

Role of Home Science Education in Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Education is a key tool for social change all around the world, as the women's empowerment movement has always emphasised. In pedagogy customised for women's development, personal growth, self-reliance, social development, social integration, productive ability, and political understanding should all be included. Home Science education is the most efficient way to develop the qualities listed above. A woman's physical, emotional, social, and economic development require a home science education. Women's empowerment can thus be defined as a process that enhances women's sense of self-worth, ability to make their own decisions, control resources, and right to influence societal change for themselves and others, as well as their decision-making skills. Home science training will empower women to handle the difficulties of today's technological age by providing them with scientific and technological expertise. Home science education not only teaches a woman, but also empowers her to make decisions and accept responsibilities both at home and in the outside world. Women who are empowered have become the face of their own growth, drilling choices that allow them to define their own agendas, swap their subordinate role in society, and be resilient enough to oppose.

Women have an important role in environmental development and management. As a result, their full engagement is required to accomplish long-term growth" (Principle 20, Rio Declaration). Promoting gender equality has two justifications. To begin with, gender equality — equal rights, opportunities, and responsibilities for men and women — is an issue of human rights and social justice. And, second, that greater gender equality is a requirement for (and an effective indicator of) long-term, people-centred growth. This chapter provides the overview of the role of women's empowerment in the context of the Sustainable Development Agenda, clarifies some basic concepts and case studies relating to empowerment and sustainable development, and highlights concepts related to the new Sustainable Development Goal 5 titled "Women's Empowerment." "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".

KEYWORDS: *Home Science Education, Sustainable Development, Women Empowerment*

1.0 UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment can be defined as “a multi-faceted social process that aids people in gaining control over their own lives. It is a process that develops people's power so that they can use it in their own lives, communities, and society by acting on issues that they deem essential.”

Individual and group empowerment is described as the degree of independence and autonomy they have. This gives individuals the ability to advocate their own interests in a responsible and self-determined manner. Empowerment is a comprehensive, functional concept that should enable and accredit individuals to realise their full identity potential in all aspects of life. This includes substantial ability to plan their lives, extensive access to resources and knowledge, and substantial decision-making freedom. Individuals can also be liberated from the constraints imposed by customs, habits, and beliefs.

As a result, "empowerment" denotes "moving from a position of weakness to one of power." Women's empowerment is a constitutional right, a fundamental human right, and a potent force for national progress, regardless of gender, religion, caste, or faith. Education, awareness, literacy, and training are all part of the process of empowering women. The necessity of establishing "Women's Empowerment via Education" was emphasised in the 1986 National Policy on Education, as well as the current "Goal 5 as Gender Equality," which is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Self-sufficiency, self-governance, and self-maintenance are all aspects of empowerment. The feeling of being able to make your own decisions arises from a sense of empowerment.

Women empowerment is a worldwide proceeding and it was augmented at the International Women Conference at NAROI in 1985. Women Empowerment is a process which includes:

- Equivalent approach for using society's assets
- Prohibition of gender disparity
- Freedom from violence
- Economic independence
- Participation in all decision making bodies.
- The ability to make decisions about one's own life.

1.1. EMPOWERING WOMEN

Women's empowerment entails acquiring more authority and influence over their own life. This refers to the idea of women continuing to be at a disadvantage to men in various economic, sociocultural, and political areas. As a result, women's empowerment can be seen as a crucial step toward gender equality, which is described as "individuals' rights, duties, and opportunities will not be influenced by whether they are born male or female."

An empowered woman, according to the *UN Population Fund*, has a sense of self-worth. She has the ability to make her own decisions and has access to opportunities and resources that provide her with a variety of possibilities. She has authority over her own life, both within and outside the house, and she has the power to influence the direction of social development, both nationally and internationally, in order to establish a more just social and economic order.

"Women empowerment is defined as the process of granting rights, powers, opportunities, and duties to women so that they can realise their full potential, think freely, and act in society on an equal footing with men."

Education has always been emphasised as the most important weapon for social change in the global struggle for women's empowerment. According to *Gunnar Myrdal (1969)*, education should have both an autonomous and "instrumental" value, i.e., the goal of education should be to rationalise attitudes as well as teach knowledge and skills. Home Science education is not designed to educate girls solely for the purpose of obtaining a degree that will serve as a passport to marriage, but rather to help them reach their full potential in all areas, including personally, socially, and economically.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as development that meets current demands without jeopardising future generations' ability to meet their own.

