

The Significance of Education for The Empowerment of Women in India

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ABSTRACT

Educating women is a top priority for India's government and civil society because of the significant impact that educated women can have on the country's economic development. Education plays an essential role in empowering women since it equips them to overcome challenges, challenge traditional gender roles, and bring about positive changes in their lives. Due diligence into the role of education in empowering women is required in light of India's present rise to global level. Given that education can pave the way for women's empowerment, reduce inequalities, and raise their status in the home and community, it is imperative that we do all in our power to ensure that all women have access to quality education in this country.

Keywords: Significance of Education, Empowerment of Women

1. INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is defined as the process of establishing conditions that enhance the agency of individuals or groups in decision-making and action, subsequently resulting in societal transformation. Hashemi Schuler and Riley (1996) assert that when individuals are empowered, their intrinsic capabilities are enhanced through the acquisition of information and skills. Empowerment is the act of granting individuals the autonomy to think independently, make personal decisions, and manage their own obligations. This technique enables individuals to govern their own lifestyles and destinies. A segment of the population is deprived of fundamental rights in every town, state, and nation; nonetheless, these persons frequently remain oblivious to the existence of such rights. Women would inherently assume priority if we were to integrate these individuals into our society. Indeed, women constitute the more pivotal component of every civilization. Despite universal awareness of this truth, individuals remain reluctant to acknowledge it at this time. Because of this, women's place in modern culture is lower than it was in the past. There was a distinct necessity to empower women due to the increasing devaluation of their status, which involved the erosion of fundamental rights and their relegation to an inferior social standing. There is a significant deal of

interest in and conversation about women's empowerment in various parts of the globe. As inhabitants of a free nation, we ought to appreciate our liberty, although we must also contemplate whether we are genuinely autonomous. Social inequality and harassment against women have been enduring issues for an extended period. Consequently, the struggle for gender equality is a worldwide occurrence. It is equitable that men and women receive equal treatment throughout all domains of society, including the job, educational institutions, inheritance, matrimony, and politics. Numerous women's organizations have arisen, and new initiatives have commenced in their pursuit of equality. While our nation's founding document does not prioritize males over females, women have historically been deprived of certain fundamental liberties that the document guarantees. Empowerment facilitates the realization of one's potential, increased engagement in politics and society, and the cultivation of self-confidence.

2. THE VALUE OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION

"A woman's education advantages her entire family, while a man's education solely benefits the individual." Empowered women result in an empowered Mother India. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.

For India to progress, it is imperative that girls and women attain access to quality education. It facilitates the development of fifty percent of human capability and enhances the quality of life both indoors and outdoors. One need not contest the assertion that education is the remedy for all problems. Numerous philosophers have proposed definitions of education, although M. Phule's is frequently regarded as one of the most consequential. An essential element of education, as articulated by M. Phule, is the capacity to differentiate between good and wrong. This concept illustrates that education has consistently served as the foundation for societal change throughout history. A person's outlook, attitude, mindset, and every other part of their conduct can be influenced through education. Educated women are more adept at advising their children, especially daughters, than those lacking degrees. A greater birth rate and a larger population can be accomplished via the efforts of educated women.

Significant progress still necessary to eliminate gender bias and guarantee equitable educational opportunities for women in India. A straightforward indication is the disparity in literacy rates between genders. Conversely, the literacy rate for men is approximately 82.14%, whilst for women it is merely 65.46%. The women were chosen to remain at home as they were perceived solely as homemakers.

3. A FOCUS ON EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

The empowerment of women is a fundamental component of every culture, state, and nation. In the stage of a child's fundamental development, the role of authority is held by a woman. The majority of people that belong to our culture are female. Education has the potential to empower women and bring about a shift in views. The social and political development of India is dependent on it as a result of this reason. According to the Convention, the Indian state has the authority to undertake policies that are geared toward empowering women. Depending on the level of education that a woman has, her lifestyle can vary quite a bit. As a subject of utmost significance, women's political

rights are becoming the focal point of an increasing number of movements, both formal and informal, all over the world. During the NAROIBI international women's congress in 1985, the idea of women's empowerment was presented for the first time. Education is a significant step toward empowering women because it gives them the ability to make changes in their lives, challenge the conventions of society, and triumph over challenges. Because of this, we must not ignore the significance of education when we are talking about the empowerment of women. It is anticipated that India will soon become a global powerhouse as a consequence of the advancements that have been made in the education of women. At this point in time, it is widely acknowledged that the most important factor that determines women's standing is the increasing tide of women's education and empowerment. In order to realize our goal of becoming a superpower, we must make the education of women a top priority. The emancipation of women will be compelled to take place. As stated by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the following are the components that constitute women's empowerment:

- To learn about and understand how gender roles affect relationships and how these relationships can be changed.
- Realizing your value, having faith in your ability to bring about change, and taking charge of your own life are all steps toward achieving self-actualization.
- You can buy more when you have the freedom to choose.
- A more equitable national and international social and economic order can be achieved if individuals have the skills necessary to initiate and direct social change.

