

Women Empowerment and Education

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Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities. Women's empowerment is another term that needs clarification. Women's economic and political empowerment was adopted as one of strategies for advancing the agenda of gender quality at the IV UN Conference on Women in 1995. The term empowerment has different meaning depending on the socio-economic, political and cultural context in which it is presented.

Overall empowerment can be perceived as a process or as outcome/goal and can take place at different levels. Women empowerment means the process through which women, who are currently most discriminated against, achieve gender equity. This will include support for men to change those aspects of their behavior, roles and privileges which currently discriminate against women.

The extent of current disadvantage and inequality means that women's empowerment may require support by development agencies at household, community and also from macro levels.

The empowerment occurs when women achieve increased control and participation in decision making that leads to their better access to resources, and therefore, improved socio-economic status. The constitution not only grants equality to women. Bringing women in the main stream of development has always been a major concern for the Government of India, and that is why the year 2001 has been declared as the "Year of Women Empowerment".

Education is the most important tool for women empowerment. No society can socially, economically, politically and culturally progress without the active participation of women as stated by the great philosopher and emancipator of Indian Women, Swami Vivekananda "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.

It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing" He has rightly emphasized, "if you don't raise the women who were living embodiment of the divine mother, do not think that you have any other way to rise." Nehru remarked that in order to awaken the people it is the woman who has to be awakened. "Once she is on the move, the household moves, the village moves and the

country moves and through the women her children are brought into picture and give the opportunity of higher life and better training. Thus, we give the opportunity of women today we build the India of tomorrow".

Women constitute nearly 50 percent of the population and only 54.16 percent of the women are literate. Thus, it is impossible to think for a developed nation until and unless women are empowered.

Therefore, the need of the present era is to make the women fully independent and empowered through education. Mass media can be a useful tool for the spread of Education which will lead to social development and awareness among the masses and eventually lead to women empowerment. Media has been highlighting and time to time discussing about the gender issue and has been raising its voice against social evils towards women such as illiteracy, dowry, rape, female foeticides, domestic violence, occupation segregation, gender disparity, etc. Educational attainment and economical participation

Are they key constitutions in ensuring the empowerment of women? The economic empowerment of women is the vital element of strong economic growth in any country. Empowering women enhances their ability to influence changes and to create a better society.

Since the passing of 33.3 per cent reservation seats of women in panchayat elections it has been very encouraging with the millions of women being elected to the panchayats in the country every five years and further more step towards Women empowerment and solving women discrimination.

The women Empowerment means greater control over finance, knowledge, information, technology, skills, training, political power, economic resources, etc. it is to improve the quality of women education with a view to making women active participant in the process of change and more importantly inculcating in them sufficient critical and questioning a spirit to question the institution and values leading to greater participation, to greater decision making power and control and to transformative action.

Empowerment of women is essential as their throughout and value system lead to the development of a good family, good society and ultimately good nation.

"Other Efforts at National Level for Raising the Education Status of Women Are :-

- The National Policy OF Education (NPE-1986)
- National Literacy Mission (NLM)
- Condensed Courses of Education and Vocational Training for Adult Women
- Mahila Mandals
- Border Area Projects
- National Commission for Women(constituted on 31ST January, 1992)
- At the present era of ICT media has tremendous role to play in education.
- The UNDP considers ICT a tool for developing countries to progress and leap frog to the developed world.

Some Important Suggestions:-

* Legal literacy and women empowerment surely are complementary. The more a woman is aware of the law in whatever way it is, the more she is empowered primarily for her own protection and more protection of her minor children, let alone seeking her other claims. Legal literacy would pave the way for self realization of women and would demystify the hoax of male chauvinism. Here are certain ways and means towards this end:

- * Right from the middle school standard i.e., eighth standard onwards, the basic concepts of three major acts i.e., Indian penal code, criminal procedure code, Indian evidence act can be taught especially to the girl students in all the schools as a part of curriculum.
- * The content of basic legal education can be phased out up to graduation on a compulsory basis no matter what the regular faculty involved in, is.
- * The legal literacy course of this nature can be of a qualifying nature with a bearing on the total aggregate of marks just as it is, in the case of languages.
- * Other efforts at National Level for Raising the Education Status of Women are:

Conclusion: -

Amartya Sen's 'Argumentative Indian' throws ample light on this subject. It's high time the policy makers of higher education institutions expand their horizons and seriously ponder upon the suggestions that are made above and in order to make the women of India truly empowered in its real sense. Until and unless women are not educated and not empowered with equal position in the society, the nation cannot be developed.

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