



WOMEN'S EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA – A STUDY

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Abstract

The old India proverb: "If you educate a man, educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, educate a family (nation)" was a pioneer in his time to understand the importance of educating women when Men dominated the educational opportunities. This maxim recognized the benefits of education and has repeatedly become the motivation for global development efforts to offer educational opportunities to women. However, basically this maxim has problematic hypotheses that further strengthen women and reinforce patriarchal stereotypes. This essay tries to unpack the hypotheses behind the proverb by seeing how it is believed that educating women leads to the development of family and nation in the context of sub-Saharan Africa,

Introduction

"If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family (nation)"

Therefore, "educating women" has become a trend, as seen in the growing global attention that focuses on providing access to education for girls and women. Gender-focused aid has nearly tripled from \$ 2.5 billion in 2002 to \$ 7.2 billion in 2006, reflecting how the development industry is acclaiming this old India maxim as a universal truth and is eager to make it happen. However, in recent decades, it has gained maximum momentum in education and development discourse, and which has often been criticized by activists advocating the end of unequal gender .

The foundations behind the maxim are questionable and have been criticized for further banning women as seeing them as development tools and reinforcing patriarchal stereotypes. This maxim fits into the 'Women in Development' (WID) paradigm by stating that women as development agents should not be wasted.¹ It also means that women must take on their domestic roles as mothers and wives for their development education leads in a more complete context .

This article seeks to unravel the fundamentals of this influential maxim by first analyzing how women's education is believed to lead to family and nation development, followed by criticism of this instrumentalist view. "Education" will be defined as formal education in this document; not because informal education does not deserve to be mentioned, but formal education is generally considered the central stage for the social and cultural formation of the new generations.¹ and hegemony often reproduces itself systematically through it. This discussion will be further contextualized using examples from sub-Saharan Africa, the area where this proverb originated. This is also a region containing countries with the lowest female literacy rate and the lowest gender parity index for enrollment in formal education.

Recognizing that Girls and Women Should Also Be Educated

This maxim was revolutionary when it was first used by Dr. Aggrey in the early twentieth century, as it highlighted the need to educate women alongside men at a time when this was extremely rare, particularly in the India context. . As stated by Njeuma.³ The dominant view in the India context does not consider women as heads of families: families are often *patriarchal* and *patrilocal* and, in some areas, even *polygamous* .Therefore, girls and their older counterparts are considered lifelong dependent on men and, in particular, depend on their parents or husbands when they get married. In other words, women are employed inside the home and take on the role of taking care and taking care of their children (*Ibid*). In Zimbabwe, the division of labor by gender is



evident, as men have complete control over the wealth and working power of women, as they contribute to the advantage of men in their home.⁴ The contributory elements of women take the form of daily living in the home, such as providing primary assistance to children and preparing food and maintaining a habitable environment for all members of the family. This allows men to master the role of earning income outside the home without the need to supply the family unit with workforce.

The maxim is based on the dominant view of women's social roles in the India context, but recognizes that women should not be excluded from education on the basis of the benefits they will bring to the family and the country as a whole. Education, in this context, adopts Amartya Sen's approach to education as one of "a relatively small number of beings and actions of central importance which are crucial for well-being".⁵ Emphasizes the importance of education as a means of expanding an individual's ability to achieve "shows" that shape his well-being. According to Sen⁶, the "ability" that a person has is "the substantial freedoms he enjoys to lead the type of life he has reasons to evaluate". Therefore, after receiving education, women will have acquired the agency and the skills to achieve their well-being. In this way, it would be deduced that their well-being would "filter" and improve the well-being of their home, contribute to the well-being of the next generation and, ultimately, improve that of the nation.

