

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

¹Smt S A L Kalyani, ²Smt S Krishna Kumari

¹Asst. Professor in History, ²Asst. Professor in Chemistry Sir C R Reddy College, Eluru

“Education is one of the most important means of empowering Women with Knowledge , skills and Self-empowering women with knowledge,skills and self-confidence necessary to participate in the development process”

Educated women are the weapon who yields positive impact on the Indian society through their contribution at home and professional fields. They are the reason of improved economy in the country as well as society. Women are the soul of a society; a society can well be judged by the way its women are treated. An educated man goes out to make the society better, while an educated woman; whether she goes out or stays at home, makes the house and its occupants better. Women education is a catch all term which refers to the state of primary, secondary, tertiary and health education in girls and women. There are 65 Million girls out of school across the globe; majority of them are in the developing and underdeveloped countries. All the countries of the world, especially the developing and underdeveloped countries must take necessary steps to improve their condition of female education; as women can play a vital role in the nation's development.

If we consider society as tree, then men are like its strong main stem which supports the tree to face the elements and women are like its roots; most important of them all. The stronger the roots are the bigger and stronger the tree will be spreading its branches; sheltering and protecting the needy. Women are the soul of a society; a society can well be judged by the way its women are treated. An educated man goes out to make the society better, while an educated woman; whether she goes out or stays at home, makes the house and its occupants better. Women play many roles in a society like mother, wife, sister, care taker, nurse ,cultural, social, political and Technological changes etc. They are more compassionate towards the needs of others and have a better understanding of social structure. An educated mother will make sure that her children are educated, and will weigh the education of a girl child, same as boys.

Education makes women more confident and ambitious; they become more aware of their rights and can raise their voice against exploitation and violence. a society cannot at all progress if its women weep silently. They have to have the weapon of education to carve out a progressive path for their own as well as their families. Education is the milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life; so that we cannot neglect the importance of Education in reference to women empowerment. Empowerment through education is ideally seen as a continuous scholastic process with cognitive, psychological and political dimensions in order to achieve emancipation. Women empowerment is not limited to urban, working women but women in even remote towns and villages are now increasingly making their voices heard loud and clear in society. They are no longer willing to play a second fiddle to their male counterparts. Educated or not, they are asserting their social and political rights and making their presence felt, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.

Women education in India has a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds 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 and India poised to becoming superpower in recent years. Education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position in society. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. . 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.

Keywords: Education, preoccupation, milestone, empowerment, participation Introduction Empowerment can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. The empowerment strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience (Hashemi Schuler and Riley, 1996). Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing individual to think, take action and control work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's lives. There are always a number of elements in the society which are deprived of their basic rights in every society, state and nation, but these elements lack in the awareness of their rights. If we enlist such elements from the society, then women would top this list. In fact, women are the most important factor of every society. Even though everybody is aware of this fact, but nobody is ready to accept this fact. As a result, the importance which used to be given to women is declining in today's society.

As a consequence of this growing tendency of underestimating women such as to make them occupy a secondary position in society and to deprive them of their basic rights, the need for empowering women was felt. Empowering women has become the focus of considerable discussion and attention all over the world. Today we enjoy the benefits of being citizens of a free nation, but we really need to think whether each of the citizens of our country is really free or enjoying freedom, in the true sense of the term. The inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women are an age-old issue all over the world. Thus women quest for equality with man is a universal phenomenon. Women should equal with men in matters of education, employment, inheritance, marriage, and politics etc. Their quest for equality has given birth to the formation of many women's associations and launching of movements. The Constitution of our nation doesn't discriminate between men and women, but our society has deprived women of certain basic rights, which were bestowed upon them by our Constitution. Empowerment allows individuals to reach their full potential, to improve their political and social participation, and to believe in their own capabilities. Importance of women education "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". PT. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU. Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside.¹ If it is said that education is the key to all problems, then it won't be improper. Thinkers have given a number of definitions of education but out of these definitions, the most important definition is that which was put forth by M. Phule. According to M. Phule, "Education is that which demonstrates the difference between what is good and what is evil". If we consider the above definition, we come to know that whatever revolutions that have taken place in our history, education is at the base of them. ² Education means modification of behaviour in every aspect, such as mentality, outlook, attitude etc. 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. Obstacles: Gender discrimination still persists in India and lot more needs to be done in the field of women's education in India. The gap in the male-female literacy rate is just a simple indicator. While the male literary rate is more than 82.14% and the female literacy rate is just 65.46%. (b). the women were consider only house wife and better to be live in the house. It is a woman who plays a dominant role in the basic life of a child. Women are an important section of our society. Education as means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. It is therefore, crucial for the socioeconomic and political progress of India.

