

Impact of Education and Skill Development on Women Empowerment

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Abstract:

Women empowerment is one of the biggest tools for 'effective development' of any country. It means freedom of women from the vicious circle of social, political, economic and gender-based discrimination. Making women aware of their rights and developing confidence in them – is a central issue. It is essential for them to be skilled in order to be able to better serve their families at home as well as professionally. Skill development not only creates employment opportunities but also empowers them. The aim of skill development, in case of women, is not just simply preparing them for jobs; but also to boost their performance by improving the quality of work in which they are involved. Empowerment of women has becoming a burning issue all over the world including India since last few decades. For centuries women were not treated equal to men in many ways. Today we can see that women occupies respectable positions in all walks of life. Yet, they are not absolutely free, due to discriminations and harassments of the society. A few number of women have been able to establish their potentialities. So now we have come out of these dark days of oppressions of women. It is the present necessity to fight for the rights of women and to ensure that they get all the rights which men have or in other words a movement for the Empowerment of Women. This empowerment is possible only through education. So Empowering Women through Education is a need of the hour.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Skill Development, Inclusive Growth.

INTRODUCTION:- Education plays a very significant role in every one's life. It is a human right and an essential tool for achieving equality. One of the major recommendations of the National Policy on Education

in 1986 is to promote Empowerment of Women through education. Empowerment is self-governance, self-sufficiency and self-maintenance. 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.
- Prohibition of gender disparity
- Freedom from violence
- Economic independence
- Participation in all decision making bodies.
- Freedom of choice in matters relating to one's life.

Really, education only helps to meet all these to women in the society. It also 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 mile-stone for Women Empowerment because it enables them to respond to opportunities, to challenge the traditional roles and to change their lives.

People must think that the education of women plays a pivotal role in improving living standards not only of their families but also of the nation. High women literacy rate improves the quality of life both at home and outside of home, by encouraging and promoting education of female children, and in reducing the infant mortality rate. Lower level of women literacy rate results in higher levels of fertility and infant mortality, poorer nutrition, lower earning potential and the lack of an ability to make decisions with in the household, so giving proper education to women is necessary for both the society and family.

Women play an important role in the development of a family and society. From last few decades, they have been actively participating in various economic & social activities, but their efforts remain unrecognized. In this male-dominating society, they are still subjected to discrimination in the social, economic and educational field. Women are not only managing their families but are also playing an important role in the development of entire society. Making women aware of their rights and developing confidence in them is a central issue.

Women Empowerment means giving them freedom or power to live the way they want. It allows them to identify their skills, knowledge & abilities to make their own decisions. It is a dynamic & growth process for women which includes awareness, attainment & actualization of

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skills. For the socio-economic development of any society, women empowerment is essential. It is important for women to identify themselves with self-confidence & esteem. The main aspect of empowerment is to give a sense of internal strength to them - to control their lives. The confident smile on the faces of women is the measurement of their empowerment. Women empowerment can be measured on the basis of two levels – Individual & Collective.

Skills development is a key to success which improves productivity, employability and earning opportunities. It is the bridge between job and workforce. Today, it is considered as an important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. Indian women face the majority of barriers to accessing skills and productive employment. A large effort is needed to create a skilled workforce for creating an economic prosperity. The aim of skill development, in case of women, is not just simply preparing them for jobs; but also to boost their performance by improving the quality of work in which they are involved. Looking at the importance of the role women play in the development of a nation, one can sense that there is a long way to go in that direction.

The women in India enjoy a unique status of equality with the men as per constitutional and legal provision. But the Indian women have come a long way to achieve these positions. Gender inequality is the main problem, a female was always dependent on male members of the family. Female was 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 permitted to mingle with others. She has very little share in political, social, and economic life of the society. National Movement act as a light to eradicate such disabilities so far. Social Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar etc., stressed on women education, prevention on child marriage, Sati, polygamy etc. After Independence of India, the constitution makers and National Leaders recognized the equal social position of women with men. 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.

