

## IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN SOCIETY

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### Abstract

*Education plays a critical role in empowering the women and eliminating all kinds of discriminations, which the women have been facing in our country today. Indian women generally faced all type of barriers to success like illiteracy, domestic violence, lack of motivational support and many more. So, higher education is very essential for the harmonious development of the country that women should go hand by hand and shoulder to shoulder with men in all fields. The higher education is the tool that can help to empower women with knowledge, skills and self confidences necessary to participate fully in the development process and bring drastic changes for women in developing country. It is the most powerful instrument for reducing the poverty and inequalities and thus laying the basis for sustained economic growth and effective governance. This paper describes the facts related to women empowerment and focusing on women in quality based higher education.*

**Keywords:** Quality based education, Women empowerment, Knowledge, Skills.

### 1. Introduction

"To educate your women first and leave them to themselves, they will tell you what reforms are necessary." ---- **Swami Vivekananda.**

Higher Education is the aggregate of systematized knowledge and practical skills that allow theoretical and practical problems to be solved by a given type of training, utilizing and creatively developing the modern achievements of science, technology and culture. **Pt Jawaharlal Nehru** rightly points out that "If you educate a man you educate an individual, however if you educate a women

you educate a family. Women empowered means, mother India empowered. <sup>3</sup>Ush and Sharma, (2004) contend that women play a vital part in the growth of a society. Their contribution has historically been very considerable throughout the rise and fall of civilizations. Their roles in social life are always numerous, diverse and highly valuable.

## **2. Challenges of Education**

Women face many social challenges today, whether it is making soaps and incense in order to secure an income for her family to raise children amidst the harsh economic crisis. This fact is presented by <sup>8</sup>Sharma, U and Sharma, M.B (2004) as "One of our greatest needs is to spread education among our women. As a matter of fact there is room for the extension of education even among men. The condition of women's education is, however, such that any attempt as its spread deserves help and encouragement from all quarters".

## **3. Role of Women in Society**

Women are considered as the goddess in the Indian society from the ancient time however it is also true that they are not treated as goddess. Considering them as goddess is not enough to give them full women empowerment in the society; however it needs positive continuous effort and participation of both men and women to really bring women empowerment. Women play a greater role in everyone's life without which we cannot imagine the success of life. Earlier they were considered as only wives and mother who have to cook food, clean home and take care of the whole family members alone. But, now the condition has been improved a little bit, they have started taking part in the many activities other than family and kids.

## **4. Why there is need for Women Empowerment?**

Dependent women are not empowered women. If women think just that being highly educated and employed they are empowered, it is a myth. Women have to awake from deep slumber and understand the true meaning of empowerment. Everyone must understand that empowering women doesn't

mean empowering them in technical area only. Women should remember that they are also rational, intelligent and thinking human beings. women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order.

#### **5. Relationship between higher education and women empowerment**

Higher education definitely raises women's status whether she contribute in the income of the family or not. She can be at par with men. Majority of the women in our country are uneducated that is why they are suppressed. It is the duty of school teachers to tell them that becoming a wife is not their ultimate goal. Education can bring phenomenal change in women's life resulting in social transformation in the long run by inculcating following attributes among them: Enhancing their confidence, raising their status in the family and society, Bring awareness about their rights, boosting their self esteem 5. Increasing their self efficacy, reducing their dependency, Opening career opportunities increased knowledge, self-confidence and awareness of gender equity are indicators of empowerment process <sup>7</sup>Murphy-Graham, 2008.

#### **6. Hindrances of Women Empowerment in Higher Education**

There are many hindrances in the path of women empowerment and in higher education. Some of them are as follows: Lack of education, financial constraints, Family responsibility, Low mobility, Low ability to bear risk, Low need for Achievement, Absence of Ambitions for the Achievement, Social status.

The following approaches have been made during XI Plan

Colleges in the development of the programme with capacity building is through activities like sensitization, awareness, motivational workshops, development and distribution of resource material, research stimulation workshops, management, management skill workshops etc. To improve the Social Group Equity, Government of India had Established Equal Opportunity Cells (EOC) for SC/ST/OBC/Minorities. The UGC has assisted institutions to establish "Equal opportunity Cells" to oversee

the effective implementation of policies and programmes for disadvantaged groups and to provide guidance and counseling in academic, financial, social and other matters. Government has also established Residential Coaching Academy for SC/ST/Minorities and Women in Universities and Colleges and the aim of these schemes is to prepare students for NET and All India & State Civil Services examinations and UG/PG level examinations.

### 7. Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, prevailing gender disparities in terms of education, health, employment and representation in national parliament are sole reasons behind this discrimination. As gender discrimination at work constraints economic growth, increases poverty and negative effect on the wealth and well being of families and communities. Therefore utmost importance should be given to eliminate all kinds of gender disparities. There is a pressing need to take in hand the challenges hampering the access of higher education to women in India. It is also necessary to identify and resolve barriers such as male attitude to women's role and capabilities can help to open up more involvement for women in higher education.

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