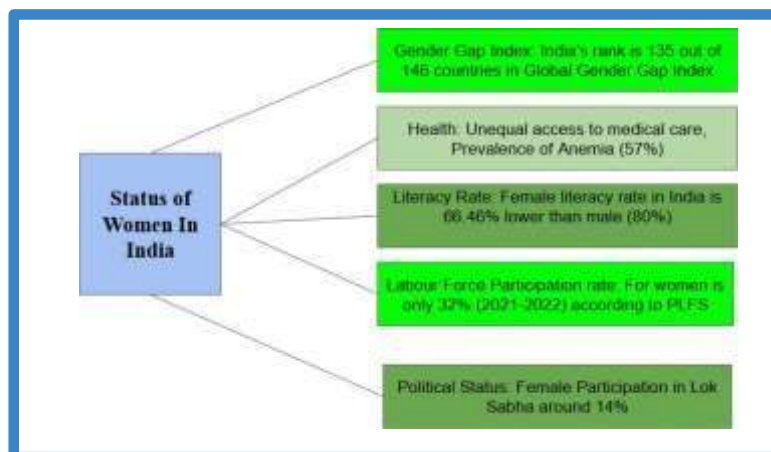


Figure 1

### *India's Social Structure and Women*

**Caste Structure:** The enslavement of women, especially by the higher castes, had a significant impact on the development of the caste system. Developing a system to regulate female sexuality was crucial to maintaining economic domination and caste purity.

**Institution of Family:** Because patrilocality and patrilineal descent are prevalent, it is usual for women to change their residence after marriage and for property to be passed down through males.

Opportunities and resources are given more weight to boys than daughters (missing daughter).

**Socialization in the family:** Because of socialization, gendered roles and relationships persist, and women develop low self-esteem. Textbooks, media, and societal norms all contribute to perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes and limiting girls' opportunities.

**Class Structure and Women's Work:** Women from higher castes tend to live alone and take care of the house, whilst those

from intermediate castes may work in specific industries.

Women from the middle class and higher castes have broken out of their social isolation to become urbanites.

**Access to Education:** Particularly in neglected and rural areas, women continue to encounter obstacles on the path to a quality education. There are still gender disparities in educational attainment, retention rates, and enrolment rates.

**Economic Empowerment:** Formal work, equal compensation, and entrepreneurship are some of the economic opportunities that are often out of reach for them. Their economic empowerment is further hindered by their lack of property rights and financial inclusion.

**Political Representation:** Women are still underrepresented in positions of political leadership and decision-making. Women are still underrepresented in higher levels of government, despite the fact that reservation regulations have improved their involvement in local governance (Panchayati Raj Institutions).

**Gender-based Violence:** Many forms of gender-based violence, including as female infanticide, sexual harassment, domestic violence, and violence tied to dowries are commonplace in India.

**Domestic Violence and Dowry Deaths:** Although there has been a growing awareness of this issue, familial violence against women was formerly viewed as a problem within the family rather than a crime against women.

### *Organizations for Women in the Post-Independence Era*

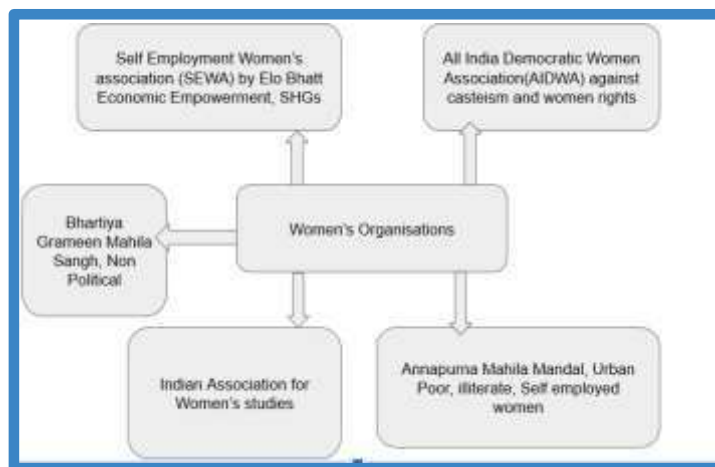


Figure 2

### *Indian Women's Legal Protection*



Figure 3

Emancipating women from the pernicious clutches of caste, gender-based, social, economic, and political oppression is known as women's empowerment. It entails giving women the autonomy to choose their own paths in life. Women's empowerment entails changing patriarchy with equality, not "deifying women."

