

Role of Education and Legal Provisions in Women Empowerment

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Abstract

Education is a mile stone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to opportunities, to challenge their traditional roles and to change their lives. If social status of women is to be uplifted, education should be viewed as an agent of basic change for the status of women. Empowerment of women means equal status to women. Equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in economic and commercial sectors, awareness of their right and responsibilities, improved standards of living and acquiring self reliance, self esteem and self confidence. Education would surely liberate or equip women with ability to take control of her life, accomplish her dreams and enhance her status; educated women are empowered women. Women and men are the two wheels of our society. Everyone should have equal rights and opportunities to service in that society.

Keywords: Women; Women Empowerment; Education and Women Empowerment; Legal Provisions and Women Empowerment.

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Introduction

Education is one factor that plays the most crucial role in empowering women. School, Colleges and other professional bodies are persistently trying to educate, motivate and trained the women in their chosen areas of career through curriculum, training, field exposure and other practical methods. It may be mentioned that education that inculcates human and spiritual values is of great significance for the empowerment of women. Educating women benefits the whole of the community. It has more significant impact on poverty and development than men's education. Education would empower women to achieve many social, mental, economic and political dreams which are denied to her traditionally.

Nearly half of population is of women. For the development of any nation women can make their contribution equal to men. Indian women are as capable as any women in any part of the world. But unlike women in many western countries, Indian women are denied equal opportunities for working with men in many spheres of life constitutionally, Indian Women have been granted equal rights with men but practically speaking they are kept much behind men in various life activities. Women should be given equal rights with men everywhere according to their special interest and legitimate demands.

Objectives

- To know the need of Women Empowerment.
- To highlight on the Universities College, NGO, Govt. efforts for Women Empowerment
- To highlight on significance of education in woman empowerment
- To highlight on woman rights helpful in woman empowerment

Need of Women Empowerment

For a balanced development, not only sociologically but also mathematically as they constitute fifty percent of the human race, it is imperative that every section of the society develops equally and in harmony with each other. Home and hearts are not only two places for women. They are performing their responsibilities successfully both inside and outside the fourwalls of the house. If Gender Justice is to be ensured, women need to empower socially, economically and politically. In fact it is the empowerment strategy that has emerged as the most challenging task not only for those who are working for women, but also for women themselves. In this regard India among countries to give women equal franchise and has a highly credible record with regard to the enactment of laws to protect and promote the interest of women. Empowerment includes higher literacy level and education for women, better health care for women and children.

Education and Women Empowerment

Woman is the most beautiful creation of God as in her lap Child feels to be in heaven. Women can even help their children in their studies if they are literate. Education is essential for everyone but in case of women it is particularly significant education not only opens up vast avenues and opportunities for growth but effect families and future generation. Education plays an important role in bringing about awareness on women's right. Education of a girl child is one of the most effective means to counter gender discrimination and enhance status of women and higher education would contribute much more effectively in abolishing.

gender inequality. Education helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain confidence to calm them educated women can recognized the importance of healthcare and know how to seek it for themselves and their children education mother can play quality attention to the needs of their children effectively. Usually children's educational attainments are linked to education of parents and the mother education is certainly more influential than the father's as he is primary source of influence on children during early years of socialization. Education of women is a step in direction of ensuring gender equality education empowers women to make decisions about themselves their families and communities. Many of the problems of Muslim women are on account of illiteracy but here too, it must be emphasized that Islam has

never proscribed literacy for women. It is highly misleading to think so. According to Quran both Muslim men and women should be educated.

The policy of the Government of India for empowerment and development of women and lays emphasis on removal of women illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to elementary education, women's participation in vocational technical and professional education at different levels. It actively promotes women's studies as a part of various courses and encourages education institutions to take up programs to further women's development and promote women's participation in nontraditional occupations and existing and emerging technologies. UGC has a number of schemes for promoting women's education as:

- Setting up of centres and cells for women studies
- Special schemes for construction of women hostels
- Technology course for women in women universities for undergraduate courses in Engineering and Technology
- Day Care Centres in universities

The agenda of empowerment of women would simply not get accomplished through legal and constitutional provisions but through proper education, the task is challenging yet not impossible.

