

EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

It is globally accepted that progress of women is very important for the growth of any country. Women have a significant contribution to the progress of the country. Education is the only key to their development. Women's empowerment has been a debating issue for quite years ago among, government, politicians and educated officials. Various people have been defining it, in their own ways. Educated women make the family and the society cultured. Education of women is the education of the whole family. Educated women are the powerful tool of change of their position in society. This paper tries to capture the meaning of empowerment, also how women can liberate themselves through education and last the obstacles and also the benefits of education so that they could be empowered themselves.

KEYWORDS: *Women, Education, Empowerment, Literacy, Illiteracy*

INTRODUCTION

Now-a-days "empowerment" word became a very fashionable word. Different individual defining empowerment in their own context. Essentially, it means 'the decentralization of authority and power'. Generally, empowerment word was used in context of women. As today in the modern era, they are considered to be very deprived sections of people, having no power. In spite of the fact, that, they constitute the 50% of the population from total population.

Empowerment can be understood as the expansion of freedom of choice and action, meaning thereby increasing one's authority and control over the resources and decisions that affect one's life. The choices of disadvantaged groups including women are extremely limited. They can't move freely in the society.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, also exercises choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. Education as a means of empowerment regarding women can bring about a positive attitudinal change in their lives and in society also. Basically, it is a process of awareness and capacity building so that the women have a greater participation in the decision-making process. Women empowerment as a process of redistribution of social power and control of resources in favor of women was introduced at the third International women's Conference at Nairobi in 1985. From then onwards the women's empowerment issue raised almost in all international and national platforms. The **World Conference on Human Rights** was held by the United Nations in Vienna, Austria, on 14 to 25 June 1993. The conference did have an expansive view of human rights, with efforts made to highlight women's rights, indigenous peoples' rights, minority rights, and more in the context of universal political and economic rights. Women's rights, in

particular, gained a strong and effective presence at the conference. In short women's empowerment is a dynamic but also a constant phenomenon whose aim is to liberate women, freedom, equality. Real empowerment is achieved only if women themselves 'realize' that it is important for them to be empowered to enjoy a just, fair and happy life. Empowerment of women as a goal of development projects and programs has gained wider acceptance since the 1990s. Empowerment of women was one of the nine primary objectives of the **Ninth Plan (1997-2002)** also and every effort was made to create an enabling empowerment where women could freely exercise their rights within and outside their home as an equal Partner with men.

Not just in India, but in several countries, women had face larger and different types of discrimination, and also they are excluded from decision making powers at all levels. Women lag behinds in context to men in all indicators of social and human development. As they are concentrated in low skilled jobs with low wages. Empowerment of women should be done from all levels and also various sections, and for this, an effective network is required.

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Educate women, you educate a nation, Indian govt. continuously making a strong commitment towards education. Education is considered as a basic human need. Education for women in India is a major issue, as many of them are deprived of it. Half of the population is i.e., women are illiterate. Illiteracy is a major problem in India. Education of women is having many good signs. Of all the discrimination and denial of opportunity that these women suffer, the most damaging is the denial of the right and opportunity to education. Women's education in India has been a major preoccupation of both the government and society, as no doubt educated women can play a crucial role in the development of the country. There is no doubt that since from Independence, educational status has been raised in women context, (as mentioned in table no. 1). But problems also increases, which lead towards the violence against women in India.

Table 1: Literacy Rate in India

Year	Persons	Males	Females
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

Source: Census of India (2011).

From this table, it's clear that their literacy rate has been increased. But then also there is need to develop and analytical questioning mind and a scientific understanding and approach, and also an awareness which invoke their mind and also to realize the realities around them. These emerging violence resulted into an imbalance in the society and shows that there is the dominance of male counterparts over their female members. Women power cannot be ignored as it's very essential for economic growth of any country. Well different policies have been revised for the growth of women empowerment. Several plans, our laws, and programs aimed at women's progress in different spheres. From the fifth five years plan (1974- 78) onwards an approach has been made from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. To empower women the 73rd and 74th Amendments of the year 1993 to the constitution of India have provided for

reservation of seats in the local bodies of panchayats and municipalities for women. Measures like this has been provided from the government side, now the thing is that we have to change our mind- set regarding our Indian ladies.

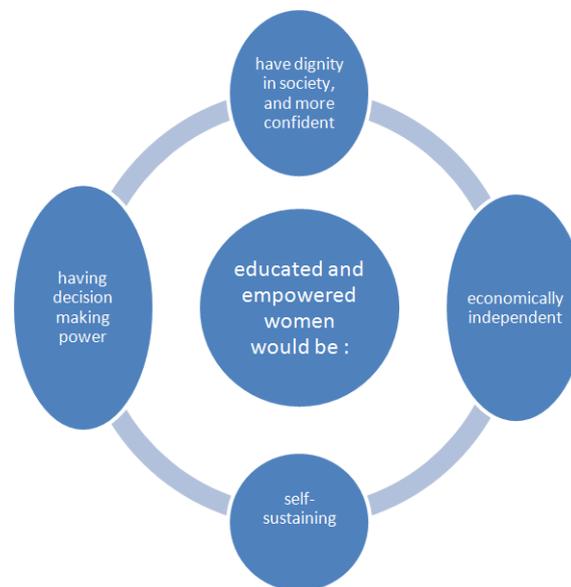


Figure 1

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Women are considered to be the half population from total population. As their importance was also recognized by the constitution also, who accorded equality to women. A number of Articles of the Constitution especially reiterated the commitment of the constitution towards the socio-economic development of women and upholding their political right and participation in the decision-making process.

Article 14 - Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.

Article 15(1) - this article prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc.

Article 16 - Equality of opportunities in the matter of public appointments for all citizens.

Article 39(a) - The State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens, equally the right to a means of livelihood.

Article 39(d) – Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

Article 42 - The State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

These are the certain constitutional provision of the upliftment and welfare for the women.

OBSTACLES REGARDING WOMEN EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

There are several reasons for not attaining full literacy in India. Although we are progressing day by day in our life's, but still in this context we are lacking. Reasons are-

- High level of poverty.
- An issue of transportation, which would not possible for the lower peoples' families to send their children especially girls alone in the schools.
- Parental attitude must require some changes in their mindset, which is necessary for the growth of women's education.
- Still, parents considered the girls as the liability which they had to fulfill in their life.
- Uneducated parents think that the education of daughters as a waste of money.
- Discrimination which existed in most of the families.
- Gender bias in curriculum still exists.

BENEFITS OF WOMEN EDUCATION

- If they are educated, then children nutrition will improve dramatically.
- If mothers are educated then they could be realized the benefits of education and can up brings their children's in a cultured way.
- Educated women could have the lower infant's mortality rates.
- 4-educated women have lesser children, leaving more money and resources to spend on their each child.
- Education for women considered to be the best way to improve family health and nutrition.
- It is observed that educated women marry later and have lesser children.
- Education helps women's self -esteem, their dignity, and also status in society.
- Educating women in India to have control on growing population.

As the above-mentioned points makes clear that educated women had several of advantages in their own life as well in society also. It should be focused majorly. Let's discuss some barrier regarding women education

CONCLUSIONS

Now, as a whole, one can be understood the meaning of empowerment means moving of an individual from a weak position to an executive power. In the context of women empowerment, it's only through education by which they can liberate themselves from a lower position to an extreme one. Educated mothers have less possibility of discrimination within the family, which is the stumbling block in their progress. Today we are in the era of scientific knowledge, where education is the major tool for the development of one's life. India has raised many great women in several fields. What is now needed to create awareness about the importance of education in case of women, the only real progress can be achieved.

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