



EDUCATION IS A KEY OF CHANGING WOMEN'S STATUS IN INDIAN SOCIETY

Dr. Sanjay, Assistant Professor of Commerce

Akash College of Education, Adampur

Abstract:

Education plays a crucial role in changing the status of women in Indian society. With increased access to education, women are empowered to make informed decisions, pursue their dreams, and challenge traditional gender norms. This paper explores the impact of education on the status of women in India, highlighting the barriers they face and the potential opportunities that education can provide. By examining existing literature and case studies, this paper aims to demonstrate the transformative power of education in advancing gender equality and empowering women in Indian society. By providing women with access to education, they are able to acquire knowledge and skills that can help them to improve their socio-economic status, and access better opportunities for personal and professional growth. Education also enables women to participate more actively in decision-making processes, and empowers them to challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes that limit their potential

Introduction

Women's status in Indian society has long been a topic of concern, with gender inequality being a pervasive issue in many aspects of life. Education is recognized as a key factor in empowering women and changing their status in society. This research paper aims to explore the importance of education in improving women's status in Indian society, as well as examining the challenges and opportunities that exist in this context. The RTE Act was put into effect in 2012. The Indian

government has demonstrated a strong commitment to education. It promised "free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen" (World Bank 1997 b) in an article of the constitution. Since education is a tool for social and economic change, it needs to be refocused to help women follow the road of reformation and advancement. Lenin stated that education "is a long and difficult matter."

It is a lengthy process since altering human psychology is an intricate task that cannot be completed quickly. It is also challenging because teaching new men and women requires them to overcome many of the obstacles of the past. "Without female education, progress can be transmitted to each generation either not at all or very slowly," stated Archer, highlighting the importance of women's general education. Though it could appear overdone and overemphasized, the argument cannot be delivered with greater vigor than this. "Education is not a luxury, it is a necessity," Mehta says, elucidating the significance of general education. Research needs to be focused on obtaining a decent education that has some promise. "History has established beyond doubt that education forms a basis for the development of the human society," according to Khanna and Varghes. Nonetheless, there are two distinct periods in which women's educational growth can be examined: the pre-independence and post-independence periods.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Universal Deceleration of Human Rights regards education as one of the basic rights of every human being. The movement for improving women's status all over the world has always emphasized education as the most significant instrument for changing women's subjugated position in society.

According to Runcimam "class, status and power are the manifestation of economic, social and political inequalities. Dubey (1975), said that the "inequalities in case of class indicates the economic inequalities, i.e. lower, middle and upper classes. Inequalities of status in terms of class expresses the difference in the living standard, in the style of life according to the higher or lower status or according higher or lower class. This situation is particularly creative by occupational mobility. This occupational mobility is the result of higher education. Higher

education among women has so far been confined to higher castes. Among the lower castes, it has not gained much significance”.

India is a multifaceted and extremely hierarchical society where no generalization could apply to all the nation’s various regional, religious, social and economic groups. Dubey and Palriwala (1990) “Women are expected to be chaste and especially modest in all actions which may constrain their ability to perform in the workplace on an equal basis with men. Cultural rules such as purdah place some Indian women in paradoxical situations, even when families suffer economically. Women's participation in employment outside the home is viewed as slightly inappropriate, subtly, wrong and dangerous to their chastity and womanly value”.

Maria Mies (1980), states that there has been no structural or quantitative change in the conditions of educated Indian women. In other words, if education has to help in realizing the goals, the educational system must change structurally, quantitatively and methodologically. Education of women has achieved significant progress but this has not helped to change the attitude or values of men and women in the direction of real equality.

Women’s position has worsened considerably in every sphere except some gains for middle-class women in terms of education and employment. They are the more visible section of society and their advancement generated a myth that, unlike some Asian Societies, women’s status in India is very good and can perform their dual roles adequately and they get considerable support from their men. The constitution of India also provides equality to women. Thus, the myth was not only entrenched but it developed a complacency and acquiescence among women.

Education is the best means to elevate the status of an individual in the existing social system. The higher education, the greater the chances of employability. The same holds for women, which is also linked to the economic structure of the family. As a result, the social status of women also changes. Women being educated develop awareness about equality and would reject submitting to the norms of subjugation. This may especially be so in the cities where women form a greater workforce in fact in all the spheres of activity. Such women participate in the family’s economic system and all activities. It is in this context that various questions have been raised in the studies in this field.

Throughout the economy, women tend to hold lower-level positions than men even when they have sufficient skills to perform higher-level jobs. Researchers have estimated that female agricultural labourers were usually paid 40 to 60 % of male wages (Kishwar and Vanita 1985). Even when women occupy similar positions and have similar educational levels, they earn just 80% of what men do (Madheswaran and Lakshmanasamy,1996).

A study on “ Rehabilitation and socio-economic conditions of Special Focus Group -war widows in the state of Rajasthan “ conducted by Humanistic Studies Group during August –November 2001, BITS, Pilani, revealed that the socio–economic status of war widows was better than widows in general.

A survey on” Working women: Issues and challenges: a case study Pilani, Rajasthan “was conducted by Humanistic Studies Group, BITS, Pilani in 2002. Analysis revealed that the majority of respondents felt that they were economically independent, had no gender discrimination in the workplace, had job satisfaction, equally participated in decision-making at home and perceived a positive change in the perception of society towards women.

