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ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract

Women education in India has a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment and India poised to becoming superpower in recent years. Education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position in society. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. . Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family and develops the concept of participation.

Keywords: Education, Preoccupation, Milestone, Empowerment, Participation.

Introduction

Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. The empowerment strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience (Hashemi Schuler and Riley, 1996). Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individual to think, take action and control work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's lives. There are always a number of elements in the society which are deprived of their basic rights in every society, state and nation, but these elements lack in the awareness of their rights. If we enlist such elements from the society, then women would top this list. In fact, women are the most important factor of every society. Even though everybody is aware of this fact, but nobody is ready to accept this fact. As a result, the importance which used to be given to women is declining in today's society. As a consequence of this growing tendency of underestimating women such as to make them occupy a secondary position in society and to deprive them of their basic rights, the need for empowering women was felt. . Empowering women has become the focus of considerable discussion and attention all over the world. Today we enjoy the benefits of being citizens of a free nation, but we really need to think whether each of the citizens of our country is really free or enjoying freedom, in the true sense of the term. The inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women are an age-old issue all over the world. Thus, women quest for equality with man is a universal phenomenon. Women should equal with men in matters of education, employment, inheritance, marriage, and politics etc. Their quest for equality has given birth to the formation of many women's associations and launching of movements. The Constitution of our nation doesn't discriminate between men and women, but our society has deprived women of certain basic rights, which were bestowed upon them by our Constitution. Empowerment allows individuals to reach their full potential, to improve their political and social participation, and to believe in their own capabilities.

Education in India

Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It is not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside (Suguna, 2011). The Indian Education system has two important structures, one is formal and another one is non-formal education. Some other educational programmes also formulated to motivate the women education such as online education and distance education. The main objective of the entire educational programme is to make every girl child to educate. This low level of literacy not only shows a negative impact on women's lives but also on their families and country's economic development. Hence it is of foremost importance to raise the level of education amongst women. There are an estimated 33.3 million Indians enrolled in higher education courses in India, according to the HRD ministry's All India Survey on Higher education report for 2015. On these, 17.9 million are boys and 15.4 million are girls as of 2014-2015. Fundamental Rights of women are equality, freedom to religion, educational rights, cultural and educational, against exploitation, freedom. Improving girls' educational levels has been demonstrated to have clear impacts on the health and economic future of young women, which in turn improves the prospects of their entire community. After the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Basic education is more than an end in itself; it is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development (Ramachandran, 1998).



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Women education in ancient India

In the Vedic Period women had access to education, but gradually they had lost this right. India Scriptures Rig Veda and Upanishads mention about several women sages and seers. Women enjoyed equivalent position and rights in the early Vedic era. However, after 500 B.C., the position of women started to decline. The position of women in ancient India was vital. In the Vedic period, women education in ancient India was prevalent. Indian women during the ancient times was said to be superior to men. The women in ancient India were given significance and they held an important position in the Indian society during that time. In the Vedic period, educational system was very developed. Historically women have taken part in all spheres of life with courage and gusto. Indian mythology is rich with stories of highly educated and evolved women. One can trace the historical evidence of ancient Indian education to the 3rd century B.C. when education was imparted orally and many women scholars were part in it. When Buddhism spread to India, some world famous educational institutions such as Nalanda, Vikramshila and Takshila were established. Research shows that a number of women were enrolled in these temples of learning. These universities flourished from about 5th century to 13th century. In the 11th century the Muslim rulers established universities in Delhi, Lucknow and Allahabad. Still education has been found to be restricted to a certain strata of the society. It was not available to everyone.

Women empowerment through education

Women empowerment is the pivotal part in any society, state or country. It is a woman who plays a dominant role in the basic life of a child. Women are an important section of our society. Education as means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. It is therefore, crucial for the socio-economic and political progress of India. The Constitution of India empowers the state to adopt affirmative measures for prompting ways and means to empower women. Education significantly makes difference in the lives of women. Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political rights are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. We can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment. To see the development in women education India is supposed to be an upcoming super power of the world in recent years. The increasing change in women education, the empowerment of women has been recognised as the central issue in determining the status of women for becoming super power we have mostly to concentrate upon the women's education. By which it will force on women's empowerment.

