

A Study On Empowering Women Through Education And Strategies To Combat Gender Inequality

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ABSTRACT:

India is a country where growth and development are driven by skills and knowledge, women empowerment through education has emerged as one of the most important aspects that can lead to socio economic development. Around half of the population of the entire world is Women. But till date gender biasness or gender inequality exists and, in many places, women are considered as a secondary citizen. It is undoubtedly true that access to education can bring about some changes in the intellectual abilities of an individual, which is required for the capacity of women to ask question, to reflect on and to act accordingly for the upliftment of their conditions as well as education is necessary so that they can gain knowledge, information and creative ideas so that they can be contribute for the betterment of the society. The present study provides a general overview of the importance of education which is necessary for women empowerment and also highlights the causes of gender biasness and the strategies to combat these issues.

KEYWORDS: Gender inequality, Women Empowerment, Education, Strategies.

INTRODUCTION: Education is one of the most powerful and an important tool that can transform lives and societies. Education is the basic necessity for the progress, growth and development of a country. It opens up a world of possibilities for individuals by empowering them with knowledge. Education plays a vital role in empowering women. Though now the women in India enjoys equal status with the men because of the legal provisions. But to achieve this equal position women struggled a lot as gender

inequality has been prevailing from the earlier or ancient times only, even in the historical days of Mahabharata, Draupadi was put as a commodity on the dice by her husband.

Gender inequality refers to the treatment and opportunities provided unequally to individuals based on their genders. Gender inequality can take place in various fields of life including social, economic, political etc. Moreover, In the earlier times women were not allowed to speak, to get education, to make any decision even about themselves but gradually with the help of education the scenario is changing. Many efforts are also going on globally to address the issue related to gender inequality and also efforts are being made to reduce it and promote gender equality. So, to promote women empowerment and reduce gender gap, educating and empowering women is very imperative for today's world. Empowering women with the help of education will not only be beneficial for the women only but also it will be beneficial for the families, communities and the entire nation.

Women Empowerment is a process through which an individual or groups gains full control over their own lives, make proper decisions as well as can achieve their aims or goals. It also involves providing individual with skills, resources, knowledge and opportunities so that they become self-confident, self-reliant, achieve financial independence and can make better choices. Moreover, when a woman gets quality education, they will be more likely to break the gender related obstacles and are able to explore diverse fields so that they can develop and empower themselves. Women empowerment will also address gender biasness, discrimination, gender inequality as well as it will also enhance equal opportunities and right to access education and resources. Throughout the world women empowerment is one of the most crucial and important goal for the socio-economic development of a country. However, the gender gap, gender inequality is a longstanding problem and it has been an obstacle to equality, women empowerment and social and economic development. But with the power of education one can break all the barriers and also can get the access to the bright future.

OBJECTIVES: The following are the objectives of the study:

- To understand the role of education in empowering women
- To find out the causes behind gender disparity
- To develop successful strategies that can effectively bridge the gender inequality
- To make everyone aware of the significance of women empowerment

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM: A study on empowering women through education: strategies to combat gender inequality.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY: The study on women empowerment through education holds utmost significance in the ongoing global pursuit of gender equality. By providing women with access to quality education and enhancing their knowledge and skills so that they can participate fully in society, will not only develop their potential but also address the root causes of gender inequality. The present study not only highlights the power of education for women empowerment but also identifies effective and successful strategies to combat gender biasness and inequality, which is very essential for a more equitable world where women can participate in the society and meaningfully contribute for the social, economic, political development of the entire nation.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

- i. Sharma, R., & Afroz, Z. (2014). Women empowerment through higher education. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS)*, 1(5), 18-22. This paper shows the relevance of higher education in women's life and also discussed thoroughly about the relationship between higher education and women empowerment as well as shows that the educated women occupy much better position in the society than uneducated women worker.
- ii. Duflo, E. (2011), *Women's Empowerment and Economic Development*, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge. The study shows that the inter relationship of economic development and empowerment are very weak for self-sustaining and there must be a commitment to equality for development is needed as well as for bringing equality between men and women.
- iii. Srivastava, N. (2014). Education: A path to women empowerment (issues and challenges). *International Journal of Management Research and Reviews*, 4(10), 1007. This paper analyses the role of education in women empowerment and also highlights the obstacles which leads to female illiteracy in India. This paper also makes a clear understanding that education is the key to women empowerment and it is also very much essential for the economic development of a nation.

RESEARCH GAP: The research gap of the study on empowering women through education and strategies to

combat gender inequality lies in the need for a more comprehensive exploration of content-specific educational interventions and reforms which can have long term impacts on gender disparities. While the existing studies shows the importance of education in women empowerment but there is a dearth of in-depth analysis of the diverse strategies to combat gender inequality. But bridging the above research gap will be pivotal in formulating more effective strategies and reforms to advance gender equality through education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: The present study is theoretical in nature. The study involves analysing existing literature, theories, concepts related to this topic. The researchers collected data from the secondary sources like books, journals, newspapers, reports, relevant documents etc. related to gender discrimination and develop a thorough understanding of the need of women empowerment for the growth of the entire nation. Through content analysis method secondary data has been analysed.