Women, has given a prominent place in the family set-up by our heritage and culture. Today in the modern age women, has an important role to play in the national development at large. Before coming on the

role of education in women empowerment it is good to think about the place of women in society as The Goddess (Devi), The Mother, The Sister, The Wife and the Prostitute. Traditionally, women's place has been inferior to that of the average man. In this male dominating society, the education of women has been neglected for a long period of time. Insufficiency of education in women can adversely affect the health and living condition of children. For to achieve economic empowerment of women we should eradicate poverty, give chance for micro credit – Women's access to credit for consumption and production, women and economy, globalization, women and agriculture, women and industry support services etc., should be promoted. To achieve social empowerment of women we should promote education, Health and sanitation, Nutrition, Housing and Shelter good environment, Science and Technology supporting hand in difficult circumstances, violence against women, protecting rights of girl child etc., are essential.

To achieve all these we should promote mass media. It will portray images consistent with human dignity of girls and women. Their policy will specifically strive to remove demeaning, degrading and negative conventional stereotypical images of women and violence against women. Private sector partners and media networks will be involved at all levels to ensure equal access for women particularly in the area of information and communication technologies. The media would be encouraged to develop codes of conduct, professional guidelines and other self-regulatory mechanisms to remove gender stereotype and promote balanced portrayals of women and men.

In modern Indian society a lot of changes happened in women's life especially in Kerala compared to Bengal, Bihar, Orissa etc. We must remember that women are the makers or builders of any society and it is the duty of the society to make them educated so that they may be able to make any decisions of their own life. They must have the knowledge about their roles in their own family, society and nation. They should not be reduced to the status of just second or third class citizen.

We have to focus on Education and Empowerment of women in rural areas. Particularly those from socially and economically marginalized groups. It is necessary to create an environment for women to seek knowledge and information in order to make choices at their own pace. It deals exclusively with the quality empowerment of woman's lives, emphasizing on process and internalizations responding to the needs

of women and girls. As, women progress, everyone in society benefits, including men. Tapping into the limitless potential of women is not only the right thing to do but it is the smart thing. That is why the United States Government and our international partners are invested in a historic effort to empower women globally. We should give chance to woman in every level then in all walks of life she can make her own foot prints. Providing proper counselling to prarents in proper time will ensure the educational opportunity of a girl. Government also take initiative to give basic infrastructure and financial aid in the right time. Education has to provide girls with the capacity to analyze their situation, expose them to a new role, build up aspiration and see a different future. It is evident that the increase in enrollment and retention alone do not automatically result desirable changes in girls. It becomes important to move from the dimensions of input into education to outcomes, which are wider than academic attainment and include personality development, self-esteem, self-efficiency and skill of critical thinking and problem solving. It is evident that programmes and project given over the years failed to bring desirable progress.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN:-Women have shown their ability in community development. Hence, it is important that women be a part of skill development. In India, women are now participating in various areas like–education, art and culture, service sector, sports, politics, media, and science and technology. They form a substantial part of the workforce but the working percentage rate of women in the total labor force is declining. A large number of them are working in the informal sectors. This represents lack of employment opportunities and skills for women workforce.

Currently, a majority of the female workforce in India is unskilled. They can be motivated to develop their life skills – that will give them high paying jobs with better livelihood & confidence to earn for their family. It will develop their ability & quality to move ahead and be self-dependent. It is observed, that the concept of training and skill development needs to move beyond imparting technical and managerial skills, with more focus on literacy, numeracy, political & life skills.

Some skills that training institutes must impart to women empowerment are:

- Communication skills
- Business etiquettes

- Language development
- Personality development
- Leadership skills
- Management skills
- Entrepreneurship skills
- Basic accounting skills
- Basic computer skills

The government of India has passed the national policy for ‘women empowerment’– which aims to ensure overall development of women within the country. They seek to impart skills to women so that they can stand & support for themselves and gain status within society.