It incorporates two major concepts:

- *The concept of "needs," particularly the most basic requirements of the world's impoverished, which should be given first priority; and*
- *The idea of restrictions imposed on the environment's ability to supply existing and future requirements by the level of technology and social structure.*

Economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection are the three basic factors that must be harmonised in order to achieve sustainable development.

Sustainable development aspires to eradicate poverty by expanding opportunities for everyone, reducing inequities, boosting basic living standards, and promoting fair social development and inclusion. All policies and actions that are broadly meant to establish a society based on freedom, democracy, and respect for fundamental rights, fostering equality of opportunity and solidarity within and between generations should include sustainable development as a key premise.

1.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

On September 25, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly in New York passed a resolution on the post-2015 development plan titled "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." 20 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ("the 2030 Agenda"), which went into effect on January 1, 2016, includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Each SDG has precise targets that must be met by 2030. They address the three aspects of sustainable development listed above: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection.



Fig 1: UN's Sustainable Development Goals (<https://www.esa.int/>)

1.4 EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Women's empowerment is a process, and sustainable development incorporates socio-cultural, economic, and environmental factors, encompassing a vast range of topics. The 2030 Agenda emphasises gender equality and women's empowerment. They are mentioned throughout the Agenda and are considered as critical to its success: "realising gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a key contribution to progress across all goals and targets," the General Assembly states in the Agenda Resolution. Looking at SDG 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" further clarifies the relevance of women's empowerment in the 2030 Agenda.

"The Sustainable Development Goals provide us with a unified plan and agenda to solve some of the world's most significant concerns, such as poverty, climate change, and violence." UNDP has the experience and ability to assist countries move forward and achieve sustainable development."

Economic, social, cultural, and environmental concerns, it is claimed, must be addressed in a holistic and integrated manner. From a gender perspective, it is critical not to view gender equality solely as a socio-cultural issue, but to evaluate it in economic and environmental terms as well, recognising gender equality as a cross-cutting goal for achieving sustainable development.

Sustainable development should be a top priority for all national policies, with the goal of improving the quality of life for present and future generations on the planet. It's about preserving the planet's ability to support life in all of its forms. It is founded on democratic and rule-of-law ideals, as well as respect for fundamental rights such as freedom and equal opportunity for all. It fosters generational and intergenerational solidarity. It aspires to develop a vibrant economy with high levels of employment and education, as well as health protection, social and territorial integration, and environmental protection in a peaceful and secure world that respects cultural diversity.

Women have continued to advocate for policies and practises that do not endanger future generations' health and well-being over time. They continue to struggle for better living conditions and environmental preservation. In practically every country, women share major responsibility for nutrition, child care, and household administration. They are also involved in environmental protection. Women are important farmers, livestock tenders, and water and fuel collectors in most impoverished countries. Despite their roles, women are underrepresented in decision-making processes involving environmental and development issues at the local, national, and international levels. Women are demanding that their voices be heard after years of having their skills, knowledge, and viewpoint ignored.

1.5 FEW RECENT INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- *MGNREGA*, the world's largest job guarantee plan, employs over half of all women.
- Reform of outdated legislation and procedures, as seen by a historic ruling in 2016 that guaranteed a *26-week paid maternity leave*, thereby encouraging women to participate.
- The new *Vishakha Guidelines* have the potential to lead to a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Centrally funded programmes such as the *SarvaSikshaAbhiyaan* and the *Right to Education Act of 2009* have aided in increasing the Gross Enrollment Rate for females in secondary school from 55.5 percent in 2008 to 80.29 percent in 2018. The percentage of female teachers in post-secondary non-tertiary education has likewise increased to 60.86 percent.
- Several recent and future efforts by a number of *Social Entrepreneurs* empower women by giving a forum for them to express their talents while also earning a living. This provides an opportunity for rural women to earn bread and butter by allowing them to generate a self-sustaining income.
- Several *fintech companies* have also begun to work on women's empowerment.
- Several large corporations are also linked in their commitment to women's empowerment through *CSR activities*. Fostering the creation of better occupations, providing guidance for infant and elder care, and ensuring mobility to and from work are all contributing to the removal of pervasive structural barriers to women's employment. The "*Modern SavitrichyaLeki*" must be empowered in order to get one step closer to accomplishing the long-term aim in the future decade.

