

The Impact of Women Education on Nation Building: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract: *To have a strong nation, its citizens need to be strong enough to contribute towards the growth of the country. Education is one of the most powerful weapons to attain economically and socially strong nation. Citizens contribute in nation building through various ways; some contribute through social work practices and some contribute as government professionals. India has a very strong history where women have played a major role from contributing as leaders in achieving independent India to holding highest positions in the global markets. It is rightly said by Michel Obama that 'when women are educated, their countries become stronger and more prosperous'. Educating women can be a great help in achieving financial independence which makes them empowered and also helps in having stronger nation. This review explores the role of women's education in nation building, emphasizing its significance in social development and economic growth. It discusses women's contribution to nation building, the barriers they face in education and potential solutions. The study relies on secondary data sources such as newspapers, journal, articles and websites.*

Keywords: women education, nation building, women empowerment

1. Introduction

"We shall see better days soon and our progress will be accelerated if male education is persuaded side by side with female education".-Dr. B. R Ambedkar. Women are the ones who have blessed with many qualities which make her mentally stronger than a man. It is the women who introduces a living being into this world and take care in best possible way. She can provide healthy life to her newborn if she can differentiate between nutritious and unhealthy food and that ability to differentiate comes from education. India persistently has taken strong steps to improve the education and status of women. The roots of women education can be found back from 1821 where south India came up institutes which provide women education. The literacy rate was improved by 6% by the time of independence which was only 0.2% before 1947. During this time Savitribai Phule, who was one of the prides of our nation, became the pioneer of female education and commenced a school for girls in 1848. Soon after independence many committees and commission were set up to improve the quality of female education, to look after gender equality issues and to implement nation policies set up by the government. For any country, strong nation cannot be achieved unless and until the women of that nation are not educated and empowered. To make our nation stronger, India has come with many policies which emphasizes on female education. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan introduced in 2001 was one of the examples under which many schemes were introduced to strengthen women education and literacy rate. Implementation of schemes resulted in higher enrollment of girl child in elementary level and lesser dropout rate up to 81 lakhs by 2016 which was 134 lakhs in 2005 (Wikipedia).

Women have left no stone unturned in making India proud at National and International level. Women has shown good participation in Olympics and given many golds and silvers in the hands of the nation and helped in upgrading India worldwide position in the field.

Role of a woman as an educator in social development

M. Phule contended that, "Education is that which demonstrates the difference between what is good and what is evil". Education means modification of behaviour in every aspect, such as mentality, outlook, attitude etc. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population (Ahmed Rouf, 2015). Researchers around the globe analyzed many ways of effects of women education in social development. Few of the researchers selected both male and female to found out the gap between education level of boys and girls. It concluded that female education is a very important factor in social development. Female education helps in decreasing fertility rates, lowering infant mortality rates and decreasing maternal mortality rate (King, Elizabeth M., and M. Anne Hill). A woman being educated reduces the gap between male and female education, hence it helped to promote gender equality and equal rights of female to get education. The Notable economist Lawrence Summers contended that, "investment in the education of girls may well be the highest-return investment available in the developing world" (Wikipedia). Women when receives education, it not only helps in social development but helps in cognitive abilities. Cognitive thinking helps a woman to balance her life in a better way. Educated women can differentiate between what is good and what is bad and can make self decision pertaining to health of her child. Educated mother can better take care of her child and better understands what is nutritious for her child (Kabir, Naila, 2005). Role of a woman is very high when it comes to managing her family in marital life. If a woman will be educated, she can equally participate in decision making towards betterment of her family. It not only gives strength to a woman but also provides the opportunity to take a further step in attaining some position in the society. India is blessed to have very strong female personalities who broke the stereotype of the society emphasized on girl education in shaping India. Personalities like Vimla Kaul, Savitribai Phule, Begum Hamida Habibulla, Begum Zafar Ali,

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Mahadevi Verma, Anutaiwagh and many more contributed their knowledge in strengthening female education system in India which can't be ignored (She the People, 2021)

