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1. Role of Education in Women Empowerment

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Abstract

A crusader for women empowerment, Savitribai Phule's contribution in the field of education has left an evergreen mark on India's historical pages. At a time when India was plagued with women's outraged modesty, she acted as a messiah for all those women who were living a life of servitude. Jyotirao Govindrao Phule occupies a unique position among the social reformers of Maharashtra in the nineteenth century. This paper discusses the impact of education on empowerment of women, as well as the challenges, various constitutional provisions and schemes of Government for empowering women. Women empowerment is an important area of study in the modern era of gender equality. It has become crucial for alleviating poverty and procuring overall growth.

Introduction

"Women represent fifty per cent of population, make up thirty per cent of the official labor force, perform sixty per cent of all working hours and receive ten per cent of the world's income and caretakers of household affairs.

Literature survey reveals that from ancient time women in our land were not given proper treatment. Her societal positioning was never at par with men. She was not given even the basic rights. They were even equated to animals and put to the lowest rung of humanity. (S. Mohammad Azaal, 2013). Education is regarded as a basic requirement and a fundamental right for the citizens of any nation. It is a controlling tool for reducing inequality as it can give people the ability to become independent. According to Business Dictionary, empowerment means, "A executive practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with employees so that they can take initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance. Empowerment is based on the idea that giving employees skills, resources, authority, opportunity, motivation, as well holding them responsible and accountable for outcomes of their actions, will contribute to their competence and satisfaction". There are other definitions of

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empowerment as: "The term empowerment refers to a range of activities from individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilization that challenge basic power relations. For individuals and groups where class, caste, ethnicity and gender determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment begins when they not only recognize the systemic forces that oppress them, but act to change existing power relationships. Empowerment, therefore, is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systemic forces that marginalize women and other disadvantaged sectors in a given context. "It is giving lawful power or authority to act. If people were empowered they would be able to participate in the planning, execution and implementation of developmental schemes.

Empowerment has many elements i.e. economic, social, political and personal. Economic empowerment means to give woman her rights in the economy. Social empowerment means status of woman in the society should be equal to man by eliminating injustice and inequity. Political empowerment means women should have seats in provincial and national assemblies and giving one woman right of one vote. Personal empowerment means women should have freedom in their personal matters. Women contribute to their families, societies and countries financially. This brings development in the economy.

Women empowerment is a foundation process of transforming gender power relations, developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge the power relation. It encompasses a wide array of things that are common like economic independence, effective communication, discrete thinking etc.

Importance of Educational Empowerment

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "To awaken the people, it is women who must be awakened; once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves" Education helps to enable women to exercise their rights on equal footing with men and participate in national development. . "Education is the milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life." The National Policy of Education (1986) has emphasized the need of women education for their effective participation in social and economic activities. The NPE, 1986 has stated, "Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar fought for tooth and nail for woman's economics liberation and for



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securing woman's social rights, He stressed the need to safeguard the dignity and to respect the modesty of the women folk (S. Mohammad Azaal- 2013).

Education empowers women more effectively which would help to eliminate gender inequality, expand their potentials, augment social and economic return, improve the quality of life, produce educated ,healthy children and reduce mortality during delivery also stand to fight against female infanticide .Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women and to make them confident enough to claim their rights.

The following table shows that Literacy rate in India.

Table 1 Literacy rate in India

Sr. No	Year	Males	Females	Total
01	1901	9.8	0.7	5.3
02	1911	10.6	1.1	5.9
03	1921	12.2	1.8	7.2
04	1931	15.6	2.9	9.5
05	1941	24.9	7.3	16.1
06	1951	24.9	7.3	16.7
07	1981	46.9	24.8	36.2
08	1991	63.9	39.2	52.1
09	2001	76.0	54.0	62.38
10	2011	82.1	65.46	74.00

From the above table we can see that the literacy rate of women is increased.

