

# [Negative impact of uneducated women in third world countries](https://assignbuster.com/negative-impact-of-uneducated-women-in-third-world-countries/)

### Armed and Educated: Negative Impacts of Uneducated Women in Third World Countries as seen in Malala Yousafzai’s Memoir, I Am Malala

As the Western society continues to progress, it is becoming increasingly evident that the barriers that once restricted and defied millions of women around the world, are slowly being deconstructed and reconstructed as society begins to change its views on gender parity and feminism. This is not only reflected in women’s new roles and jobs within the Western society, but also in politics as women are now able to run and vote. On the other hand, despite the progress, millions of girls in non-Western developing areas such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, still continue to suffer severe disadvantages as they are often subjugated by men and stripped of their basic human rights. One of these basic rights includes the right to an education, yet, most girls in non-Western societies are excluded from the education systems throughout their lives. This is a huge problem as the lack of education is what is creating the barrier that prevents women from obtaining equality in society. Recent research and evidence has shown that education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for a girl, overall leading to a healthier and more productive life. However, since their rights are taken away from birth, they lose the right to learn, grow, and succeed in life. In her memoir I Am Malala, Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest-ever winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, accurately depicts the struggles and negative impact of uneducated women in third world countries .

There are many factors that contribute to a developing nation’s extremely low female literacy rate. One of the primary reasons for this is the lack of proper schooling facilities, qualified teachers, and/or teaching aids such as textbooks. This is especially true for girls living in more remote areas of the country. Additionally, in many parts of the developing world, the nearest school to a community might be a four to five-hour long walk. Apart from it being exhausting and time consuming, girls also face the threat of violence or sexual assault on the way to school. Thus, many parents opt to keep their daughters at home. According to UNESCO’s regional overview on sub-Saharan Africa in 2013, more than 68% of the girls that do make the long journey to school everyday end up dropping out before they complete primary school (Stepp). Malala further supports this as she witnesses “ most of the children in refugee settlements were not going to school. Sometimes there was no school. Sometimes it was unsafe to walk to school. And sometimes children were working instead of being educated” (Yousafzai XIX). Furthermore, another main reason why many families in developing countries choose not to educate their daughters is because they cannot afford it as there are a lot of costs associated with it. The cost of uniforms, textbooks, and schooling facilities can be too much to bear for a family living in poverty. For the families that can afford it however, boys are often favored to receive an education over girls. This is especially evident during Malala’s trip to Nigeria when she discovers that “ many girls were [her] age and all had dreams of being doctors or teachers or scientists… but only 4 percent of girls in Northern Nigeria finish school” (Yousafzai XVIII). Lastly, another reason for the lack of female education in developing countries is the cultural beliefs and gender norms of the society. In the male-dominated society, women are typically viewed as nothing more than the property of the men. Most cultures believe that a women’s sole purpose is to serve the men of the house, do household chores, reproduce and care for the children while the man goes out to provide for the family. Due to these misguided gender norms, many girls do not have the opportunity to attend school because their contributions to the household are valued more than their personal education. These gender norms are extremely prevalent when Malala states that “[she] was a girl born in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are hidden away behind a curtain, their role in life simply to prepare food and give birth to children” (Yousafzai 13). In any case, millions of women in developing nations are unable to receive an education and this has several negative impacts on different aspects of women’s lives.