1.6 HOME SCIENCE EDUCATION: A KEY TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Everyone's life is impacted by their education. The process of providing people more influence over their own lives, societies, and communities is referred to as empowerment. "Home Economics aims at freedom of home from dominance of things and their due subordination to ideals," said *Ellen Richards*, the first President of the Home Economic Association. Home Science is a versatile branch of study that researches health, nutrition, child care, textile and garment design, resource management, and other home-related themes. As a result, Home Science education covers every area of household and family management. It's an 'art' because it aids in the efficient management of resources, and it's a 'science' since it aids in the betterment of family life by providing knowledge in the subject. Home Science includes an integrated approach that combines theory, practical, and field work, and has been constructed in an innovative way to assist students to acquire knowledge.

Home Science has made a significant contribution to national development by preparing students to run extension and community outreach activities. Students are urged to cultivate a scientific mind set. Home Science education focuses on familiarising students with contemporary technology, family and community connection strategies, and resource sustainability for human growth. Home Science is a discipline that combines elements of science, social science, and technology to aid in the study of and improvement of human existence. As a result, its approach is intrinsically interdisciplinary.

Home Science has traditionally used an ecological approach in its curriculum, involving students in teaching, research, and extension. Home Science education emphasises the relevance of an individual's dynamic interaction with his or her family, community, and society as a whole, as well as with natural resources. Students who study Home Science in higher education have the opportunity to hone their skills while also developing a sense of social responsibility. In today's world, Home Scientists advocate for the development of individual and community capacity for social and economic empowerment. They provide entrepreneurship training to community women and youth from all walks of life. Many Home Scientists have gone on to become successful entrepreneurs. They are no longer job seekers, but rather employment producers. In research organisations, the food and textile industries, dietetic practice, education and child development sectors, green building accreditation, strategic planning, and communication technologies, they gain and offer jobs.

Food and Nutrition, Fabric and Apparel Sciences, Human Development and Childhood Studies, Resource Management and Design Application and Development Communication and Extension are among the five windows of opportunity available in Home Science. Home Science education also improves disciplinary knowledge, communication skills, critical thinking, cooperation/teamwork, and multicultural competence, all of which contribute to lifelong learning. The students must understand the Home Scientist philosophy, which is to give back to the community from which they draw for long-term development. Home Science has made a significant contribution to both developed and developing countries.

Most notably, it contributes to women's economic empowerment by providing a diverse range of work alternatives, including both wage and self-employment. (See the table below). It has also aided in the empowerment and long-term development of women, with women from the field of Home Science becoming successful entrepreneurs and holding positions of leadership in corporations.

1.6.1 JOB OPENINGS IN THE FIELDS OF HOME SCIENCE

Table 1: Representative roles of Home Scientist in specialised areas

Specialisation	Representative Roles
Food science, and nutrition	Food Product Tester, Quality Control Technician, Dietary Aide, Food Technician, Dietary Assistant, Dietetic Technician, Home Economist, Dietitian, Food Technologist, Nutritionist, Caterer, Baker, Food Service Manager etc.
Clothing and Textile	Fabrics/Accessories Estimator, Employee in a Textile Industry or Embroidery unit, Assistant Designer, Fashion Illustrator, Textile Technician, Sales Associate, Merchandise Displayer, Fashion Buyer etc.
Child Growth and Development	Preschool Teacher, Special Education Aide, After-School Program Supervisor, Preschool Aide, Family Child Care Provider, Recreation Aide, Teacher Aide, Child Day Care Supervisor, day-care centre, creches, nursery school etc.
Communication and Extension	Journalists, Counsellors, Reporters, News Readers, Media programmers, Teachers, Investigators, Counsellors, and Researchers Professor, non-governmental organisations, Media planners and managers, programme coordinators etc.
Home Management	Interior Designing, Furnishings and Maintenance Showroom Assistant, Interior Design Aide, Hospitality Supervisor, Furnishings Sales Associate, Window Display Designer, Interior Design Assistant, Photo Stylist, Furnishings Buyer, Housekeeping Instructor etc.

