

# Enhancing women's contribution in nation building: A case study of Jaunpur District

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## Abstract

Half of India's population is Women. They can contribute significantly for substantial growth in the economy. Several initiatives have been taken by the Indian government, institutional bodies (Universities, NGOs etc.), and individuals for societal development. However, certain areas remain untapped. Norms are made in place but institutional enforcement is found to be missing. This study is undertaken at grass-root level for some women that are beneficiaries of government schemes and policies, some remain neglected from any help, and some prefer to remain aloof from this. Areas of mental happiness, climate change, bee-keeping, voter registration, skill development, contraceptives, nutritional supplements, educational movies, self-defense, libraries, parenting, educate-at-home, women schemes booklet, work-from-home, sanitation, women-respect classes have been studied as they impact the lives of women.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, potential-areas, grassroots-level, skill development, mental Health

## 1. Introduction

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released its first human development report in the year 1990. It stated that women have remained invisible in statistics but they are immensely important for development. David Banks, wrote in 2018 that a person's 90% thoughts are self-directed and 10% are for the people around and their concerned problems as published in a book titled 'The People Skills Handbook'. Consequently, women would contribute to the development of the nation if their own life is improved first. Moreover, providing them with any facility would mean improvement in society's infrastructure. This is similar to a vicious circle in a good sense. Both, woman-development and women in development are correlated to nation-building.

India would develop further if Indians are more productive in work. An in-

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dividual's highest need is the feeling of self-actualization as per Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs of the year 1943. This theory was worked upon and McClelland's Human Motivation Theory of the 1980s proved that the need for self-actualization is driven by a motivator at every level which changes circumstantially.

The objective of this study is to understand the economic and non-economic factors that impact day to day activities of women. It also identifies key areas that must be worked upon to empower women economically, politically, and culturally. The next section mentions some women-centric research studies.

## **2. Few areas and corresponding studies**

### **2.1 Women Status**

Sanghi et. al. (2015) mentioned that the time spent on domestic duties by rural females aged 15-29 years was 54.8% and 57.5% in years 2004-2005 and 2011-2012 respectively. For the same period, the figure rose again for the age group 30-44 years which was 52.5% and 65.8% respectively. Pazol (2015) has suggested that educational interventions would help in increasing the knowledge of available contraceptives and making informed decisions. Gupta (2021) has argued that the women stay away from the job market due to the increasing crimes. As stated in the 2021 Global Gender Gap Index, India ranks 140 among 156 countries now. The ranking was 98 in 2006. India's female work and labor force participation (FLFPR) figure is 24.5% in 2018-19 and the global average is 45%. FLFPR depends on teaching and learning.

### **2.2 Education**

In a study titled 'Benefits of Reading Books: How It Can Positively Affect Your Life' published on Healthline in 2019, it was suggested that books improve vocabulary, brain connectivity, sleep, empathize well, improves social bonds, engages the mind as we grow old, mitigates depression, high blood pressure and lengthens the lifespan. It also eliminates boredom. A study titled 'Effective Educational Videos: Principles and Guidelines for Maximizing Student Learning from Video Content' by Brame, published in 2016 in a journal titled 'CBE life sciences education' stated that videos are the main delivery mechanism in parting online education and have become a major part of higher studies. Education regarding personal needs is a must.

### **2.3 Sanitation**

World Bank report in 2016 stated that the advantage of open defecation is the morning walk that people undertake to locate a safe spot for defecation

and augment the social links in one's community. Lack of sanitation approximates to 6.4% of the gross domestic product in monetary terms annually in India (World Bank, 2010) equates to 0.05 million of each household's savings. Clean India Mission started on October 2, 2014, and the government is focused to make India open defecation-free for the health benefits of people and surroundings.

## 2.4 Natural Environment

Roy et. al. (2018) has stated that with increasing industrialization, pollution is increasing. Efficient air purification is expensive. Chauhan et. al. (2017) has argued that indoor plants are essential to achieve air quality and they impact human health positively. Beeswax candles, carbon filters, and salt lamps must be used for air purification. Raj & Pandey (2021) write that bees create a healthy environment, Italian bee is the most preferred for beekeeping business, spring is considered the best season, for it. One million flower trips are done by nearly 50,000 bees to produce 1 kg honey as per the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Abhijeet V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo mentioned in the book titled 'Poor Economics' (2011) that the well-intended and thoughtful policies may be unimpactful if the implementation is improper. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam wrote in the book 'My Journey' that just as research, science, experiment, and technology are important for a nation's development, so are commitment and persistence.

