

Role of Education in Women Empowerment

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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. Empowerment allows individuals to reach their full potential, to improve their political and social participation, and to believe in their own capabilities.

Objectives of the study:

- To make a study of the status of women entrepreneurs
- To analyze factors influencing the performance of women traders
- To make a study of the problems and achievements of women traders.
- To recommend some practical suggestions.

Specific features of women in rural areas

- Poverty
- Illiteracy
- Ignorance
- Man dominated society
- Dependence on agriculture

EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

Yes, education and literacy empowers women. The only way a society or nation can move forward, and aspire to economic growth and development is not just through education- but especially education among the women citizens.

There are several reasons for this. Let's look at them one by one:

Education liberates:

Education liberates the mind. Whether you're studying the sciences, history, literature, languages or social sciences, you are gaining knowledge. You are educating yourself about the world, about how nature, people and nations work. Books which educate open up our minds to places, people and possibilities we'd never have thought of otherwise. Therefore, an educated woman will also be a liberated woman.

Education breaks down barrier :

Education enables us to break down all barriers- religious, linguistic, cultural, political, gender and geographical. An educated woman will not discriminate others on the basis of these barriers- she will treat everyone the same, and work with them. She might also chose a husband neglecting such barriers, and can bring families from different backgrounds together. This can form a nice way of fostering both national and international integration.

Education allows the privilege of choice:

As education opens up new worlds to women, it will enable them to make their own choices, in everything- whether it be lifestyle, career, life-partner, sexuality, food etc. Education will teach them to discriminate between wrong and right, and make the correct choices in life. Plus it will also teach them to be independent, make their own choices and not bow down to anyone, or society's asinine norms.

Education mobilizes:

Education will galvanize women into fighting against the social evils which still plague Indian society. An intellectually enlightened woman will actively fight against dowry, bride-burning, marital rape, rape in general, molestation and sexual harassment, and objectification of women. She will also fight misogyny and patriarchy. Look at the widespread protests after the December 2012 Delhi gang-rape. Most women who protested were young and educated.

Education fosters independence:

Most young, educated women of today are coming into their own being. They know about their autonomy over their lives- they no longer bow down to moronic societal diktats. They live life on their own terms. They live how they want to, they date who they like, they also chose their life-partners and just about everything else.

Education helps choose a career and gets financial independence:

This is an extension of my previous point. Education, today, is enabling women to go beyond professions considered traditionally good for them- like medicine, nursing, teaching, librarian etc. Today, women are becoming models, actors, fighter pilots, gym instructors, cops, writers, engineers, architects, journalists, scientists, corporate, law, filmmaking and whatnot- they are breaking the glass ceiling. Today's intellectually liberated and emancipated woman is also earning her own keep. Now she doesn't have to depend on a man to give her a house, food, clothing and shelter. She can earn her own keep, and buy her own house and feed herself. Today, women are leading good lives sans men- they are no longer forced to play second fiddle to males who treat them, in many cases, like doormats.

Educated women contributes to economy:

Imagine a nation where women are qualified and are able to get jobs. The contribution to the workforce will enhance the output, and therefore, the economy will develop. And I'm not just talking about industries and corporations, but also about healthcare, the education sector itself, arts, science, literature etc. This will contribute greatly to the advancement of any society, both culturally and economically, and also help its human development indicators. Women can help, through their work, get rid of problems like India's high maternal mortality rate, high rates of gender violence and other crimes against women, child sex abuse, female feticide, implement family planning and other schemes etc.

Apart from these seven reasons listed above, there is a much deeper reason that women must be educated, and they must be encouraged to learn as much as they want. Paraphrasing a popular saying here – educate a man and you will educate one person, educate a woman and you will educate a whole family. I would add that educating a woman can, in fact, educate more generations.

A highly educated, liberal-minded, independent and professionally successful and sensible woman will chose an educated husband. Then she will also educate her kids, and make them into wise, responsible citizens, who will push forward their kids, and so on.

Only a society that educates, empowers and respects its women can become an advanced society. Education is a woman's birthright- and her parents and society better start acknowledging that.

Conclusion: Women play an imperative role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. They are essential possessions of a lively humanity required for national improvement, so if we have to see a bright future of women in our country, giving education to them must be a pre-occupation. Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. The education develops the idea of participation in government, panchayats, public matters etc for elimination of gender discrimination.

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