

Women's Education and Empowerment

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Abstract:

After 75 years of Independence Indian people could not get rid from clutches of caste, creed, bribe, gender discrimination, Rural- Urban divide, Poor rich divide etc. Social reformers like Mahatma Phule, Maharshi Karve, Savitribai Phule, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Chattapati Shahu Maharaj have had great work to vanish all types of discrimination in Indian society. The government of India is taking utmost reforms to eradicate discrimination through various policies & programmes in education and other sectors. On the one hand India has had a great tradition of women Education which was a significant feature of Ancient Vedic period. On the other hand, there were examples of Indian families in India who were sending boy child to school but not the girl child because of gender based bias in the society. The feeling of superiority of boy and inferiority of girl often caused inequality & gender based discrimination in early age.

Key Words: Women Empowerment Sustainable Development, Sustainable Health, Gender equity, Medieval period, Millennium Development Goals, Human Rights, Liberalization, Vedic Period, Privatization, Freedom, Social security

Introduction:

Women Empowerment is the act of making women progressive, educated Socially, Politically and Financially supportive. To empower women education is the basic instrument of change which has been being used by the state and Central government. Right to education, 30% reservation in employment, decision making, reservation in social and political sector etc are becoming change agents in women empowerment. Sometimes the concept of women empowerment had been misunderstood as the concept of western world but Indian women are facing many challenges to develop their personality like men. Historically Indian women had played vital role in the process of evolution of mankind. Women had been economic partner to men who discovered to domesticate plants, food and farming. The religious books like Quran and other focused the rights of women as Right to education, right to worship, freedom, opinion, social security, economic independency and health etc. Twenty-first century is the age of science and technology, Privatization, Liberalization, and Globalization role of women is significant in every phase of national development. It is necessary to bring all women in mainstream of social, scientific, cultural and economic development.

- **Women Education:** Women education in India after 100 AD was badly neglected, It was the medial period which is called as dark age for women. No special efforts were made to provide education to women. The status of women in society cannot be improved without educating women. During the British rule many institutions were opened to educate men and women but Indian family system was not in position to educate girl child. To send girl child to school was considered as bad omen. No special efforts were made to promote women education. After 1818 there had been a social awakening among people that development of country will not be possible without women's education. However, some local committees & municipal corporations allocated funds to open institutions. Missionaries started first girls native school called Chinsura near Calcutta in 1818. In

Bombay presidency American missionary society started school in Bombay city in 1824 and thereafter they opened schools in Ahmednagar, thane and Nashik districts. In 1847 Students literacy & scientific society was established. Prof. Patton of Elphinstone college, Dadabhai Nauroji Dr. Bhau Daji Raosaheb, Mandlik V. V. etc were the members of the society. They started Girls school at Bombay in 1851. Great social reformer Mahatma Jotirao Phule started special school for Girls at Bhidewadewada, Pune in 1851. Rajashri Chataparati Shahu Maharaj supported Women Education in Karveer Regency (Kolhapur). According to Rajashri shahus contribution in women education there were 35 Girls schools with intake of 1800 girl students at karveer in 1915-1916.

- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER): General Enrolment Ratio is a quantifying technique to measure number of students enrolled. The GER of Women education at degree level was 28.5% in 2021-2022 which is supposed to be 50% up to 2030. GER of college going male students in 2014-2015 was 24.5 and female students was 22.07%. It is the matter of fact that percentage of female students in majority of Higher education courses is observed to be high than the male students. GER of both male & female students is significantly increasing but it is less as compared to developed countries. The GER amongst SCs, STs and OBC female students is much lower than the national average. The GER of Muslim female students in Higher Education is very minor. There are many reasons for lower GER such as social, economic, geographical. Tribal areas do not have sufficient no of institutions. Students from such groups are marginalized in which non availability of Hostel facility, Proper infrastructure, transport facility, The Govt. has had been providing various scholarships, and other intensives in Higher education but problems are remaining same.
- Efforts by Commissions & committees: Women Education in India was suffering from many shortcomings. Before and after Independence the government of India has had been taking many efforts through various committees & commissions. Many programmes and activities were planned to provide access and equity not only in Higher education but in primary and secondary education also. The committees & Commissions are as follow:
 - The University Education Commission (1948-49)
 - The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)
 - National committee on women's Education (1959)
 - Durgabai Deshmukh committee (1959)
 - Hansa Mehata committee (1962)
 - The Kothari Education Commission (1964-1966)
 - The National Commission on Status of women (1974)
 - The committee on status of Women towards Equality (1974)
 - National policy on Education (1968)
 - National policy on Education (1986)
 - National Perspectives plan for women (1988-2000)
 - National Knowledge Commission Report (2007)
 - Serva Shiksha Abhyan(SSA)
 - Rashtriya Madhimik Shikshan abhiyan(RMSA)
 - Rashtriya Uchchater Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

- National Policy on Education (NEP2020) etc.

These committees & commissions made Following efforts:

- (i) Provision of separate schools & colleges for female students
- (ii) Provision of Hostel facilities
- (iii) provisions of Mid-Day Meal
- (iv) Provision of Scholarship
- (v) Free transport facility by MSSRTC
- (vi) provision of Coeducation facility
- (vii) Establishment of Polytechnics colleges for girls
- (viii) Creation of separate cells for girl students in schools & female students in colleges
- (ix) Construction of staff Quarters for women teachers
- (x) Introduction of Condensed courses for girl students
- (xi) Organization of Seminars, Conference s & Workshops
- (xi) Voluntary assistance to educational Organizations working for women.
- (Xii) Provision of Vocational courses for women
- (xiii) Introduction of skill Based courses for women.

Indicators of Empowerment

- Increase in GER of women in Education at all grade levels
- Appointment women in all fields including Army, NDA, Aviation etc.
- Women are becoming more confident and self-oriented
- Having Critical thinking & problem solving capacity
- Maintaining positive relationship with others.
- Having good communication skills & Life skills
- Having Access to better knowledge & Information resources.
- Increasing positive attitude skills, Self-image, Self-awareness, self-esteem etc.
- Better negotiation skills as compared to men
- Developing good stress Management skills
- Women are learning self-defense techniques
- Increasing time for leisure and family, child care

Conclusion:

Universalization of Education is necessary for women empowerment. It is the need of the day to extend the role and responsibility of the state & central Governments to provide financial assistance to all educational programmes devise apex bodies on education. Establishment of primary, secondary, Higher secondary schools and Higher education institutions in rural & remote areas. Establishment of training colleges for women is also the requirement at present. Generally rural girls are deprived from education due to different causes like monetary problem, work pressure, family problems, remoteness of villages etc. especially Backward class women are marginalized from the mainstream of education. Girl students from Muslim families, SC/ST/OBC/SBC/ and other minority are remaining aside from Education. To achieve sustainable Development Goals, it is necessary to empower women through education. Educated women must help other women to develop their knowledge & skills and to bring up their children healthy nation loving citizens of India. Development of Women at all grade levels is not so easy task. India need s many schools, College and universities to achieve the target of 50% GER in Education up to 2030.

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