

A STUDY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWEREMENT

Modalavalasa. Induvadana¹, L. Narasimha Rao²,

¹Government Degree College, AMADALAVALASA, Srikakulam Dist., A.P.

²Y.V.N.R.Government Degree College, KAIKALURU, Krishna Dist. A.P.

Abstract :

Women empowerment has been an ongoing saga from many years. Women Empowerment means promoting women in their social and economic development, providing them equal opportunities of employment, education, economical development and allowing them to socialize; the freedoms and rights that were denied before.

Education is the basic requirement for every citizen in the country. Women who are facing discrimination in many fields have the need to acquire it. It is a powerful tool for women to excel in many areas and mark their identity in the society. 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. Women empowered means mother India empowered." Education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Discrimination of women from womb to tomb is well known. There is continued inequality and vulnerability of women in all sectors and women oppressed in all spheres of life, they need to be empowered in all walk of life. Unless women are educated they will not be able to understand about their rights and their importance. In order to fight against the socially constructed gender biases, women have to swim against the system that requires more strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment and empowerment will come from the education. 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. This paper aims to create the awareness among the women's about different empowerment and identifying the impact of education in women overall empowerment. The education plays key role in every walk of women's life. This paper also identifies the importance of education in the empowerment of women. The study also shows that educational qualification play significant role in women empowerment and it concludes that if women's empowerment is to be effected, it can be carried out only through the medium of education. Hence, it is of foremost importance to raise the level of education amongst women.

Introduction:

The place of women in Indian society has been changing from time to time. In Rig Vedic period, women were at par with men and thus, used to participate actively in different walks of life. But, by the medieval period, the place and status of women in society reached its nadir and a woman was considered merely an object of consumption and re-production. Till recently, Indian women were, indeed, stationed at the receiving end. They were neglected in their families and there were many social and religious restrictions upon them. Child marriage was rampant, widows were debarred from remarriage and were subjected to humiliation and even the cruel custom of Sati was in vogue. "Purdah system" and the rigid

socio-religious customs had interned them within the four walls of their homes and thus, they had no access to education. Economically, they were completely dependent on their husbands, sons or other male relatives.

Thanks to the Indian renaissance of 19th century that the place and status of a woman in the Indian society started looking up. The efforts of various social reform movements under the stewardship of Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand, Vivekananda, Shankaracharya, Govind Ranade, Annie Besant, Gandhiji and many others are really laudable in this context. Many inhuman customs and practices have come to an end only due to their tireless essays for the upliftment of women's status in Indian society. Influenced by their motivation and exhortation, women with all their nerve and verve participated in the Indian freedom struggle and women like Kaasturba Gandhi, Nelichandra Sen, Sarojini Naidu, V.L. Pandit and Indira Gandhi have all left an indelible mark in the annals of women's lib movement.

With the prevalence of nuclear family, Woman's rights and status within the family have looked up and today, she is playing a more independent and active role in society and nation building. Inter-caste marriages are becoming popular day by day and polygamy has been declared illegal. There is a National Woman Commission to look after them and their affairs and redress their grievances. Indian women, today are playing really a very important role in the economy, academics and politics of the country.

Today our women have come into their own, what with increased education and heightened awareness. Societal consciousness has also grown to acknowledge that with half the population remaining backward and underdeveloped, no society can grow to its potential. Hence, it is quite heartening to note that today we not only have a welfare state trying to do its best to uplift the conditions of our women, but general social consensus has also evolved around the equal status for our women. However, still a lot needs to be done before we have a more healthy attitude towards our women. The paranormal and pathological societal behavior towards women, as experienced from time to time, is only a reflection of a lingering reluctance of a section of the society in this regard.

Women in Education :

In India female literacy is very less when compared to Male literacy. Female illiteracy is more in India. Charles Woods dispatch formed in 1854, Eswar Chandra Vidya sagar, Kandukuri Veeresalingam and Jyothirao Puley rendered their life time services for improvement of women education. The Government has been taking many steps for advancement of Women through five year plans. In these 5 year plans, huge amount was allotted for the Women Education. Free and compulsory education to the children at the age group of 6 to 14 was enforced as per the act of 2009. Importance was given to Women education in fourth year plan. People give importance to the boys education in Indian society. Gender inequality is not only limited to economic independence of women; gender equality is the other side. Many schools were established only for Girls education through Women education movement.

National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan; India) was set up for encouraging Girls education. 35252 Model schools were established by 2009 for Girls education.

