

A Study on the Need and Importance of Women Education in Rural Area



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Abstract

Education is considered as the milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond challenges, to confront their traditional role, to change their lives. Education is a powerful tool for reducing inequality as it can give people the ability to take decision with regards to their life and work. Women empowerment is now not limited to urban areas only but women in remote areas are now increasingly making their voices loud and clear in society. Women education will be achieved only when there will be change in the attitude of society with regard to womenfolk, dignity, fairness and equality. The female literacy rate in rural area is comparatively lower than the female literacy rate of urban women. In this paper the investigators intend to study the need and importance of women education to empower the women with special reference to Muslim women.

Keywords: Women Education, Empowerment, Rural Area.

Introduction

In India , The constitution has guaranteed equal status and rights to women but in true sense this theory has not been practiced in real life .As a result of this women are lagging behind men in various spheres of life. Women are partners in development, but their contribution as wives, mothers, income earners and community members, often unrecognized and undervalued. The movement for improving women's status all over the world emphasizes education as the most significant tool for changing women's subjugated position in society. Emphasizing the importance of women in our society Swami Vivekananda said, "As a bird cannot fly on one wing, no society can make progress unless its women to join men in all activities". In India, women constitute nearly 50% of total population. So, happiness and full development will not possible so long as women remain depressed and exploited.

In rural areas, majority of women depend upon men for their livelihood and continue to be voiceless section, though economic value is not attached to women's role. In bringing up the family, their contribution is very significant. Since household, health and nutrition are generally in the hands of the women, the empowerment of women is necessary for ensuring their own welfare and also the well being of the entire household. Real empowerment of women would happen only by adding more value on their contribution to the family and society.

Role of Education to Empower the Women

Education is always regarded as the highest instrument of women empowerment. Education can build the necessary confidence among the women to fight for rights. Proper education can help to engage them in socio-political changes of the world as well as in the financial developments. Moreover, the education will ensure their full and individual participation along with men in all activities. Education can also open the gate of employment, women can be financially independent and this independence can enable their individual decision making position in the society.

Women Empowerment

The meaning of the word 'empowerment' is to give power to make them able. The Oxford dictionary defines empowerment as the action of empowering, the state of being empowered. The term empowerment is a process aimed at changing the nature and discriminations of systematic forces, which marginalized women and other disadvantaged section in a given context.

The term women empowerment refers to the ability in women to take decision with regards to their work and giving equal rights to them in all spheres of life like personal, social, economic, and legal and so on.

Women empowerment is a process in which women challenge the existing norms and culture, to effectively promote their well being.

UNESCO defines empowerment as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and had accountable institutions that affect their lives”. An empowered person can have the necessary control over his/her destiny and life. According to Hashemi Schuler and Riley (1996), the term empowerment also can be viewed as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It strengthens the innate ability by way of acquiring knowledge, power and experience.

Women empowerment refers to their entities. In case of women empowerment, it deals with empowering women through various social processes. The main idea of women empowerment in India is securing equality of rights with men. Women empowerment denotes equal participation of women in political, financial and other issues. Education is considered as the highest instrument for empowering women in India. This can enable Indian women to claim their rights.

In India Traditionally women are deprived from their rights. Male dominated society always suppressed the voice of women in India. It is long cherished dream of the women to claim a world which will allow them to have their own life.

Review of Literature

Nayak Purusottam and Mahanta Bidisha (2007) carried out a study on Women Empowerment in India. Findings of the study revealed that acceptance of unequal gender norms by woman are still prevailing in society. The study concludes by an observation that access to education and employment are only the enabling factors to empowerment, achievement towards the goal. However it depends largely on the attitude of the people towards gender equality.

Ghosh Aritra and Sarkar Rimi (2015) carried out a study on Women Empowerment in India: A sociological perspective. The study concludes that though steps have been taken by the Govt. to ensure gender equality but Govt. initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self decision making and participating in the social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality.

Gupta, V.P. (2018) in his article on empowerment revealed that there should be respect and dignity towards women. Women should be given total independence of their own life and life style in side home and outside at their work. In the article it is also revealed that education is the strong means to achieve the goal of women empowerment.

Need of Women Education to Empower the Women

Women Education refers to the forms of education aims at improving the knowledge and skills

of women and girls. Educated women are capable of bringing socio-economic changes. The constitution of almost all democratic countries including India guarantees equal rights to both men and women. Education is now a fundamental right. An educated woman is aware of her rights and duties to the nation. Need of women empowerment can be summarized as follows:

1. Without women empowerment, we cannot remove injustice and gender bias and inequalities.
2. If women are not empowered, they cannot enjoy security and protection of life.
3. Women empowerment acts as a powerful tool against exploitation and harassment of women.
4. If women are not socially and economically empowered, they will not be able to help in the development of the country.

Muslim Women in India

According to Census 2011, 17.22 crore Muslims constitute 14.23% of the total population in India. Among the Muslim population approximately 48% of them are women. These Muslim women are one of the endangered sections regarding the issue of empowerment in India. According to the census 2011, more than 50% Muslim women are illiterate in India. This illiteracy may affect the process of empowerment.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the importance of women education in rural area.
2. To study the role of women education to empower the women.
3. To study the role of women education to empower the Muslim women.
4. To study the correlation between women education and women empowerment.

Area of Study

The area of the proposed study covered the minority area of BaziaGaon block of Samaguri

Methodology

This study is based on survey method. The Sample of the study is taken from the minority women of Samaguri area. The size of the sample is 300. The sample is selected by using random sampling. Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data were collected with the help of the questionnaire and interview and secondary data were collected from books journals and from different web sites.

Educational Status of Muslim

Table1: Percentage of Muslim Participation to Total Enrolment

Percentage of Muslim to total enrolment	Elementary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
	7.74	9.01	8.34

Table 2: Percentage of Muslim Girls Participation (2014-15) in school

Percentage of Muslim girls participation	Elementary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
	49.79%	51.74%	50.85%

Table 3: Drop out of Muslim Girls' Student in India

Percentage of Muslim girls' participation	Primary	Upper primary	Elementary	Secondary	xi-xii
	6.03%	8.52%	6.81%	23.27%	4%

Source: School Report card, 2014

From the above tables it is observed that the rate of education of Muslim girls is very low. The main cause behind this back drop of Muslim girls' may be summarized as follows:

Dominance of Patriarchy

Muslim community is still dominated by the shackles of patriarchy. The education of a girl child in Muslim family fully depends on the will of the male members of the family.

Religious Rigidity

The rigid nature of Islam frames tough condition for women's freedom.

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is more prevalent in the Muslim community where a girl child is brought up only to take care of the male child.

Child Marriage

In India, it is a common practice for the Muslim girl to get married in their adolescence.

Social Discrimination

In our society a boy child is always preferred than a girl child and Muslim community is no exception of that.

Poverty

According to Sachar committee report there are 31% Muslim population under the poverty line. Poverty does not encourage the guardian to send their girl children to school.

Conclusion

From the study it can be concluded that without education no empowerment will possible. Education is the strong means to empower the women. Another thing to achieve empowerment is that we have to change the attitude of people towards women education. We also have to change the patriarchic mind set and superiority of male over the female. Women should be given equal opportunity for education and empowerment without discrimination. Moreover the attitudinal change in society towards the status and education of women is utmost important to arrive at the goal of women education.

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