1.7 WOMEN HOME SCIENTISTS AS ROLE MODELS TO THE SOCIETY

Through their unique efforts, a handful of exceptional women have become extraordinarily powerful and successful in their lives. They are today's women's source of inspiration and motivation. Some of them are mentioned below:

1.7.1 ManpreetBrar (Model, Miss India 1995)



Manpreet Kaur Brar is an actress and model from India. In 1995, she was crowned Miss India and became first runner-up in the Miss Universe competition. Manpreet was born on June 9, 1973, in Mizoram, India, to a Sikh family. Lady Irwin College in Delhi is where she earned her bachelor's degree. She was a Community Resource Management and Extension honours student. She went on to become the Brand Ambassador for Omega, the world-famous watchmaker.

1.7.2 ShyamalaGopalan (Indian-American cancer researcher)



GopalanShyamala (December 7, 1938 - February 11, 2009) was a biomedical scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory who pioneered breast biology and oncology by identifying and characterising the progesterone receptor gene. She was the mother of Kamala Harris, the US Vice President, and Maya Harris, a lawyer and political commentator.

1.7.3 Ritu Kumar (Fashion designer)



Ritu Kumar is a fashion designer from India. She went to Loreto Convent School and afterwards to Lady Irwin College to further her education. Kumar started her apparel company in Kolkata. She began her career in the 1960s and 1970s with bridal wear and evening gowns, gradually expanding into the international market during the next two decades. Kumar's company has launched stores in Paris, London, and New York, in addition to India. Designs Kumar uses natural textiles and traditional printing and weaving techniques in his designs. She has also included Western aspects into her work, but she has largely stayed true to traditional sari designs. Princess Diana, Priyanka Chopra, Lara Dutta, Deepika Padukone, and Madhuri Dixit have all worn her designs.

1.7.4 Thangam Philip (Padma Shri civilian award winner)



Thangam Elizabeth Philip (1921–2009) was a pioneer of Indian hospitality education and a nutritionist. She was the Emeritus Principal of Mumbai's Institute of Hotel Management and the author of several cookbooks. Philip was granted the fourth highest Indian civilian honour, the Padma Shri, by the Government of India in 1976. He was a recipient of the FAO Ceres Medal and the Knighthood of the Order of Cordon Bleu Du Sant Esprit of France.

1.7.5 Sushma Seth (Actor and founder Yatrik Theatre Group)



Sushma Seth (born June 20, 1936) is an Indian actress who has been on stage, in films, and on television. She began her career in the 1950s and was a founding member of Yatrik, a Delhi-based theatre company. Junoon was her first film, released in 1978. She is most recognised for her role as Dadi in the pioneering television soap Hum Log (1984–1985), in which she played a mother and grandmother. She's collaborated with Dev Raj Ankur, Ram Gopal Bajaj, Manish Joshi Bismil, and ChanderShekhar Sharma, among others.

1.7.6 Chitragada Singh (Actor)



Chitrangna Singh (born August 30, 1976) is an Indian actress who predominantly appears in Hindi films. YehSaaliZindagi, HazaaronKhwaisheinAisi etc. are among her films. Singh represents Airtel, Parachute, Puma, Borges Olive Oil, Garnier, Aliva Crackers, Taj Mahal Tea, and Joyalukkas Jewellers as a brand ambassador.

1.8 CONCLUSION

As quoted by honourable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi “*Our Matru Shakti is our pride. Women's empowerment is critical to our progress.*” Women's contributions to long-term development must be recognised. Women have an important part in their children's education and socialisation, including teaching them about environmental stewardship and responsibility. More needs to be done to give women a stronger role in environmental decision-making and to enable them to participate in the "green economy." More training and capacity-building programmes geared to the needs of women are required. Women's involvement in the family, community, and society as a whole must be free of socio-cultural and religious norms that hinder women from participating. A shift in thinking is required, particularly among the males who now dominate the arena.

Health, education, information, life-long learning for self-development, vocational skills, employment and income-earning opportunities, technical services, inheritance and matrimony, common resources, credit, technology, market, mass-media, family planning, women's rights, and other factors contribute to empowerment. Home Science education has given women more authority in the workplace. Home Science education has demonstrated that a woman may be a teacher, researcher, entrepreneur, and administrator in addition to being a homemaker. As a result, it makes use of and demonstrates the woman's abilities in many areas of life.

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