. Literacy and educational levels are increasing for Indian women still there is gap between male and female literacy rate which can be seen in the following Table

Table 2

Year	Percentage of literacy in total	% of Male literacy	% of Female literacy	M/F Literacy
1971	34.45	45.96	21.98	23.98
1981	43.57	56.37	29.75	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	63.38	70.85	54.16	21.69
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

.Educational statistics ,Ministry of HRD,Dept of Edu

In the above table we can see that in 2011 the gender gap is 16.68%



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Education is the systematic process of teachings, training, and guiding students to acquire knowledge, skill and understanding through practical experience or deep study on a subject, especially at a learning institution. It is the practice of being taught things, and learning new skills. Education happens at school and in university but it can also happen at home, in the workplace and through life experience more generally. It is the acquisition of knowledge, various life skills, and values in order to become a better person. Education helps people to become literate and reasonable. Women education refers to every form of education that aims at improving the knowledge, and skill of women and girls.

The Role of Education in Women Empowerment

There was a time when people thought that it was not necessary to educate girls. Savitribai Phule was the first women teacher in India. She opened a girls school along with her husband Jyotirao Phule in Pune, Maharashtra

Educating Women is an essential step towards strengthening the position of women in the society. A modern educated woman give due importance to her social life as well. Education broadens her outlook. It helps in developing her personality. Until the middle of nineteenth century, girls and women were educated only for traditional household works.

The social reformers in the nineteenth century for the first time raised the question of low status of women in India. Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, M.G. Ranade, Maharshi Karve, Jyotiba Phule, Dayanand Saraswati and many others got quite concerned with woman's low position in society. They felt very strongly that efforts must be made to raise her status.

Women's position in the family very much depends upon the level of their education. Higher the level of her education, greater equality she enjoys in the family. It appears that Indian woman is still not treated at par with man in social and family life. The educated women even today though earning, are in acquiescence with the doctrine of the male domination. The education may have made them economically independent, but they still lack the needed self-confidence.

Traditionally, an Indian woman had four fold status-role sequences. These were her role as a daughter, wife, housewife (homemaker), and mother. Traditionally Indian women exist because of the family and for the family. The woman, whose status and role traditionally was well defined and almost fixed in the society, is now experiencing far-reaching changes.



The following table show that total workers in India as per the censuses taken in the year 2011 and also exhibit the level and percentage of women workers in India

TABLE:- 03

Population/ Workers	Persons		Male	Female
	Total			
Population		1,21,05,69,573	62,31,21,843	58,74,47,730
No. of workers		48,17,43,311	33,18,65,930	14,98,77,381
% of workers		39.79	53.26	25.51
	Rural			
Population		83,34,63,448	42,76,32,643	40,58,30,805
No. of workers		34,85,97,535	22,67,63,068	12,18,34,467
% of workers		41.83	53.03	30.02
	Urban			
Population		37,71,06,125	19,54,89,200	18,16,16,925
No. of workers		13,31,45,776	10,51,02,862	2,80,42,914
% of workers		35.31	53.76	15.44

25.51% of the women workers working in various activities in India out of women in India. In rural areas, the women workers are in higher participating in their family development and also the economic development of the nation as compare to urban areas

Table 4 Work Participation Rate By Sex In India (1971-2011) Total/ Rural/ Year Urban
Persons Males Females

Sr. No.	Total/ Rural/Urban	Persons	Males	Females
1971	Total	33.08	52.61	12.11
	Rural	34.03	53.62	13.42
	Urban	29.34	48.82	6.68
1981	Total	36.70	52.62	19.67
	Rural	38.79	53.77	23.06
	Urban	29.99	49.06	8.31
1991	Total	37.50	51.61	22.27
	Rural	40.09	52.58	26.79
	Urban	30.16	48.92	9.19
2001	Total	39.10	51.68	25.63
	Rural	41.75	52.11	30.79
	Urban	32.25	50.60	11.88
2011	Total	39.8	53.3	25.5



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Rural	41.8	53.0	30.00
Urban	35.3	53.8	15.40

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India.

The work participation rate by sex in India of rural area is more than urban area.

Table 5 Percentage Of Female Main Workers To Total Female Population Under Broad Categories

Sr. No.	Year	Female Main Worker	Cultivators	Agricultural Laborers	Household Industry	Other Workers
01	1981	13.99	04.65	06.46	00.64	02.24
02	1991	15.93	05.51	07.05	00.55	02.82
03	2001	14.68	05.11	04.51	00.95	04.11
04	2011	25.50	24.00	41.1	05.70	29.20

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India.

