

# Women Universities as agents of change:

## I Introduction

## II Evolution of Women Universities

## III Women Universities as Catalysts for Change

A) Promotion of Gender Equality by challenging Patriarchal norms and stereotypes (Lady Shri Ram College, case study)

B) Economic Progress through exploiting Women's Potential (UN report → every dollar invested in women, there is economic benefit of \$7.)

C) Women Universities address Gender Based Violence (90% of US women's colleges offer counseling services for survivors of sexual assault, NSVRC)

D) Women Universities Foster Community

Engagement (75% of students at US women's colleges participate in community services, NSVRC, 2020)

E) Encouraging Women role in STEM

Fields and Non-Traditional Careers (Women's university in Cairo, case study)

- F) Women Universities address Global issues from a Gender Sensitive Perspective (Wellesley College's women and climate change program)
- G) Enhanced Role in Decision Making Bodies (Wellesley college, produced female leaders, including Hillary Clinton, Diane Sawyer)
- H) Educated Women Give Birth to Educated Nation (Dr Joyce Banda → when you educate a woman, you educate a nation)

#### IV Challenges Faced by Women Universities

- A) Financial Constraints are Impeding the growth of Women Universities  
(45% of women citing financial reasons for not pursuing higher education - UN Women 2020)
- B) Societal Attitudes and Stereotypes are restricting Progress of Women Universities (women account for only 21% of all students enrolled globally - UNESCO, 2020)
- C) Women Face Safety and Security Threats (Kinnaid College for Women, Lahore case study)
- D) Limited Access to Quality Educated Institutions (World Bank, Women's Access to Quality Educational Institutions, 2019)



## V Way Forward to Improve Women Institutes

A) Increase Funding and Resources

(Ashoka University, India (case study))

B) Encourage women-led startups and Entrepreneurship Programs

(women-focused incubators)

C) Enhance Digital Literacy and online

Safety (The Digital Literacy Program at the Asian University for Women)

D) Addressing Gender Stereotypes and

biases (Awareness campaigns through media)

## VI Conclusion

"The future of our world is in the hands of the women of today" - Jawaharlal Nehru.

Educated women can play a significant role in the society. Historically, women have struggled against <sup>the</sup> patriarchal mindset of the society, to achieve their fundamental rights.

Education is one of those fundamental rights. Women's institutes can become a beacon of change for the society. These institutes tend to promote gender equality.

Women's universities empower woman economically to uplift the society as a whole. This has been achieved through increasing women role

in STEM fields. Apart from this, women universities also focus on community engagement and address global issues from a gender-sensitive perspective. But, women institute also

face many challenges including financial constraints, patriarchal stereotypes and security threats. These problems can be addressed

through proper policy implementation and raising awareness. Hence, it can be said

that women universities act as a catalyst of change.

The evolution of the women universities is the result of continuous struggle. This milestone has been achieved through a remarkable journey. In the early 1800s, women were restricted to obtain higher education. Pioneers like Emma Willard and Mary Lyon founded women's colleges in the United States. At the beginning, women were admitted with some restrictions and had access to limited curriculum. Later on, feminist movements sparked and demanded for equal rights, leading to contemporary period with notable women universities.

Women universities focus on gender equality by challenging the myths of the society. Many notable universities empower women to stand



against the patriarchal trends of the society. These institutes have arranged their courses efficiently to meet the challenges of the present era. One of the leading case study of success of women universities is, the Lady Shri Ram College, India. Hence, it can be said that women universities are agents of change in the society.

Women's Universities empower woman economically. This is one of the major goal of women's institute to explore their potential. Equal participation of women in the society can address many challenges and also uplift the society as a whole. According to a UN report, <sup>for</sup> every dollar spent on woman's empowerment, there is an economic benefit of \$7. Hence, it can be said that women universities are agents of change.

Women Universities also address gender based violence. Women Universities have vital role to play in addressing woman's challenges and ensuring safe environment for their students. Many institutes worldwide have counselling programs to help the victims of gender based violence (GBV). According to NSVRC, 2020 report, 96% of US women's college offer counselling services for survivors of sexual violence. It shows that women's universities are bearer of change.

Women's universities also ~~work~~ work on community engagement. Many notable universities train their students to provide services to <sup>the</sup> community. Many women universities volunteer their students to participate in projects that address social issues. These projects address specific community needs, such as health, education and environmental issues.

As per NSVRC report, 75% of students at US women's colleges participate in community services. Hence, it can be said that women universities are agents of change.

