

Importance of Education in Empowerment of Women

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Abstract

Women, the first school of the child, constitute roughly one half of the world's population. But their social and economic position is lower than that of men in almost all countries of the world. Of course, women do enjoy better positions in some societies than in others, but their overall position everywhere is lower than their male counterparts. But today the times have changed. One of the most important aspects of modern education is the education of women. Education of women is the most powerful weapon to change the position in society. Educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said: "If you educate a man, you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman, you educate a whole family. Education is a milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond 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. 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. This paper discusses the importance of education in empowerment of women.

Keywords: Education, Empowerment, Women, Strategies, Obstacles.

Introduction

Education plays an important role in the progress of an individual's mind and growth. It has a great importance in everybody's life. It is a life-long process of inner growth and development, and its period extends from birth till death, i.e. from cradle to grave. It is a human right and an essential tool for achieving equality. All over the world, education is regarded as the key factor in overcoming the barriers that women face and the basic tool for empowering women and bringing them into the main path of development. One of the major recommendations of the National Policy on Education in 1986 is to promote Empowerment of Women through education. The concept of Women Empowerment was introduced at the International Women's Conference at Nairobi in 1985. Empowerment is a process which includes:

- Equal access to opportunities for using societies resources.
- Gender Equality
- Freedom from violence
- Economic independence
- Participation in all decision-making bodies.
- Freedom of choice in matters relating to one's life.

So, only education helps to achieve all these for women in the society. Education ensures that women grow up with knowledge of the world, ability for critical thinking and practical skills which lead to self-confidence and self-respect. So, education is a key weapon for Women Empowerment because education gives the rights to enable them to respond to opportunities, to challenge and to change their lives.

Status of Women's Education

Everyone has a right to education, which shall be directed to the full development of human resources, and human dignity and potential, with particular attention to women and girl child. In India women enjoy a unique status of equality with the men as per constitutional and legal provision. But the Indian women have come across a long journey to achieve these positions. India has made progress in education, but not enough and definitely not at a pace we would like to see. Even after half a century after India attained independence, almost sixty percent of girls/women are not literate. Most of them have never been to school or any other education programme and also gender inequality is the main problem and a female was always dependent on male members of the family. There are so many restrictions in front of females. They are not allowed to

speak aloud in front of the elder members of her family. In the family, every fault had gone to her. In many social activities she is not allowed to participate. She has very little share in political, social, and economic life of the society. The position and status of women all over the world has risen incredibly in the 20th century. Now the status of women changed a lot. She has brought the property rights, voting rights, an equality in civil rights, matters of marriage, employment etc.

Importance of Women's Education

Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover, educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. Benefits of educating women are long established. But there is new understanding as to why educating women is the most urgent task facing the global development community and how women's education can drive the international efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Women's education is the most profound challenge to human development. Education is vital in emergencies, following a disaster or when a country is in conflict, contributing stability to the lives of males and females and helping families to heal and look forward. For communities, the strategies for providing girls the opportunities to complete their education yield benefits for all.

Strategies For Women Education

Almost every conceivable strategy and approach has been covered in policy documents of the Government of India. All policy documents recognise that the first stumbling block is poverty, and that women from poor communities, especially in rural areas needs special attention. The second stumbling block is social status, especially when considering children from disadvantaged communities (Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribes, some minority groups). For promoting women empowerment some strategies and recommendation are:

- Provide schools within walking distance, closer to the place of dwelling, if necessary, satellite schools for remote hamlets.
- Introduce flexible school timing and region-specific school calendar.

- Appoint more women teachers in rural areas and provide them secure residential accommodation.
- Provide incentives like uniforms, textbooks, exercise books, attendance scholarship, free bus passes etc.
- Introduce facilities for "bridge programmes" to enable dropouts to re-enter the school system.
- Improve quality of education, motivate teachers to make learning a joyful exercise.

Women Empowerment through Education

Women empowerment is the most important part of any society, state or country. It is a woman who plays a vital role in the basic life of a family. Women are an important part of our society. Education as means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. The Constitution of India gives the right to the state to adopt affirmative measures for prompting ways and means to empower women. Education is very important to makes difference in the lives of women. Women Empowerment is not only a state or a country but it is a global issue. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is a milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So, we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment. To see the development in women education India is supposed to 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.

Obstacles

In most developing countries, the private returns to girls' education- the economic benefits that families will receive – are usually much lower than the social returns, and also lower than the returns to boys' education. This conspires with other factor to encourage families to give priority to boys' education. The poorer the family, and the more difficult and costly it is for them to send children to school, the more likely girls are to be squeezed out by this logic. There are many other obstacles to female education like parental preferences, and social values.

People think that to spend money or time on daughters would be in wastage because they have to be work at home. But their son would run their families. Some of the major obstacles are listed below:

- Endemic poverty.
- Schooling costs.
- The burden of household labour.
- Shortage of school facilities, especially in rural areas.
- Inadequacies in Teaching Learning environment.
- Negative and even dangerous school environment.
- Cultural and social practices that discriminate against girls, including early marriage and restrictions on female mobility.
- Parental preferences.
- Social and religious values.
- Lack of efforts for resource mobilization.
- Shortage of female teachers.
- Gender bias in curriculum.
- Teacher competencies.
- Low retention and high dropouts.
- Working as domestic servants etc.

According to a 1998 report by U.S. Department of Commerce, the chief barrier of female education in India are inadequate school facilities such as sanitary facilities, shortage of female teachers, gender bias in curriculum and also conservative cultural attitudes.

Conclusion

Women play an important role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power. There is a strong relationship between woman empowerment and education. The education of women is the most powerful weapon to change the status of the society. Education also brings a change in inequality. The education develops the idea of participation in government, panchayats, public matters etc for elimination of gender discrimination. In order to promote women's empowerment, it is necessary to create an environment that will allow women to participate in educational programs and share the benefits. The educational and other policies for women empowerment should be implemented by the government. The barriers of women's empowerment are poverty, unemployment and inequality. Equal and

active participation of women is necessary for women empowerment. 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-confidence and self-respect among women. The Government of India has launched Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme which motive is girls independent. Such schemes should be implemented nationwide to bring the desired changes. This study concludes that access to education for all, especially for women, should be accessible to all. Since it educates society and makes a great contribution to the growth of a nation if women are taught.

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