Role of women legislatures in nation building

- Women of our nation came as a strong contributor and played their role in making India strong with utmost responsibility. In 1917, an Irish president Annie Besant was the first president of The Indian National Congress. And in 1925, Saroji Naidu became the first Indian president of Indian National Congress which was a remarking moment of women's strong contribution towards nation building.
- After Independence, Our nation gave India's control in the hands of woman. The very first prime minister of India Shrimati Indira Gandhi was given charge of the position when even the foreign countries never thought of giving such respectable position in woman's hand (Malhotra Raj, 2020)
- Women have also gained reservation at panchayat level which helped in highlighting issues related to women from grass root level. 73rd Constitutional Amendment was effected in the hope that it would lead to better governance and provide political space to the disadvantage section of the society like schedule caste, schedule tribes and women (Kaul and Sahani, 2009). 'Panchayat', being "Local government", is a State subject and part of State list of Seventh Schedule of Constitution of India. Clause (3) of Article 243D of the Constitution ensures participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions by mandating not less than one-third reservation for women out of total number of seats to be filled by direct election and number of offices of chairpersons of Panchayats (Ministry of Panchayati Raj). At present 20 states of India have made advance arrangements for 50% women participation in panchayati raj institutes.
- Indian women have also taken the initiative to form their own political parties, and in 2007, the United Women Front party was created, and has advocated for increasing the reservation of seats for women in parliament to 50% (Raman, Nachammai). As of 2013, it has been reported of the members of parliament 11% were women in Lok Sabha and 10.6% in Rajya Sabha (Spary, Carole (2014). While 2019 Lok Sabha elections witnessed the higher number of women candidates that is 78 (women MPs) which means 14% securing seats in lower house of the parliament, equal representation of women in parliaments still has a long way to go (News 18, 2019). It is important to understand that the political representation of women is important because this is how issues related to women and other major policy decisions get the right kind of space. Experience shows that when women are in important leadership roles the policies change for good (Malhotra Raj, 2020)

Barriers comes in the way of women education

There are many obstacles which come in the path of a female education. India being a developing country still faces a huge problem of getting female child attains elementary education. Government initiated many policies for girl child but still it is unable to achieve the goal. It is the need of an hour to work on the barriers of female education

because it is rightly said that when a men get educated, he educates himself, but when a women get educated, she educates the whole society. Acquiring the basic literacy skills enables an individual with day to day activities such as monetary transactions, household management, taking care of children, having knowledge of health and hygiene etc.

There are certain hurdles which individual experience in attaining education:- (kapur, Radhika, 2018)

- Financial Problems:-Majority of the Indian population live the rural area and have agriculture as main source of earning. It is harder for the families to send their daughter to schools because they thinks that instead of sending her to school and spending money on her, it is better to stay her home for household work.
- Quality of education:-We have attained good level of educational institutes at urban level, but those institutes are very limited and impossible to bear the fees for majority of population. Quality of education especially in government schools is very low with lack of skilled teachers.
- Unsafe to attend school:-women and girls found it unsafe to go to the school as these institutions are either far from their home or very limited in numbers. It was seen that many villages have only one government school which is a major obstacle.
- Lack of proper infrastructure:-Schools specially government institutions lack that charm which attracts children to come to the schools. Lack of facilities like table, chair, drinking water facilities, poor ventilation and urinals are major problems.
- Inappropriate curriculum:-Children found it harder to cop-up with the syllabus and left the studies in between. Inappropriate teaching method leads to rise in the dropout rates.

Steps to minimize the barriers

It is very important to take some productive steps to achieve strong nation. For any country education is the way for better and stronger nation. And women are the very much important contributor towards nation building. Hence it is the need of hour to take some steps in minimizing barriers of women education.

- Digitalizing the education system:-With such an advanced technology, education can be accessed digitally even to those interior areas where access to infrastructure is not available. During the pandemic of Covid-19 many children were able to access education because of digital advancement.
- Focus on health issues:-Many girls and women lack nutritious food which resulted in high dropout rates from schools, poor participation in different fields of work. Lack of proper pre and post natal care leads to leaving good jobs which is again a major issue.
- Opening new platforms for women:-women in 21st century persistently doing a remarkable work in their field. But still there are many more hidden talents who can contribute in nation building if given a chance. There are many daughters who missed the opportunity in participating in Olympics due to lack of nutrition and proper training. If proper facilities are provided in the field then India can achieve higher ranks. Providing free access to education and proving equal opportunity in

different field can make a remarkable difference in achieving stronger nation.

2. Conclusion

Women play a crucial role in nation building and their education is a powerful tool for national development. Despite existing barriers significant strides have been made in promoting women's education. However, further efforts are needed to ensure equal access to education for women as this key to achieving a stronger nation. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. The education develops the idea of participation in government, panchayats, public matters etc for elimination of gender discrimination (Ahmed Rouf, 2015). We as a developing nation still lack equal participation in legislation and equal right to education, which needs to be renewed. We have many policies for betterment of female education and participation, but proper implementation of such policies is not visible which needs to be taken into consideration.

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