

Education and Skill Development's Role in Empowering Women

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Abstract: *Women empowerment is one of the biggest tools for 'effective development' of any country. It means freedom of women from the vicious circle of social, political, economic and gender-based discrimination. Making women aware of their rights and developing confidence in them – is a central issue. It is essential for them to be skilled in order to be able to better serve their families at home as well as professionally. Skill development not only creates employment opportunities but also empowers them. The aim of skill development, in case of women, is not just simply preparing them for jobs; but also to boost their performance by improving the quality of work in which they are involved. Empowerment of women has becoming a burning issue all over the world including India since last few decades. For centuries women were not treated equal to men in many ways. Today we can see that women occupies respectable positions in all walks of life. Yet, they are not absolutely free, due to discriminations and harassments of the society. A few number of women have been able to establish their potentialities. So now we have come out of these dark days of oppressions of women. It is the present necessity to fight for the rights of women and to ensure that they get all the rights which men have or in other words a movement for the Empowerment of Women. This empowerment is possible only through education. So Empowering Women through Education is a need of the hour.*

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Skill Development, Inclusive Growth

I. INTRODUCTION

Women Empowerment means giving them freedom or power to live the way they want. It allows them to identify their skills, knowledge & abilities to make their own decisions. It is a dynamic & growth process for women which includes awareness, attainment & actualization of skills. For the socio-economic development of any society, women empowerment is essential. It is important for women to identify themselves with self-confidence & esteem. The main aspect of empowerment is to give a sense of internal strength to them - to control their lives. The confident smile on the faces of women is the measurement of their empowerment. Women empowerment can be measured on the basis of two levels – Individual & Collective.

Education plays a very significant role in every one's life. It is a human right and an essential tool for achieving equality. One of the major recommendations of the National Policy on Education in 1986 is to promote Empowerment of Women through education. Empowerment is self-governance, self-sufficiency and self-maintenance. The concept of Women Empowerment was introduced at the International Women's Conference at Nairobi in 1985.

Women play an important role in the development of a family and society. From last few decades, they have been actively participating in various economic & social activities, but their efforts remain unrecognized. In this male-dominating society, they are still subjected to discrimination in the social, economic and educational field. Women are not only managing their families but are also playing an important role in the development of entire society. Making women aware of their rights and developing confidence in them is a central issue.

Skills development is a key to success which improves productivity, employability and earning opportunities. It is the bridge between job and workforce. Today, it is considered as an important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. Indian women face the majority of barriers to accessing skills and productive employment. A large effort is needed to create a skilled workforce for creating an economic prosperity. The aim of skill development, in case of women, is not just simply preparing them for jobs; but also to boost their performance by improving the quality of

work in which they are involved. Looking at the importance of the role women play in the development of a nation, one can sense that there is a long way to go in that direction.

The women in India enjoy a unique status of equality with the men as per constitutional and legal provision. But the Indian women have come a long way to achieve these positions. Gender inequality is the main problem, a female was always dependent on male members of the family. Female was not allowed to speak aloud in front of the elder members of her family. In the family, every fault had gone to her. In many social activities she is not permitted to mingle with others. She has very little share in political, social, and economic life of the society. National Movement act as a light to eradicate such disabilities so far. Social Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar etc., stressed on women education, prevention on child marriage, Sati, polygamy etc. After Independence of India, the constitution makers and National Leaders recognized the equal social position of women with men. The position and status of women all over the world has risen incredibly in the 20th century. Now the status of women changed a lot. She has brought the property rights, Voting rights, an equality in civil rights, matters of marriage, employment etc.

Women, has given a prominent place in the family set-up by our heritage and culture. Today in the modern age women, has an important role to play in the national development at large. Before coming on the role of education in women empowerment it is good to think about the place of women in society as The Goddess (Devi), The Mother, The Sister, The Wife and the Prostitute. Traditionally, women's place has been inferior to that of the average man. In this male dominating society, the education of women has been neglected for a long period of time. Insufficiency of education in women can adversely affect the health and living condition of children. For to achieve economic empowerment of women we should eradicate poverty, give chance for micro credit – Women's access to credit for consumption and production, women and economy, globalization, women and agriculture, women and industry support services etc., should be promoted. To achieve social empowerment of women we should promote education, Health and sanitation, Nutrition, Housing and Shelter good environment, Science and Technology supporting hand in difficult circumstances, violence against women, protecting rights of girl child etc., are essential.

