

WOMEN PERCEPTION OF EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

In the empowerment discourse, empowerment has been defined as expansion of freedom of choices and action. It means increasing one's life choices (World Bank) and therefore the capacity to challenged existing power relations of the society (UNDP). It implies that women empowerment is the process of acquiring control by women over resources and their own lives. It wider phenomenon and can't reduce to or understood only by lower fertility rates as in Indian context it doesn't change the prevailing gender power relations of society. Achievement of lower birthrate has culminated in sex selected abortions and son preferences even among educated sections of society. In the absence of any wider socio-structural change it'd be too naive to assume that education and women empowerment has direct and proportional relationship. Education plays a role in women empowerment but the link among the 2 is quite complex and multi layered. Hence, it's important and pertinent to ask how do women give some thought to their empowerment? Do they feel empowered after being educated? If yes in what ways and the way do they define it. Does education help them in control over their lives and challenging the power relations? Hence there's a necessity to check the women's perception about empowerment and the way do they visualize the role of education in it. The current study is an endeavor to answer the assorted questions like how do women perceive empowerment and role of education in their empowerment? and Do their sense of empowerment increase with increase in the years of schooling?.

Keywords: Empowerment, Education, Development, Experience, Achievement, Productivity, Capacity.

Introduction

Education is very important for everybody, but it's especially significant for women's and women. Education helps women and women's to grasp their rights and to realize confidence to assert them. Education has independent also as instrumental values, i.e. the aim of education must be to rationalise attitude yet on impart knowledge and skills. It makes a private civilized, refined, cultured and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is that the only means. Its goal is to form an individual perfect. Every society gives importance to education because it's a panacea for all evils. It's the key to resolve the varied problems of life. Education is believed to be the foremost powerful and dynamic instrument for social, economic, political, scientific and technological development of countries. The higher institutions had historically been an area where the society found to for ideas and visions for meeting its perennial need for change. The expected changes should specialize in both the political, social and economic life man. The history of female participation in education during the past decades has been of general interest to the society.

Education – A Powerful Tool for Women Empowerment

Educating women is one in every of the powerful tools for women's empowerment. While the advantages of educating women and women's for societies, in general, and their families, more especially, are well understood, the case for education serving as a catalyst in reducing gender inequality, or benefiting women themselves, is a smaller amount clearly established. Access to educating for females at this junction is extremely vital so on attain a better status which will enable them to occupy higher positions of leadership. A proverb goes thus educate a female and you educate a nation and if you educate a person you educate only an individual. Empowerment of women as a basic right has been recognised through many regional, national and international conferences. Empowerment has been defined in such a big amount of ways. One author said that empowerment may be a continuous and life long process and so should be in the style of a scientific set of continuous,

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continued, sustained, never ending (but ever improving) goal directed efforts. This can be because the women have always been the pivot of their families. Empowerment could be a drive towards realization of the innate potentials found in an individual. Thus, the potentials found in the female youth might be enhanced if empowered. It will be concluded that education can function a veritable tool for female empowerment and national development. The position of females in leadership positions has been and can still be supported their level of education. Hence, if more females are encouraged to amass education, the more females we shall have in empowered position in future.

Position of Education of Women in India

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to create education available to the women of India. However women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and also the government has taken various measures to produce education to all or any Indian women. As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the six decades and also the growth of female literacy has after all been over that of male literacy rate. Kerala and Mizoram are the sole states in India that have achieved universal female literacy rates. The development in social and economic status of women is alleged to be one in every of the explanations for literacy. In cities the literacy rate is sort of equal between women's and boys in the country. However the speed in rural areas continues to be but the boys. 40% of the centres under NFE (Non Formal Education) programs are set apart for women's. In step with statistics of women education in India, today 0.3 million NFE centres have primary education to 0.12 million women out of seven.42 million children. However in tribal areas there's not much of gender bias as compared to all or any other castes, tribal community statistics show lower male ratio in spite of much low income, literacy, education and other facilities several efforts are being made towards women education and empowerment. the government is taking steps to extend the speed of women education and employment. Literacy rate is estimated because the percentage of individuals educated to the respective total population. Though literacy is extremely important for both males and females, there exists a large gap between both the sexes in India.

Policies and Implementation Strategies for Women Education

All policy documents recognise that the primary obstacle is poverty, which women from poor communities, especially in rural areas need special attention. The second obstacle is social status, especially when considering children from disadvantaged communities (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, some minority groups, nomadic tribe). While social status in the variety of reservation of jobs and places in institutions of higher learning are provided, there's irrefutable evidence to point out that the obstacle is at the elementary level. Children don't have access to good quality schools which will enable them to interrupt out of existing stereotypes. Therefore, despite of well intentioned policies, children from disadvantaged groups and communities aren't ready to access good quality education at the first level. The Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plan documents recognized that national developmental and demographic goals cannot be achieved unless women's education is haunted on a priority basis. All possible strategies, ranging from flexible school timings to decentralised planning and administration had been recommended over and over again. One amongst the arguments put forth by educational administrators was that serious efforts were never really taken to implement some key recommendations like flexible school timings and appointment of local people as teachers in primary schools. A number of these ideas had been tried move into pockets, especially in Rajasthan through Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish. Flexible timings were also experimented in Madhya Pradesh. But, unfortunately they'd remained only at micro-level and had not been integrated into the mainstream.

