

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

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### **Abstract:**

The reality of women's lives remains invisible to men and women alike and this invisibility persists at all levels beginning with the family to the nation. The mere fact that "women hold up half the sky" does not appear to give them a position of dignity and equality. True, that over the years women have made great strides in many areas with notable progress in reducing some gender gaps. Yet the "afflicted world in which we live is characterized by deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between women and men."

**KEYWORDS:** *Education, Women, Family*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Indian Government has expressed a strong commitment towards education and stated in its constitution with an article promising "free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen (World Bank 1997 b) and the RTE act was implemented in the year 2012.

Education is an instrument of social and economic change and it should be reoriented to enable women to take to the path of progress and reformation. Education, Lenin said "is a long and difficult matter. It is a long matter because such a complicated task as changing human psychology cannot be done in a rush, right away it is a difficult matter because in the process of education the new men or women numerous survivals of the past have to be overcome". Emphasizing the general education of women, Archer said "without female education, progress can be transmitted to each generation either not at all or very slowly. This may seem exaggerated and over-emphasised, but the case cannot be made too strongly". UNESCO realizes the overwhelming importance of basic education for women as well as men. Without this, the world of tomorrow will be overpopulated and will suffer more poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy than ever before.

Explaining the importance of general education Mehta remarks “Education is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Studies must be directed toward getting a good training that has some potential”. Khanna and Varghes have explained that “history has established beyond doubt that education forms a basis for the development of the human society”. However, the development of women's education can be studied in two phases, in the pre-independence period and the post-independence period.

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

Universal Declaration 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 Runciman “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.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the objectives of the present study to find out the answers to the following questions.

- To what extent women are conscious of their socio-economic status?
- ▪ To what extent the working women develop a sense of independence in comparison to housewives?
- ▪ How far the functions of have changed in the family on being educated? How far has the status of women changed in the family on account of their, as per the indicators mentioned?
- On being educated, how the social relations of women have changed in the existing social system?

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The present study is about the impact of education on improving the social and economic status of women in Haryana. In the study, all the women in the Haryana state constitute the population but obviously, the researcher can't conduct the study on the entire population. In the study, the focus is on the impact of education on improving the social and economic status of women in Haryana. The study will be conducted qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The quantitative part will pertain to collecting data from various sources about the social and economic status of women. To assess the impact of education on women, different sets of quantitative data will be gathered. To get a deep insight into the impact of

education some case studies will be conducted. Both survey as well as case study methods will be followed to explain the phenomenon of social and economic status.

In any survey of research, covering the entire population is practically an impossible task. What is feasible and generally practised is to study a sample representative of the population under study. Out of twenty-three districts in Haryana, two were purposively selected. These districts namely Kurukshetra and Kaithal are selected purposively.

The study will be conducted at quantitative as well as qualitative levels, multiple sampling processes will be followed. The sample will be taken by both women and men. The sample of women will be selected from various strata namely educated and uneducated, working and non-working. The process of sampling is purposive i.e. purposefully 200 educated and 200 uneducated women will be selected from each district.

To find out the mindset of men, a group of 200 men will be selected purposively. All these men will be related to women as brothers, fathers, husbands, or friends.

#### **DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- A sample size of middle-class educated and uneducated women of Kurukshetra and Kaithal districts is restricted to 200 each from each district. In the case study, extreme cases are included. However, affluent women and extremely poor women are not included in the study
- Nineteen indicators of social and economic status are selected. Other indicators, social and economic, are not included in the study.
- The respondents sometimes may be judgmental in giving information about themselves.
- Sometimes respondents may consider the investigator to be an intruder in their life and despite repeated persuasion, it may be an arduous task to convince them

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Women play a crucial role in a nation's progress and development. Education is a powerful tool for changing society's position and reducing inequalities. Women have successfully improved their status within the family in India, demonstrating their equal partnership in promoting social, economic, and political development. Women's education is significant for contemporary Indian society, as it increases the standard of living in families and society. Women can guide their entire community through their understanding of certain phenomena, which can be built through quality education. Women's education largely impacts the societal



process, enabling women to acquire basic skills and foster a value system conducive to raising their status in society. It creates vital opportunities for social and economic development, ensuring more participation in developmental processes and enhancing awareness of rights and entitlements in society. Thus, women can enhance their participation in society on an equal footing in all areas.

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