Reasons why education is so important for women/girls Better standard of living : Better standard of living for the family is one of the advantages of women/female education. It doesn't take a mathematician to conclude that a family relying on double wages is more content and happy than a family which relies on the income of a single parent. An educated mother will earn as good as the father of the family and will look after the financial needs of her family in a much better way. Two incomes under the same roof will improve the quality of living and also ensure better education and facilities to the children, not to mention that a happy family will ultimately lead to a happy society.

Improved Health and Hygiene

Women are more concerned about the health of their family than men and have a great sense of hygiene too. Even working women are constantly concerned about their family's health and don't compromise with it at any cost. It is only because of the women in the house that men work free, with the only responsibility of earning money; as they know that everything else in the house is being take care of. So it becomes imperative that the women who is taking care of the family and your children is educated, so that she recognizes the health hazards and is confident enough to act prudently to eliminate them.

Dignity and Honor

A woman is the dignity of a house, and a society is judged depending on how its women are treated and how much they are educated. It is only when a woman is able to protect her own dignity and honor, that she will be able to protect the dignity and honor of her family. An uneducated woman may lack the courage to speak for her own dignity while an educated woman will be confident enough to fight for it.

4) Self Reliance

Education makes a woman self reliant; that is, she does not depend on anyone for her own survival as well as the survival of her children. She knows that she is educated and could well be employed equally like men and fend for the needs of her family. A woman, who is financially independent, can raise her voice against injustice and exploitation.

5) Eliminating Crime against Women

Many of the social evils and crimes against women can be easily eliminated by educating women. Incidents of dowry, flesh trade, female infanticide as well as harmful customary practices can be eradicated by educating women of a society. An educated woman plays a very important role in a civilized family and influences the thoughts and beliefs of its members. She is unlikely to remain silent on domestic violence against other woman or girl in the family; and will definitely help in strengthening the social fabric of the society. An educated woman will never concede to the female infanticide and is well aware that it is a crime as per the law and also forbidden by any religion.

6) Decreased Mortality Rate

An educated woman is more likely to marry later in life improving the chances of survival of the mother and baby. Educated mothers are more aware of their children's needs and nutrition, and take well care of them resulting in a low child mortality rate; providing them better health, hygiene and nutrition. According to a study it is estimated that nearly 1.5 Million children could be saved globally, if only their mothers had completed secondary school.

Prevents Social Exclusion of Women

A girl child who doesn't go to school today, is most likely to work as a domestic help in household chores in her own house as well as other houses; mostly only for petty sum of money. An uneducated woman or a girl is most likely to work as domestic help or in extreme cases pushed into flesh trade; unlike men or boys who easily get employed as unskilled labors despite being uneducated. Those women who had worked as domestic help for their whole life or had been into other undignified professions, get socially isolated from the society; leading to depression and other mental and physical ailments. An educated woman on the other hand, is unlikely to go all through this and will ultimately brew a balanced society.

Integral Development

Today the developing as well as the underdeveloped countries strive for integral development; that is, they have realized that the true development of a nation can be achieved only when no one is left behind on the path to progress. The goals of integral and sustainable developments will be nothing more than mere words if our women are not educated and empowered. Women must be provided an equal opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with men, and encouraged to pursue the professions they aspire- doctor, lawyer, technocrat, scientist, journalist, adventurist etc. Only then we will be able to achieve our goal of sustainable development by 2030.

Exploring the Hidden Potential

We all must have heard about the term 'Brain Drain', also must have expressed our concern about the talented individuals of a developing or under developed nation migrating to some other parts of world; mostly to a developed nation in search of better financial opportunities and better facilities. Rather than stressing too much on the talent leaving their land; such nations should educate its girls and women to explore their hidden potential. Women education in developing countries is essential for their growth and stability. Who knows that the girl who is working as a domestic help has the potential to become a doctor, if only she is given the right guidance and an opportunity to do so. When it comes to brain and the use of it, women are no inferior to men; why not to help them achieve their aspirations. It would ultimately benefit the nation, as a woman is less likely to leave her roots and migrate to other nation.

Women in Politics or Bureaucracy

Educating women will also lead them to become political leaders, who can fight for the rights and justice of other women. Women political leaders or bureaucrats can more effectively fight against injustice and other crimes against women; ultimately leading to a balanced society. The more women enter into politics and bureaucracy, the more achievable the goal of global sustainable development by 2030 will become.

There are innumerable women in the world who have held and still hold influential positions across the globe and have taken decisions to make the world better. Especially the underdeveloped and developing countries will benefit more from women education.

Women Empowerment: Making the World a Better Place

We are living in an age of women empowerment. Women the world over are working shoulder to shoulder with men. By and large, they are now empowered to take decision about different aspects of their life and profession.

