

Empowering Wives: Advancing Education and Opportunities Post-Marriage in India

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Abstract

Almost half of all people on the planet are women. The best method to enhance a household's health, nutrition, and financial standing - a household being a micro unit of a country's economy - is for women to receive an education. In this regard, one could argue that under education of women may be a barrier to the economic advancement of the nation. In India, women obtain significantly less schooling than males do. Government and non-profit organizations have made a real attempt to raise women's educational achievement. The actions of the Indian government towards women's education reflected in the modifications made to elementary, secondary, and higher education legislation and infrastructure. According to the survey, there has been a noticeable improvement in women's educational achievement as evidenced by changes in female literacy levels throughout time. However, no one talks about the right to education of a woman after her marriage. How she is sacrificing her higher education and the challenges she faces if she pursues so and the sacrifices she makes relating to her further education and sacrificing career of her own dreams and lives her life in poise.

This paper talks about the women's right to education post marriage and the challenges she faces in her life post marriage. Right to Education after marriage is also a fundamental human right. Women empowerment in education post-marriage is necessary in the society.

Keywords: Women and higher education, Marriage, Legal Right, Responsibilities, Housewives, Post-marriage.

Introduction

Every woman finds it very challenging to pursue, the higher education after marriage. Due to the additional responsibilities of marriage, girls sometimes discontinue their education. They become completely focused on taking care of their parents-in-law and other family members in addition to their spouse after marriage. As soon as after getting married, they also begin to bear and raise children. Most essential, women who choose to pursue higher education after marriage require the support of their husbands and in-laws and if she has the will to do so, nothing can stop her. She will become independent and self-assured. After landing a good job, financial freedom will improve her attitude and self-worth. She has many domestic duties; thus, it is her responsibility to strike a balance between work and school. After marriage, women will need to put in a lot of effort and commitment to further their education, but it is possible!

Some scholars across all disciplines, including feminist theorists and economists, have consistently noted that women's employment selections are significantly influenced by their family responsibilities. However, a number of researchers have been drawn to a considerable deconstruction of women's experiences with power, sexuality, reproduction, and work within the family system in recent times. The life course approach used in this study to explore women's lived experiences and challenges in pursuing higher education after marriage.

As we all know Education for Women is a Strategy in herself, the letter S in STRATEGY stands for Self Confident, the letter T stands for Trustworthy, the letter R stands for Role and Responsibilities, the letter A stands for Artistic, the letter T stands for Talented, the letter E stands for Entertaining, the letter G stands for Genuine; and the letter Y stands for Yare.

Evolution of Women's Education in India

In ancient India Women's education in ancient India was advanced, compared to many other ancient societies. Women like Gargi and Maitreyi were renowned scholars in Vedic times. However, access to formal education was limited primarily to girls from privileged families.

In Medieval period, with the onset of medieval times, access to education for women declined due to societal norms and cultural shifts. Education was often restricted to household skills and religious teachings only. During the **British period**, the establishment of British rule in India had a mixed impact on women's education. On one hand, missionary efforts introduced Western education for women, but on the other hand, traditional societal norms continued to restrict access for many of them.

In **19th century** Leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar advocated for girls' education as a means of social reform.

In **Post- Independence** the focus was on increasing literacy rates and reducing gender disparities in education. In recent decades, there has been a significant increase in female literacy rates across India. Government initiatives like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaigns specifically target education for girls.

Despite progress, challenges remain, including gender-based discrimination, socio-economic disparities, and cultural barriers. Efforts are ongoing to ensure quality education and equal opportunities for women in India. Overall, the evolution of women's education in India reflects a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors. While there have been notable advancements, continued efforts are required to achieve universal access and quality education for all women across the country.

Married Women and Societal Norms

This is a gendered issue since this harsh social norm frequently affects our female population. The girl accepts these terms, conditions as her fate, and accomplish it without objecting to the fact that she has real rights and obligations guaranteed to her by religion and the state law. Article 21 of the Constitution states that every individual, regardless of gender, has the right to live with dignity and to make a living.¹

However, in our patriarchal and conservative society, rights and duties of a bride are dictated by her in-laws, in many cases it has been found our own mother in law plays spoilsport, as she does not want her daughter-in-law to pursue her studies or work outside her home. Instead, she considers her as household assistant employed to lower workload in routine household chorus, nothing more. Some families are

¹ <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/todays-paper/op-ed/why-women-quit-education-after-marriage/>

generous enough in allowing their bride to pursue her career goals, but that just appears to be mere eyewash.

As time goes on, her schooling begins to look like an unfair compromise from her family, and her excitement for her educational demands gradually wanes. She is finally forced to swallow the harsh pill of accepting that one should put her focus into serving her family after marriage and that knowledge inevitably becomes obsolete, forcing them to stop their studies in the middle of their journey.

The Indian government offers a wide range of programs aimed at empowering and bettering women, but the issue of education post marriage receives very less attention.

It is inaccurate to believe that males will have a major role in shaping the destiny of our nation. It is equally dependent on the marginalized women. The key to contemporary India is giving them the equality they deserve. However, it seems as though women are laying their family values deep under the earth in this state where they are being abused or prevented from continuing their studies after marriage.

The framework that creates a legal relationship between spouses and places responsibilities and rights on them in relation to one another is known as marriage law. The framework of marriage law governs the formation of this connection. These rights might include joint property ownership, benefits from inheritance, and even the ability to make decisions in the event that one spouse becomes incapable of doing so. All of these items may theoretically be covered by these rights. These duties usually involve things like helping financially, sharing responsibilities, and sometimes even having parental responsibility over children.

