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Women Empowerment Through Higher Education

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Abstract

India holds the second position in the world of having highest population. There are approximately 49% female in total population of it. But if we analyze the current status of Indian women with other countries of the world than we can realise that the scene is not even satisfactory but the worst. Indian women generally faced all types of barriers to success like illitracy, domestic violence, lack of motivation and support and many more. India is country where man dominance in the society prevails. It is very essential for the harmonious development of the country that women should go hand by hand and shoulder to shoulder with men. And for empowering the women , higher education will play a vital role .

Key words: Empowerment, Higher Education

Introduction

Dependent women are not empowered women. If women think just that being highly educated and employed they are empowered, it is a myth. Women have to awake from deep slumber and understand the true meaning of empowerment. Everyone must understand that empowering women doesn't mean empowering them in technical area only. Women should remember that they are also rational, intelligent and thinking human beings.

For centuries, women were treated as less-than-equal to men in many ways. Women were not allowed to vote, own property, or work in many jobs. This situation is due to strong addiction to culture and tradition. Such patience is exercised not only for the sake of society and children, but also due to lack of confidence to live as a single woman and face the challenges of life. Women have to awake from deep slumber and understand the true meaning of empowerment. Now that we are out of those dark ages, women are more EMPOWERED to do whatever they want. This means that they have the ability to choose their own destiny, job, vote, and do anything a man can do.

The Oxford American Dictionary defines "empowerment" as "to make (someone) stronger and more confident, esp. in controlling their life and claiming their rights."

When we talk about women's empowerment, we talk about women taking more of a leadership role. Whereas until very recently, women were subordinates.

1. MEANING OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The absence of a democratic context has contributed to slow progress in empowering women, particularly in South Asia. Women's empowerment movements have not survived in authoritarian regimes based on gender subordination and ideologies of male dominance. Approaches in South Asia have necessarily focused on opportunities and services rather than on political power. Conceptualizations of gender discrimination and male domination have been oversimplified and focused on elimination of obvious oppressive practices such as wife beating or dowry demands. Empowerment of women that will have lasting impacts must involve consciousness raising before the social construction of gender, which subordinates women in the family, class, caste, religion, or society, can be changed. Three experimental approaches to empowerment in South Asia have been tried: integrated development, economic empowerment, and consciousness raising. Consciousness raising has been implemented in awareness groups and

education that have led to a new consciousness, self worth, societal and gender analysis, and access to skills and information. The economic empowerment approach has relied on improving women's control over economic resources and strengthening women's economic security. Gramin Bank has provided one example of organizing women around savings and credit, income generation, and skill training activities. Integrated development approaches have encouraged women's collectives that have engaged in development and social problem resolution and formed specialized activity groups as means of mobilization of women. No one design has assured success. Identification of the poorest and most oppressed in a geopolitical area has provided an entry point for action. Women were encouraged to find a separate time and space for themselves. The three aforementioned approaches have different assumptions about the reason for women's powerlessness: greater poverty and lower access to resources, economic vulnerability, and subordination within patriarchal societies and socioeconomic inequalities.

2. MEANING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education is the aggregate of systematized knowledge and practical skills that allow theoretical and practical problems to be solved by a given type of training, utilizing and creatively developing the modern achievements of science, technology, and culture. The term "higher education" is also applied to the training of highly skilled specialists in the fields of economics, science, technology, and culture at various types of higher schools, which accept persons who have successfully completed secondary general-education schools or secondary specialized-education institutions.

Objectives

The main objectives of this research paper are:-

1. To know the relevance of higher education in women's life.
2. To analyse the need of women empowerment.
3. To identify the hindrances in the path of women empowerment.
4. To examine the impact of women empowerment on the growth of the country.

Research Methodology : This research paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper attempt has been taken to analyse the importance of higher education for women in India. The data used in it is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study.

Literature Review

Duflo, E. (2011), Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge.

The study argues that the inter-relationships of the empowerment and development are probably too weak to be self sustaining, and that continuous policy commitment to equality for its own sake may be needed to bring about equality between men and women.

Sethuraman, K. (2008), The Role of Women's Empowerment and Domestic Violence in Child Growth and Undernutrition in a Tribal and Rural Community in South India, Research Paper No. 2008/15, United Nations University.