Women universities encourage woman role in STEM fields. Most of the women are allowed to work in traditional fields due to patriarchal mindset. Women universities are helpful in raising awareness about woman role in the society. Many notable institutes have devised courses and allocated scholarships to women to increase their role in community building. An important case study of woman role in STEM field is of Women's university in Cairo STEM program. It proves that women's universities are agent of change in society.



women universities address global issues from a gender-sensitive perspective. These institutes conduct research and gather data of global issues. Their main focus is on the consequences of global issues on the vulnerable section of community including women and children. Wellesley college's Women and Climate change program explores the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls. Hence, it shows that women universities are acting as agent of change.

women universities encourage women role in decision making bodies. These institutions provide women access to higher education. Moreover, women universities also offer leadership programmes, training and mentorship opportunities to women. These programs help women to develop required skills and confidence to take on leadership roles. Wellesley

colleges have long history of producing female leaders including Hillary Clinton and Diane Sawyer. Hence, it can be said that women universities are agents of change.

As the saying goes, when you educate a woman, you educate a nation. Women universities produce educated women, which lead to educated nation. Educated women prioritize their children education. Apart from this, educated women have resources as well as knowledge to support their children education.

This cycle of education builds the nation. As Dr Joyce Banda once said, "when you educate a woman, you educate a nation." Hence it can be said that women universities are agents of change.



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Women universities are playing a vital role in society, but they are also facing challenges that are impacting their growth. Women universities are struggling with financial constraints. Small amount of money is being spent on girls education. Women universities often receive inadequate funding from governments and private sector. This may hinder the women to participate in community with full potential. According to UN Women 2020 report, 45% of women citing <sup>reasons</sup> financial for not pursuing higher education. This indicates the problems of women universities.

Another challenge faced by women universities is stereotypes and social attitudes of <sup>the</sup> society. Most of the women face societal pressure while pursuing higher education. They are expected to prioritize family and caregiving

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roles, women face these problems due to outdated views about women's education. According to UNESCO 2020 report, women account for only 25% of all students enrolled globally. This shows problem faced by women universities.

The progress of women universities are undermined owing to safety and security of <sup>the</sup> students.

In a patriarchal society, girls institutes face a lot of threats. They are often threatened by extremist and conservative sections of society. A case study of this problem is, Kinnaird college for women, Lahore. This case study shows problem of women universities.

Another problem faced by women is limited access to quality institutions. It is a significant hindrance to women's growth. Most of



the women universities have inexperienced faculty member. These institutes also offer limited program which restrict students choices and opportunities. According to the World Bank 2019 report, 22% of women worldwide had access to quality educational institutions. This shows problem faced by women universities.

The challenges faced by women universities can be addressed through increasing funding and resources for girls institutes. These limitations can be addressed through government grants as well as private donations. Increased research, alumni support and scholarships for students will be a crucial step. A case study of Ashoka university, India will be helpful.

This university provides scholarships, residence and mentorship program to ensure women participation.

Another solution to tackle the issues of women universities is women-led startups and entrepreneurship programs. To achieve this women should have ~~be~~ <sup>that are</sup> skills, in demand. Training and mentorship program can be viable option to increase women's <sup>role</sup> in entrepreneurship. Women should also be provided access to successful entrepreneurs as role models. Women-focused incubators is the best option to address this problem.

Another solution is digital literacy and online safety for women. Gender equality in education can be achieved through ~~through~~ proper digital training and access to technology. Women should also be educated about online safety measures. The digital literacy program at the Asian University for women is workable.



case study. This university has empowered women from diverse background through digital literacy.

Lastly, the uses of the women Universities can be tackled through challenging stereotypes and biases against women. None of the solutions will be workable unless the society accept the value of women education. It is crucial to address the root cause of the problem. One of the best workable solution is awareness campaigns through media. In this way the problems of the girls institutes can be resolved.

To sum up the whole discussion, it can be concluded that women universities are agents of change. These institutes have served the community as whole particularly women.

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The crucial role played by these institutes has made woman a precious entity in the society. These institutes have empowered women through education and increased their role in decision making bodies. Moreover, women universities have addressed gender based violence and outdated stereotypes of community against women.

This resulted in economic wellbeing of the woman. <sup>Despite</sup> ~~Apait~~ all these milestones achieved, women institutes still face many problems, including financial constraints, security threats and limited institutions. But these problems can be overcome through proper policy implementation and raising awareness. In short, women's universities have emerged as beacons of hope.

“When we live in the world as it is, we are constantly being shaped by the world as it is. But when we create, we have the power to shape the world as it could be.”

(Audre Lorde)