## 3. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative. Primary data collection is from interactions with the women in the district during the months from February to November in the year 2021. Visits were made to government institutions like schools, Joint District Hospital (JDH), Community Health Centre (CHC), and Primary Health Centers (PHC). Seven campaigns were organized in joint coordination with Red-Cross society, Jaunpur, and N.G.O., Akanksha Samiti, Secondary data collection is collected from books, documents, newspapers, research papers, and magazine articles.

### 3.1 About study area

As per census 2011, the district population of Jaunpur is 4,147,624, and the gender ratio is 1000:1032 (male: female). Medical paraprofessionals under the aegis of the National Health Mission (NHM) and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) are called Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and Anganwadi (Hindi name for courtyard). The number of ASHA workers in

Jaunpur is 3833, ASHA Sangini heads a group of ASHA workers and is 208 in number. There are 5321 Anganwadi workers. The number of villages is 3442. The primary body of the Panchayati Raj system is Gram Sabha which is 1740 as of December 2021. There are 63 special educators and physiotherapists for handicapped children. There are more than 2800 primary and upper primary schools in the district. There are 17 functional centers of skill development currently training nearly 3000 students and there is a large scope to increase this number.

#### **4. Findings and suggestions to enhance women's contribution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Former Managing Director of International Monetary Fund, Cristine Lagarde had stated in 2015, that if all women start contributing commercially then India's Gross Domestic Product will rise by 27%. The GDP growth is 8.4% for July, August and September 2021 quarters. A growth of 9% per annum is the targeted figure to reach an economy valuing 5-trillion USD as stated by Financial Express in its article 'Three-fourth of India's GDP to come from the urban population if these reforms are made' published in August 2021. Certain potential areas that are vital to achieving the same are listed in the following sections.

##### **4.1 Mental happiness matters**

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, released a report in 2014 titled 'New Pathways New Hope' which defined mental health as a state of well-being and not only the absenteeism of mental disorder. Mentally happy person copes up with stress, realizes own abilities, contributes to the community. Mental health problems are due to psycho-social distress. In 2011, the Indian government had constituted a Policy Group to report mental health status across India. In March 2020, the Department of Health and Family Welfare of the Punjab government launched a toll-free number to cater to stressed citizenry during lockdown. The vulnerable community members have been suggested to receive special attention and integrated care. *Swavlamban card* is made for physically handicapped people and benefits are provided. Similarly, counselors must be hired for mentally unhappy people which may not necessarily have a mental disorder. As of December 2021, there is a lack of institutions for mentally disabled people and mental-health counseling centers in Jaunpur. The patients are referred to the mental hospital in adjoining district Varanasi. An institution must be set up for providing counseling, evidence-based care, preventing homelessness, and protecting rights i.e. motivating personally for happy living.

## 4.2 Protect climate

Journal of American Society for Horticultural Science published a study in the year, 2005. It states that there is a scope to achieve nearly 67,000 tree plantations daily if globally citizens on their birthday's plant trees. Uttar Pradesh state has carried out a tree plantation drive on July 4, 2021, and 25.5-crore saplings were planted. Generally, awareness campaigns must be organized for women to educate them about the benefits of air-purifying plants. Rubber plants, areca palms, spider plants, and snake plant saplings are easily available in Jaunpur and must be placed in homes to improve air quality. This would be a supplementary effort to the sustainable development that is being done at higher levels.

## 4.3 Empower through bee-keeping

National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM) targets to accomplish the goal of 'Sweet Revolution'. This is a part of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan. It is undertaken in rural areas as a part of the integrated farming system. Women must learn about taking care of bees i.e. when do they bite, how to transport them, giving sugar syrup during off-season etcetera. They could place the beehive boxes on the roof-top or fields. Then, sell the collected honey to potential corporate customers like Dabur, Patanjali and subsequently earn money, contribute to household income and increase self-esteem. Beehive box making would generate employment for carpenters. In Jaunpur, bee-keeping is done at four places. There is scope for social entrepreneurs in this area.

## 4.4 Vote for India

The rural women respondents are unaware of the struggles undergone by women in the 1800s and 1900s to achieve the power to vote and select the ruling authority. They are unaware of the benefits of choosing the right government. The Election Commission of India (ECI) is organizing voter awareness camps aggressively. But there is a need to provide video-based education and teach women the history of those programs. This would sensitize them to convert to voters. Women have a soft corner for children. Given this, it is important to explain that if women vote today then their Generation Y and Generation Z will reap the benefits of good government, officers, and society. Keeping this in mind the research scholar wrote an article in Hindi-language to motivate women which were published by six local newspapers on November 29, 2021.

