ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract: Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can’t neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment and India poised to becoming superpower in recent years. Education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position in society. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family and develops the concept of participation.

“Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power.” Education of women in the education of women is the most powerful tool of change of position in 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. Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world. The rise of feminist ideas has, however, led to the tremendous improvement of women's condition throughout the world in recent times. Access to education has been one of the most pressing demands of these women's rights movements. Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. India is poised to emerge as one of the most developed nations by 2020, more literate, knowledgeable and economically at the forefront. No doubt, women will play a vital role in contributing to the country's development.

In British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. During this period, various socio-religious movements led by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to 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 six decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 2001 only 54.16% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2011 65.46% female were literate. The growth of female literacy rate is 11.30% as compared to 6.29% of that of male literacy rate. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political right are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Literacy rate in India have risen sharply from 18.3% in 1951 to 74.04% in 2011 in which enrolment of women in education have
also risen sharply 7% to 65.46%. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plan and programmes have aimed at women’s advancement in difference spheres. From the fifth five year plan (1974–78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women’s issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission of Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the right and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local level. In fact, if we take a retrospect of history, we come to know that women have always been given secondary position in society, but the difference between men and women created by the Nature is but natural. It is education through which we realize this fact. When American women realized this, they opposed this injustice which was meted out to them by way of a huge movement, through which they asked for equal rights. For eradicating this injustice, the UNO (United Nations’ Organization) framed a Convention / Charter which is called 'The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women' (CEDAW), which further led to the formation of Women's Commission.

<table>
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<td>2021</td>
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On observing the above table, we come to know that at no point could the literacy rate of women match that of men. As a result, even after 67 years of independence, women occupy a secondary position in our social hierarchy. Inspire of being aware of her position, women can't transform the situation due to lack of education. Therefore, women's empowerment can't be effected unless we persuade the importance of women's education.

The challenges/barriers of women empowerment are the following:

- Because of the inherent superiority complex among the males, they often doesn’t allow their female counter-part to rise as high as them.
- High level of domestic responsibilities.
- Restrictions to participate in social, economic and religious activities.
- In our society, the boy-child often gets preference for education and healthy diet over the girl child.
• Preference for male-child still exist among many families in the society.

The solutions for empowerment of women includes the following:
• Education through mass communication is very important. Both women and men should be made aware of their responsibilities to promote and practice gender-equality.
• Gather national data and identify the areas where instances of violence and gender-inequality is the most. This data can be used by the Government, NGOs and field workers to raise the status of women.
• The society should be made aware that both boy-child and girl-child are equal, and they both should have equal access to resources.

As per united national development fund for women (UNIFEM) the term women’s empowerment means:
• Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed.
• Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one’s ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one’s life.
• Gaining the ability to generate choices exercise bargaining power.
• Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights.

REFERENCES
1. Government of India, Census of India 2001
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