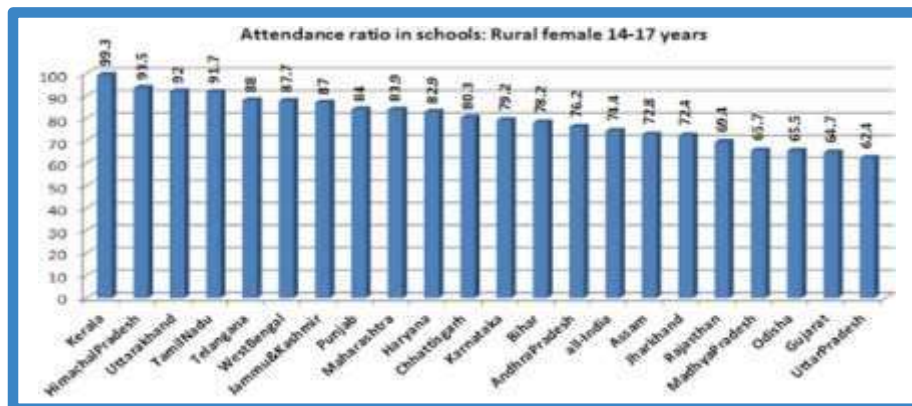
### ***Education as a means of Empowering women***

The advancement of women is the fundamental principle of every society, country, or state. A woman is the one who controls a child's day-to-day activities. There are a lot of ladies in our culture. Attitudes may improve if women are empowered via education. Therefore, it plays a crucial role in the political and economic growth of India. The Indian government has the power to promote gender equality through affirmative action programs, as stated in the country's constitution. The power of education to change women's lives is immense. The concept of women's empowerment was initially introduced at the 1985 NAROI International Women's Conference. An important step towards women's empowerment, education gives them the tools to challenge gender norms, solve problems, and change their lives for the better. That is why the power of education to empower women must not be underestimated.

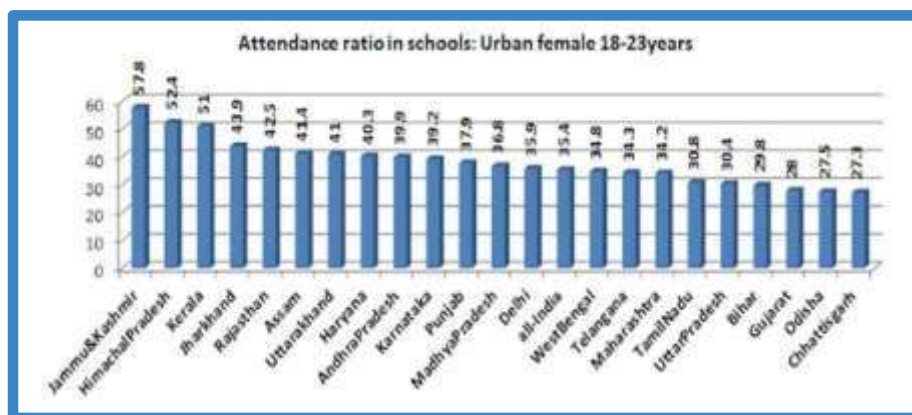
Everyone agrees that the rising tide of women's education and empowerment is the biggest thing affecting women's position. Investing in women's education is crucial if we want to achieve superpower status because it will lead to women's empowerment. UNIFEM states that the following are essential components of women's empowerment:

- Educating oneself on gender dynamics and how they can be evolved.
- Achieving personal growth involves developing a strong belief in one's abilities, taking charge of one's life, and feeling valued.
- Having the ability to make judgements and exert influence in negotiations.
- Acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to organise and lead social change with the purpose of creating a more just economic and social system across the world.

### ***Statical representation of Girl child education: 20 major states***



**Graph 1. for Girl child education in Rural Areas**



**Graph 2. for Girl child education in Rural Areas**

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is accelerated when women are empowered through education. This is because education has a multiplicative influence on communities and societies through several methods. One of the most powerful tools for empowering women is education, which happens to be a basic human right as well. According to SDG 4, everyone should have the same opportunity to receive an education, irrespective of their gender, race, or socioeconomic status. In order to empower women and girls, SDG 4 ensures that they have access to education. This provides them with knowledge, skills, and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (King and Hill, 2010), Girls, women, their families, and communities all benefit greatly from female-led education programs. Investing in people's capital has many benefits, but it is particularly important for women in developing countries where educational equality is a major issue. National efforts may have less success without women's education, which would hurt women's efforts. The importance of providing men and women with equal educational opportunities is equal.