DISCUSSION:

Meaning of women empowerment: Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decisions for their personal development as well as social development. Empowerment of women means encouraging women to be self-reliant, independent have positive self-esteem, generate confidence to face any difficult situation and take active participation in various socio-political development. In the ancient time women are badly treated by their family and society. They were not given education and were restricted to do only household activity. They were kept completely unaware about the rights and duties. This can be understood by the following table of literacy rate. (Table- 1)

Table:1- Below is the list of literacy rates of female and male in India

Year	Male %	Female %
1911	9.8	0.6
1921	10.6	1.0
1931	15.6	2.9
1941	24.9	7.3
1951	27.16	8.86
1961	40.4	15.35
1971	45.96	21.97
1981	56.38	29.76

1991	64.13	39.29
2001	75.26	53.67
2011	82.14	65.46

Source: Census of India- literacy rates (age 7+)

CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY:

- 1) **Poverty:** poverty is one of the main causes of gender bias in India. It is the root cause of gender discrimination in our society. A total 30% of people live Below poverty line and out of 70% are women.
- 2) **Illiteracy:** Gender biasness in India had developed to educational backwardness for women. It is the reality that there are various opportunities provides to girls but still in India the girls denied a chance at learning. But now a days it is important to Change the thinking of the people in our society and should understand the benefits of educating girls.
- 3) **Patriarchal setup in our Indian society:** In India our society our family is male dominating society. That means men are the supreme, male are more powerful than Female. In every aspect men get more chances in comparison to female .our family also give importance on male child rather than Female child .various stereotypes mindset seen in our society .people believe that men are economically stronger than women and this mind set develop the biasness among the girls and boys.
- 4) **Lack of awareness among women:** most of the women in our society unaware about their fundamental rights and capabilities. They have lack of understanding of how social, economic and political forces affect them. That's why they accept all discrimination in the society because of their lack of awareness and it is the major cause to develop gender bias among the people. Government makes various policy law in favor of girls but in our society, girls do not know about their rights about their law, even they do know about their fundamental rights and it is the main reason to develop gender discrimination between girls and boys.
- 5) **Social customs , beliefs and practices:** Infect now a days a lot of family have give importance on male child and disfavor towards the daughter and in our society also have some beliefs customs which develop the biasness between gender .In our society some people have mindset where the male are more suitable in business and commercial side and the female are suitable in home science arts etc. and in our society there are various customs which is against girls and

this beliefs and customs develop biasness between girls and boys.

- 6) **Narrow Thoughts:** mindset among the people is one of the major causes to develop the gender bias among the people. In our society the rules regulations are not same for girls and boy. People think man are stronger than women. They have narrower thinking about girls and boys. society give importance on to educate boys more than girls.
- 7) **cultural factors:** It is another cause of gender bias. Our cultural system develops stereotype behavior among the people. Cultural factor most influential factors to develop gender biasness. Because culture taught us that boys are perfect for outside the home and girls are do work always inside the home.

STRATEGIES TO COMBAT GENDER INEQUALITY:

- 1) **Mass education:** It is the main strategy to remove gender bias. Because we know that education is the main key to change everything. Mass education help to provide education equally to the girls and boys. Mass education is the way which help the people to change mindset towards the stereotype thinking.
- 2) **Create Awareness:** lack of awareness is the main cause of gender bias. creat awareness among the people specially girls are more important to reduce the biasness from society .The girls should know their rights and opportunities provides by government for them through which the girls develop their qualities by taking various opportunities.
- 3) **Spread of girl's child education:** One of the major strategies to reduce biasness is education. We know that education is the main instrument which help to develop our society our thinking, our mindset. Because education is the only way to change anything. so to spread girl's child education is also a way to reduce gender bias because when education spread up then all girls get opportunities to educate themselves.
- 4) **Law to stop feticide:** Feticide is one of the major issues in our society. The people when know that their baby is girl then they are worried about that and feel burden that's why they take decision of feticide. To solve this problem, it is necessary to take some action by the government. Government should make some rules and punishment to stop these criminal activities.
- 5) **separate vocational schools for girls:** vocation is one of the crucial parts of every human being. Because through vocation we make our place in our society and this vocation is one of

the major causes of gender biasness. Because society thought only men are economically stronger and women are depending on him. that's why vocational education for girls is important now adays. So, it is necessary to establish vocational school separately for girls where the girls can choose their vocation according to their interest.

- 6) **To prevent social evils:** In this study social evils means some norms rules regulations exists in our society which are totally against to the girls. To reduce gender bias, it is important to prevent this type of evils and change those regulations. Which are not equal for girls and boys. That's why society take responsibility to prevent the evils.
- 7) **Improvement of education system:** develop the education system is one of the major strategies to reduce biasness among the society. Because education can make a healthy mind set among the people so development the existing system of education can removing various prejudice from the mind of people. Education system means in educational institutions should provide hostel to girls provide girls education which make our society stronger.
- 8) **safety environment:** Another way to make equality in the society is to provide safe environment to the girls. Now adays girls are not safe that why they cannot participate in any event with boys .so it is need for girls to provide safe and secure environment where they work freely where they are free from all type of inequalities. when the girls feel that they are free they are secure then they can play better role in the society.

