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Education and women empowerment in India

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ABSTRACT

Education is one of the most creative means of empowerment. It helps a person to realize his or her potential in a social group to achieve a higher social mobility and the state to maintain good social order. Empowerment through education can also dealt with by following a capabilities approach. Being an important component of developing capabilities, education has an intrinsic role to play in developing freedom and leaving the rest to be attained through institutional and legal means. Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. Universal high-quality education is the best way forward for developing and maximizing India's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the society, the country, and the world at large. India will have the highest population of young women in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of their progress, development and empowerment.

Keywords: Education, Empowerment, HDR, Women

India is very ancient country. It has rich and varied social cultural and philosophical heritage. Education is always played an important role in shaping the destinies of the societies through development of the individuals as a whole. Education links to the task of upliftment of individuals, and national development within highly competitive global scenario. Modern India is multicultural, multilingual society with undercurrent of essential unity. Some of the important national goals as enshrined in the constitution are secularism, equality, liberty, fraternity. Empowerment literally means making someone powerful felicitating the weak attain strength to increase one- esteem to help someone assertive/ and self confident to enable someone to confront injustice and oppression and support someone to fight for their rights.

Empowerment is the process by which the powerless and the weak gain greater control over the circumstances and their lives, control over the resources and ideology. In India, empowerment in reality is struck by gender dominance, caste dominance. For the women, in any gender dominated patriarchal society, empowerment in any field, social, economic, cultural and political is possible through Education. In Indian planning process, woman was looked at a perspective of welfare point of view and not development and empowerment point of view. She was a component of social welfare programme but now she is to be looked at empowerment point of view. In the past, due to Hindu social theory, due to prevalence of different Varna, the social hierarchy was underpinned by a legal order in which the privileges and disabilities are carefully modulated according to caste and gender. Now the law is changed. Despite this women in general and women of inferior castes continue suffer. Empowerment is seen as a way of addressing the problems of rights that remain unenforced. Women right to get employment and gain empowerment is the most concern of the government and that is possible through only adequate useful education.

Empowerment According to HDR in South Asia 2000 is ` a change in the context of women's life which enables her increased capacity for leading a full-fledged human life`. Gender empowerment must be viewed from the angle of gender relations and gender inequalities between men and women. These inequalities are both explicit and implicit. Explicit are known through statistics; sex-ratio, child infanticide, literacy rates, wage differentials, ownership of land and property. The implicit are relating to empowerment. Located in the household, confined to customs, culture and traditions, the intra-household inequalities result in

breeding to in-equal distribution of power, in-equal control over resources, in-equal participation in decision making, dependence, lack of self-reliance, and unequal distribution of wealth and drudgery. Education is a complex area. To improve the quality of life of women in particular education is important. Since 1990s, LPG also touched the education field. Education is not only an instrument of socialisation but also empowerment. In this age of transitional realities, education not only to provide employment but also empowerment. Especially, the women in the society need to be fully educated and thus empowered. Education and empowerment shall go hand in hand to modernise the Indian society. In the task of empowerment of women, the role of trained man power in India is at its low ebb. The higher institutions of higher learning are no doubt producing trained man power but there is brain drain.

To empower especially women in India, there is a need for such an educational system which should compose of relevance and quality, access and equality, career opportunities and adequate financial support from government. Since independence, approaches to women empowerment have been drawn on a variety of approaches, policies and influences. From 1947-75, the approach towards women was welfare oriented. They were treated as aid recipients rather than active participants in their own development. Then the approach was shifted to equality of women and involvement in developmental process. In early 80s, the empowerment approach emerged with participation and self reliance approach. Then equity and development approach amalgamated to form gender and development concept. In 1990s, the discourse on women empowerment moved into the realm of human rights. The Rights based approach brought together the concepts of welfare, anti poverty and equality, women literacy and education with women's empowerment.

Education creates healthy environment for empowerment and capacity building among women. We have to create literacy and education as enshrined in Indian Constitution. The implicit inequalities located in the household, customs and religion—have caused unequal distribution of power, unequal control over resources, unequal participation in decision-making process, dependence, no self-reliance, and unequal distribution of wealth all caused due to lack of education and awareness among women. The Gender Empowerment Measure developed by UNDP-HD Report says Four areas of empowerment of women. They are; power over economic resources, access to professional activities, share in jobs and share of seats in policy making bodies. The situation is that out of 116 countries studied 9 have gender empowerment at 0.60, 24 have 0.25 and the rest have to go along way.