Certain steps are essential in universities/ colleges that play major active role for women empowerment in society

- Interaction of universities with girls school
- Short term and Up-to-date courses for women
- Relationships of universities/ colleges with industries
- Scholarships for girls in universities/ colleges
- Reservation of seats for girls in different disciplines
- Introducing New professional courses for women

Such type of active participation of universities/ colleges will make women self confident and self reliant. Various action planned suggested should be employed by various universities/colleges all-over India so as to empower women and to create a vibrant society.

National Policy on Education

Gender Inclusion Fund toward equitable education for girls as well as transgender students and a substantial increase in public investment to bring education spending to 6% of gross domestic product, there are growing concerns about its implications on girls' education. Indian planners no doubt realized the importance of universal education and they made many acts and laws for it. The 1986 National policy on education put emphasis on compulsory primary education for all children with special stress on girl education. The national Development Council Report on literacy in 1992 also laid emphasis on female education.

Women Rights and Empowerment

The human society consists of being two types' men and women. Both of them are equally vital for existence and continuity of society but in reality that women in all ages and societies have remained inferior in status than to men. They are considered as the object of sexual satisfaction and creation of children. In India women until now is hankering for proper status and appropriate role in the society. They are lower in status to men and in spite of great changes the largest chunk of them are illiterate and are confined to the bounds of which their economic role is restricted to the discharge of domestic works. The traditional social customs like instance on women's confinement to home subordinate position to women, women as dependent on husband and parents and negation of independence in any field. Women constitute 48% of the Indian population, but when we often sermonize human rights, we often forget that women as human beings are also entitled to fundamental human rights. We have denied and continue to deny them basic human rights. Even after 58 years of independence these women continue to live in a state of neglect and exploitation.

In later years a powerful reformist movement led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal, Justice Ranade in Bombay and Swami Dayanand Saraswati in Punjab sprang up. They denounced the disabilities that handicapped women's social advancement and try to abolish practices such as Sati, early marriage etc. through legal means.

After independence BR Ambedkar has tried to remove the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. The first natural attention in this regard was given to securing legal and constitutional rights. The constitution of India was ahead of its time not only by the standards of the developing nations but also of many developed

countries, in removing discrimination against women in legal and public domain of the republic. It provided complete equality to women and fulfills the promise made many years ago by national movement: women got the right to vote along with men without any qualification of education or property or income.

Empowerment of women in Indian context primary really means that they should be able to turn their aspirations into policy and law. They should have control over their lives and livelihood decisions. They should also be able to pursue self realization and self assertion, and live informed, rational, self-interested lives as those in upper reaches of Indian society. The constitution of India has guaranteed equality liberty and dignity to the women. The preamble promises to secure for all its citizens, social justice, economic and political liberty of thoughts, expression belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity, to provide them all fraternity, assuming the dignity of individual and unity of nation.

The roles, rights and duties privileges have been different for men and women in context of familial and social living. Women can make their contribution equal to man for the development of nation. Now the home and hearts are not only two places for women they are performing their responsibility successfully both inside and outside for walls of the house. If gender justice is to be insured women need to empower socially, economically and politically. In fact it is empowerment strategy that has emerged as the most challenging task not only for those who are working for women, but also for women themselves.

While it is true that Indian women condition has improved since independence (in 1947) with respect to literacy, life expectancy, maternal mortality. They continue to occupy a subordinate position vis-a-vis Indian men in all spheres of life economic, social and political. In the plan economy of India the government is deeply concerned with the improvement of social economic status of women. The five year plans have consistently place special emphasis to improve the conditions of women and integrate them in economic development process. A series of social legislation have been enacted and various welfare schemes have also been introduced from time to time improve the condition of women.

