

CHALLENGES IN EMPOWERING THE WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

Empowerment is not something which could be made available in the form of a capsule to those whom we think are in need of it. It is not just a concept that could be defined with the help of some universally accepted parameters. Educating an Indian woman creates a vital opportunity for the social and economic development of India. An

educated Indian woman will yield a positive impact in the Indian society by contributing positively to the economy of both the country and the society. An educated woman reduces the chances of her child dying before the age of five. The chances of controlling the population are high as an educated woman is likely to marry at a later age as opposed to uneducated woman.

Introduction

The development of women's education is integrally linked with the perception of roles within the Indian society. Views have changed little and an exogenous factor such as education has had minimal impact on the liberation of women from age-old prejudices and beliefs. Education is considered as a potent instrument through which processes modernization and social change come to existence. Education exposes people to new thoughts and ideas and provides necessary skills. Harmonious development without educating women is impossible. More over it has been rightly said that to educate a woman is to educate the whole family. Women power is an epoch-making factor in the economic growth of any country. By providing women with the tools to overcome eliminate the hindrances. We can empower a new generation of business contributors, community leaders and policy makers.

Role of Women Education

Secretary Clinton has said that the empowerment of women in business and government represents perhaps the most consequential long-term opportunities to promote sustainable development, democracy and economic growth. Women's Education has assisted in improving the quality of life for women. Veritably, women's history is an extensive one filled with struggle, strife, barriers, discrimination, demands, change and opposition. While women's history is filled with opposition, clearly, women's education has leaded the way to women's empowerment. Care givers, nurturers, and providers by nature, women's education has expanded the role of women to include such descriptions as mentors, motivators, educators and leaders.

Importance of Women Education in India

Educating an Indian woman creates a vital opportunity for the social and economic development of India. An educated Indian woman will yield a positive impact in the Indian society by contributing positively to the economy of both the country and the society. An educated woman reduces the chances of her child dying before the age of five. The chances of controlling the population are high as an educated woman is likely to marry at a later age as opposed to uneducated woman.

An Enlightened Future

Educating a woman uplifts her life as well as the quality of her life and her entire family. It is a fact that any educated woman will definitely support the education of her children especially a girl child and provide a better guidance to her children. An educated woman in a society like India will assist in reducing the infant mortality rate and control the blossoming of the population.

Educated Women Lead the Nation

The women of any country have an important contribution in the progress of that country. It is the women who are capable of building such children who may lead the country to the path of progress and prosperity. Educated women make the family and the society cultured. To fight against the socially constructed gender biases, women have to swim against the system that requires more strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment and empowerment will come from the education. Recently, the concept of empowerment has been tied to the range of activities, undertaken by and for women in different areas, education included.

Status of Women Education

The access of women to education, health and productive resources is inadequate. Therefore they remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded. There are various issues which poses myriads of challenges towards the vision of women empowerment. The status of women could be improved by women themselves and nobody else. It is the modern era of satellites, achievements and technology-based gadgets.

The popular UNESCO slogan says, "Educate a man and you educate an individual; educate a woman and you educate a family". Education can play a vital role in bringing about the desirable behavioral changes among the women and make them well equipped in terms of knowledge, competence and capacity to deal with different educational problems.

Empowerment is a Development Process

Empowerment means moving from enforced powerlessness to a position of power. Education is a cardinal means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to fully participate in the development process. Education is a critical

area of empowerment for girls and women. This is not only because education is an entry point to opportunity but also because a woman's educational achievements have positive ripple effects. Education is much more than reading and writing. It is an essential investment countries make for their future, a crucial factor in reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development.

Challenges to Women Education

- **Negative parental attitudes**

Poor families are more likely to keep girls at home to care for younger siblings or to work in family enterprise. If a family has to choose between educating a son or a daughter because of financial restrictions, typically the son will be chosen. Negative parental attitudes toward educating daughters can also be a barrier to a girl's education.

- **Inadequate school facilities**

Another challenge to education in India is the lack of adequate school facilities. Many schools do not have enough classrooms to accommodate all of the school-age children. Furthermore, the classrooms that are available often lack of basic necessities such as sanitary facilities or water. Lack of latrines can be particularly detrimental to girls' school attendance.

- **Shortage of female teachers**

Lack of female teachers is another potential barrier to girls' education. Girls are more likely to attend school and have higher education academic achievement if they have female teachers. This is particularly true in highly gender segregated societies such as India. Currently, women account for only 29 percent of teachers at the primary level (MHRD 1993). The proportion of teachers who are female is even lower at the university level, 22 percent of instructors (CSO 1992).

- **Gender gaps in University education**

Currently, a very small proportion of both men and women have a college education, just over 3 percent of men and 1 percent of women. Although a very small proportion of the Indian population attends college, women account for a third of the students at this level (MHRD 1993).

- **Gender bias in curriculum**

As long ago as 1965, the Indian government agreed to rewrite text-books so that men and women would not be portrayed in gender- stereotyped roles. However, a study of Indian text-books done in the 1980's found that men were the main characters in the majority of lessons. In these lessons, men held high prestige occupations and were portrayed as strong, adventurous and intelligent. In contrast, when women were included they were depicted as weak and helpless, often as the victims of abuse and beatings.

Conclusion

The women are an integral part in every society. But status and education of women are still backward than men. The Indian constitution has granted equal rights and status to all irrespective of caste, creed and gender. But in practice, women have been deprived of their constitutional rights in various ways. They are becoming victims of various social injustice, and they are not being able to enjoy their due right and status in society. Women have shifted traditional assumptions about their roles and capabilities. There has been a marked change, and it has been for the better. Here some of the major challenges have been discussed. These challenges affect the growth and development of the women education in India tremendously.

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