According to (Adetunde & Akesina's, 2008) According to studies, some countries have been successful in achieving gender equality and providing equal access to education, while others have failed miserably. Many have pointed to a lack of political will as the reason governments don't change their policies. In order to achieve gender parity in opportunities and priorities, as outlined in the MDGs. In response, policy studies should centre on primary education and its constraints. The groundwork for secondary education research and practice could be laid by the balance achieved in primary school.

In their study, (Shu'ab & Ayuba, 2015) found that women experience marginalisation as a result of their lack of resources in several areas of life. If more women got degrees, they could influence politics, the economy, and society at large. When women are empowered, they may contribute more to their country's educational program on a material, financial, and moral level, which in turn improves the program's growth. More children will have the opportunity to get an education as a result of women's education since they will be better equipped to contribute financially to their children's education.

According to (Engine-Dehir, 2009), The key to global harmony, prosperity, and sustainability lies in ensuring that all people, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, have access to quality education. Improving a community's human resource base begins with quality education. Education is one of the most effective means of enhancing human resources. The development of human resources is affected by the accessibility and quality of education. Investing in people is the first step towards improving the material world. The country's fast socioeconomic development depends on it.

According to (Omololu, 1972), Because they were ignorant of the political situation in the country, Nigerian women were denied the opportunity to get an education. Staying at home to cook for their husbands and take care of their children brings them more happiness. The more they learnt, though, the more their views were shaken, and the more they understood that national events touched them as deeply as their husbands. Women are more involved in national politics now. They are selected by the electorate through voting in elections. These individuals hold seats in the federal Senate, the House of Representatives, and the State House of Representatives.

When educated women gain economic independence, they will be able to open private schools just like men. Some educated women who are also financially stable have already joined the effort. It has already been said that most school administrators are women; these women are usually exemplary and set a good example for the students and faculty. To be fair, private school owners around the country have saved the day by saving their public schools from certain doom. Providing a high-quality education appears to have slipped the minds of the nation's three branches of government. The nation's educational objectives can be advanced with the help of women working in the field of education.

The nation's political evolution is influenced by women. When it comes to politics, women's votes matter a lot because of how many there are. Therefore, they are in a position to influence the nation's political leadership and make decisions on their behalf. Also, women have been known to hold all levels of political office and have shown remarkable performance when it comes to responsibility. It should be noted that the educational sector is highly susceptible to the political will of leaders. Empowering women would not only help choose competent leaders, but it will also put them in a position to make good decisions for the country's educational progress.

Embracing the goals, beliefs, and values regarded vital and desirable, sustainable development can help countries like Nigeria tackle the current challenges with the global development process. Thus, it is possible to say that "sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and apparatus of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future." The process involves enhancing present and future capacity to meet human wants and ambitions through the harmonic combination of institutional reforms and the exploitation of technological breakthroughs (Toluhi, 2001).

By establishing policies and program interventions that do not put Nigerians in debt now or in the future, sustainable educational development can provide a system of education that takes into account these important factors: access to high-quality instructional materials, facilities provision, curriculum funding, and motivation for teachers. If Nigerian schools are



serious about contributing to long-term sustainability, they must achieve the following:

1. The individual should learn to value his own cultural traditions more, but he should also be able to take in new information and ideas to deal with the dynamic problems he faces.
2. In addition to teaching people how to connect with and contribute to their communities, it should instill in them an appreciation for the value of well-organized systems in driving human progress.
3. It needs to encourage people to think beyond the box, especially when it comes to cultural and technological matters.
4. Integrity, honesty, selflessness, tolerance, perseverance, and commitment are some of the qualities that should be inculcated in individuals as a result. "All of these traits provide the ideal environment for great leadership to flourish.
5. In order to promote a productive culture, it must make it easier for many individuals to see their own creative brilliance and tap into it to improve their skills and the way they do things, making their personal and social efforts more fruitful.