Special achievement for the empowerment of women during ninth five year plan (1997- 2002)

- Introduction of a bill on domestic violence against women (prevention) to eliminate

all forms of domestic violence against women and the girls 2002.

- Adaptation of national policy of empowerment of women to eliminate all types of discrimination against women and to ensure gender justice, besides empowering women both socially and economically.
- Launching of 'Swa Shakti' to create an enabling environment for empowerment of women through setting up self-reliant, self help group (SHGs) (1988).

Political Empowerment of Women

The political empowerment of women is only a part of the overall mainstreaming of women at the political level only a microscopic minority of women. At the political level only a microscopic minority of women at the helm of affairs, can affect the change in the life of women. It is the economic and social empowerment of women that needs to be given greater importance. This could be achieved a lot through education of women means greater Awareness of their role in society, Awareness of their rights, better knowledge of housekeeping and better performance of their role as a house wife and mother education and training have opened up the avenues of employment and self employment in the organized. Sector as never before women are working in diverse fields as doctors, Engineers, IAS officers, IPS officers, Bank officials and in a wide range of sectors in the unorganized sector. In the agriculture most of the operations are run by the women.

The Constitution of India granted equality to women and empowered the State to take special measures of positive discrimination by eliminating the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by the women. The Fundamental Rights ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law and prohibit any kind of discrimination against women irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of specific importance in this regard Article 51 A(e) states that it is the duty of every citizen in India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 strives for removing gender based discrimination and effectuating economic empowerment of Hindu women. The 73rd and 74th amendments (1993) to the constitution of India

have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of panchayats and municipalities of women laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels. Human Rights Commission and Mahila Aayog are such branches of government to protect the rights of women to make them stand along the men with pride.

Women specific legislation

- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956
- The dowry prohibition Act 1961
- The commission of Sati prevention act 1987

Women Related Legislatures

- The married women's Property Act 1874
- The workmen's succession act 1925
- The child marriage restriction act 1929
- The Hindu Marriage Act 1955
- The Maternity Benefit Act 1961
- The Indian divorce act 1969
- The family court Act 1986
- National Commission for Women act 1990

These all government efforts are made for girls for the betterment of their status

- Article 14 confers equal rights and opportunities on men and women in political economic and social affairs.
- Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any Citizen on the ground of sex religion race cast etc.
- Article 15 (3) empowers that the status to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women.
- Article 51(A) imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Women Empowerment and NGOs

Voluntary Agencies (NGOs) came into existence spontaneously, voluntarily and without any compulsion or control to fulfill particular needs of some groups of people or the society. NGOs are playing an effective role in the eradication of poverty, illiteracy, ill health and overall backwardness of the villages. They were instrumental initiating, stimulating and societies. NGOs are broad based association with people having volunteered for a

particular purpose cause. Participatory cultures of these agencies contribute for the success in the empowerment of women. Helping women stand on their own through such programs as social economic programs vocational training and other similar programs.

Conclusion

Women and men are two wheels of our society. Everyone should have equal rights and opportunities to service in that society. Nearly half of the population is of women for the development of any Nation. Women can make their contribution equal to men. A literate Mother always teaches their children good manners, politeness, moral values etc., so that they May progress smoothly in their life. Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with knowledge, skills and self confidence necessary to participate fully in the process of development. Educating women, benefits the whole society. It is not enough to provide only education to women but they require access to the market and employment also. Government also has taken several steps for the women empowerment. Since childhood, it is made necessary to send them to school and give them equal love by parents as compared to their sons. Women will gain power only when both men and women begin to respect and accept the contribution of women.

Today many women are more liberated and have secured their rightful place in a family and Society. We can see their increasing nos in science, discovery, defense and public affairs, human engineering, in promotion of health, vigour, longevity, fine arts and moral idealism. The main reason of improvement in women's condition is due to awareness about woman rights and education facilities. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. Women should equal with men in matters of education, employment, inheritance, marriage, and politics etc. "If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered". PT. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. The Fundamental Rights ensure equality and prohibit discrimination against women irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity.

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