

WOMEN EDUCATION - A TOOL TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY

R. Vanitha, Assistant Professor,
Department of Economics,
A. V. C. College (Autonomous).

Dr. A. Navin Kumar,
Associate Professor,
Department Of Economics, Poompuhar
College of Arts and Science (Autonomous).

Abstract

Education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world. Therefore, many governments and organizations have focused new policies and stances in support of bettering education, and it is consistently used as a measure of development around the world. In all countries of the world, education is recognized as the cornerstone for sustainable development. It is a fulcrum around which the quick development of economic, political, sociological and human resources of any country resolves. Education acts as a catalyst for women empowerment. Educated women will be able to contribute towards the development of Nation, Agriculture, Society, economy as well as family welfare. This paper examines how the education helps a woman to transform the entire society.

INTRODUCTION

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. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India this is yet to meet the requirements despite reforms. Little has been achieved in the area of women empowerment, but for this to happen, this sector must experience a chain of reforms. Though India could well become one of the largest economies in the world, it is being hindered due to a lack of women's participation.

HISTORY OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. However, in the 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, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were 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 three decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate.

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. 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 THROUGH EDUCATION

Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political right are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at Nairobi in 1985. Education is a milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education with reference to women empowerment India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020. The year 2020 is fast approaching; this can become reality only when the women of this nation become empowerment. Within the framework of democratic policy, laws, development policies, plan and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in difference spheres. 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. Women empowerment is a multi-dimensional process involving the transformation of the economic, social psychological, political and legal circumstances of the powerless. In the specific case of women, empowerment entails not only positive changes in these critical respects but also the dismantling of the cultural norms and traditional practices that devalue, dis-empower and dispossess women. It means giving traditional and legal status to the efforts of women to develop and contribute to the creation of wealth, taking and participating in decision making of their families

and societies at large and to reduce their present state of vulnerability, decrease dependency and passivity and be at the centre, not at the periphery.

Educated Women in National Development

The benefits derivable from education include the following: enhancement of the quality of living-food, housing, health, clothing, transport, communication, entertainment and gainful use of leisure. If the vast majority of our women folk are educated, their personal development can be enhanced remarkably. Children and husbands also stand to gain tremendously. Women are likely to have more confidence in themselves and their ability to contribute effectively to national development.

Marital Obligation:

Education helps in the fulfillment of women's obligation. A married woman is expected to take care of her home – husband and children. She is expected to use whatever knowledge and skills she has to cook, clean and rear her children – there is no doubt that a woman who is able to read about health care, nutrition, body changes, modern household equipment, etc, will perform creditably well her God-given responsibility to the home and society at large.

An educated woman will be able to help her children with their school assignments. She may also go beyond that to further enlighten them in their school work, attend Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings and inquire about the academic performances of her children. This will ensure blissful homes, well-educated and well-behaved children and contented husbands and an endowed nation.

Agricultural Development:

Half of the world's populations are women and two-third of the work is done by them. Ironically the people that participate most in agricultural production are the least educated. Therefore, provision of basic literacy and skill acquisition for illiterate females will no doubt ensure bumper agricultural production.

Health Management:

Mothers help in no small measure in securing perfect health for the children and by so doing for the entire community and nation. Attaining good health starts right from the womb. It starts from the pregnant mother knowing and taking what constitute balanced diet, abstaining from damaging drugs, and actions inimical to the health of the baby. A woman can beware of all these harmful conditions if she is educated, since most enlightenment campaigns against diseases are transmitted either through the radio, television, newspapers, posters, pamphlets or magazines or in the local languages or English language. If women are educated they will have knowledge of basic health care and will be in a position to help others to maintain and improve their own health.

National Reconstruction:

If women are educated, they will be able to assist in nation building and reconstruction. A few women are currently holding powerful positions in our country and in the world. There is still room for improvement if more women are educated. Perhaps with more women holding the mantle in a male-dominated political arena, the socio-political state of affairs will definitely improved throughout the world.

Social Development:

The improvement of society could be effected through the development of the potentialities of the women folk. The 1978 General Conference of UNESCO meeting said:

Increasing educational opportunities for women boosts equity and foster national development. The potential contribution of educated and trained women to labour force and the importance of their education in the improvement of family welfare and planning are factors still under-estimated in national development.

It is also pertinent to mention here that the higher the level of education, the greater the likelihood that a women will stay in the labour force. The participation of women with university degrees is more than double that of women who have only primary education. This creates an ever-increasing pool of experienced and skilled personnel and from which supervisory and management positions can be filled.

Economic Development:

In the economic sphere, most women engage in small scale or large scale businesses. Also, women who are married to entrepreneurs and big time businessmen will be able to help such husbands if educated; they will be able to converse with such husbands intelligently and offer useful advice to them concerning their jobs. Such women will be able to deal with their husbands' business partners, friends and other highly placed associates without the slightest feeling of inferiority or shame. Furthermore, if women are educated and are gainfully employed, they can assist their husbands in financing the home and the education of their children.

CONCLUSION

According to the Country Report of the Government of India, "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. Women education as an instrument per-excellence for effective national development as well as a dynamic instrument of change in the society.

REFERENCES

1. S. P. Agarva I(2001),Women’s Education in India(1995-98)Present Status, Perspective, Plan, Statistical Indicators with Global View,Vol III Concept Publications Co, New Delhi.
2. N .L. Gupta (2003)Women’s Education Through Ages,Concept Publications Co, New Delhi.
3. R. K. Rao (2001) Women and Education, Kalpaz Publications, Delhi.