#### **Research Gap**

1. High-quality education has a role in women's sustainable development.
2. Opportunities and obstacles exist for women's sustainable development.
3. Which programs in India are effective or effective at teaching women about sustainable development and empowerment.

#### **Research Objectives**

1. To understand how quality education contributes to women's sustainable development;
2. To research the connections between quality education and other SDGs.
3. To explore the relationship of women empowerment sustainable business practices.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The data used in this research article was gathered from secondary sources, including books, government publications, reports, and online available data. This study is both exploratory and descriptive.

#### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The United Nations created the 17 interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. These objectives are intended to tackle a variety of global social, economic, and environmental issues. Aspects of environmental sustainability and human well-being are covered by the 17 SDGs. Sustainable development, according to the United Nations (UN, 2012), could also be referred to as equitable and balanced". This means that for development to last forever, it must simultaneously balance the interests of various groups of people within and between generations, as well as in the three main interconnected areas of the economy, society, and environment.



**Figure 4**

### ***Goals of the SDGs through Education for Women***

The following are specific goals of education initiatives that span the pertinent domains of education, health, youth, skill development, technology, and women's economic empowerment in order to accomplish sustainable development of women via education:

- Make certain that young women and girls receive a complete cycle of high-quality education.
- Equip young women and girls with the necessary information and abilities.
- Encourage girls and young women to fully engage in society by supporting them as they enter adulthood and the workforce.

## **4. ANALYSIS**

### ***Women's contribution to promoting sustainable development***

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2047 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which were adopted by world leaders in 2015, represent a way forward for sustainable development that does not exclude anyone. In order to accomplish all seventeen goals, it is necessary to empower women and achieve gender equality. Prioritizing the rights of women and girls is essential if we are to realize justice and inclusion, inclusive economies, and the protection of our shared environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

Affirming gender parity is important for two reasons. First, a matter of social justice and human rights is the need for women to have the same opportunities, rights, and obligations as men. In addition, achieving more gender parity is not just an indication of successful people-centered development but also a necessary condition for it. It is important to consider women's and men's viewpoints, interests, needs, and goals in development processes for both social justice and practical reasons (OSAGI, 2001).

After years of having their opinions, knowledge, and experiences disregarded, women are finally standing up and demanding that their opinions be taken seriously. They agree that a holistic strategy for sustainable development is necessary due to the interconnected nature of environmental, social, economic, and political issues. Gender mainstreaming and positive action work hand in hand to create an environment that is supportive to women. There are two parts to this: first, there are targeted policies and programs that aim to better women's lives, and second, there is a need to be gender sensitive in all policy and program decisions, including those that don't directly address women's empowerment.

### ***Women and the family***

Almost everywhere in the world, women occupy the traditional roles of breadwinner, child caretaker, and house administrator. Additionally, they actively manage the environment. The bulk of impoverished nations' agricultural labour, animal care, and water and fuel gathering is done by women. Regardless of their valuable contributions, women still face a lack of representation in decision-making roles related to development and the environment on a global, national, and even regional scale. Since women are primarily responsible for caring for and teaching the next generation, they place a higher value on the role that communication and education play in preventing climate change. The traditional roles of women as caretakers of domestic and natural resources place them in a prime position to help develop livelihood plans that take into account the evolving nature of the environment. Because they care about the well-being of present and future generations, women make substantial contributions to sustainable development in their roles as consumers, educators, family carers, and producers.

### ***SDG 4, education and women's empowerment***

Education for women is strongly tied to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality education and promotes opportunities for continuous learning. Education empowers women in the following ways, according to SDG 4:

**Access to Education:** Equal access to quality education is a cornerstone of gender equality and a basic human right. According to SDG 4, everyone should have the same opportunity to receive an education, irrespective of their gender, race, or socioeconomic status. In order to empower women and girls, SDG 4 ensures that they have access to education. This provides them with knowledge, skills, and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

**Gender Equality in Education:** Achieving and eradicating gender inequality in education is the goal of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Equal educational opportunities for girls and boys not only benefit individuals, but also contribute to the development of more equitable and welcoming communities as a whole. By addressing issues like poverty, cultural norms, and infrastructural gaps, SDG 4 empowers women and brings about a society that is more balanced between the sexes.