This research paper explores the relationship between women's empowerment, domestic violence, maternal nutritional status, and the nutritional status and growth over six months in children aged 6 to 24 months in a rural and tribal community. This longitudinal observational study undertaken in rural Karnataka, India included tribal and rural subjects.

Doepke, M., Tertilt, M. (2011), Does Female Empowerment Promote Economic Development?

This study is an empirical analysis suggesting that money in the hands of mothers (as opposed to their husbands) benefits children. This study developed a series of noncooperative family bargaining models to understand what kind of frictions can give rise to the observed empirical relationships.

Kingdom, G.G. (2002), Education of women and socio-economic development, Reason and Revaluation: Studies in the Babi and Baha'i Religions, volume 13, Los Angeles: Kalimat Press.

This research paper shows the findings of some recent research on the social and the economic benefits of female education and emphasize on giving importance on the ways through which women's schooling leads to social gains. And also support the Bahá'u'lláh perspective towards women's education.

Frenette, M., Coulombe, S. (2007), Has Higher Education among Young Women Substantially Reduced the Gender Gap in Employment and Earnings? Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, Canada.

This research paper examine the role of rapidly rising educational attainment among young women in raising their relative position in the labour market and suggests that the educational trends have not contributed towards a decline in the full-time employment gap.

Need of Women Empowerment

Empowerment is probably the totality of the following or similar capabilities:

- * Having decision-making power of their own
- * Having access to information and resources for taking proper decision
- * Having a range of options from which you can make choices (not just yes/no, either/or.)
- * Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making
- * Having positive thinking on the ability to make change
- * Ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power.
- * Ability to change others' perceptions by democratic means.
- * Involving in the growth process and changes that is never ending and self-initiated
- * Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma

So from the above points we can divide the components of Women's empowerment in five components, which is self explanatory that why there is need of women empowerment:-

- women's sense of self-worth;
- their right to have and to determine choices;
- their right to have access to opportunities and resources;
- their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home;
- and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Relationship Between Higher Education and Women Empowerment

Higher education definitely raises women's status whether she contribute in the income of the family or not. She can be at par with men. Majority of the women in our country are uneducated that is why they are suppressed. It is the duty of school teachers to tell them that becoming a wife is not their ultimate goal. Their standing up on their feet and being something is important. Education can bring phenomenal change in women's life resulting in social transformation in the long run by inculcating following attributes among them:

1. Enhancing their confidence
2. Raising their status in the family and society

3. Bring awareness about their rights
4. Boosting their self esteem
5. Increasing their self efficacy
6. Reducing their dependency
7. Better up bringing of their children
8. Enhancing their mobility
9. Opening career opportunities

Increased knowledge, self-confidence and awareness of gender equity are indicators of empowerment process (Murphy-Graham, 2008). There is evidence that these components are usually developed during and as a result of higher education (Maslak and Singhal, 2008).

Women, who are educated and earning, are in much better position in our society as compared to uneducated women worker. This is a commonly understood view about the role of education in transforming women.

Hindrances of Women Empowerment & in Higher Education

There are many hindrances in the path of women empowerment and in higher education. Some of them are as follows-

- Lack of education
- Financial constraints
- Family responsibility
- Low mobility
- Low ability to bear risk
- Low need for Achievement
- Absence of Ambitions for the Achievement
- Social status

Status of Women in Indian Society

The worth of a civilization can be judged by the place given to women in the society. The Muslim influence on India caused considerable deterioration in the status of women. They were deprived of their rights of equality with men. Raja Ram Mohan Roy started a movement against this inequality and subjugation. The contact of Indian culture with that of the British also brought improvement in the status of women. The third factor in the revival of women's position was the influence of Mahatma Gandhi who induced women to participate in the Freedom Movement. As a result of this retrieval of freedom, women in Indian have distinguished themselves as teachers, nurses, air-hostesses, booking clerks, receptionists, and doctors. They are also participating in politics and administration. But in spite of this amelioration in the status of women, the evils of illiteracy, dowry, ignorance, and economic slavery would have to be fully removed in order to give them their rightful place in Indian society.

Conclusion

On the basis of above detailed analysis it could be concluded that there is no doubt about the essential need of empowering women through higher education. Now it is cleared that only literacy is not the ultimate solution but women should be highly educated to know their rights and duties. And should be able to use their rights as per the need. But it is also mandatory that there should proper implementations what policies are made and what government of India has made different programmes regarding women empowerment.

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