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Women Empowerment through Education – An Emergence of Light in the Society

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Abstract:

“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. If one wants to empower the nation, empower the women of that nation and rest will be history. The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India “ to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law”. Education brings revolution and reduces the inequalities within the society. This paper reviews the evidence on the empowerment-development relationship.

Key words: Economic Development, Women Education, Women Development, Literacy

Introduction

Women's empowerment in India has a long history. Great social reformers in the past like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Acharya Vinobha Bhave and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar etc. abolished ghastly practices like sati and child marriage and worked relentlessly in the past for an encouragement of women in India. The poverty and lack of opportunity breed inequality between men and women, so that when economic development reduces poverty, the condition of women improves on two counts: first, when poverty reduced, the condition of everyone, including women, improves, and second, gender inequality declines as poverty declines, so the condition of women improves more than that of men with development. Economic development, however, is not enough to bring about complete equality between men and women. Policy action is still necessary to achieve equality between genders. Such policy action would be unambiguously justified if empowerment of women also stimulates further development, starting a virtuous cycle.

Empowering women and Economic development:

Women empowerment and economic development are associated to each other: in one direction, development alone can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, empowering women may benefit development.

Several principles define women's empowerment, such as, for one to be empowered, one must come from a position of disempowerment. They must acquire empowerment rather than have it given to them by an external party. Other studies have found that empowerment definitions entail people having the capability to make important decisions in their lives while also being able to act on them. Empowerment and disempowerment are relative to each other at a previous time; empowerment is a process rather than a product.

Education playing an important role in women development:

People engage in public debate and make demands on government for health care, social security and other entitlements. In particular, education empowers women to make choices that improve their children's health, their well-being, and chances of acquiring survival skills. Education informs others of preventing and containing a disease. Such education empowers women to make choices that can improve their welfare, including marrying beyond childhood and having fewer children. Education can increase women's awareness of their rights, boost their self-esteem, and provide them the opportunity to assert their rights.

Education is not universally available and gender inequalities persist. A major concern in many countries is not only the limited numbers of girls going to school, but also the number of educational pathways for those that step into the classroom. There are efforts to address the lower participation and learning achievement of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

In some parts of the world, girls and women are attacked for attending school, and societal efforts to stop this may be lacking.

Education is a powerful tool and a woman across the world educated or not is ruling and is the spine of the house. In particular, education empowers women to make choices that improve their children's health, their well-being, and chances of acquiring survival skills. Education informs others of preventing and containing a disease. Such education empowers women to make choices that can improve their welfare, including marrying beyond childhood and having fewer children. Education can increase women's awareness of their rights, boost their self-esteem, and provide them the opportunity to assert their rights.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), increasing women's empowerment is essential for women's well-being and has a positive impact on agricultural production, food security, diets and child nutrition.

Women's empowerment has five modules: women's sense of self-worth;

- Their right to have and to determine choices;
- Their right to have access to opportunities and resources;
- Their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home;
- Their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Objectives :

- To understand the basic principles of women's empowerment
- To bring a light on kinds of empowerment of women through educational initiatives.

Methodology:

The study is based on descriptive research design. The data has been collected through secondary sources like journals, books, government reports, newspapers and various working papers.

Dimensions of Empowerment of Women through Education: Education facilitates emancipation of women in a multifarious way. It equips women in such a way that they may get directions. Followings are the various dimensions:

Participation in Public Affairs:

Education gives women an opportunity to participate in public affairs actively. It gives them space where not only civil and political but economic, cultural participation of women is ensured. The power of knowledge will strengthen self-confidence among them to resist any kind of exploitation. The political empowerment of women depends upon their self-conscientization. It may help them in taking crucial decisions in their personal and political life. Their empowerment consists of right to vote, right to contest, their role as campaigners in public affairs. It may also bring their participation in local self-governance. Education was to equip women with the know-how to make sure that women would be part of structures and participate in making influential decisions and policies that affect women and ensure that their interests would be advanced (Akawa, 2014).

Social Upliftment :

Education has potential to help in social upliftment of women also. It plays a catalytic role in a country's socio-economic development and is one of the principle means available. Research based career-oriented future must be respected as a potential instrument for bringing about social transformation and ensuring the success of democracy (Singh & Singh, 2017).

It is argued that it may facilitate an environment free from all forms of violence against women and ensure the participation and adequate representation of women at the decision-making level can only be said to lead to their increased development and empowerment if such participation enables them to achieve greater control over factors of production, access to resources and the distribution of benefits (Varghese, 2012)

Financial Independence:

Education not only empowers women in their social standing but in their financial capacity also. It builds their credit worthiness through ensuring their financial literacy.

Women with sound educational status have very robust financial planning (Varghese, 2012). The financial independence is a necessary condition for enabling women to seek justice and equality, because without economic strength, women cannot be able to exercise their rights and entitlements. Without reasonable income security, people lack real freedom to make rational choices and to become socially responsible (Varghese, 2012). The financial literacy equips women with expertise in doing financial planning not only for the household but even society and state. The economic capacity of women may be determined through their command over resources, agency and achievements. The access of women to micro-finance services is also determinant to their financial independence. It may also help in terms of developing their purchasing power. Female education has historically been seen as deeply subversive and threatening. In societies throughout the world, education is seen as not only offering a path to formal employment in the cash economy, but is popularly associated with ideas about 'modern' i.e. westernised life (Sweetman, 2004).

Political Growth:

Education assists in political empowerment of women. The participation of women at all levels of governance structures empowerment. Alida Brill (2000) holds, "Without our own is the highest need of this hour for women's actual voices being heard inside the government areas and halls of public policy and debate, we are without the right to accountability— a basic establishment of those who are governed" (Mandal, 2013).

Conclusion

Empowerment of women is a very vital component of development discourse. It is very much explicit that empowerment of women is very much required for positive change and transformation of unequal society. Despite independence of our country, women are still not free from their boundaries. The sufferings of our women are far worse than that of developed nations. It must be kept in mind that gender equity is the realization of complete equality in all aspects of the social order regardless of gender (Mandal, 2013). For achieving complete equality in the society between two genders, it is necessary to eliminate all kinds of domination, oppression and discrimination against the fair sex by their male counterpart (Mandal, 2013). Empowering women is seen as one of the central issues in the process of sustainable development for many nations worldwide. Around the globe, government and different ranging from microfinance services to promoting sustainable development and human rights (Huis, et al. 2017) In order for development to occur, for gender organizations strive to increase women's empowerment by implementing different interventions such as offering access Equity to be achieved, and for men and women to develop their full potential as individuals, education provided in the schools must contribute to the eradication of gender stereotypes. Any development activity may be achieved only through mutual cooperation and active participation of a purely objective nature, such as the strength of the women should utilize their skills Empowerment of women leads to benefit not only individual woman and women groups, but also to the families and community as a whole through collective action for development (Dominic & Jothi, 2012). Therefore, the education of women is a very strong tool for their empowerment

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