The concept of empowerment involves not only the sense of inner strength and control that an individual possesses, but also their awareness of and actions in respect to their social, political, and legal rights and duties. This multi-tiered notion includes individuals, groups, and communities as three of its constituent aspects. Through the use of mutual regard, self-reflection, empathy, and group involvement, this global, ongoing process with a local focus makes it possible for those who do not have a fair share of vital resources to have a more active role in the operation of those resources.

4. INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN: AN ANALYSIS

The involvement of women can be used by groups to gain support, and by politicians to impose their agenda. Anyone can get involved, whether formally or informally, in the political, social, or administrative spheres. Panchayat Raj institutions provide numerous opportunities for women to participate. This broad term encompasses any endeavor that demonstrates women's participation in roles of administrative and governmental authority. Among these activities are the creation, formulation, planning, execution, and assessment of development-oriented policies and programs. Even before India gained its freedom, many of its women took part in politics. As leaders and volunteers, they were instrumental in the freedom movement. At the time of India's independence, Article 15 of the constitution ensured that women would have equal rights. Even though women are guaranteed equal rights in India's constitution, they nonetheless confront substantial gender disparity in political power. Women really do not have nearly enough clout at the federal and state levels. It is

tragic but true that the Lok Sabha does not hear from more than half of India's citizens. With only 21 out of 233 MPs (or 9%) representing the chamber, women's representation in the present Rajya Sabha is much fewer than in the Lok Sabha. It is widely believed that a society headed by women would be more cooperative and less conflict prone, but the reality is that men are more prevalent in powerful positions like parliament, bureaucracy, judiciary, army, and police, therefore gender imbalance is clearly present at the social level. Without the ability to influence policy or the economy, women are already at a disadvantage. Our own constitution did not help India achieve post-independence ideals like social justice, equality, and fairness. Even with a female prime minister in office for a short time, women's status did not rise. In 1975, in the middle of the 1970s, the United Nations (UN) proclaimed it the 'International Women's Year,' beginning a global movement to improve the political representation of women. After this, the United Nations Decade for Women, which ran from 1976 to 1985 and was characterized by an emphasis on "Equality, Development and Peace," ended. While the percentage of women in political office in India has remained mostly steady, they did rise to a higher political position after the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment acts granted them more say in policymaking. Women were allowed representation in panchayats and municipalities as a result of the 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Indian Constitution, which aimed to give them a role in local decision-making.

5. EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The enrollment of boys and girls in educational institutions is an area where adult literacy programs have significantly improved gender equality. The increasing involvement of women in literacy initiatives has resulted in a progressive decrease in the gender disparity in reading proficiency. The difference in enrollment rates between males and females in neo-literate households is considerably smaller than that found in non-literate households. Currently, girls and boys are provided with equal educational opportunities in primary schools globally. A restricted number of nations, however, have accomplished this goal about universal education. Political participation among women is on the upswing. As of January 2014, the proportion of women in parliament surpassed 30% in at least one chamber in 46 different countries. In many nations, women persistently encounter prejudice over access to economic resources, employment opportunities, education, and participation in governmental activities. Women and girls encounter obstacles and inequities across all industries in which we operate. Approximately 62 million females worldwide are not enrolled in educational institutions. Approximately 33% of women worldwide may encounter gender-based violence at some point in their lives. Approximately 1 out of every 7 girls in less developed countries were married before reaching the age of fifteen, with some even becoming child brides as young as eight or nine. Approximately 287,000 women, with 99% living in underdeveloped nations, succumb each year to complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Despite comprising over 40% of the agricultural workforce, women's presence among landowners ranges from 3% to 20%. Approximately 10% of all enterprises in Africa are owned by women. This proportion is a mere 3% in South Asia. Furthermore, women represent less than 20% of legislative representatives worldwide, although making about half of the global population. Every sector in which we operate has the potential for revolution when women and girls receive equal treatment to men and boys. Gender equality and the empowerment of

women are fundamental prerequisites for development, rather than simply components of it. To strengthen our dedication to assisting women and girls, it is essential to create educational awareness initiatives centered on women's empowerment and gender equality.

6. CONCLUSION

Women play an essential part in the expansion and development of a nation's economy. Investing in the education of women should be a primary objective if we want to ensure that they have a brighter future in our nation. This is because women are crucial human resources for growth. Moving from a position of weakness to a position of strength is what it means to be empowered. When it comes to women, education is the most important factor in altering cultural norms. One more way in which education helps to lessen inequality is by elevating one's status inside one's own family. In an effort to eliminate gender bias in the dissemination of knowledge and to provide a level playing field for women's education, the state developed educational institutions that are solely dedicated to the education of female students. Education encourages the concept of involvement in public affairs, panchayats, government, and other institutions, which contributes to the elimination of gender discrimination.

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