## 4.5 Develop skill

Women must be motivated to undertake skill development courses. The case must be mentioned here of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya

Yojana (DDU-GKY) healthcare course run in Gorabadshahpur, Jaunpur, from months August, to October in 2021. The students enrolled and completed the course but, wanted to leave the job after being employed because of unpleasant work conditions. There is an issue where students want to quit the course in the initial days as evident also, from data-entry-operator cases at the same center in December 2021. The research scholar is involved in counseling for improving the self-confidence of the students. There is a felt need of rolling out counseling campaigns aggressively both for motivating students to enroll and complete courses heartedly. Motivational video is made for the same (Raj, 2021).

#### 4.6 Use Contraceptives

Contraceptives are vital for family planning and controls the increasing population of the nation. In India, government medical paraprofessionals called Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and *Anganwadi* workers educate mothers on caretaking self and newborn regarding health, sanitization, contraceptive usage immunization schedules. In government hospitals and community health centers (CHC), contraceptive knowledge is imparted to women. Newly-wed couples are given family planning counseling under the scheme 'Mukhya Mantri Samuhik Vivah Yojana' in Uttar Pradesh. There is a lack of provisions for counseling men (only) on the usage of contraceptives. However, there is a condom box available at government medical institutions (JDH and CHC) where the contraceptive is available to use free of cost. Condom boxes were placed at three more public offices in Jaunpur in August 2021 and their acceptance is reportedly positive. Male counseling regarding contraceptives must begin and there could be dedicated workforce/ training programs for this. Also, fertility posters must be placed in all offices where the footfall of the public is high as an additional awareness campaign.

#### 4.7 Eat nutritional Supplements

During pregnancy, women have been prescribed the intake of folic acid, iron, and calcium as recommended by the World Health Organisation. The people who took dietary supplements had reduced chances of testing positive for COVID-19 as per a study published in the journal *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health* in 2021 because supplements boost the immunity levels of people. Excessive exercise, stress, pollution, cigarette smoke, ultraviolet sunlight, and medications cause oxidative stress in the body as mentioned by Dr. Strand in a book titled 'What your doctor doesn't know about nutritional medicine may be killing you' published in 2002. The author advises the intake of nutritional supplements which act as antioxidants, neutralize the free radicals that cause oxidative damage in the body, and prevent chronic diseases. If women are

given a daily intake of supplements, then their health would improve and they would feel fitter. Awareness campaigns must be organized.

#### **4.8 Watch educational movies**

As of December 2012, there is no theatre in the Jaunpur district where educational movies could be shown. There could be a provision to showcase movies on projectors at village levels in Indian districts. This would add to the education system and make learning fun for women and youth (future workforce of India).

#### **4.9 Learn self-defense**

Law and order situations are managed in the district. 181 is the toll-free women-helpline number and 112 is the toll-free police-helpline number. There is an anti-Romeo squad in Uttar Pradesh districts where police officials take rounds of public places to provide safety to women against eve-teasing and other physical/ sexual assault. Support mechanisms like government schemes and policies are provided to victims as well. But, at the time the crime is being committed, a woman is the first one to save herself by performing acts of self-defense. Martial arts is a technique that improves physical strength and if the victim is weak then learning the tactics would enable one to save self as learned after visiting the training centers in the district. Indian government started Mission Shakti and phase-3 is observed in December 2021, promoting self-defense, but there is a felt need to increase awareness due to the recent crimes. Mini-documentary is made on self-defense by the research scholar (Raj, 2021).

#### **4.10 Organise libraries**

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) launched Reading Mission in September 2021 to promote book reading among students. It is reported in Hindu newspaper in 2019 that two years ago with 250 books, an Aizwal based author opened a little library for the public outside the wall of the home facing the adjoining compound and the library has 1000 books. Hence, it is suggested that there must be a book corner at public places in the district like showrooms where the footfall is high. There are more than 500 shops in the study area, Jaunpur.