As per United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) the term women's empowerment means:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed.
- Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.
- Gaining the ability to generate choices exercise bargaining power.
- Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multi-level construct referring to individuals, organizations and community. It is an international, on-going process centred in the local community, involving Mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of Valued resources gain greater access to the control over these resources.

Let's see the difference in the literacy rate between men and women in given table are as under

Literacy rate in India

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	62.38	76.0	54.0
2011	74	82.1	65.46



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Advantages of woman education: Social improvement: Women education helps the women to solve the issues and problems faced by society. Kothari commission of 1968 recommended education as a device for social progression. Through woman education, India can attain the objective of social development.

Gender equality

Woman is a part of unprivileged section of society. Education helps them to seal a gender gap in society. Coeducation institutes also teach men children to give respect to female. Economic productivity: Through women education the country can attain the growth in the economic level and it also raise the GDP of a nation.

Decrease in infant humanity: The educated women understand her family situation and take suitable and better decisions in the family to avoid the dispute among the family members. Women education also brings down the infant humanity rate in India.

Improved living standard: Education will automatically increase the employment opportunity for a woman. A well-educated woman has the possibility to get good job and better standard of living. Strengthening of democracy:

Education creates attentiveness among woman which causes enlarged contribution in politics which eventually leads to strengthening of democracy. They could protect their rights through mobilization.

Importance of women education in India

According to the International Encyclopaedia on women (1999) various authors highlight the role of education for the empowerment of women. Since employment plays a vital role in improving women's status in a society education of women is of prime importance in any women empowerment programme (Dominic and Jothi, 2012). Educating an Indian woman creates a vital opportunity for the social and economic development of India. An educated Indian woman will yield a positive impact in the Indian society by contributing positively to the economy of both the country and the society. An educated woman reduces the chances of her child dying before the age of five. The chances of controlling the population are high as an educated woman is likely to marry at a later age as opposed to uneducated woman.

Educational equality

Another area in which women's equality has shown a major improvement as a result of adult literacy programs is the area of enrolment of boys and girls in schools. As a result of higher participation of women in literacy campaigns, the gender gap in literacy levels is gradually getting reduced. Even more significant is the fact that disparity in enrolment of boys and girls in neo-literate households is much lowered compared to the non-literatehouseholders.11 The world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys. But few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education. The political participation of women keeps increasing. In January 2014, in 46 countries more than 30% of members of parliament in at least one chamber were women. Inman countries, gender in equality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government.12 Women and girls face barriers and disadvantages in every sector in which we work. Around the world 62 million girls are not in school. Globally, 1 in 3 women will experience gender-based violence in her lifetime. In the developing world, 1 in 7 girls is married before her15th birthday, with some child brides as young as 8 or 9. Each year more than 287,000 women, 99 present of them in developing countries, die from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications. While women make up more than 40 percent of the agriculture labour force only 3 to 20 percent are landholders. In Africa, women-owned enterprises make up as little as 10 percent of all businesses. In South Asia, that number is only 3 percent. And despite representing half the global population, women compromise less than 20 percent of the world's legislators. Putting women and girls on equal footing with men and boys have the power to transform every sector in which we work.13The gender equality and women's empowerment isn't a part of development but at the core of development. To get rid of this we have to make some educational awareness programmes on gender equality and women empowerment for cementing our commitment to supporting women and girls.

Conclusion

Women play an imperative role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. They are essential possessions of a lively humanity required for national improvement, so if we have to see a bright future of women in our country, giving education to them must be a pre-occupation Empowerment means moving from weak position to execute a power. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing



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knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. The education develops the idea of participation in government, panchayats, public matters etc. for elimination of gender discrimination

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