

Education and Empowerment of Women: Issues and Impact

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Abstract – Empowerment of women is a necessity for the development of a society, because it improves both the quality and quantity of individual resources available for development. It is one of the major practical concerns when concentrate on human right and development. Women empowerment is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. Without the empowerment of women, it would be a fable to dream about the target of sustainable development. Women contribute almost half of the population and empowered women will strengthen the national economy. Education is one of the key aspects that enable the women to respond to the challenges, to confront the traditional role and change their lives. Education has also been considered as a key to unlock the golden door of freedom for the development. Education helps in reducing inequalities and function as a means of improving the status of women within the family and society. Empowering women provides an opportunity to acquire practical information and learning for their improved livelihoods. Our country can become a developed nation only if large women folk contribute the best of her ability and capacity which is possible when she is empowered and educated. This paper will discuss the role of education and its impact in empowerment of women and challenges that come in the pathway.

Keywords – Empowerment, Education, Challenges, Society

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INTRODUCTION

“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

Empowerment of women in 21st century play vital role in the development of the country. Women represent almost half of the population in the world and access to education has been one of the most pressing demands of the women's right movements. Women Empowerment is a worldwide concern and discussion on women political right are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns globally. The idea of women empowerment was introduced in 1985, international women conference at NAROIBI .Women's education has too been a key concern of both the government and community as educated women can also play a crucial role in socio-economic aspect. The first year of New Millennium 2001 was declared as "WOMEN EMPOWERMENT YEAR". Education of a women leads to a better family and ultimately an ideal society to a progressive nation. A developing nation is one where all the people of the country irrespective of their caste, religion, sex, colour and

creed are socially, economically, politically and culturally are independent. Education facilitate a women to develop into strong intellectual by giving her knowledge . Agarwaal and Salve (2013), Each and every field like teaching, Nursing care, Social work, medicine, Women proved to be better than men. It is a dominant means for reducing inequality as it can give the capability to become independent. Women, who come transversely discrimination in any field, have particular needs of this. Education is considered as an important milepost of women empowerment because it permits them to face the confronts, to deal with their traditional role and change their life. Education of women is the vital instrument of change of their position in the society. Still huge womenfolk of our nation are illiterate, weak, backward, and exploited. Empowerment and competence building afford women an avenue to acquire practical information and knowledge for their improved livelihoods. India can be converted into a developed nation only if women contribute to the best of her capacity and ability which is possible when she is educated and empowered.

INDIAN CONTEXT

India is a democratic and a developing country but its fact that still there is deep ignorance in the

society about the values of women. Women's are deprived and discriminated by our society. There was much progress in our society in everywhere but gender inequality exists in many dimensions of life, not only in India but many countries of the world. There still exist a wide gap in between male and female. In Indian mythology women is treated as divine, holy and pure, the position of women in "Vedas" and "Upanishads" was put on a high pedestal but now, in actual we know the position and status of women in our progressive society because still we are talking about "Women empowerment", India has a strong written constitution proclaiming laws for equality and welfare of women, barbaric and cruel practices still continue to haunt women in the form of female feticide, infanticide, girl child labour, Dowry related death, molestation, sexual harassment, rape, eve-teasing, gender inequality, domestic violence etc. are very common in Indian counterpart. Still a large section of women specially the rural women face increasingly violent from of gender bias. Perhaps the highest form of violence against the women is to deny life on gender basis; data shows that there is still a very high preference for a male child in states like Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh etc. We must remember that girls are indispensable part of our society and an asset to our family and nation. We need to constructively work against the outdated traditions, prejudices, practices, superstitions and customs which lower the status of the women. Economic, social and political empowerment can be achieved to a great extent through education.

HISTORY OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. However, in the British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. In this period, a range of socio- religious movements led by renowned persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chander Vidyasagar, Mahatma Gandhi, Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar emphasized on women's education and took various initiatives to make education available to all the women of India. However women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and the government has taken various measures to provide education to all Indian women. As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 1971 only 22% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2001 54.16% female were literate. The growth of female literacy rate is 14.87% as compared to 11.72 % of that of male literacy rate.

WOMEN EDUCATION STATUS

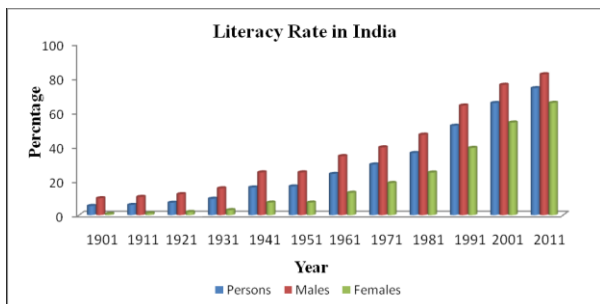
In our Indian constitution, Directive principle of state policy (DPSP) provides free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years.

And this DPSP not yet achieved their target till now. Educational professional admit that this failure is primarily due to the slow development of education among girls. Literacy and educational levels are increasing for Indian women still there is space between male and female literacy rate which can be seen in the following Table.

