

Role of Education in Women Empowerment

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Abstract: India is striving hard to emerge as one of the most developed nations by the end of next decade with higher literacy rates, higher employment rates, more knowledgeable and economically stronger. One of the essential elements for the growth of any country is women empowerment. In India, the composition of women is almost half of the population and therefore it plays an equal role in strengthening the national economy. Education is a major factor contributing to women empowerment as it enables them to find solution to various challenges, confront their traditional roles and raise their standard of living. The unexplored potential of women needs to be utilized efficiently and effectively for the development of economy as well as their personal well-being. Various efforts have been put forward in the area of women empowerment, but the achievements are still insignificant. This segment still needs a huge chain of reforms. India can become one of the largest economies in the world because of the growth of women participation. According to the census report of 2011, the literacy rate of women is 65.46% where the literacy rate of males is over 80%. However, women education is a major concern of the government as well as the civil society in India because educated women can play an active role in the development of the country.

Keywords: Development, Education, Empowerment, Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is considered as a fundamental right and a basic requirement for the citizens of every country. It is a powerful tool for reducing inequality as it can give people the ability to become independent. More particularly, for women, education provides right kind of power to tackle the problem of discrimination in many spheres.

Women education means the form of education that aims at enlightening the knowledge, skill and creativity of the female segment of the society. It includes primary and secondary education at schools and colleges, vocational and technical courses, health education, entrepreneurship development

training and programs, etc. Women entrepreneurs' play a significant role in the development of economy and a large percentage of micro-enterprises in developing countries are run by women. However, various factors play an important role in the empowerment of women, the most significant being education. Women education is the most powerful tool to improve their position in the society. These women entrepreneurs are making remarkable contributions in urban as well as rural areas. Still large part of women folk of our country are deprived of education, backward, weak, oppressed and locked in tradition bound society. Education reduces inequalities and helps to attain equal status for women in the family. Empowerment and capacity building helps women to learn theoretical framework and practical implications of different areas for their better-quality livelihoods. India can become a developed nation only if women contribute to the best of her capacity and ability which is possible when she is educated and empowered.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To identify the role of education for women to become entrepreneurs.
- ii. To identify the barriers in the education of women.
- iii. To study the policies, programs, institutional networks and the involvement of support agencies in promoting women's entrepreneurship.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data collected from various published reports of RBI, SIDBI and from other government reports and from various national and international journals, publications from various websites which are focused on various aspects of Women Entrepreneurship.

IV. NEED OF WOMEN EDUCATION

The concept of women empowerment is a recent one. Educated women are competent enough to bring speedy social and economic changes in the economy along with their male

counterpart. Education of a women leads to empowerment of women and empowerment of women leads to an ideal society to a progressive nation. A progressive nation is one where all the people of the country in respective of sex, religion, caste, creed and color are economically, socially, culturally, politically independent.

V. EDUCATION IS NEEDED FOR WOMEN BECAUSE OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS

- A. *Education Empowers Women:* Because of education, women learn their rights and gain confidence to claim them whenever needed.
- B. *Education Improves Tolerance Power:* Education helps women to understand democracy, improves tolerance, build trust and encourages them to participate in the politics of the societies.
- C. *Education Improves rate of Employment and Economic Growth:* Education improves rate of employment because of availability of right kind of people for jobs. This helps to boost economic growth.
- D. *Education Provides Solution to Environmental Problems:* Educated people tend to use energy, water and other resources more efficiently knows to reprocess household waste.
- E. *Awareness for Early Marriages:* Education makes women more career oriented and helps to avoid early marriages.
- F. *Knowledge for Health and Safety:* Educating women helps to prevent many diseases among herself and her children by taking proper precaution for health and safety.
- G. *Reduces Mortality Rate of Infants and Children:* Education helps women identify early signs of illness, take precautionary actions and seek out advice from doctors at proper time. This helps to reduce infant and child mortality rates.
- H. *Education Fights Hunger:* Education helps to inform the devastating impact of malnutrition on the health of children and educate means to prevent them.

