

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN GENDER EQUALITY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Gender Equality means that people of all gender have equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities. Everyone is affected by gender in equality-women, men and trans and gender diverse people. Gender equality is a human right. Education plays an important role for gender equality. Education enhances employment opportunities, makes better health and empowers every gender of the society about their rights. India had ranked 140th among 156 countries in the global gender gap Index 2021. This index shows that India's position is not good in gender equality. This paper explains why education is significant for gender equality? This paper throws light on the laws made for gender equality in the Indian constitution and introduces the programs of the government of India which are being run for the empowerment of women. The present paper emphasizes on how the transgender class are getting out of the disadvantaged and backward class through education. The paper analysed that education is the most powerful tool for gender development and education helps in creation of better society.

Keywords: Human Right, Women Empowerment, Global Gender Gap Index, Gender Equality.

Introduction

“If you educate a woman, you educate a family, if you educate a girl, you educate the future”

-Queen Rania of Jordan

If we want sustainable development, inclusive growth and a peaceful world then gender equality is mandatory. Because as long as some sections of the society are victims of rate, frustration, illiteracy, social backwardness, we cannot even imagine the complete development of India. Gender equality implies a society when people of all gender enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all sphere of life. Without gender equality we can't bring balance between nature.

The term 'women empowerment' is very much discussed in these days. Government also took step for women empowerment like triple talak decision, permission to enter in Sabarimala temple and many others. Now the words like 'Abala' and 'weak' is not for women. History is witnessed that lord ram had worshiped Bhagwati bhawani earlier to kill Ravana.

According to global gender gap report, India has fallen 28 places and ranked 140th among 156 countries. This gap is measured on the basis of four dimensions- Economic participation and opportunity, Educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment. India has performed worst in the health and survival index attain 155th rank among 156th countries. There is a great need to work in this area. India's situation in the index of education attainment is also not good.

Objectives

- To know the importance of education in Gender equality
- To recognize the significance of education in women empowerment
- To know the change in the life of transgender person due to education
- To recognize the welfare schemes and provisions in constitution for Gender equality

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Methodology

The study is qualitative in nature. Research article, newspapers, reports, different websites are used to write this paper.

Importance of Education in Gender Equality

Education helps to reduce inequality and pave the way of development. Just as food is necessary for the development of the body, on the same way, education provides nutrition to the mind. The power of pen is more than the power of sword. Education provides economic empowerment. The education of girls and women can lead to a wider range of benefits to improve maternal health, reduce infant mortality and many other problems. Education improves wages & jobs for women, makes women healthier, empower women to fight for their rights, protects girls from harmful practices and can challenge education stereotypes. Today, women hold many important positions in India. The Credit for this goes to education only. Now- a -days Indian women walk shoulders to shoulders with men and achieving in diverse fields like politics, arts, science and law etc. The name of some Indian women are as follows, which is an example of women empowerment. our finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman, Indra Nooyi, Anundhati Roy, Marry Kom, Kiran Bedi, Geeta Gopinathan and so many others.

Man and woman are two wheels of the same chariot. Education not only empower women but also men in terms of understanding. An educated man respects working woman and understands the double weight that falls on the woman's shoulders. The major hurdle in gender equality that some men are not in the favour of women's education. They thought that the birth of women is only for household activity. Hence promoting gender equality in patriarchal social order is impossible without the consent, mindset and involvement of male population. Now a time there is a need for real education that can help to develop mutual respect and understanding for each other and reduces violence and discrimination. Education helps to combat the crimes on women such as acid throwing, rape, sexual harassment and many others.

Transgender people who have traditionally being marginalised by the society and faces many challenges which affects their mental health. Education provides freedom from stigma, discrimination and moves them to social inclusion. Education is the light, hope for the vulnerable sections of the Indian society. According to the world happiness report India got rank 139 out of 149 countries in UN's World Happiness Report 2021. This rank shows that India's pathetic condition in happiness index. This report focuses on how happy their citizen perceived to be. For a happy country India has to work more on gender equality. India can become a happy country if every citizen of this country is happy and live fearlessly and without discrimination and violence.

Role of Women during Covid 19

During covid 19 when everything was closed, there is no relaxation for women. Their duty for domestic work continuous as 24 hours. Women's duty increased more in covid 19 time period. They have to give extra time to their children due to closures of schools, more time consumed in the family care and sanitation. But this work is undervalued and invisible. Despite this, in this time period the incidence related to domestic violence and exploitation were increased which is shameful. The reasons behind this violence are financial insecurity, frustration of unemployment and endless confinement within the house.