TABLE 1: LITERACY RATE OF INDIA

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

According to the Table-1 the literacy rate for women before independence had a very pitiable burst in comparison to literacy rate of men. This is eyewitnesses from the fact that literacy rate of women has risen from 0.7 % to 7.3 % whereas the literacy rate of men has risen from 9.8 % to 24.9 % during these four decades. After the independence the literacy rates have shown a substantial increase in general. However the literacy rate of male has almost tripled over the period e.g. 25% in 1951 and 76 % in 2001. Surprisingly the female literacy rate has increased at a faster rate than the male literacy during the decade 1981 -2001. The growth rate is almost six times i.e. 7.9 % in 1951 and 54 % in 2001. From this analysis one can infer that still the female literacy rate is wadding behind male literacy rate .The rate of school drop outs of female child is also found to be relatively higher in comparison with male child. This higher rate of illiteracy of women is certainly attributing for women reliance on men and to play a subordinate role. The lack of education is the main cause for women's exploitation and carelessness. Only women education and their literacy can help it to understand the Indian constitutional and legislative provisions that are made for strengthen them. Thus, promoting education among women is the important for empowering and to accomplish their goals in par with men in diverse sphere of life.



SOURCE: CENSUS OF INDIA 2011

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

One more area in which women's equal opportunity has shown a major improvement as an outcome of adult literacy programs is the area of enrollment of boys and girls in schools. As a result of higher involvement of women in literacy campaigns, the gender gap in literacy levels is slowly getting reduced. Even more noteworthy is the fact that gap in enrolment of boys and girls in neo-literate households is much lowered compared to the non-literate householders

TABLE -2 STATE-WISE PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE LITERACY IN THE COUNTRY AS PER 2011 CENSUS

S. No.	Name of the State	Female Literacy
1.	Andhra Pradesh	59.7%
2	Arunachal Pradesh	59.6%
3	Assam	67.3%
4	Bihar	53.3%
5	Chhattisgarh	60.6%
6	Goa	81.8%
7	Gujarat	70.7%
8	Haryana	66.8%
9	Himachal Pradesh	76.6%
10	Jharkhand	56.2%
11	Karnataka	68.1%
12	Kerala	92.0%
13	Madhya Pradesh	60.0%
14	Maharashtra	75.5%
15	Manipur	73.2%
16	Meghalaya	73.8%
17	Mizoram	89.4%
18	Nagaland	76.7%
19	Odisha	64.4%
20	Punjab	71.3%
21	Rajasthan	52.7%
22	Sikkim	76.4%
23	Tamil Nadu	73.9%
24	Tripura	83.1%
25	Telangana(Latest data)	57.9%
26	Uttar Pradesh	59.3%
27	Uttarakhand	70.7%
28	West Bengal	71.2%

UNION TERRITORIES

S. No.	Name of UT	Female Literacy
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	81.8%
2	Chandigarh	81.4%
3	Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman Diu	65.9% & 79.6%
4	Delhi	80.9%
5	Jammu & Kashmir	56.4%
6	Ladakh	69.7%
7	Lakshadweep	88.2%
8	Pondicherry	81.2%
	All India	65.46%

According to the table -2 , the state wise literacy rate of female had an average of 65.46% in all India basis according to 2011 census. The high literacy rate is 92.0% in Kerala and low literacy rate is 52.7% in Rajasthan in 2011 census while in contrast to literacy rate of female is 11% increase in 2011 census as increased from 54.16% to 65.46%. Women's are growing well in the very last 10 years. Government of India has been taken a variety of steps and policies especially for women in every section of society.

EDUCATION PORTRAYAL IN EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

- 1. Education Liberate:** Education liberalizes the thinking, mind, thoughts, imagination, power, principle in various fields for easy to survive and achieve knowledge through education. Education makes the women's self-sufficient in every aspect, she is not depends on her father, husband nor son neither brother.
- 2. Education stay away from obstacle:** Education gives equal rights to women in socially, politically, culturally, gender, religiously manner. She will fetch equal status with men and that is the basis for the development of both national and international integration.
- 3. Education gives decision making power:** As education opens ways to take decision according to their choice whether it is relates to life style, life partner, job, career etc. Education trains to learn what is right and what is wrong and it also push to stay independently on their own feet.
- 4. Education stow away:** Education will garnishing women to defense against crime, social devil, sexual harassment,

marital rape and mental stress of society etc.

5. **Educated women endow to economy:** If women are qualified and helpful for family to earn money that means she able to develop the economy status of family and also for nation. Women can facilitate through their work, get free from problems prevailing in India like high maternal mortality rate, high rates of gender violence and other crime against women i.e. child abuse, female feticide, implement family planning and other schemes etc.
6. **Education strengthens the women lives:** Education enhances the quality of women and makes some strategies to grow upward, to gear the entire education system to play positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. To enlarge the women's access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels and breaking the gender stereotypes of the society.
7. **Analysis of UNESCO about education role in empowerment:** UNESCO data proves education transforms development. It says that if all children enjoyed equal access to education, per capita income would increase by 23% over 40 years. And if all women had a primary education, child marriages and child mortality could fall by a sixth and maternal deaths by two-thirds.