Means of Women Empowerment

Education: Without proper and adequate education, women cannot become empowered individuals. They need to be encouraged to go for higher studies so that they can contribute significantly in the creation of a knowledge society

Communication Skills: Without developing skills for effective communication, women cannot make their voices heard. It is essential for them to communicate effectively to become successful. As leaders, they need to put across their points to the people so that a family, team or company can be effectively managed.

Disposable Income: Women need to earn well to have their say in important financial decisions governing their lives. Being financially independent gives women power over lives and also contributes to the growth of businesses.

Power of Internet: Access to the internet has opened the floodgates of knowledge and awareness and increased social interaction reach and influence of women. The liberalizing influence of the World Wide Web has broken all taboos, myths and misconceptions regarding women.

Women Empowerment helps to make the society and world a better place to live in and march forward on way to inclusive participation. It means increase happiness for the family and the organizations where women make a difference. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone 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.⁴ for becoming super power we have mostly to concentrate upon the women's education. By which it will force on women's empowerment. As per united national development fund for women (UNIFEM) the term women's empowerment means:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed.
- Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.
- Gaining the ability to generate choices exercise bargaining power.
- Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

On independence, Article 15 of the Indian Constitution guaranteed equality to women under the law. Though the Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights to all citizens, women are still marginally represented in the Indian political arena. The fact is that in the hands of women are having lack of power at the centre and state level.

As a result of higher participation of women in literacy campaigns, the gender gap in literacy levels is gradually getting reduced. Even more significant is the fact that disparity in enrolment of boys and girls in neo-literate households is much lowered compared to the non-literate householders.¹¹ The world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys. But few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education. The political participation of women keeps increasing. In January 2014, in 46 countries more than 30% of members of parliament in at least one chamber were women. In many countries, gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government.¹² Women and girls face barriers and disadvantages in every sector in which we work. Around the world 62 million girls are not in school. Globally, 1 in 3 women will experience gender-based violence in her lifetime. In the developing world, 1 in 7 girls is married before her 15th birthday, with some child brides as young as 8 or 9. Each year more than 287,000 women, 99 percent of them in developing countries, die from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications. While women make up more than 40 percent of the agriculture labour force only 3 to 20 percent are landholders. In Africa, women-owned enterprises make up as little as 10 percent of all businesses. In South Asia, that number is only 3 percent. And despite representing half the global

population, women comprise less than 20 percent of the world's legislators. Putting women and girls on equal footing with men and boys have the power to transform every sector in which we work. The gender equality and women's empowerment isn't a part of development but at the core of development. To get rid of this we have to make some educational awareness programmes on gender equality and women empowerment for cementing our commitment to supporting women and girls.

Conclusion

Educating women is integral to the economical and social development of a nation. Women play a responsible role in the houses and societies. They are responsible for looking after their children, relatives and elders of the house, which makes it mandatory for them to be well informed and aware of threats and security. An educated woman can bring some positive changes in her own house as well as in the society. She is more likely to send her children to school, improving the nation's literacy rate. There are numerous other advantages of educating women apart from good health and hygiene, raised economy of the nation etc. No nation can achieve development in a true sense if it leaves its women behind on education. Women Empowerment helps to make the society and world a better place to live in and march forward on way to inclusive participation. It means increase happiness for the family and the organizations where women make a difference.

Contemporary societies across the world have been exposed to the major processes of transformation on social and economic development front. However, these processes have not been implemented in a balanced way and have augmented gender imbalances throughout the world in which women remained the ultimate sufferer. The situation has adversely affected the pace of women empowerment. Therefore, we require a completely transformed society in which equal opportunities of growth can be suitably provided to women so that they can co-exist with their male counterparts contributing equally in all the factors responsible for the growth of society in a larger sense.

References

1. Suguna M. (2011). Education and Women Empowerment in India. International journal of Multidisciplinary Research: VOL. 1. Issue 8.
2. http://www.abhinavjournal.com/images/Arts_&_Education/Nov12/1.pdf
3. http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10603/8562/9/09_chapter%204.pdf
4. Ibid. N1.
5. Shindu J. (2012). Women's Empowerment through Education. Abhinav journal: Vol. 1. Issue- 11.p. 3. Journal of Education and Practice www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.6, No.10, 2015 191
6. K. Mahalinga. (2014). Women's Empowerment through Panchayat Raj Institutions. Indian Journal of Research: Vol. 3. Issue 3.
7. Chibber B. (2010). Women and the Indian Political Process. Mainstream Journal: Vol. XLVIII. Issue 18.
8. Bhat T. (2014) Women Education in India Need of the Ever. Human Rights International research journal: Vol. 1 p.3. 10. Ibid. N3. 11. Ibid. N1. 12.