Legal Perspective of Married Women rights to Education

- **Right to Education is a Fundamental Human right** Legally, being married does not deprive a woman of her right to education. The law supports the educational aspirations of married women, recognizing their autonomy and agency in pursuing educational opportunities.²
- **Continuation of education after marriage specially for women** One's entitlement to an education shouldn't be inherently restricted by marriage. If both couples want to further their education, they should be given the chance to do so. Governments and society should make sure that people, particularly women, have the resources and encouragement to continue their education after marriage.
- **Protection of laws** Laws and policies should safeguard the right of married individuals to access education. This includes protection against discriminatory practices that might prevent married individuals, particularly women, from enrolling in educational institutions.
- **Equality and Non Discrimination** Equality and Marriage should not be a barrier to education. States and institutions must work towards ensuring that access to education is equitable and not dependent on marital status.
- **Support for Married Students:** Educational institutions should provide support for married students, such as flexible schedules, childcare facilities, and financial aid options, to enable them to balance their family responsibilities with their educational pursuits.
- **Awareness and Advocacy:** There needs to be awareness and advocacy efforts to highlight the importance of education for all individuals irrespective of their marital status. This includes educating communities and families about the benefits of education for both married men and women.

² <https://togetherthrive.info/marital-issues/understanding-the-legal-rights-of-a-married-women-in-india>

Constitutional Provisions

Part III and **Part IV** of the Constitution's guiding principles must be followed when interpreting the right to education, which is implied in the rights to life and personal liberty given by **Article 21**. Many articles in Part IV specifically address the right to education. The **Article 41** declares that the "State shall, within the boundaries of its financial resources and growth, make effective provisions for safeguarding the right to work, to education and to assistance from the government in cases of unemployed people, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other instances of undeserved want".³

Article 45 Article 45 states that "the State will try to provide, over an interval of ten years from the beginning of this the constitution, for an obligatory education for every child until they achieve an age limit of fourteen years".⁴

Article 46 states that "the State shall protect the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and the less fortunate groups of the people, from injustice in society and all forms of exploitation in a situation and shall promote with special care its educational and economic interests."⁵ Among other things, the three **Articles 41, 45, and 46** intended to accomplish the stated objective. The substance and limitations of the right to education must be decided upon in the context of these Articles. When the right to education was interpreted in the context of Articles 45 and 41, it meant that: (a) every child and citizen of this nation has the right to free education up until the age of fourteen; and (b) after that, the right to education is limited by the state's economic resources and its level of development.

We might address each of these limbs independently with the introduction of Article 21-A in the 86th amendment to the Constitution in 2002, the right to education became a basic right. The Constitution now includes a basic right for the first time in the history of independent India. The right to education, in contrast to other basic rights, needed enabling legislation in order to be implemented. This enabling law is the RTE Act. Act No. RTE was enacted on April 1, 2010.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- It must be ensured that accessible education is ensured that educational opportunities are accessible to married women by offering flexible learning options such as part-time courses, evening classes, online education, or distance learning. This flexibility can accommodate their family responsibilities and allow them to pursue education at their own pace.
- Financial Assistance provide scholarships, grants, or financial aid specifically targeted at married women to alleviate financial barriers that may hinder their pursuit of education. This support can cover tuition fees, textbooks, transportation costs, or childcare expenses so that they can pursue their education without any barriers.
- Childcare Facilities must be provided and established on-campus or nearby childcare facilities to assist married women in balancing their education with childcare responsibilities. This can enable them to attend classes or study without the burden of arranging alternative care for their children.
- Counselling services shall be offered and academic guidance tailored to the needs of married women, addressing their unique challenges and concerns related to managing family life while pursuing education.

³ https://www.education.gov.in/directive_principles_of_state_policy_article-41

⁴ https://www.education.gov.in/directive_principles_of_state_policy_article-45

⁵ https://www.education.gov.in/directive_principles_of_state_policy_article-46

- In addition, Employment Opportunities Promote initiatives that facilitate employment opportunities for married women who have acquired education, ensuring that they can utilize their skills and contribute to the workforce while managing familial responsibilities and education.
- Awareness Campaigns shall be conducted within communities and families to promote the value of education for married women, emphasizing the benefits of lifelong learning and personal development.
- Advocate for policy changes that promote gender equality in education and address barriers faced by married women, including discriminatory practices or social norms that limit their educational opportunities post marriage.

Conclusion

It is concluded that in order to create an environment that is favourable for good economic health, political and social stability, and will pave the way for growth and development, our society, which has a population that will place greater demands on the country's resources, needs a young generation of females who value and pursue education. The most crucial tool for developing human resources is education. The highest priority among the several steps taken to raise the status of women in India is, therefore, education. The emphasis of planning has moved in recent years from preparing women for their customary positions as mothers and homemakers to recognizing their value as producers who significantly contribute to household and national wealth. Over the course of the three decades before that of planned development, attempts have been made to give women access to non-formal education and to increase the number of girls enrolled in schools with the goal of encouraging them to complete their schooling as long as feasible. When attending institutions for higher education, girls who are seeking degrees are frequently reluctant to tie a holy knot for fear that it may cause their academic progress to stagnate. It is necessary to talk about marriage, rather than being an empowering force in our life, is turning out to be unproductive. Academic stagnation contributing to the postponement of our weddings, and girls desire to marry than they should in order to finish their education.

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