UNESCO proves that education empowers women, promotes tolerance, improves job opportunities and increases economic growth avoids early marriages and also saves mother's lives

HINDRANCES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

There are some major problems that were faced by women from history and still today up to some extent.

- Gender discrimination
- Lack of education
- Household responsibility
- Child marriage
- Child labour
- Partial attitude of parents
- Domestic violence
- Endogamy marriage
- Family responsibility

- Social status
- Dowry

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS, SPECIAL LAWS AND NATIONAL POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The importance of women as a central human being resource was recognized by the Constitution of India which has not only accorded equality to women but also empowered the State. There are a number of Articles in the Indian Constitution that safeguards the socio-economic development of women and their participation in decision making process of society.

1. Art. 14- Grants equal rights and opportunities to men and women in the socio, economic and political spheres.
2. Art. 15(1) - It prohibits discrimination against any people on the basis of their sex, caste, religion, race and place of birth.
3. Art. 16- Equality opportunities in matter of public employments to all citizens.
4. Art. 39(d) - Grants equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
5. Art.42- The state has to make provision for ensuring of humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Government of India has also enacted some specific laws to protect the interests of women and for up gradation of women status. These are:

- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956- It provides equal right to women in parental property.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961-This act declares the taking and giving of dowry an unlawful activity.
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976- It provides equal remunerations compare with men to women for work of equal value.
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971-This act legalizes the abortion granting the right of women to go for abortion on the basis of physical and mental health.
- The Criminal Law Amendment Act 1983- It seeks to stop a various number of crimes against women.
- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986- It prohibits the

vulgar presentation of women in the media such as- newspapers, cinema, T.V. etc.

- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005- This act provides more effective protection of women guaranteed in the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and society.
- The goal of National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The policy states that: "Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured. Special safeguards will be taken to eliminate discrimination, eradicate illiteracy and create gender sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of vocational or technical skills of women. Sinking gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area.
- Specific moment goal in existing policies will be achieved, with unique focus on girls and women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including the SC/ST/OBC and Minorities."

SUGGESTION

- Consciousness of education is essential whether girls from rural or urban area.
- Change the system towards women based sex discrimination.
- Removal of gender inequality.
- Encourage the women actively participate in social and political issues.
- Spread the message that education of women is to build the strong women to create an incredible country.
- Awareness needs to know the women are effectively good contributor of the socio-economic development of the nation.
- Education plays a vital role to enhance the quality of women's and increase their quantity of knowledge that use in various fields where she survives.
- To encourage all the girls and women's belongs to rural areas and to provide training to polish their creativity.

- Women should aware about their rights and encourage to every field of life.
- Education trains the girl child to live independent and free from their domination.
- Arrange different kinds of training, workshop and courses for grooming of girls and women for enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Increase the confidence for developing ability to think critically. It is guaranteed that women respect is chief concern in all spheres of life. Whether she is in her family or in their workplace.
- All woman should have the independent to live her life according to their choice and give chance to select their area of interest like education, employment and health etc.
- There is need to transform the attitude of the peoples who still neglects the female child or women.
- The word empowerment is only used in books and papers as a flowery language but somewhere in the society it is still not used practically and truly. It is possible whenever thinking and attitude of our society change towards about the women.

CONCLUSION:

The present scenario, it may be said that woman in the modern hi- tech society which is moving very fast under the shadow of population explosion, conflicts, chaos and corruption can mold the personality of the adolescent and youth in a proper direction and perspective, provided the woman are themselves in power. There is a positive relationship between education and woman empowerment. In another essential aspect is that, in these societies the issue of women empowerment has been facing certain serious challenges, which are the outcome of certain evil norms and attitude such as child labour, child marriage, illiteracy, superstition, partial attitude of the parents, female feticides etc. and in such a situation women empowerment is an urgent necessity. In order to promote women's empowerment, it is necessary to create an environment that will allow women to participate in educational programs and share the benefits. The educational and other strategies for women empowerment should be implemented in reality for empowering women in the world. The problems that are present in our society like poverty, unemployment and inequality cannot be eradicated by man alone but equal and active participation of women is mandatory. Without the education she

will not be able to understand about their rights and its importance. Empowerment of women intend to motivated towards acquiring higher literacy level, better health care for women and their children, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in socio-economic and commercial sectors, awareness of their rights, improved standard of living and to achieve self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect among women. In 2019 the Government of India has launched *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* scheme which aims at making girls independent both socially as well as economically. It also helps in create awareness and improving the competence of delivery of welfare services which only intended for women. Such schemes should be put into practice all over the country to get the desired changes. What be supposed to never gone is that women like men need to be proactive in the process of lifelong learning. That is the true empowerment from “women for development” the time has come to move focus to “women in development”, with the cooperation of men through group engagement and management.

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