The study found that the government & its agency partners have undertaken various measures/initiatives for the effective implementation of the skill development system for women. Skill development has highly impacted women empowerment. It has changed the image of women workforce. The results are as follows:

1. Majority of the women have captured the market of garment making, fabric painting, zardosi work, hand embroidery, beauty parlour, etc.
2. They have started their small business units with good level of income
3. Employment of women in organized sector has increased by 12%
4. With employability skills, it’s now easy for them to present, communicate & analyze
5. Skill development has increased number of women entrepreneurs in the country
6. It has helped them to shift from manual labours to desk jobs

PROBLEMS STILL FACED BY WOMEN AFTER GETTING PROPER SKILLS:

Even after proper training, it is not easy for them to get a job – due to following reasons:

- Too much competition for gender bias, family issues & long working hours
- Early marriages & traditional protocols, do not allow them to stand independently in their career path
- Even after getting a job, many women are paid less as compared to males

- Along with this, women safety is again continuous issue which pulls women back

- Financial support to skilled women.

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.

BARRIERS OF WOMEN EDUCATION:

There are many barriers to female education like parental preferences, and social values. People think that to spend money or time on daughters would be in vain because they have to be at home. But their son would run their families. Most of the rural people give education to their daughters to learn read, write and count the money, then they think that it is sufficient and feel proud that they have done their duty very well. Some of the major barriers which are as follow:

- Inadequacies in Teaching Learning environment
- Parental preferences

- Social and religious values
- Poverty
- Lack of efforts for resource mobilization
- Inadequate school facilities
- Shortage of female teachers
- Gender bias in curriculum
- Teacher competencies
- Basic Teaching amenities
- Ineffective administrative supervision and monitoring
- Pardah system
- Low retention and high dropouts
- Working as domestic servants etc.

Some of the factors that may encourage women education for empowering:

- Through giving parental motivational campaigns
- Residential schools for girls.
- Parental associations should be formed to encourage and to take care of girls education.
- Various schemes and programmes by state and center government should be implemented to promote girls education.
- Arrange community awareness programmes.
- Imparting basic amenities including building and toilet facilities will promote women education.
- Promote gender sensitivity in curriculum
- Give Natural Learning Experiences (NLE)
- Promote Activity Based Learning.
- Provide apt counselling in apt time.
- Appoint councillors in Schools.
- Organize co-curricular activities

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

International Convention in all forms of Discrimination Against Women (ICDAW) in 1993 mentioned that education is one of the most important means of empowering women with knowledge, skills and self-confidence, necessary to participate fully in the development process. Educating women benefits the whole society. It has a more significant impact on poverty and development than men's education. It is also one of the most influential factors improving child health and reducing infant mortality rate.

Educated women's responsibility is tremendous. Women have a significant role in shaping the behaviour and mental make up of the younger generation. She has the primary duty of nurturing and shaping the children, the leaders of tomorrow. Educated women are always cautious about the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children. Education makes them able to know their rights and gain confidence. Educated parents have a good thought about their children's educational attainments. Mother's education will influence more in children's life than father's. The empowered women can stand with men. They are not inferior to men and they can do whatever the men can do, some times better than that of a man.

CONCLUSION:

A number of great women have made themselves wonderfully powerful and successful in their lives through their individual efforts. They are the source of inspiration and motivation of the women of today. A women can do whatever the man can do in this world. Self-confidence of them is an essential part of women empowerment. Indian' women literacy rate is very low when we compared to world standards. In India it was found that there is a large disparity between female literacy rates in different states. Bihar, U.P. Rajasthan etc., have very low female literacy rates.

It is seen, that there is a need for developing gender-responsive strategies for skill development for women—who are no less than men. Empowering women socially, economically, educationally, politically and legally is important for socio-economic development. Women are capable to manage if given opportunity. They must be treated with respect, purity, dignity and equal rights. All we need is a concentrated effort focused in the right direction that would rest only with the liberation of women from all forms of evil. As more and more India moves towards the 'knowledge economy', it becomes increasingly important for it to focus on the advancement of the skills and these skills has to be relevant to the emerging economic environment. For transforming its demographic dividend, an efficient skill development system is the need of the hour.

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