However, Women make up half of the country, so in order to make country as powerful country women empowerment is very important. Women empowerment refers to enabling women to have control over their lives, make choices and decisions, and have equal access to resources and opportunities. It involves creating an environment where women can participate in society and the economy on an equal footing with men, and where their voices are heard and their rights are protected. Women's empowerment can take many forms, including education, economic, political, and social. Ultimately, women's empowerment aims to create a world where women have the power and freedom to live their lives, without discrimination or limitations based on gender.

But despite several contributions, women are considered to be inferior. So, the state and the central government have introduced many acts and schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop

Centre Scheme, Ujjawala Scheme etc. to empower women (Table 2)

Table:2- Below is the list of some schemes launched by the Government of India for women empowerment

Government Schemes for Women Empowerment	Year of Launch	Launch By-
Ujjawala scheme	2007	The Ministry of Women and Child Development
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)	22nd January, 2015	Prime Minister of India
One-Stop Centre Scheme,	1st April 2015.	The Ministry of Women and Child Development
Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)	April 8, 2015	Prime Minister of India
Stand-Up India scheme	15 April 2016	Prime Minister of India
Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)	2017	The Ministry of Women and Child Development

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

1. **GENDER EQUALITY:** Women empowerment is important for removing the gender biasness in our society. It is important because through which we can achieve the gender equality which is essential for us and it is also our right. Gender equality means men and women are equal in every aspect of our society. They are equally participating in any event in the society. Women empowerment means men and women have equal rights to get opportunities.
2. **ECONOMIC GROWTH:** women empowerment is also important for the development of economic side of our country. Because when women are economically stable than they are able to contribute to the society for the development. When women gets equal rights, equal opportunity and equal economic stability than they are better able to contribute to the society as well as country.
3. **SOCIAL JUSTICE:** one to most important things to achieve women empowerment for social justice because we saw that in all aspect women and girls are the subject to violence and

various discrimination in our society. Our society do various types of such activities which are only favor of boys and this type of discrimination is known as injustice. Girls always face various barriers in the society because of their gender. But when girls are empowered, they create more justice and suitable society for us.

4. **HEALTH AND WELLBEING:** Another most important of women empowerment is health and well-being. Women empowerment is needed to develop health and wellbeing among the people in the society. When women get proper education and primary health knowledge, they can able to manage themselves and others also. That means when women are access to health care then they can better 'take care of themselves and their families.
5. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** women empowerment is important for sustainable development. It has been known that when a men educate then one person only educated but when women are educated then the whole family are educated. Women empowerment give important on future for girls. And sustainable development related to environmental aspect. When women are empowered then they can better manage their environment. They able to solve the various problems of the environment. When they are empowered, they are better conscious about their environment and they can contribute for the development of the environment which are most important aspect now a days.
6. **VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION:** To remove the violence and discrimination from our society women empowerment is most important aspect. In our society women are the subject to violence and various discrimination in the society but in our country our constitution provides equal rights to the boys and girls but some people infect maximum people in the society give important more on boys than girls and that's why the girls face various discrimination. But it can remove through empowered the women. When girls are empowered then they fight against their violence activity. They can get their opportunities and also remove discrimination from the society and develop society in various way.
7. **LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING:** In our society one of the major prejudices among the people is male are more suitable and powerful for taking leadership in the group. People thought that men are stronger in decision making and girls are not able in this activity. That's why girls are ignored by people. But empowerment to the women can change the

mindset of the people about girls. when a woman empowered, they can take better decision in any aspect. They are able shows their leadership quality and solve various problems by taking suitable decision with situation.

8. **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE:** women empowerment is important for social and cultural change. Now the world is science and technological world and the mindset of the people should high and make themselves free from any type of prejudice. In our society exists various prejudice discrimination to girls. For the development of the country, it must be changed. Women empowerment help to change the social rules regulations by removing prejudice and make developed society. Empowerment of women modified various cultural activities by adding something new which helps to make healthy society.

FINDINGS: In this study it has been clear that Education plays a vital role in empowering women and also helps equipping women with skills and knowledges required for contributing meaningfully in the society.

From Table 1: the researchers collected the data from the census of India on the literacy rates of female and male in India, that is in the year 2011 the male literacy rate in percentage is 82.14 where as the female literacy rate in percentage is 65.46. The researcher finds out that there is a huge difference between the literacy rates of male and female.

From Table 2: The researcher mentions that for empowering women and for the overall development of the country, the central and the state government launched various schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre Scheme, Ujjawala Scheme etc.

Thus, the researchers also mention some effective strategies to combat gender inequality.

CONCLUSION: On the basis of the above detailed analysis, it could be concluded that education is the key towards a successful and develop society. With education women can empower themselves socially, economically, physically as well as can become informed, knowledgeable, skilled human being. Moreover, the study also mentions the causes of gender inequality like poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness etc and also suggest some strategies to combat it like mass education, spreading awareness, knowing about the laws related to women etc.

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