**Quality Education:** Provision of inclusive, egalitarian, and relevant quality education is emphasized in SDG 4. Beyond the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, a good education should also teach students to think critically, solve problems,

and apply what they have learnt in real-world situations. Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Agenda is to ensure that all girls and women have access to a quality education so that they can participate actively in all aspects of society and the economy. This will empower them to make informed choices and positive impacts in their communities.

**Empowerment Through Lifelong Learning:** Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Agenda recognizes and promotes a lifelong learning opportunity for all people, recognising that education is an ongoing process that extends beyond traditional schooling. Women can adapt to changing social and economic climates by continuing their education throughout their lives and expanding their knowledge base. SDG 4 makes it simpler for women to participate in decision-making at all levels by creating opportunities for lifelong learning, stimulates entrepreneurship, and helps women become more employable.

#### *The Indian government's efforts to empower women via education*

The government of India has actively worked to ensure that women are empowered in all spheres of society, including education, economics, politics, and social mobility, through a variety of strategic initiatives. School environments should be inclusive of girls, especially those from low-income families, and should have the resources to address their individual needs. Government programs such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban & Rural), Samagra Shiksha, Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna, Swachh Vidyalaya Mission, and others work towards this goal.

In an effort to boost the employability of women, the government is funding training programs at the Women Industrial Training Institutes, the National Vocational Training Institutes, and the Regional Vocational Training Institutes. Along with POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anganwadi Services Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme, One Stop Centre (OSC), Universalization of Women Helpline, Child Protection Services Scheme, Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG), Swadhar Greh Scheme, Ujjawala Scheme, and Working Women Hostel, the following initiatives have been implemented over the last five years by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) to empower women and girls throughout the country.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Ultimately, sustainable development can only be achieved through educational programs that address specific concerns about sustainability. By teaching participants, the principles, knowledge, and skills necessary to solve social, economic, and environmental sustainability issues, these programs strengthen communities' capacity to participate in sustainable practices and decision-making, which in turn improves economic, environmental, and social outcomes. But education can't solve gender inequity and empower women by itself because it's just one part of social policy. To attain long-term women's development and education-based women's empowerment, it is necessary to consider not only women's rights but also the legal and social systems, government policies, the job market, welfare systems, culture, and religion.

In conclusion, increasing educational opportunities for women is a key factor in achieving the SDGs on a worldwide scale. This essay has laid forth the many reasons why it is beneficial to educate women, highlighting how it helps not just individuals but also communities and nations. Providing women with opportunities for higher education empowers them to break the cycle of poverty, promote gender equality, enhance their health and well-being, and drive economic development. Education also helps them rise in the family hierarchy and lessens inequity. To encourage women's education across all levels and to reduce gender bias in the transmission of information, the state established institutions of higher learning reserved for female students. Educating the public about the importance of participating in panchayats and governance can help remove gender bias..

## REFERENCES

- [1] Hashemi, Syed M. & Schuler, Sidney Ruth & Riley, Ann P., 1996. "Rural credit programs and women's empowerment in Bangladesh," World Development, Elsevier, vol. 24(4), pages 635-653, April
- [2] King and Hill (2010), Girls Child Education, Abuja.
- [3] Adetunde and Akesina (2008:338), Girls Enrolment in Nigerian Schools.
- [4] Onanya, S. (2005:15), Women Education as a Tool to Sustainable Development in Nigeria.
- [5] Engine-Dehir L. (2009), Fundamental Human Rights and Education in Nigeria.
- [6] Omololu, A. A. (1972), "Education of Women" in A. Adaralegbe (Ed.) A Philosophy for Nigerian Education. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, Nigeria limited.
- [7] Toluhi, (2001), Sustainable Women Educational Developments in Nigeria, Ibadan book, ltd.

#### *Online References*

- [8] <https://swarajyamag.com/insta/india-improves-overall-score-on-sdg-index-uttar-pradesh-registers-biggest-improvement>



- [9] <https://www.saoicmai.in/elibrary/women-empowerment-and-sustainable-development.pdf>
  - [10] <https://vishnuias.com/challenges-in-primary-education-in-india/>
  - [11] <https://www.counterview.net/2019/12/girl-child-education-20-major-states.html>
  - [12] <https://theiashub.com/free-resources/mains-marks-booster/status-of-women-in-india>
  - [13] <https://legodesk.com/legopedia/laws-womens-rights-in-india/>
  - [14] <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1845382>
- ..
- 