Recently Hillary Clinton (March,24,2010) appreciated Indian women leaders for their role in uplifting the socio-economic status of Indian women and making concerted efforts to bring education to them.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

Education is the best means to elevate the status of an individual in the existing social system. The higher the education, the greater the chances of employability. The same may hold in the case of women. Women, which are educated may be contributing more to the economic structure of the family. As a result, the social status of the women also changes. Further, the women being educated develop awareness about equality and would reject submitting to the norms of subjugation. Perhaps it is this equality principle that enables the Indian parliament to bring the women's reservation bill. It is in this context that various questions have been raised and need to be answered on an empirical basis. It is in this context that the present study has been planned.

Importance of Education in Changing Women’s Status

Education plays a crucial role in empowering women and changing their status in Indian society. By providing women with access to education, they are able to acquire knowledge and skills that can help them to improve their socio-economic status, and access better opportunities for personal and professional growth. Education also enables women to participate more actively in decision-making processes, and empowers them to challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes that limit their potential.

Furthermore, education can help to break the cycle of poverty and improve the overall well-being of women and their families. Women who are educated are more likely to have fewer children, have better access to healthcare, and are better equipped to make informed decisions about their own lives. In addition, education can also reduce the incidence of child marriage and early pregnancy, both of which are significant challenges for women in India.

Education has often been regarded as a powerful tool for changing the status of women in society. Throughout history, women have been marginalized and discriminated against, facing limited opportunities for education and economic empowerment. However, with the advancement of education, the status of women has gradually improved, leading to greater equality and empowerment in various aspects of life.

Education holds a significant role in changing women's status by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to challenge gender norms and societal expectations. It opens up opportunities for women to pursue higher education, enter the workforce, and achieve financial independence. Additionally, education enhances women's decision-making ability, allowing them to have more control over their lives and make informed choices regarding their health, careers, and relationships.

One of the key benefits of education for women is improved economic empowerment. By acquiring knowledge and skills through education, women are better equipped to secure stable jobs, advance in their careers, and earn higher incomes. This, in turn, reduces their dependency on male counterparts and enhances their financial independence. Studies have shown that educated women are more likely to participate in the labor force, contribute to household

income, and invest in their families' well-being, leading to improved economic outcomes for themselves and their communities.

Furthermore, education enables women to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes that limit their potential. By gaining a better understanding of their rights and opportunities, educated women are more likely to advocate for gender equality, challenge discriminatory practices, and promote women's empowerment. Education empowers women to speak out against gender-based violence, discrimination, and inequality, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

Education also plays a crucial role in improving women's health outcomes. Educated women are more likely to make informed decisions about their health, seek medical care when needed, and adopt healthier lifestyles. By increasing their knowledge of reproductive health, nutrition, and disease prevention, educated women are better equipped to protect themselves and their families from illness and improve overall well-being. Additionally, education has been linked to lower rates of maternal mortality, infant mortality, and HIV/AIDS transmission, highlighting the significant impact of education on women's health outcomes.

In addition to economic empowerment and health benefits, education also enhances women's political participation and decision-making. Educated women are more likely to be engaged in political processes, vote in elections, run for office, and advocate for policies that promote gender equality and women's rights. By increasing women's representation in leadership positions and decision-making bodies, education helps to ensure that women's voices are heard, their needs are addressed, and their rights are protected in all aspects of society.

Despite the numerous benefits of education for women, there are still significant barriers that prevent many women from accessing quality education and realizing their full potential. Poverty, discrimination, cultural norms, and lack of resources are some of the key challenges that hinder women's educational opportunities and limit their chances for advancement. Addressing these barriers requires a multi-faceted approach that involves government support, community engagement, and grassroots initiatives to prioritize gender equality in education and create a more inclusive learning environment for all.

Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Women

Despite the significant benefits of education for women, there are still numerous challenges that exist in ensuring access to quality education for all women in India. One of the main challenges is the lack of infrastructure and resources in many parts of the country, which can limit women's ability to access education. In addition, there are cultural and social barriers that can also hinder women from pursuing education, such as traditional gender roles and expectations that prioritize men's education over women's.

However, there are also many opportunities for improving women's access to education and changing their status in Indian society. For example, government policies and programs such as the Right to Education Act have been implemented to improve access to education for all children, including girls. Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups are also working to provide support and resources to women and girls, to help them overcome the barriers they face in accessing education.

Conclusion

Education is a key factor in changing women's status in Indian society, by providing them with opportunities for personal and professional growth, and empowering them to challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes. While there are still many challenges that exist in ensuring access to quality education for all women, there are also numerous opportunities for improvement through government policies, programs, and the work of civil society organizations. By continuing to invest in education for women, we can help to create a more equal and inclusive society for all. In conclusion, education plays a vital role in changing women's status by empowering them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to challenge gender norms, advocate for their rights, and achieve greater equality in all aspects of life. By investing in women's education, we can build a more equitable society where women have the opportunities and resources to reach their full potential, contribute to their communities, and lead fulfilling lives. Education is a powerful tool for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and it is essential that we continue to prioritize and support women's education to create a more just and inclusive world for all.

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