National Women Literacy mission launched on 8th September, 2009 to provide basic literacy.

Special committee was also formed in MHRD for taking necessary steps to the Women adult education through NAEP (National Adult Education Programme).

There is no importance to the women in Legislature and Parliament. By improving Women education participation in voting of elections is also being increased in the course of time.

Development of Women is possible through Women education and campaign. Participation of Women is at the lowest in Judiciary, Bureaucracy, Defence, Customs, Accounts, Postal and Income Tax etc.

Schemes for Women Education:

Shiksha Sahayog Yojana – This scheme is meant for providing scholarships to students whose parents are living below or marginally above poverty line & who are covered under Janashree Bima Yojana.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – This scheme is being implemented in all districts of India. The aim of this scheme is to provide elementary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years .It was launched in 2001

Saakshar Bharat – The main aim of this programme is to strengthen Adult Education, especially of women, by extending educational options. To implement this scheme, 1.70 lacs Lok Shiksha Kendras (Adult Education Centers) are established in Panchayat grams of the districts covered under the Scheme. The benefit of Shaksar Bharat Yojna can be availed by contacting Lok Shiksha Kendras in various regions.

Kanya Saaksharta Protsahan Yojna – The objective of this scheme is to reduce the dropout rate & to increase the interest of Tribal Girl Students to continue their study. Rs. 500 is given to those girls who continue study in class VI, Rs. 1000 to girls who get admission in IX & Rs. 2000 to girls who gets admission in XI.

KGBV's were also established during July 2004 to improve Girls education at High school level especially for SC,ST,OBC and minority categories.

Lok Jambish and Siksha Karmi : It is being implemented in Rajasthan for Girls education in backward areas

Mahila Samaikya programme : It was formulated in 1989 for women empowerment and education in rural areas especially for socially and economically back ward women.

Women empowerment in education plays a key development in the country. Educating women uplifts her as well her family. Education implies not only gaining knowledge but also transforming that knowledge into application through vocational training and skill development. Education is the basis for promotion of the status of women. Women should not be considered merely as a worker who does all the work of the home. She should be seen as a dynamic promoter of social development.

Literacy and educational rates are increasing in Indian women but there is still a gap between male and female literacy rate which can be seen as shown in the following

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
1961	24.0	34.4	13.0
1971	29.5	39.5	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Need for education for Women:

Empowerment enables women to acquire knowledge,skills and techniques which help them in personal as well as social growth.Special efforts shpiukd made by the government to increase the proportion of girls in all fields.

Lack of education is the main cause for the women's exploitation and negligence. Education helps them in standing on their own feet earning money. They do not have to depend on anyone for food and living. It also helps them in understanding the laws that are framed for them in case of any violence or anything wrong happens against them. If a woman gets education, it means she could provide guidance to her children especially girl child.

Gender equality is what women desire. Education helps them in achieving it. There are many women holding positions in all fields showing they can also do all the work that men do if they get a chance. The proportion of women in politics should also increase so that they get a chance to express their views over the development of women.

Importance of Media : Media is also being played an important role in improving socio and economical status of women. However media should have its own control to avoid vulgarity in relating to the articles on women in serials and advertisements.

Challenges:

The society is more biased for men in case of education and other opportunities. Social norms and family restrictions mostly in villages and backward classes, make women deprived of education. Some of the challenges faced by the women are:

- ❖ Lack of financial support.
- ❖ Child marriages.
- ❖ Belief that there is no direct benefit on investing on girls.
- ❖ Cultural stereotyping that girls finally become a homemaker.
- ❖ Gender inequality

Conclusion :

The Social evils of unemployment, poverty and inequality can be eradicated by active participation of all sections of the public. Equal and active participation of women is necessary. 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. Recently the NDA Government has launched Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme which aims at making girls independent both socially as well as financially and which will help in generating awareness and improving the efficiency of delivery of welfare services meant for women. Such schemes should be implemented nationwide to bring the desired changes. Mostly gender barriers still continue particularly on rural area. Due to current socio economic constraints in rural area, the potential of women have not been fully utilized and further pushed back into the social hierarchy. Most of the educated women feel that, they are able to achieve more than men. But inbuilt idea that women are capable of doing less work than men and less efficient than men. The lack of education becomes the obstacles in getting empowerment. Taking an overview of all the above aspects, we come to know that the transformation is very much needed. For gaining this process a momentum, education is indispensable.

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