
ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract

Women's empowerment refers to the ability of women to enjoy all of their rights to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, as well as the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and well being. All nations, businesses, communities, societies and groups can benefit from the implementation of programs and policies that leads to women empowerment. Empowerment of women is a necessity for the development of a society as it enhances both the quality and the quantity of human resources available for development. Women constitute more than 50% of the population, undertake most of the work (two thirds) but only receive one tenth of the total income rather than men. The working hours of women are longer than that of men, often 12-16 hours per day. In addition to their domestic responsibilities in child care, women have to be responsible for housework also. Women have to suffer from continuing under nutrition and two thirds of them are suffering from anaemia . Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development. Playing multiple roles in families, women have already proven their worth, but still their condition on social and economical fronts has not been up to the mark and in many parts of the world they are forced to lead a miserable life. Education plays an important role in women empowerment.

Key Words: Women empowerment, Education

The policy of women empowerment is well entrenched in the Fundamental Rights enshrined in our Constitution. For instance:

- Article 14 ensures to women the right to equality.*
- Article 15(1) specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.*
- Article 15(3) empowers the State to take affirmative action's in favour of women.*
- Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office.*

Forms of Women Empowerment

Economic empowerment is the most important and an obviously expected outcome of having membership in the self-help groups formed for the basic purpose of credit and savings. Women enjoy economic freedom as a part of economic empowerment because they earn well.

Political empowerment supports creating policies that would best support gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private spheres. Popular methods that have been suggested are to create affirmative action policies that have a quota for the number of women in policy making and parliament positions. As of 2017, the global average of women whom hold lower and single house parliament positions is 23.6 percent.

Means of Women Empowerment

Communication Skills: Without developing skills for effective communication, women cannot make their voices heard. It is essential for them to communicate effectively to become successful. As leaders, they need to put across their points to the people so that a family, team or company can be effectively managed.

Disposable Income: Women need to earn well to have their say in important financial decisions governing their lives. Being financially independent gives women power over lives and also contributes to the growth of businesses.

Power of Internet: Access to the internet has opened the floodgates of knowledge and awareness and increased social interaction reach and influence of women. The liberalizing influence of the World Wide Web has broken all taboos, myths and misconceptions regarding women.

Empowering women through Education

History has proven that *"If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation"*.

Without proper and adequate education, women cannot become empowered individuals. They need to be encouraged to go for higher studies so that they can contribute significantly in the creation of a knowledge society. Every child has a right to equal educational opportunities. Women constitute more than 60% of the world's population which ought to place them as pacesetters in education. Sadly, in some countries, girl-child education is neglected due to cultural beliefs. Women are seen as only relevant in the kitchen and for procreation purpose. Educating a woman brings about self-esteem and confidence. It also promotes active participation in her society. Women need to be more involved in educational policy decision making process.

It takes collective effort of the government and society in creating equal opportunities for education, and increasing the enrolment of the girl-child into schools. This in itself reduces poverty. On the long run, an educated woman will actively play a better role in directing her children through life's journey.

Constraining Factors for Women Empowerment:

- Heavy work load of women;
- Isolation of women from each other;
- Illiteracy;
- Traditional views that limit women's participation;
- No funds;
- Internal strife/militarization/wars;
- Disagreements/conflicts among women's groups;
- Structural adjustment policies;
- Discriminatory policy environment;
- Negative and sensational coverage of media.

Conclusion

To conclude the present scenario, it may be said that education is the cornerstone of women empowerment which could be achieved through hearty and co-operative efforts of the Government and NGO's and also eliminating the traditional attitude, norms and practices through proper education and guidance. The government should take steps to remove the constraining factors in women empowerment and should try to increase the means of women empowerment.

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