Recognize women as Development Agents

Recognizing the importance of education for development, the proverb maintains the opinion that women are agents of development. Differentiate the results of education for men and women: "educated" women have greater capacity to generate externalities, additional benefits that would contribute to the development of their families and the nation in general. On the other hand, men will only benefit from education. Therefore, this view makes educated women better development agents than men. The proverb falls under the dominant approach of considering the education of girls and women as a solution to human poverty. This approach is strongly anchored in the long-standing Women in Development (WID) framework, which has been used since the 1970s. More later, other frameworks appeared that criticized the original WID position, such as Women and Development (WAD), and gender and development (GAD). Nonetheless, the WID framework is still considered to be of great influence on the way women and education are conceptualized, as seen in the frequent nominations of the maximum in defense campaigns / policies of governments, international agencies and NGOs. The WID framework is inherent in modernization theories and emphasizes that expanding education for girls and women will lead to "efficiency and economic growth"⁷. For example, the World Bank considered women in developing countries to be a "previously untapped source of human capital" and repeatedly stressed the importance of dedicating resources to girls' education to maximize the potential of this part of the population to encourage the development of the country.⁸ This has led education to become fundamental in the development of human capital by improving an individual's productivity.⁹

An approach to human capital considers education as an investment in development: sufficient investments are believed to promote general development and greater sustainability of development progress.¹⁰ Therefore, he attaches great importance to investment in education for girls and women as "creating powerful synergies to reduce poverty and produce huge intergenerational gains."¹¹ This notion has been easily accepted and there is significant research that highlights these "synergies to reduce poverty" and "intergenerational advantages in the education of girls and women.

Education of Women as Synergies to Reduce Poverty

The main synergy to reduce poverty is the generation of income through an increase in female participation in the labor market. In Ghana, between 1991 and 1998, women who received primary and post-primary education increased participation rates by nearly ten percent in urban and rural settings¹¹. A positive link has been established between receiving education and getting better job opportunities. Probably, women also receive better incomes, as higher-income occupations and promotional opportunities generally require that people have more knowledge and skills obtained mainly through formal education.



Other indirect impacts of poverty reduction are related to health; For example, reducing the fertility rate and reducing the chances of contracting HIV and other diseases. The high fertility rate is often considered a feature of developing countries and an obstacle to development. In the mid-1970s, the World Fertility Survey was published which supported education as a solution to the problem of high fertility, with research showing that the more education a woman has, the less likely she is to have children.

Therefore, the notion of "education as a form of contraception" was created from the causal relationship between the level of female education and fertility rates.¹³ This causal relationship can be understood from the "four main channels" described by Ainsworth *et al.* (1996), which explain how schooling women can lead to less fertility and greater use of contraceptives. In summary, the four channels highlight how "wage effects" and "educational aspirations" increase the opportunity cost for women to raise children. The "wage effects" consider that educated women will be entitled to better wages than their uneducated counterparts, therefore the opportunity costs to raise children increase, as motherhood and the education of children will require an additional amount of time, which could otherwise be spent on work. Regarding "educational aspirations",

An Instrumental Vision of Women's Education and Development

Perhaps the most problematic assumption of the proverb is that it claims that educating women will necessarily benefit others. This hypothesis fits into the WID framework by supporting the integration of women in development as a solution to human poverty. However, the WID framework created and put into practice the category of "Third World Women", which standardized and homogenized girls and women in developing countries. According to the maxim, girls and women are tied to their homes and mainly have the same needs and interests, that is, they seek benefits for their family after receiving education. This is very problematic because it overlooks the importance of differentiating race and class in women's lives by seeing women as a homogeneous group and not addressing the complexity of the different experiences and roles of women within the family. Society and the nation.

Furthermore, individual aspirations and values accorded to education are not taken into account, and the results of the education of girls and women focus on the stereotypical conceptions of wives and mothers. Unterhalter notes that this notion of educating women primarily benefits others and the home. The inability to relate the benefits of education to women is actually "the place of the most serious discrimination". The girls and women in this context are educated to contribute to the family and the home, while boys and men receive an education free from these expectations.

Conclusion

This popular India maxim has helped establish the necessary emphasis on the education of girls and women, however the assumptions on which it is based have led to this document evaluating their reasons for educating girls and women. While current educational efforts have undoubtedly improved the lives of many women, they have not yet addressed the strategic gender needs needed for sustainable improvements in women's lives.

Clearly, women are still closely tied to their domestic roles as wives and mothers and education is currently used as a tool through which to reproduce this dominant patriarchal gender division of labor. By deciphering problematic assumptions, it is clear that the maxim has failed to address the root causes of gender inequality in education and has been ineffective in realizing how gender inequality is reproduced through education. This inequality is not simply due to differences in access to schools and resources, but also to the way in which women lack power and are limited to their stereotypes of gender.



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