

Women Empowerment: Its Importance and Peoples' Attitudes towards Women Education in Rural Area

Abstract

Education is a basic need for the citizen of any nation. It is a powerful tool for reducing inequality as It can give the ability in women to take decision in women to take decision with regards to their life and work giving equal rights to them in all spheres like: personal, social, economic, political, legal and so on. Education is also considered as the milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their lives. 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. At present the female literacy rate according to the census report of 2011 are 65.46 % in comparison to male literacy rate of 80%. In this paper we intend to study the importance of women education to empower the women and the attitude of people towards women education in rural area.

Keywords: Women Education, Attitude, Empowerment.

Introduction

In ancient India the position of women was one of authority and honour. They used to study religion, literature and philosophy. The right to utter sacred 'mantra's" was also enjoyed by them. Very early marriage and compulsory widowhood were rare in Vedic times. During the rule of the East India Company female education was the most neglected subject. There were no space for girls and the number of girls students attending boy's school were negligible. They took up educational work in India only for political and administrative reasons and therefore they devoted their attention to the education of the boys only.

It is true that India made some progress in the field of female education after the rule of Company. But compared to the total requirement of the country this progress was slow indeed. By the end of 1901-02 there were 12 colleges, 467 secondary schools and 5628 primary schools for girls in the post-independence period, education of women progressed considerably. But the disparity between the education of boys and girls still continued. The reasons for this disparity are lack of understanding of the value of girl's education by the parents, want of money for school dress and books, necessity of keeping the girls at home for taking care of the younger children or to help parents in domestic work.

Women Empowerment

The term women empowerment is a recent one. The first year of New Millennium 2001 was declared as "Women Empowerment Year". Education of a woman leads to a better family and ultimately an ideal society to a progressive nation. A progressive nation is one where all the people of the country irrespective of caste, creed and colour are economically, socially, culturally, politically are independent.

The term women empowerment refers to the ability in women to take decisions with regards to their work and giving equal rights to them in all spheres of life like-personal, social, economic, political, and legal and so on. Women empowerment is now not limited to urban, working women but women in even remote villages increasingly making their voices loud and clear in society. They are no longer willing to play a second fiddle to their male counterparts. Educated or not, they are asserting their social and political rights and making their presence felt, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.



Lakshmi Talukdar

Research Scholar,
Deptt.of Psychology,
Gauhati University,
Guwahati, Assam

In the meantime it is also true that women, by and large do not face discrimination in the society today but unfortunately many of them have to face exploitation and harassment. They are still subjected to rape, abuse and other forms of physical violence.

Women empowerment will be achieved only when the attitude of people will change towards women regarding their status, equality and dignity in society. But till now the people in rural area give much importance on man's education even though girls' are performing well. So, it is essential to change the attitude of rural people towards women education so that we can change the scenario of the rural education regarding girls.

Benefits of Women Empowerment

Women empower gives confidence of women in their ability to lead meaningful and purposeful lives. It removes their dependence on others and makes them individuals in their own right. The benefits of women empowerment are ...

1. They are able to lead their lives with dignities and freedom.
2. It adds to their self-esteem.
3. It gives them a distinct identity.
4. They are able to gain positions of respect in society.
5. Empowered women are financially independent and they are able to make contribution to the society.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives confined for the proposed study are:

1. To study the needs of education in women empowerment.
2. To identify the problems of women education.
3. To study the present scenario of women education in India.
4. To study the attitude of rural people towards women education.

Needs of Women Education to Empower the Women

The advancement of women is the most significant fact in modern India. Women have an important role to play in the progress of a country. It is only with the help of education that the level of a nation can be raised. In this regard former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said that education of a boy is education of one person but education of a girl is the education of the entire family.

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.

The needs and importance of women empowerment can be summarized as follows:

1. Without women's empowerment, we cannot remove injustice and gender bias and inequalities.
2. If women's are not empowered, they cannot enjoy security and protection in life.

3. Women empowerment acts as a powerful tool against exploitation and harassment of women.
4. If women's are not socially and economically empowered, they will not help in the development of the country.

Problems of Women Education

The problems of women education in India are caused by social, economic and political factors. Some of the problems prevalent in women education in India along with Assam are given below:

1. Prevalence of old superstitions, traditions and conservatism for which most of our women had to spend their time within the kitchen. These social evils will have to be removed by taking some necessary steps.
2. Lack of provision for separate girls school is also one of the factor responsible for slow growth of women's education in India . In remote areas parents are against of co-education. and they have tendency to get their daughters married at certain age. So, the attitude of the people in the rural areas will have to change to increase the rate of women education.
3. Lack of residential facilities for female teachers : It is seen that sometimes teachers leave their jobs due to lack of security and residential facilities.
4. Employment of girls in domestic work is another problem in women education.
5. Unsuitable curriculum for girls is another problem of women education. There is lack of awareness regarding introduction of significant changes in the curriculum for women.
6. Another problem of women education is poverty. In rural areas people somehow manage to earn their livelihood. So they send their sons to school and avoid sending their daughters.
7. Lack of provision of girls school is also another cause for slow growth of women education in India.

Present Scenery of Women Education in India

Although women are much empowered today in comparison to ancient India some problems such as dowry system, domestic violence, rape and other related crimes are still prevalent. As per the 2011 census women are subject to disadvantages as compared to men in terms of literacy rates. The census report, 2011 reveals that the total literate population is 70.04%. The female literacy rate is 65.46 and male literacy rate is 84.14%. The percentage of I.P.C. crimes committed against women has increased during last five years from 9.25 (2009) to 11.2 % (2013).

Table 1: Literacy Rate in India

Year	Male	Female
1901	9.8	0.7
1911	10.6	1.1
1921	12.2	1.8
1931	15.6	2.9
1941	24.9	7.3
1951	24.9	7.3
1961	34.4	13.0
1971	39.5	18.7
1981	46.9	24.8

1991	63.9	39.2
2001	76.0	54.0
2011	82.14	65.46

Source: Census report, 2011

Attitude of Rural People towards Women Education

Though the women literacy rate is growing fast day by day but in rural areas the growth of women literacy rate is very slow. The cause behind this is that the attitude of people towards women education in rural areas is still not very positive. During the time of survey in one of the village of Bagan area of Kamrup district it is found that people still prefer for a boy child than the girl. They are not giving chance to the girls regarding higher education. They have the intensity to get their daughters married at certain age instead of continuing their education. So, to increase the level of women literacy rate ,we should first change the attitude towards women education.

Conclusion

From the study it can be concluded that that there is positive correlation between education and empowerment. Without education no empowerment is possible. Another thing to achieve empowerment, we have to eliminate male superiority and patriarchal mindset of the people. Women should give equal opportunity for education and employment without discrimination. Moreover, the attitudinal change in society towards women regarding their status and education is utmost important to arrive at the goal of women education.

References

1. Mukerji, S.N.: *Education in India Today and Tomorrow*.
2. Das,Lakshahira : *A text book of Education,21st eEd*
3. Bera, Nabanita: *Women empowerment through education, International journal of Humanities and social science studies, vol.2, 2016*
4. Singh, Khushboo: *Importance of education in empowerment of women in India, International journal of Multidisciplinary Research and developments, vol.1, 2016.*