#### **4.11 Focus on parenting**

The Indian government aims to complete elementary education for citizens as this is the fundamental right for children aged 6-14-years and the same is cost-free. Mission to educate-all started in the year 2000. The ASHA and

*Anganwadi* medical paraprofessionals who go door-door in villages may be given additional training on parenting like communicating to children, parental response, motivating toddlers, tantrums management, brain development, and raising creative and critical thinkers. They must be rationally sensitized towards a child's emotional development. The details of which are published in books, research papers, portals in the English language. These sources of data are accessible to educated mothers (mostly urban) but not to rural households. The ASHA and *Anganwadi* workers may be trained in parenting and they may provide training to rural mothers. Raj (2020) talks about a model for the same in a blog titled we must help India's rural women bring up good children with promising futures with UN Women Asia & Pacific. Additionally, parenting cartoons/ messages may be published in local newspapers.

#### **4.12 Educate at home**

Similar to the home visits made by ASHA and *Anganwadi* workers there could be teachers who follow door-to-door teaching, exam, and certification model. This could also be replicated to the buildings in villages called *Panchayat Bhawan* or *Mini-Sachivalayas*. Certification will increase a woman's self-confidence.

#### **4.13 Make a single booklet of women schemes**

This booklet is launched in Jaunpur on December 8, 2021, jointly prepared by Akanksha Samiti and District Probation Office Jaunpur. Details and guidelines of all the schemes are collected from the government department and finally coordinated with the probation department to compile the same into a booklet, a single window to the women. The helpline numbers of the study area are listed beside the scheme name.

#### **4.14 Work from home**

Wool-related (eg. Crochet, Knitting), cloth-related (eg. Stitching), and rope-related (eg. Macramé) crafts are common hobbies of Indian women. The art form cannot be done by machines and it is possible to create garments and upholstery using the art of crochet that is listed under handicrafts by the India Brand Equity Foundation, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. In skill development training centers, one has to be physically present. Many women are unable to step out of homes due to household responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, washing, etcetera as commuting might be time-consuming and they will have no time to prepare food for the family.



Such women could be allowed work-from-home opportunities and craft the products in their free time. Teachings regarding colour combinations, design, and customization could be virtual i.e. over WhatsApp, Zoom, and other software. Appropriate pictures and videos could be exchanged for this. Activities of door-to-door collection, labeling, and transportation to potential markets, must be centralized to give this activity a professional outlook. As stated by Raj (2019) in a blog with UN Women Asia & Pacific, tax benefits could be given for individual purchases of these women-made items. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) law of India abides the companies to spend 2% of average net profit in past three years, towards the betterment of society. The government's policy intervention is needed to support this. A part of 2% could be dedicated to the purchase of women-made crafts. The same may be made tax-free for individuals to attract customers.

#### **4.15 Sanitation matters**

Better access to sanitation facilities will let women have a free mind to use in constructive activities. With the increasing population, there is less area available in homes which may be unsuitable to further construction. Deprived households receive monetary help of ~170 USD for constructing lavatories but when the same goes out of order, the open defecation starts again until the repair is done. It is suggested to construct more community toilets (or toilets on the roadside) and the caretaking of the same must be under the aegis of CSR. There could be a pay-to-use toilet and a free-of-cost toilet beside each other for the public to use as per their income-based preference.

#### **4.16 Upgrade school curriculum**

Research Scholar had presented the idea of organizing Respecting Women Classes (Mahila Samman Kaksha) in schools to the education department of Kaushambi district of Uttar Pradesh. The classes were enrolled in 1401 government schools, which is reported by the Times of India (Dixit, 2020). A weekly 30-minute session on taboo topics was held before the pandemic. In addition to this, Environmental Clubs must be formed in schools. They may focus on doing eco-friendly activities and organize awareness camps. Also, the installation of biometric devices in all schools needs to ensure the attendance of teachers. The development of smart-class must have a dedicated budget. In addition to moral science books, motivational and social-behavioral books (latest works based on psychology) must be included in the curriculum.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The Indian government has launched schemes and policies centered on women. Findings and suggestions above contribute to improving the same by identifying some potential areas that must be tapped. Empowered women will become more educated, contribute financially and environmentally climate protection, They will focus on their health, help in population control, lower mental pains due to suitable hygiene and sanitation, and improve home environments. Most importantly, they will earn respect in society that shall mitigate the current crimes against women. Economic independence will empower women to contribute more to the nation's development.

## 6. Future Implications

More community participation is required for policy framing for the districts. This research, testing of the suggested models, and collection of empirical evidence is suggested in the remaining 74-district of Uttar Pradesh and 748-districts of India. 'Many' case studies may be compiled to make generalizations for large masses. This is challenging but possible.

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