To achieve all these we should promote mass media. It will portray images consistent with human dignity of girls and women. Their policy will specifically strive to remove demeaning, degrading and negative conventional stereotypical images of women and violence against women. Private sector partners and media networks will be involved at all levels to ensure equal access for women particularly in the area of information and communication technologies. The media would be encouraged to develop codes of conduct, professional guidelines and other self-regulatory mechanisms to remove gender stereotype and promote balanced portrayals of women and men.

In modern Indian society a lot of changes happened in women's life especially in Kerala compared to Bengal, Bihar, Orissa etc. We must remember that women are the makers or builders of any society and it is the duty of the society to make them educated so that they may be able to make any decisions of their own life. They must have the knowledge about their roles in their own family, society and nation. They should not be reduced to the status of just second or third class citizen.

We have to focus on Education and Empowerment of women in rural areas. Particularly those from socially and economically marginalized groups. It is necessary to create an environment for women to seek knowledge and information in order to make choices at their own pace. It deals exclusively with the quality empowerment of woman's lives, emphasizing on process and internalizations responding to the needs of women and girls. As, women progress, everyone in society benefits, including men. Tapping into the limitless potential of women is not only the right thing to do but it is the smart thing. That is why the United States Government and our international partners are invested in a historic effort to empower women globally. We should give chance to woman in every level then in all walks of life she can make her own foot prints. Providing proper counselling to parents in proper time will ensure the educational opportunity of a girl. Government also take initiative to give basic infrastructure and financial aid in the right time. Education has to provide girls with the capacity to analyze their situation, expose them to a new role, build up aspiration and see a different future. It is evident that the increase in enrollment and retention alone do not automatically result desirable changes in girls. It becomes important to move from the dimensions of input into education to outcomes, which are wider than academic attainment and include personality development, self-esteem, self-efficiency and skill of critical thinking and problem solving. It is evident that programmes and project given over the years failed to bring desirable progress.

II. SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN:

Women have shown their ability in community development. Hence, it is important that women be a part of skill development. In India, women are now participating in various areas like – education, art and culture, service sector, sports, politics, media, and science and technology. They form a substantial part of the workforce but the working percentage rate of women in the total labor force is declining. A large number of them are working in the informal sectors. This represents lack of employment opportunities and skills for women workforce.

Currently, a majority of the female workforce in India is unskilled. They can be motivated to develop their life skills – that will give them high paying jobs with better livelihood & confidence to earn for their family. It will develop their ability & quality to move ahead and be self-dependent. It is observed, that the concept of training and skill development needs to move beyond imparting technical and managerial skills, with more focus on literacy, numeracy, political & life skills.

III. ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

International Convention in all forms of Discrimination Against Women (ICDAW) in 1993 mentioned that education is one of the most important means of empowering women with knowledge, skills and self-confidence, necessary to participate fully in the development process. Educating women benefits the whole society. It has a more significant impact on poverty and development than men's education. It is also one of the most influential factors improving child health and reducing infant mortality rate.

Educated women's responsibility is tremendous. Women have a significant role in shaping the behaviour and mental make up of the younger generation. She has the primary duty of nurturing and shaping the children, the leaders of tomorrow. Educated women are always cautious about the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children. Education makes them able to know their rights and gain confidence. Educated parents have a good thought about their children's educational attainments. Mother's education will influence more in children's life than father's. The empowered women can stand with men. They are not inferior to men and they can do whatever the men can do, some times better than that of a man.

IV. CONCLUSION

Present paper concluded that there is a need for developing gender-responsive strategies for skill development for women—who are no less than men. Empowering women socially, economically, educationally, politically and legally is important for socio-economic development. Women are capable to manage if given opportunity. They must be treated with respect, purity, dignity and equal rights. All we need is a concentrated effort focused in the right direction that would rest only with the liberation of women from all forms of evil. As more and more India moves towards the 'knowledge economy', it becomes increasingly important for it to focus on the advancement of the skills and these skills has to be relevant to the emerging economic environment. For transforming its demographic dividend, an efficient skill development system is the need of the hour. A number of great women have made themselves wonderfully powerful and successful in their lives through their individual efforts. They are the source of inspiration and motivation of the women of today. A women can do whatever the man can do in this world. Self-confidence of them is an essential part of women empowerment. Indian' women literacy rate is very low when we compared to world standards. In India it was found that there is a large disparity between female literacy rates in different states. Bihar, U.P. Rajasthan etc., have very low female literacy rates.

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