

Higher Education and Women Participation in India



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Abstract

Education plays a vital role in our society as well as in individual life. Education helps in breaking the pattern of gender discrimination and bring drastic change for women in developing countries. To end the gender bias, it is essential that women to be educated. Country like India, Higher education promote better paying jobs for women. Education helps the women in developing knowledge , self- confidence and skills which is needed in the developmental process. Education has an important significance in the context of transitional society and quasi-traditional like India. The fundamental function of education is to bring the change in the society. The report of Indian Education Commission (1964-66) stated:

"The realization of the country's aspirations involves changes in the knowledge, skills and values of the people as a whole. If this ' change in a grand scale' is to be achieved without a violent revolution there is one and the only instrument that be used-Education".

Keywords: Women Education, Women, Country, Higher Education, Institution, Gender Parity, Development, Equality, Economics, Discrimination.

Introduction

An educated woman helps in bringing socio- economic changes. India is a democratic country that guarantees equal rights to both men and women. A woman plays a vital role in nation progress. It constitutes 50 percent of the country's human resource. Many literacy programs are being taken in favour of women. And many Government and Non-Government organizations are taking initiative in spreading women education. Higher education includes technical , professional and scientific education. For any nation's cultural, social and economic development, Higher education is important. Educating women is not charity. For removing poverty from the country, they should educate their women. Higher education is the education which is beyond the level of secondary education. Education which is given in colleges or universities are Higher education. Medicines, Business, Theology, Art and Music. It also includes other institutions like Technological institutions and Teacher's Training School. Higher educational Institutions gives training of highly skilled specialists in the field of science , technology, culture, economics and various types of higher schools. After completing secondary level educations, these institutions all candidates in their campus. In other words, 'Higher Education' refers the education at the degree level and above.

Aim of the Study

In this paper I will try to delineate the importance of Higher Education for Women in India and its choices and challenges. I shall also mention the place of women in Higher Education in India and the main factors influencing women in completing higher education. Finally effort will be made to give some suggestions for promoting women participation in Higher education.

Methodology of Study

The research methodology towards producing this paper is mainly based on the secondary data and own thoughts and ideas towards this campaign. Help has been taken from various research papers, literature reviews, websites, journals government surveys and newspapers. Limitations are bound to be there in a form of non coordination of many ideas towards the ideas of experts and theoretical nature of this paper.

Meaning of Women Education

Any Education that improves the knowledge, skill of women and girls is women education. It includes various types of education such as general education at schools and colleges, health education, professional education, vocational and technical education etc. Women education

encompasses both non-literary and literary education. It brings socio- economic changes in the life of women.

Higher Education Considered as -"A Boon to Woman"

Knowledge of women increases with the experience that she gain from the supporting world around her and the environment where she live as knowledgeable productive member of the society. The first source of learning for the child is the homely environment with mother's love. Only an educated mother can create this environment at home and allowing her children to gather and analyse information, which helps in adapting to bigger society in future. The children will become better members of society with Critical thinking and analysis.

Higher education leads a woman to "Complete living" with:

Necessity of Life

Education helps in preserving better life as money is maintaining life. and helps in fulfilling all the needs of life.

Self-Confidence

Education develops self-confidence in women. Higher education helps the women in gain knowledge and also enables her to earn a living.

Family Welfare

An educated women deal with both health and financial support to the family.

Involvement In Social and Political Activities

Education helps in make her a wise citizen with effective social and political action. Higher education makes women a better understanding of social and political processes beyond the home in far-reaching social structure.

Complete Living-

Women should be physically strong, earning a living, being a responsible parent and an earnest citizen. These are not enough if a women does not include- ethical value, spiritual value, social value and intellectual values.

Higher education makes the women mentally and emotionally stronger and overcome the obstacles in life and helps to become a complete woman.

Importance of Women Education

The importance of women education is as follows-

1. Economic empowerment- The helpless condition of women cannot be changed as they remain backward and economically dependent on men. With proper education and employment of women, economic empowerment and independence will come into existence.
2. Improved health- Educated mother can take care of herself and her baby. Educated women and girls are aware of the importance of health and hygiene. With health education, they are empowered to lead a healthy lifestyle.
3. Economic development and prosperity- Education helps the women in Economic development and prosperity of the country.
4. Improved life- The life of women can be improved with the help of education. Her rights would not get trodden down. And their identity as an

individual would never get lost. They can read and learn about their rights.