VI. ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- A. *CHOICE FOR PROFESSION AND EMPLOYMENT:* Education plays an important role in making women independent and more successful by opening various job opportunities for her so that she can achieve her dreams by choosing profession of her choice.
- B. *Reduction in Poverty:* Women education is a major contributor to reduce poverty so that women can work independently and can contribute in the considerable task of eliminating poverty completely and bringing positive changes in the economy.
- C. *Self Esteem and Dignity:* Every woman has got her own aspirations. Educated women are able to achieve their

goals and maintain their dignity and honor. They become an inspiration for millions of other females as a role model.

- D. *Improved Life:* Education of women leads to change in conduct of family members and society. It also helps in removing mal-traditions like Sati-Pratha, Early marriage, Dowry etc.
- E. *Encourages Team Work:* Education encourage women to work with team rather than being individuals. She learns different perspectives of professional working environment.
- F. *Personality Development:* Education helps in balanced personality development by giving due weight to various aspects of personality.
- G. *Effective Communication:* Education of women also plays an important role in teaching her expression of feeling or through effective communication which can solve disputes and adjustment problems of any level.
- H. *Rights and Justice:* Educated women are very well informed of their rights for justice. This helps to reduce the instances of violence and injustice against women such as female foeticide, child-marriage, domestic violence, dowry etc.
- I. *Improved Health:* Education gives power to a women to become strong physically by giving her knowledge about sports, exercise, health and hygiene and lead a healthy and happy life.
- J. *Knowledge of Various Programs:* Education encourages women to take advantage of various schemes like Entrepreneurship Development Programs, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Total Literacy Programmes, etc.

VII. BARRIERS OF WOMEN EDUCATION

- i. In India, more than 50% of the girl child do not start their primary education. They have to face ignorance since birth and generally are not allowed to go to school.
- ii. The girl child in Indian families especially rural areas, are responsible along with their mother for the household work such as cooking, cleaning, looking after the sibling, fetching water, collecting wood, etc. This discourages girl child to go school.
- iii. Bonded labour system of parents stands as barrier for the education of girl child of the underprivileged families.
- iv. Many social practices like dowry system act as a main cause for discrimination of the girl child. Female child is considered as a burden and liability since birth because of the tradition of accumulation of cash and other assets to provide as dowry at the time of marriage. Therefore, females are made deprived of education.
- v. According to available sources, occurrence of dropout and stagnation amongst girls are nearly twice that of boys all over India.

- vi. The lack of infrastructure and basic facilities as well as the methodology in schools and colleges is not encouraging for education of girls.

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

The importance of women as a significant human resource was recognized by the Constitution of India and this recognition helped to frame different policies time to time towards the socio-economic development of women and empowerment of State. Some of the Articles of the Constitution enabling women empowerment are:

- A. *Article 14*: Men and women, both have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.
- B. *Article 15(1)*: Prohibits discrimination against any citizens of India on the grounds of race, religion, caste, sex, etc.
- C. *Article 16*: Equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens.
- D. *Article 39(d)*: Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- E. *Article 42*: The state to make provision for ensuring first and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

IX. GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ENACTED SPECIFIC LAWS TO SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN AND FOR UPGRADATION OF THEIR STATUS

- A. *The Hindu Succession Act, 1956*: Provides the right to parental property for women.
- B. *The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961*: Declares taking of the dowry as an unlawful activity and thereby prevents the exploitation of women.
- C. *Equal Remuneration Act, 1976*: Provides payment of remuneration equal with men for work of equal value.
- D. *The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971*: Legalizes abortion, giving way the right of a women to go for abortion on the grounds of physical and mental health.
- E. *The Criminal Law Amendment Act 1983*: Seeks to stop different types of crimes against women.

- F. *The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986*: Prohibits the vulgar presentation of women in the media such as TV, cinema, newspapers, etc.
- G. *The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005*: Provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family.

X. CONCLUSION

Women education is the most powerful tool for improving their status in society. There is a positive relationship between education and women empowerment. 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 rates for women, better health care, increase in job opportunities, ownership of productive resources, increased participation in all sectors, and improved standards of living along with self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect. Government schemes are being implemented nationwide to bring the desired changes and making women socially as well as financially independent. Many NGO's and Self-help groups are also working towards the upliftment of this valuable resource of our country.

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