Women gives an outstanding contribution during corona outbreak. Women stood at the front-line workers as health care workers, caregivers, innovators, community organizers and as some of the most effective national leaders in combating the pandemic. "It is observable that policy response strategies to the covid period by women leaders had more favourable compared to outcomes in countries led by men." (Kabeer, N. 2021). This year's theme for the international women day is "Achieving an equal future in a covid 19 world". In this year this day is celebrates for the tremendous efforts by women around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the covid 19 pandemic.

Significance of Education in Women Empowerment

Women contribute almost half of the population. Women empowerment is essential to reduce gender inequality. There is continued inequality and vulnerability of women in all sectors Education is considered as a milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their lives.

The condition of women has improved in the last few years in India. There is no doubt that education has played a leading role in improving the situation of women in India. According to the census 2011 in India women literacy rate is 64.63%. The literacy status of India has increased but there is a need to more improvement.

According to the sustainable development goal report 2020 the fourth goal is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The Indian constitution provides equality to every citizen residing in India and opposes discrimination based on religion, race, caste sex and place of birth. Despite the provision in the Indian Constitution, India's surface status is not good from the gender equality point of view.

Reasons

- There are still some evils present in Indian society like dowry, child marriage, son's desire etc. These are the greater impediments for implementing gender equality policies and rules.
- Girls are still prevented to go to school.
- Indian women are not conscious about their health. Infertility, stress, hormone imbalances, Nutrition deficiency are the common problems faced by the Indian women.
- This is economic discrimination present between men and women. The work done by women is undervalued and most of the women not paid equally for equal work.
- Women are victims of domestic violence.
- There is double responsibility upon women. They are household managers and they also contribute to the outside work. beside this, some women still have a pathetic situation inside the house and outside the house.

Education status of Transgenders in India

Transgender people are those whose gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be at birth. In our Indian society transgender gets employment through dancing, singing in wedding or son's birth. In our Indian culture transgender people are considered good for every auspicious work. They are also described in ancient epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata. But this is a bitter truth in our Indian society they are treated only on the basis of 'Hijras'. They are considered as humorous characters. Abusive language is used for them. They are not given equal status and even not accepted by the society. "Due to social behaviour and sometime the coercion of the society, they have to go into begging and sex work". (Rajkumar,2016). In our constitution every citizen of India has the right to equality. According to Article 14 the state shall not deprive any person in the state of India for equality before laws and equal protection of laws. The Transgender Persons Protection of rights bill was passed in 2019. The bill seeks to provide a mechanism for social, economic and educational empowerment of transgenders. The bill prohibits the discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to education, employment, healthcare, right to reside etc. Along with these government efforts transgender person should have aware about their rights. Education is needed for awareness. Education is the only medium that can recognize their existence and reduce or eliminate the darkness of their life. According to the 2011 census transgender is around 4.9 lakh in a country with a literacy rate is 57.06%. There are many examples in India which have made an identity in the society through education and made India proud. some examples are as follows:

K. prithika yashini is the first transgender police officer in tamil nadu and fought a legal battle to identified as a transgender. Manabi Bandopadhyay is the first transgender professor and first transgender acquire a Ph.D in Bengali literature. Beside this, many transgender people want to go school but they face harassment and discrimination. This is the biggest fear and obstacle in the growth of transgender persons and this create gender inequality in India.

Schemes by the Government for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

India is the country where girls are worshiped as goddesses and the land here is called Mother India. Indian government runs many schemes to educate and empowerment of women.

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme
- Udaan Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
- Women helpline Scheme
- One stop centre scheme
- Swadhar scheme
- Nari shakti puraskar
- Mahila-E-Haat
- Development of women and children in rural area

The objective of these schemes to educate girl child, encourage girl child for higher education, provide defensive atmosphere to women, provide holistic services, to support financially, to recognise women who gives a great contribution for women empowerment.

Suggestions

- Moral education should be provided to the male dominant society. They understand the contribution and work of women in all spheres of life.
- Some married women are not able to work outside. Some skill development programme should be start up for their employment.
- Government should focus more to increase the literacy level of every gender of the society- women, men and transgender people.
- Teacher can play an important role for inclusion. Teacher should motivate the transgender people for education and prepare a friendly environment for them.
- More scholarship programmes for girls and transgender people to motivate them for studies

Conclusion

“If we want to reach real peace in this world, we should start educating children”-Mahatma Gandhi. The target of gender equality can't be achieved due to dominance of some sections of the society. In this time that the male population of India also come forward in support to women education. They should feel the concept of 'Ardhanareeshwara'. The Government Welfare schemes can be improved the condition of a women, if these schemes properly implemented. Education is the only way to lock the mouth of people having ridiculous thinking about women. Education is an important medium through Indian women gets social identity. Article 21 of the constitution guarantees the life and personal liberty to all persons. Article 21[A] ensures education is a fundamental right for every Indian citizen. In spite of transgender person faced discrimination and harassment in the society. Education is the only remedy for this situation. In the 21st century education is the most important weapon for gender equality.

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