5. Dignity and honor- Educated women are now looked upon with dignity and honor. They become a source of inspiration for million of young girls who make them their role models.
6. Justice- Educated women are well-known about their rights for justice. Dowry, forced-prostitution, female foeticide, child marriage against women were lead to decline.
7. Choice to choose a profession of her choice- Educated women and choose a profession of her choice. A girl should get an opportunity to be educated and can plan become an engineer, doctor, nurses, cook, air-hostesses or a profession of her choice.

Main factors influencing Women's success/ Failure in completing Higher Education

There are few factors which supports in the success and failure in completing higher education in women.

Success

The education system allows females to excel and women are strongly motivated to succeed. Women's Higher Education are promote by Women's universities. There is reduction of prejudice among women's education. Education promotes employment opportunities to women. Some higher education courses provide Scholarship facilities for women. Residential facilities are also provided to female students in some areas.

Failure

Female students face difficulties regarding transport facilities in general. Female students were sexually harassed for completion of Higher education. Women sometimes are not able to complete their education due to marriage. Gender stereotyping inhibits completion of studies. Women also fail to complete their education due to financial constraints. Part-time work to earn living interferes with studies.

Indian Government role in Promoting Gender Equity In Education

There is 48% of the total population of women in India. The major issue in India is Equity in Education. There has been a tremendous growth in women enrolling for higher education after Independence. It helps in reducing the gender gap in higher education. Women have enrolled around 14.72% in professional courses. The highest enrollment in Goa and lowest in Bihar. The need for gender parity in all the stages of education has advocated by various commission and committees set up in India after Independence. The national policy on education, Kothari Commission and the programme of Action in 1992 put enormous emphasis on promotion of gender equity in education by reducing the gender gap in retention, access and transition from one stage to other. The national policy of education focussed on the basic change in the status of Women due to education. To neutralize the accumulated disadvantages of past, the national policy of education become a remarkable achievement for women empowerment. The year 2001 was celebrated as women's empowerment year. This year recognised

women as cause in the development of the country and an agent of socio- economic change.

Indian Government supports women for higher education. Various programmes like Indira Gandhi scholarship for single girl child for pursuing higher and in order to promote higher education through scholarships. Government constructed women hostels and by capacity building for women managers in higher education. Women Leader Women appointed as Board of Governors of apex technical education Institutes of Technology (Nits). Two women scientist nominated first time in the history of IITS.

During XI Plan, the following approached have been made-

1. In respect of Women managers, it offer various training programmes focused on increasing sensitivity to gender issues.
2. To make capacity building a women's movement.
3. To involve Vice- Chancellors of the Universities or Principals of concerned.

In the development of the programme colleges with capacity building is through activities like awareness, sensitization, development and distribution of resource material, motivation workshops, research stimulation workshops, management skill workshops etc.

Government of India had established Equal Opportunity Cells (EOC) for SC/ST/OBC/ Minorities to improve the Social Group Equity. The UGC has assisted institutions to establish "Equal Opportunity Cells" to provide guidance and counselling in academic, social, financial and other matters. Problems faced by Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST), the cell would also take up programmes to Sensitize University / Colleges. The aim of these schemes is to prepare students for NET and All India & State Civil Services examinations and UG/PG level examinations. Government has also established Residential Coaching Academy for women in universities and colleges and for SC/ST/Minorities. With this, the students for NET and All India & State Civil Services examinations and UG/PG level examinations are prepare.

Indian Government has introduced Post-Graduate scholarships for Women, SC/ST in professional courses. And also introduced Post-Doctoral Fellowship for Women and SC/ST.

For the development of girl child education, the CBSE dedicated Udaan program so as to promote the admission of girl student. The CBSE selected about 951 students. The aim is to address the teaching gap between School education and engineering entrance examination. It helps the enrolment of girl students in technical education institutions through academic and incentives support. It offers video, text and practice tests on a tablet which provide free online supplementary lessons in physics, chemistry and maths.

Pragati

To pursue technical education, various scholarships for Girl child are provided. The aim of these scholarships is to encourage and support girl child to get technical education. This scheme providing Rs 30,000 as a scholarship and a tuition

fees of Rs2000 for 10 months until the duration of the course. 4000 girls will be benefited every year under these scholarships. There is a restriction regarding these scholarships, that only one girls per family will income less than 6 lakhs/ annum will be considered. The candidate will be selected on the basis of merit through the qualifying examination of the state.