Realising the need and importance of empowerment of women in our country, the Government of India as well as Government of Andhra Pradesh under YSR Congress Party introduced variety of Educational Schemes and programmes at Primary, Secondary, Intermediate, Graduation, Post-graduation. Levels with a motto to encourage and promote girls and women education and empower them.

1. Elementary education schemes; Elementary education schemes play crucial role for the development of basic elementary education. These schemes are:

- I. Sarva shiksha Abhiyan:
- II. Mid day meal Scheme in Schools

2 Secondary Education schemes; Secondary education is the most significant stage in the educational hierarchy as it prepares the students for higher education and the world of work. The policy at present is to make secondary education more qualitative available, accessible and affordable to all young ones in the age group of 14 to 18. At present the following schemes targeted at secondary stage (ie class ix xii) are being implemented in the form centrally sponsored schemes

- i. Rashriya Madhyamika Shiksha Abhiyan
- ii. Girls hostel scheme
- iii. National schemes of incentives to girls for secondary education
- iv. Scheme of vocational education.
- v. Inclusive education for disabled at secondary stage.
- vi. National merit cum means scholarship scheme.
- vii. State level scholarship schemes for meritorious students
- viii. National scholarships
- ix. Schemes for constructing and running of girls hostels for students of secondary and higher secondary schools.

2. Schemes for Higher Education:

Higher Education is the responsibility of both the Center and State governments. The co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions is the constitutional obligation of the central government. Meritorious students from families with or without necessary means need an incentive or encouragement to keep on working in their academic career. Following are some significant fellowship schemes/ scholarships awarded by the various institutions;

- i. National scholarship
- ii. Schemes of Apprenticeship.
- iii. Junior research fellowships for bio medical sciences
- iv. Post doctoral fellow ships
- v. Department of Science and Technology grants and fellowship.
- vi. All India Council for Technical Education scholarship.
- vii. DSTS scholarship scheme for women scientist and technologist
- viii. Biotechnology fellowships for doctoral and post-doctoral studies by DBT
- ix. Scholarships /Awards at undergraduate & postgraduate levels in various science course.
- x. Fellowship /scholarship /Award by the Jawahar Nehru University.
- xi. Sports authority of India promotional schemes

- xii. Empowerment of persons with disabilities –schemes/ programmes.
- xiii. Scholarship schemes for ST students by Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- xiii. Scholarships for minority students.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh under YSR Congress Party, has formulated and introduced various programmes to empower women in the State . In his 21 months of his administration, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy credited 80,000 Crore Rupees in women bank /post office accounts to empower themselves and to educate their children in the State. Most of these programmes are education linked empowerment programmes. They are;

- i.) Amma Odi
- ii.) Kaapu Nestam
- iii.) YSR Cheyuta
- iv.) YSR Sunna Vaddi
- v.) YSR Aarogya Aasara
- vi.) Kaapu Nestam
- vii.) YSR Cheyuta
- viii.) YSR Sunna VaddiNestham
- ix.) YSR Aasara
- x.) YSR Pension Scheme
- xi.) YSR Rythu Bharosa
- xii.) Jagananna Vasathi Deevena
- xiii.) Jagananna Vidya deevena
- xiv.) Jagananna Thodu
- xv.) Jagananna Goru Mudda
- xvi.) YSR Sampoorna Poshana
- xvii.) Jagananna Vidya Kanuka

CONCLUSION

Education as a means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. It is therefore crucial for the socio economic and political progress of India. The Constitution of India empowers the State to adopt affirmative measures for prompting ways and means to empower women. The government of India as well as the government of Andhra Pradesh by passing timely Acts and implementing rules and regulations trying to empower the women through providing quality education . The effect of women employment on family and society is more evident in situations where women possess higher levels of employment and income . The empowerment of women em editor ployees is also higher when they are at high levels of education and employment.

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