The National Policy on Education (1986, revised in 1992) has been perhaps the foremost lucid document on women's education. It absolutely was hailed as a serious breakthrough in addressing gender issues in government policy. The chapter titled "Education for Women's Equality states" Education are going to be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. So as to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past; there'll be a well-conceived draw near favour of women's. It'll foster the event of recent values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and also the active involvement of educational institutions. This may be an act of religion and social engineering. The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, educational activity will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets, and effective monitoring. This document was developed after nationwide debate through a Government document titled Challenge of Education. Of these externally aided education projects explored alternative administrative mechanisms

for flow of funds and administration. The Shiksha Karmi programme was the primary to be administered through an autonomous body, the Shiksha Karmi Board. This, it absolutely was argued, provided the project the required flexibility to run a community based education programme while retaining the legitimacy and authority of a section. Similar implementation mechanisms were adopted altogether subsequent externally aided programmes. While basic education was spread out to external assistance, adult literacy remained a national commitment.

Women's Empowerment and Its Discontent

Many feminists bemoan this popularization as they saw an idea meant to enable women individually and collectively to rework unequal power relations and unjust structures and institutions, being reduced to an instrumental concept that focuses on individual rights. Specifically, feminists are wary of its use in neoliberal policies and in mainstream development agencies as some way to mobilize women through self-help groups as better economic and social change agents, filling the vacuum left by the retreat of state services and also the slump. Empowerment thus becomes about mobilizing grassroots women, encouraging their participation and giving them voice in predetermined development strategies without giving them the facility to challenge exiting narratives of development and to articulate new alternatives. Given this domestication of the concept, feminists seek to rescue it and convey back the ability embedded in it, so women can collectively seek to remodel themselves, their families, state and international institutions. At the identical time, feminist recognize the requirement to quantify empowerment through measurable indicators so it is accustomed demand equality and make state and non- state actors in charge of gender-justice.

Constraints and Policy Measures to Women Empowerment in India

The Government of India had declared 2001 as Women's Empowerment year. The national policy of empowerment of women's had set certain clear-cut goals and objectives. The policy aimed toward upliftment, development and empowerment in socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects, by creating in them awareness on various issues in reference to their empowerment. The subsequent are the precise objectives of National Policies particularly of rural folk on Empowerment of women's in India.

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women's to enable them to comprehend their full potential.
- Equal access to participation and deciding of women's in social political and economic lifetime of the state.
- Equal access to women to health care, quality education in any respect levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social insurance and public life etc.,
- Strengthening legal systems aimed toward elimination of all sorts of discrimination against women.
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women's.
- Ministering a gender perspective in the development process.
- Elimination of discrimination and every one styles of violence against women and therefore the women child.
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

The National policy for empowerment of women's envisaged introduction of a gender perspective in the budgeting process as an operational strategy. Some laws and legislations are enforced strictly for effective and proper implementation of this policy. The Ministry of women's and child development, because the nodal agency for all matters regarding welfare, development and empowerment of women's, has evolved schemes and programmes for his or her benefit. These schemes are spread across a broader spectrum like women's need for shelter, security, safety, legal aid, justice, information, maternal health, food, nutrition etc., still as their need for economic sustenance through skill development, education and access to credit and marketing.

Conclusion

Women empowerment isn't the results of any single factor; it's achieved through multi-pronged approach and energy. Findings of this study clearly indicate that women's education and empowerment doesn't have linear relationship. Though, it had several benefits like increased awareness about laws, access to contraceptives, lower fertility rates, positive effects on their daughters' education etc. But in

the absence of wider socio-structural changes women cannot exercise their increased awareness into reality. Findings of the current study clearly show the lacuna in the processes of women's education because it didn't help in deconstructing the regressive attitudes among women. Women of all educational levels had these regressive attitudes. If we would like to alter this case curriculum for girls and women's needs urgent modification. Curriculum and textbooks should take proactive approaches to deconstruct the sexist biases, misogyny prevalent in Indian society. In the absence of curricular reforms at wider levels, we are able to reap the advantages of increased access of girls and women's to education. Because it is very important for any society that girls and women's are attending schools and colleges but it's way more important to determine that what they're learning there. Is education process empowering them or not and insight gained from this study are often wont to design suitable educational experiences for all women and specifically for rural women. On the premise of study of findings it is concluded that women's perceived empowerment in an exceedingly very narrow and limited sense, as on all indicators of women's empowerment, (participation in crucial deciding processes, extent of sharing of domestic work by men, control of her reproductive functions, control of own income, ability to forestall violence, self-confidence, and pride) it absolutely was found that the majority of the women's were unclear/ ambivalent. the women's who were illiterate or had education and involved in paid work were of the opinion that education would have enhanced their capacities to earn whereas most of highly educated women who belonged to higher people were denied to require paid work by their families. Most of the women's no matter their educational levels perceived empowerment because the ability to earn but beyond that they were clueless about other indicators of empowerment. Like they didn't think that it's important to for his or her men to share domestic work or wife beating isn't acceptable in any respect.

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