In India, there is more dropout ratio of girls in education than boys. UGC has also introduced Swami Vivekananda Scholarship, keeping the idea of Swami Vivekananda to promote girls education. This scholarship is for Single Girl Child for research in Social Sciences. The aim is to compensate direct costs of higher education especially for only girl child in their family.

Reasons behind Indian Women opting for Higher Education are-

1. Encouragement by the Family, Society and Government.
2. Women have ability to combine her studies and work with family life.
3. It helps in reducing discrimination regarding girls in families.
4. Higher aspirations to obtain tertiary degrees.
5. Higher preparation for higher education.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "If you educate the man, you educate the person but if you educate the woman, you educate the nation". There is drastic increase in women's access to colleges and universities. An educated women has power to be a better citizen.

Girls' and Women' Right to Education

Gender inequality has been a major barrier to human development today. Since 1990, Many steps have taken to remove gender inequality but they have not yet achieved the expected gender equity. Women and girls are discriminated against in education, political representation, health, labour market and so on. To measure gender inequalities , The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is used in three important aspects of human development-

Empowerment

Proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females and adult females and male over 25 years of age with at least some secondary education.

Economic Status

Measured by labour force participation rate of female and male population over 15 years of age.

Reproductive Health

It is measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates.

According to the World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education, participants of the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, and of subsequent international assemblies, embraced on ambitious vision of a world in which "all children would have access to an education that would enable them to realize their highest potential as individuals, parents, citizens and workers." Gender parity intends to achieve equal participation for girls and boys in education, but this does not mean the education which is imparting is one of quality.

The situation regarding the drop out ratio of girls from school has change alot with the time. Girls'

enrolment has been rising faster at both primary and secondary levels. Moreover, Women enroll in higher educational system are less likely exceed men in grades. In 2013, an estimated 31 million girls of primary school age and 32 million girls of lower secondary school age were out of school. A better education doesnot always guarantee better employment opportunities. Women also face significant discrimination in the labor market and end up in jobs where they don't use any of there skills.

All countries face lack of gender parity and gender equality issue all around the world. Girls and women education is both an intrinsic right. Latter to help them reach other development objectives. Gender disparities are held in every rich or poor country. For this, women empowerment should be a world wide priority. By educating, Girls and women, it helps in the breakdown of poverty. Educated women are less likely to get married early and against their will. They are less likely to die in childbirth. They more likely to have healthy babies. And likely to send their children to school. Education may not be the only input into women's empowerment, it is a central one.

Status of Women in Indian Society

In Ancient times, Women held high position and status. But women still do not enjoy equal status with men. The position of women's in her family depends upon her education level. If women are highly education, She enjoys greater equality in the family. Women still lack the needed of self-confidence even education made they economically independent. The reason behind this can be they brought up under the old cultural atmosphere. Even after the acquisition of modern education, they have not been able to shake off its influence. However, in modern times her role has changed. Women have contributed alot in the society. Women have all the rights to command equal status with men. There is a need for complete equality among men and women.

Principles of Women's Empowerment

To improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities, women empowerment is necessary. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential. Women empowerment is essential to build stronger economies and achieve internationally agreed goals for development. Gender diversity helps business perform better signals that self-interest and common interest can come together.

The Women's Empowerment Principals offer practical guidance to business. And the private sector on how to empower women in the community, market place and at workplace. The principles are designed to support companies in reviewing existing policies and practices to realize women's empowerment.

The Principles are as follows

1. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
2. For gender equality, it establish high- level corporate leadership.
3. Treat all men and women equally at work-respect and support human rights and non discrimination.

4. For all women and men workers, it ensures the health, safety and well- being.
5. Promote equality through advocacy and community initiatives.
6. Implement supply chain, enterprise development and marketing practices that empower women.
7. To achieve gender equality, it measure and publicly report on progress.

Conclusion

Earlier Girls and Women were educated only for traditional household works. But now, there is a change in the role status of women. Women are treated equally as compared to men in the field of education. There are changes in the role- status of women. Families educate their girls or women equally as they educate boys and men. Parents are fulfilling the dream of their children without gender parity. The educated women should insist on exercising their political, social, civil and economic rights. This leads to overall growth and development of women skills and knowledge in the society. Education promotes awareness of rights and entitlements in society. Education helps the women to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence. This help to build positive image and developing their ability to think critically, fostering better decision making and helping them more informed choices about education of their children, health and employment. Educated women help in the development of society as well as nation. The economic independence that education brings is an added incentive. We can hope for better days while all women of our country will be educated and enlightened.

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