The women workers' participation in the various levels of activities is in increasing level. Because of the women empowerment the freedom of working and the need for earning to maintain their family as the better economic level.

Challenges

There are many challenges that are plaguing the issues of women's right in India. Targeting these issues will directly benefit the empowerment of women in India

Education: Even after 65 years since independence when education is concerned. 82.14% of adult men are educated, only 65.46% of adult women are known to be literate in India. The gender prejudice is in higher education, specialized professional trainings which batter women very hard in employment and attaining top leadership in any field.

Skill gaps are a key constraint to innovation, hindering productivity growth and economic development. In particular, shortages in the supply of trained professionals in disciplines related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) should be increased for the innovating the potential of a society.

Poverty: Poverty is considered the greatest threat to peace in the world, and eradication of poverty should be a national aim as important as the eradication of illiteracy. Due to this, women are exploited as domestic helps.

Health and Safety: The health and safety concerns of women are paramount for the well being of a country and is an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. However there are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned.



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Professional Inequality: This inequality is practiced in employment and promotions. Women face countless handicaps in male customized and dominated environs in Government Offices and Private enterprises.

Morality and Inequality: Due to gender bias in health and nutrition there is unusually high mortality rate in women reducing their population further especially in Asia, Africa and China.

Household Inequality: Household relations show gender bias in infinitesimally small but significant manners all across the globe, more so, in India e.g. sharing burden of housework, childcare and menial works by so called division of work

Constitutional Provisions For Empowering Women In India

1. Equality before law for all persons (Article-14);
2. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15(i)); • However, special provisions may be made by the state in favor of women and children Article 15(3);
3. Equality of opportunity for all citizens relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state (Article 16);
4. State policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39(a); (v) equal pay for equal work for both men and women (Article 39(d); 9
5. Provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief (Article 42);
6. Promotion of harmony by every citizen of India and renouncement of such practices which are derogatory to the dignity of women Article 51A(e)
7. Reservation of not less than one-third of total seats for women in direct election to local bodies, viz; Panchayats and Municipalities (Articles 343(d) and 343 (T).

Government Schemes for empowering Women: The Government of India has undertaken different schemes for welfare upliftment and security of the women. Some of these may be noted here- „Rastriya Mahila Kosh” (RMK) 1992-93, „Mahila Samridhi yojana” (MSY) 1993, „Indira Mahila Yojana” (IMY) 1995, „Swa Shakti Group”, „Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women” (STEP), „Creches/Day-care Centre for the Children of working and ailing mother”, „Hostels for working women”, „National Mission for



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Empowerment of Women, „Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), „Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Employment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG), 2010, „Women’s Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS), „Working Women’s Forum, „Indira Priyadarshini Yojana, „NGO’s Credit Schemes. The present Prime Minister Modi Government has launched the programmes of „Beti bachao, beti padhao aims at tackling the low child sex ratio of 918 girls child in resources and savings of a family which is helpful to meet the expenses of higher education and marriage. The first year of New Millennium (2001) was declared as “Women Empowerment Year”. It is necessary to supplement Government efforts by nongovernment organizations for facilitating women empowerment. Yet India has not achieved the expected goals, hence comprehensive programme for empowering women is still demanding. The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog has launched Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) on the occasion of International Women’s day (March 8, 2018).

The goal of National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The policy states that: “Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured *Here are 5 women of Indian origin, who became role models of empowerment when they decided to carve a niche for themselves in a man’s world.*

Mother Teresa, Kalpana Chawla, Indira Gandhi, Indra Nooyi, Aishwarya Rai

Conclusion

Women empowerment is not an automatic and spontaneous process. It requires efforts deliberately and consistently from all human beings in all walks of life. To conclude the present scenario, it may be said that education is the keystone of women empowerment which could be achieved through heartfelt and co-operative efforts of the Government and NGO’s and also eliminating the traditional attitude, norms and practices through proper education and guidance. The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grass root problem. Swami Vivekananda had said “That nation which doesn’t respect women will never become great now and nor will ever in future” and in pursuit of making India a great nation let us work and strive hard in empowering women to the maximum.



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