The negative effects that uneducated women have on their society include both personal and social factors. For starters, many women that are uneducated are more susceptible to early marriages usually against their will (in some cases girls as young as eight or ten). This results in millions of illiterate young girls without the appropriate tools to build healthy, educated families. The Voices of Youth organization stated that “ for every year a girl stays in school past fifth grade, her marriage is delayed a year” (Madu). Similarly, Malala emphasizes this point when she states that “…[parents] are just waiting for their daughters to be married off while the sons went to school” (Yousafzai 29). This in turn, leads to most girls giving birth at an extremely young age, resulting in a higher mortality rate among young girls during child birth or simply because the child is unhealthy. Studies have shown that an extra year of schooling for girls also reduces fertility rates by 17% (Joshi). Secondly, uneducated women also have a lot of difficulty communicating and expressing themselves at home or in public. Doing simple tasks like reading signs or paying at the grocery store proves to be quite difficult for many young women as they have not had the opportunity to learn how to read. Malala relates a story of a young girl she saw selling oranges. “ She was scratching marks on a piece of paper with a pencil to account for the oranges she sold,” as she could not read or write (Yousafzai 217). Lastly, the lack of educated people in developing countries is what allows educated people to exploit their ignorance. This is especially true of the government or religious leaders that use fear and ignorance to bring themselves to power or to have a huge portion of the population under their control. For example, several times throughout her memoir, Malala states that “ the lack of education is the root of all of Pakistan’s problems,” and that “ ignorance allowed politicians to fool people and bad administrators to be re-elected” (Yousafzai 41). The government makes promises and manipulates people to the point where people are convinced that the corrupt authorities are fit to be in power. After elections, however, all the promises that are made are forgotten and the nation suffers for years before another election takes place and the same thing happens all over again. What is worse is using a natural disaster that devastated a nation to preach religious extremes. This is portrayed several times throughout Malala’s memoir- after an earthquake struck Pakistan, religious leaders called Mullahs preached “ the earthquake was a warning from God. They said it was caused by women’s freedom and obscenity. If we did not mend our ways and introduce Sharia or Islamic law… more severe punishments would come” (Yousafzai 107). Preaching misinterpreted verses from the Quran and exploiting the ignorance of people who did not understand Arabic worked well to their advantage as fear made it particularly easy to manipulate them. As can be seen, the lack of education has severe negative impacts which can easily be prevented if women are educated. Education has so many benefits, but lack thereof blinds people to the fact that knowledge is power and it is one of the most powerful weapons against mass manipulation and exploitation.

Education, especially in developing countries, is extremely valuable as it can solve many of the country’s problems. Educating women of the country comes with its own list of benefits, most of which people are ignorant towards. Firstly, it is no secret that poverty and illiteracy go hand in hand. Research has shown that most illiterate women live in countries with increasing economic difficulties and “ enormous debt burdens” (Madu). What citizens of developing countries refuse to acknowledge is that the solution lies in educating their women. When women are educated, it enables them to contribute to their country’s income as more women begin to join the labor force. According to UNICEF, when ten percent more women attend school, GDP increases by three percent on average (UNICEF. org). This may potentially abolish poverty and many of the other problems developing countries are faced with. Secondly, women who are well educated and receive an independent income will naturally find their voice not just in the family, but also within their society. In other words, women gain the self-confidence and courage they need to speak out and resist the injustice they see around them, or are facing themselves. This is directly reflected in Malala herself as she found her own voice “ growing up in [her] father’s school” (Yousafzai 118). Knowledge is addicting and having the luxury of education from an early age left her craving for more, despite the threats of Mullahs and the Taliban. Thus, she continues to advocate for women’s right to education. Furthermore, the role that educated mothers play in reducing infant and child mortality is profound. Results in Africa indicate a 40% in child survival for mothers with five years of primary education (Wade). This is because educated women tend to have fewer and healthier children. In addition to this, when women are educated, they are more likely to ensure that their children are also educated leading to a future generation that is well equipped to contribute to society. It is rightly said that investing in a girl’s education is investing in a nation. In fact, there is an African proverb that says, “ If we educate a boy, we educate one person. If we educate a girl, we educate a family- and a whole nation” (Stepp). To conclude, education not only removes ignorance, but allows for women to unleash their full potential by becoming conscious, skilled and productive citizens.

All in all, it is proven that educating women in developing countries is the solution to reducing the issue of gender parity as well as enabling women’s full potential, while simultaneously boosting their developing nation’s economy. The proof lies not only in Malala Yousafzai’s memoir, I Am Malala , which accurately represents the struggles of uneducated women in developing countries, but also in the statistics that show the negative impacts of uneducated women as well as the benefits of education.   Educated women obtain the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence that they need to lead healthier, more productive lives while raising the standards of living for their families and communities. It is hard to believe that the solution lies in half the world’s population, yet so many leaders are oblivious to it or are refusing to change their methods.

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