

Importance Of Education in Women's Empowerment

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Abstract: Education act as an important tool for women's empowerment, prosperity, development, and welfare. Enormous inequality and vulnerability of women can be seen in all sectors like Economic, Education, Social, Political, Health, Nutrition, Right Legal, etc. women are oppressed in all spheres of life, they need to be empowered in all walks of life. Empowering women is very necessary in today's scenario of our society because unless and until women are empowered, there can be no progress. They should be made strong, alert, and aware of their equal status in society. Apart from empowerment they need to be loved by their family members, they need to give extra care and need support from their family, need to be justice by this society so that they can move freely in this male dominating society and fully enjoy their own life. Women in the present situation are not free in this society rather than they are not properly empowered as they had to suffer from so much violence created by this cruel society. Somehow, to get rid of this violence, education can play an important role. By getting proper education they can realize their power and can build new self-confidence in them.

Key Words: women, education, discrimination, empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Women are considered to be an important segment of our society. And no doubt they are experiencing different up and downs in their life from ancient times till today in modern times due to variations in different socio-economic conditions, due to lack of equal opportunities in different fields, due to more illiteracy, due to more household responsibilities, and due other many factors. They are considered to be half of our population in India and half population seems to be illiterate. They are struggling for their rights over the decade and the same as the condition is today, they are striving to achieve equality in all fields. Hence, various movements are led out to improve their status and of course, achieved a lot. Well among the various movement women empowerment is also one of them that bring the attention of so many social reformers, governmental agencies, and voluntary organizations. Women empowerment is the need of today's women as empowerment refers to the growth of the power of an individual. It is seen that empowering women is beneficial for their growth and for the growth of the nation. But it is only possible when there is a channelized system for their empowerment. In fact, an empowered woman is a nation's strength. The United Nations Organization had declared the year 1975 as Women's year. Various studies that were conducted made a consensus that so long as women remained as depressed and exploited, no nation can enjoy freedom and justice without their development. So various steps are to be taken to educate women through which their empowerment is possible.

2. GLIMPSE OF WOMEN'S STATUS FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES:

For ages, women had social status and prestige during the Vedic period. They had the right to education also. They used to devote their whole life to the pursuit of knowledge. They were educated in different fields like astrology, geography, veterinary sciences, and even martial arts. They used to take part in wars and fights. Every religious performance is incomplete without her participation. However, their social honor, position, and prestige started declining in the middle age. During colonial times again it is urged that women should be given equal status as men and many reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotibha Phule made endless efforts to regain the status of women in the society. These reformers remove terrible social evils, like sati pratha, child marriage, and polygamy. They also struggled for widow remarriage and particularly for women's education. Later on in the mid-19th-century women first entered the formal educational system, however widely accepted

in the mid-20th century. During these times the Governmental initiative was slow but social reformers realized rapidly the significance of women's education to make them useful citizens of the country.

3. DIFFERENT DIMENSION OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT :

There are various dimensions of women empowerment like **decision-making power of women in households activities**, free mobility of women, which is also affected by their age, education, marital status, type of family, etc. greater freedom is associated with the employment of women. **Access to education** is also one of the most important sources of women's empowerment. As **women's participation at all stages** of education rises, women's empowerment is bound to achieve. **Access to employment** is directly related to cash earnings, by which the empowerment of women is bound to rise. Women's control over cash earnings is also important for empowerment which is affected by place of residence, education, household structure, etc. **Access to participate in social, economic, and in political fields.**

The Government of India has declared 2001 as Women's Empowerment Year. This policy has set up different goals for the upliftment of women. Following are the different objectives of this policy :

- 1) The de-jure and de-facto enjoyments of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on an equal basis with men in all political, economic, social, cultural, and civil spheres.
- 2) Equal access to participation and decision-making of women in the social-political and economic life of the nation.
- 3) Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, employment, equal remuneration, social security and public life etc.,
- 4) Elimination of all kinds of discrimination against women through the legal system.
- 5) Changing the attitude of minds of the people in the society and there should be equal participation of both men and women in different fields.
- 6) Removal of gender inequality from a different perspective.
- 7) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.

The National policy for the empowerment of women envisaged the introduction of a gender perspective in the budgeting process as an operational strategy.

4. EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH EDUCATION :

Education seems to be the milestone in the life of a woman which helps her in maintaining their status. Nowadays the education of a woman is very important. If they are educated in real terms then only, they can enjoy the life with full prestige. Through education, they can utilize their rights over certain things which they can't use properly without being educated. Education keeps them aware of the different kinds of rights, recommendations, and policies that are being made in their favor are helpful in overcoming from difficult situations. Their real Empowerment is possible only from education. According to *Mahatma Gandhi*, "If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate an entire family." Education is a powerful tool for social transformation. Hence, education for Women has to be paid special attention. Greater access for women to education must be ensured in the educational system. We have different kinds of policies and schemes regarding education. First, the University Education Commission, headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan recommended for provision of necessary facilities in the co-education colleges, expansion of educational opportunities for girls, the establishment of right status for girls, provision of some kinds of special education for girls, and provision for equal remuneration in case of female teachers as males. National Committee for Women education, popularly known as Durgabhai Deshmukh Committee (1958-1959) recommends the establishment of a National Council for the Education of girls and women, provision of more funds for women's education, the appointment of female teachers in girls' schools, equal curriculum for boys and girls in the primary stage so that there should be no point of gender discrimination. Kothari commission, (1964-1966) also recommended no differentiation between the curriculum of boys and girls, social service for girls, the establishment of a special organization for the education of girls at the state and central level, part-time service for girls along with household activities.

Education is the most important lever for social, economic, and political transformation. In order to achieve UEE (Universalisation of Elementary Education), the govt. of India has initiated a no. of programs and projects. The main aim of these programs and projects is to create awareness of education among the masses and to promote female education. We have different types of schemes and programs e.g.:-

i) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Launched in 2001 with its main theme:

- * Enrolment of all children in school

- *Retention of all children till the upper primary stage
- *Significant achievement of children in the primary and upper Primary stage.

Provisions of the Right to Education Act (RTE), are being implemented through SSA in 2009.

- a) Free and compulsory education for all children of India in the 6 to 14 year of age group.
 - a) No child shall be denied admission in school for lack of age proof.
 - b) Provides for 25% reservation for economically disadvantaged communities.
 - c) Financial burden will be shared between state and central government and many more are the salient features of this act that are more beneficiary for the children.
- SSA made special focus is on girls, children belonging to SC/ST communities, other weaker sections, minorities, and urban deprived children.

ii) **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya**

KGBVs are residential upper primary schools for girls from SC, ST, OBC, and Muslim communities. KGBVs are set up in areas of scattered habitations where schools are at great distances and are a challenge to the security of girls.

KGBVs provide for a minimum reservation of 75% seats for girls from SC/ST/OBC and minorities communities and 25% for girls from families that live below the poverty line.

iii) **National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementry Level (NPEGEL)**

NPEGEL is implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) and addresses the needs of girls who are 'in' as well as 'out' of school. NPEGEL also reaches out to girls who are enrolled in school but do not attend school regularly.

iv) **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMs)**

In keeping with the constitutional provisions to raise the level of nutrition of children and enable them to develop in a healthy manner, the National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched as a Centrally sponsored scheme in 1995. Commonly referred to as MDMs, this was expected to enhance enrolment, retention, and attendance of children's in schools apart from improving their nutritional levels.

v) **The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan**

The major objectives of the RMSA are to (i) raise the minimum level of education to class X and universalize access to secondary education; (ii) ensure good quality secondary education (iii) reduce the gender, social and religious gaps in enrolments, dropouts and improving retentions.

All the schemes or programs are made for the welfare of women or child education. Government always tries to make everything for the betterment of women's education, but if we do not send our girls to schools to receive education, then these schemes or any programs could not do any kind of work, in another word our nation will not progress.

5. PROBLEMS OF ACHIEVING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

- 1) Discrimination among the girls and boys within the school as well as in the family.
- 2) Caste is a great hindrance to girls' education, especially in rural or remote areas.
- 3) Poverty is also a major issue in terms of education. People having lower income or living below the poverty line thinks that there is no need to educate a girl just educate a son.
- 4) Gender biases, disparity, social injustice, and violence are the main factors for the deteriorating condition of women.
- 5) Lack of adequate schools for the girls especially in rural areas.
- 6) Lack of hostel facilities especially for girls.
- 7) Early marriage of girls.
- 8) In the eyes of the parents boys are still more valuable than girls.

6. RECOMMENDATION FOR THE BETTERMENT OF WOMEN:

- 1) One very foremost thing is that there should be an additional change in the mindset of men.
- 2) Providing women equal opportunity in every walk of life.
- 3) Society must change its perception regarding the status of women.

- 4) There is a need to create awareness about the importance of education in women's life.
- 5) Women should have the decision-making power in household activities and at the national level also.
- 6) the most important thing is to access women towards education which is the grass root problem of every state.
- 7) Awareness programs need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.

7. CONCLUSION:

The Empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century not only at the national level but also at the international level. Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and Women have full opportunities of Self decision making and participation in the Social, Political, and Economic Life of the Country with a sense of equality. To conclude, there is an urgent need for a sustained, comprehensive effort at all levels to attack this problem of gender bias from all sides in a focused manner.

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