

**A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION ON WOMEN
EMPOWERMENT**

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ABSTRACT

‘Women empowerment’ is the process of enabling and developing ability or potential in women so that they can think and act freely, exercises their choice and control their lives and thereby reducing discrimination and exploitation towards them. When women who contribute almost half of the population are empowered it will strengthen the national economy. Education is considered as a milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their lives. Increasing access to education notwithstanding, gender discrimination still persists in India and lot more needs to be done in the field of women's education in India. Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom for development. Eileen Malone Beach sees education, health care, and income as a blessed trinity because they are so closely related. This paper discusses the impact of education on empowerment of women as well as the challenges and changes that we must have to deal with during the process

INTRODUCTION

Education is considered as a basic requirement and a fundamental right for the citizens of any nation. It is a powerful tool for reducing inequality as it can give people the ability to become independent. Women, who come across discrimination in many spheres, have a particular need for this. Education is regarded as an important milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to face the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. Education of women is the most powerful tool of change their position in the society. Education has become a tool and also an agent of social change promoting new knowledge, new values and new ways of improving human conditions. Through education one is expected to become a

dutiful, responsible citizen of the society. A person can be shaped in thinking, behaviour and interaction in the line with the expectation of the society through undergoing the process of education. Culturally women are perceived as having lower social status, which has further worsened their opportunity and consideration for education. Women empowerment is receiving world attention; India has included gender equality and women empowerment in its development goals. Women empowerment is an essential ingredient for achieving all the developmental goals. India as a nation has adopted education as an instrument for social and economic transformation.

EDUCATION AND WOMEN

A popular saying goes ‘While educating a man benefits him alone, educating a woman benefits the whole family and society at large’. It is a proven fact that children of educated women enjoy high education standards and fare better than children of illiterate mothers. Educated women, manage their homes better as they support their families economically, financially and emotionally. Women comprise approximately half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them bear a lot as they were denied equivalent opportunities in different parts of the world. Despite best efforts by national and international organizations education is still not accessible to many particularly women from developing countries like India. Key challenge in achieving gender equality in education is reaching those girls who remain out of school even in countries where school campaigns have led to significant gains in enrolment.

CHANGING STATUS OF INDIAN WOMEN

Indian women enjoyed equal status along with men during the pre-vedic period. Women had access to education and married after they reached adulthood. Further they enjoyed the right to choose their partners. Rig Veda Upanishads mention about several women sages and seers, notably Gargi and Maitreyi.

Women status started deteriorating since the post vedic period as was clearly observed from the restrictions imposed on women lifestyle in ‘Manu smritis’ that includes restraint on access to education also.

NEED FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment enables women to acquire knowledge, skills and techniques which will help them in their personal and social growth as well as foster in them sensitivity towards problems in the society. Special efforts are required to be taken for education, health and employment of women. Economic empowerment is essential for improvement of female sex ratio but economic empowerment is possible only when women are educated.

Lack of education is the root cause for women's exploitation and negligence. Only literacy and education can help women to understand the Indian's constitutional and legislative provisions that are made to strengthen them. Education is "potential affirming and performance confirming". Empowerment of a girl starts even enterprise makes empowerment operational. That is full filling journey for a mother too: from a painful situation to a gainful situation. When women are educated, they will be able to contribute in nation building. A few women are currently holding powerful positions in India and in the world, but there is still room for improvement if more women are educated. Perhaps with increase in women holding the mantle in a male-dominated political arena, the socio-political state of affairs of the whole world will definitely improve. Gender equity is what women desire. Empowerment becomes the means of achieving it with dignity. Indian woman is considered as *shakthi*, which means power. What is power without justice?

Empowerment calls for critical intervention by governments too. Interventions need neatly designed approaches with assigned roles for women and executed systematically. Women development and women empowerment are correlated conceptually and methodologically. Thus, promoting education among women is of great important in empowering them to accomplish their goals in par with men in different spheres of life, nurturing and sustaining a culture on unity, equity and dignity. Cultural and knowledge value-addition makes the case for social emancipation, political nurturing and economic empowerment that much stronger. Education makes women economically sound which is source of other all types of women empowerment i.e., Social, Psychological, Technological, Political.

STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN EDUCATION

It is sure that an imperative need to develop an action plan for girls' education making it a priority area in school education. Education of the girl child needs special focus in the content of achieving universalization of elementary Education. The latest national programme on Education for Girls at Elementary level (NPEGL) itself is not capable for joining the gap between literacy rates of boys and girls at the school stage. A lot of issues are faced by the girls in the socio-cultural context and modernization. All the commissions stressed on the need for giving essential education to girls and focused on parents also through motivation campaigns. We should be aware of the following facts such as,

- Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is possible only when all the girls are educated along with boys.
- Traditional role of girls should change. Both girls and boys need to grow economically and play multidimensional roles for successful life.
- Girls need special attention in Education. So democracy cannot flourish politically, without the education of girls.
- Should obey the constitutional obligations to provide special focus to girls' education.
- Many laws are enshrined in the constitution to protect the rights of girls. □ Economic and social progress can't attain without girls education.

These factors are necessary to attain girls' education. We should utilise cultural, political and constitutional provisions to attain this.

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

1] Education Manumit-Education manumit the thinking, mind, thoughts, imagination, power, principle in various field for easy to survive and achieve knowledge through education .Empowerment of women brings equal status to women, opportunity and freedom to develop her which also means equipping women to be. Education makes the women's self sufficient in every aspect, she is not depends on her father, husband nor son neither brother.

2] Education stay away from hurdles-Education gives equal rights to women in socially, politically, culturally, gender, religiously manner. She will bring equal status with men and that is the reason to fostering both national and international integration.

3] Education allows to take Decision-As education opens ways to take decision according to their choice whether it is relates to life style, life parterner,job,career,eating style, sexuality etc.Education teach to learn what is wrong and right .Education push to stay independtely on own feet.

4] Education Garner- Education will garnishing women to defense against crime, social devil, sexual harassment, marital rape and mental stress of society etc.

5] Educated women contributes to economy- If women are qualified and helpful for family to earn money that means she able to develop the economy status of family and also for nation. Women can help, through their work; get rid of problems like India's high maternal mortality rate, high rates of gender violence and other crime against women child sex abuse, female feticide, implement family planning and other schemes etc. Sharma (2016)

6] Education enhances- Education enhances the quality of women and makes some strategies to grow upward, to gear the entire education system to play positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. To widen women's access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels, breaking gender stereotypes.

Above six statement proof that education play very vital role for empowering women.Paraphrasing a popular saying here-educated a man and you will educated one person, educate a woman and you will educated a whole family would like to say that educated women educated more generation.

CONCLUSION

The evils of poverty, unemployment and inequality cannot be eradicated by man alone. Equal and active participation of women is obligatory. Unless women are educated they will not be able to understand about their rights and their importance. Empowerment of women aims at striving towards acquiring higher literacy level and education, better health care for women and their children, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in economic and commercial sectors, awareness of their rights, improved standard of living and to achieve self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect among women. What should never be forgotten is that women like men need to be proactive in the process lifelong learning. That is true empowerment. From “women for development” the time has come to shift focus to “women in development”, with the cooperation of men through group engagement and management. That will indeed be a ‘quality’ change for equality. While being attracted by modernisation and globalisation we must be confident to say no to marginalisation.

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