



Women Literacy As The Way to Women's Progression

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ABSTRACT

Women progression through education is a dynamic concept. Women are the main force in human resources. This paper illustrates the productive effects of female literacy in every sphere of life. The benefits of female education for women's empowerment and gender equality are broadly recognized; as female education rises, fertility, population growth, and infant and child mortality fall and family health improves. Increases in girls' secondary school enrollment are associated with increases in women's participation in the labor force and their contributions to household and national income. Women's increased earning capacity, in turn, has a positive effect on child nutrition. Children especially daughters of educated mothers are more likely to be enrolled in school and to have higher levels of educational attainment. Educated women are more politically active and better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them. Empowerment of women is important in a developing country like India why because the benefits will not only felt by the women themselves, but also by their households and in turn their nation.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

The women's education is of greater importance than men's education as educating women is educating the whole family. Education at all levels is an impetus to social development and educating women is a stepping stone to solve many problems of country like India. Ensuring right to educate will enable women to enrich and develop themselves and achieve true equality in terms of economic, political and social participation with men in various matters. In the recent years empowerment of women has been recognized as a central issue that determines the status of women in the society. Empowerment is not an event but a process, which challenges the traditional power equations and relations both in the family and society. Women empowerment can be seen in the angle of abolition of gender based discrimination in all institutions and structures of the society and participation of women in policy and decision making processes at domestic and public levels.

EDUCATION HAS FAR – REACHING EFFECTS

The education of parents is linked to their children's educational attainment, and the mother's education is usually more influential than the father's. An educated mother's greater influence in household negotiations may allow her to secure more resources for her children. Educated mothers are more likely to be in the labour force, allowing them to pay some of the costs of schooling, and may be more aware of returns to schooling. And educated mothers, averaging fewer children, can concentrate more attention on each child. Besides having fewer children, mothers with schooling are less likely to have unintended births. This has implications for schooling, because poor parents often must choose which of their children to educate.

Closing the gender gap in education is a development priority. In this competitive world, a woman has to take up all her responsibilities in efficient way and develop her career at par with the men; this is possible when the woman is educated. The National Policy on Education (NEP) was adopted in 1986, which set a target for universalisation for elementary education for children of 6 to 14 years and eradication of illiteracy in age group of 15 to 35 years by 2000. But this could not achieve till today. In every educational institution, the girl dropouts are more as they are forcefully or voluntary involved in household activities, work at fields, looking after younger siblings or working in unorganized sector. However, a quality education imparted to the girls would steer its way out of the storm and bring out a healthy home to the society. Schools and Colleges that have the tools they need to nurture critical thinking, exposure to big ideas and the creativity to generate new big ideas will yield young minds capable of transforming the future of their country.

PATHWAYS THROUGH WHICH EDUCATION AFFECTS SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Literacy is a key factor in the efforts to advance women's standing in the third world. Gaining literacy expands a woman's opportunities to

communicate feelings and needs. According to Ballara, not only does literacy help silent women express needs, interests and concerns, but literacy activities for and with women motivate the organization of women's groups to support collective demands and to seek active participation in development and a better position in society. Literacy affects women's critical role as a mother. Her own education makes her a passionate advocate for the education of her children. Her own education makes her a nation's greatest asset in the effort to produce a generation of educated, productive citizens.

Education benefits women in two distinct ways during different stages of life, and both formal and non-formal education play a role. While enrolled in primary and secondary school, girls are less likely to fall into early marriage, early motherhood, HIV infection, and street life. After leaving school, education helps women run their houses more effectively, a significant ability since in many parts of the world women are the key economic actors in households and are often solely responsible for providing for their families. Formal education provides adolescent lives with structure and safety, and it empowers adult women to better care for themselves and their children. A woman's ability to capitalize on the benefits of education beyond adolescence depends on the efficacy and duration of her education. Whether or not she graduates with a husband or child, she is poorly served if she cannot read. The Government and privately funded programmes should utilize this approach to implement a two-pronged initiative to improve the status of women and the quality of women's education in order to achieve universal literacy.

WHEEL TO GO FORWARD

Education is recognized as the cornerstone for sustainable development and to go forward in life with dignity. Women who constitute a large proportion of the nation's population have important role to play in politics and nation building. The society and the family gain from a literate woman. In other words, when women are literate, it is all society that gains. Literacy education is seen as a powerful agent of socialization in that it plays a tremendous role in preparing an individual to tender active and useful service both to the family and society in general. Literacy gives women a voice in their families, political life and on the world stage. It is a first step towards personal freedom and broader prosperity (Boliva; 2010). The advantages of a literate woman can be seen in the life of the family, the economic and political life of the society.

a) Lowers the fertility rate

The reason that female education lowers the fertility rate by reducing desired family size and that this, in turn, is because education raises the value of women's economic activities by raising the labour market rewards from going out of the home for work. In other words, the more the women are educated they desire smaller families. Education may also change women's preferences about the quantity versus the quality of children, with educated women choosing fewer children

but of better quality. Education of women improves child health because of educated mothers' greater knowledge of the importance of hygiene and of simple remedies. All this lowers infant mortality, which in turn means that a family does not need to have a large number of children in order to hedge against the possibility of premature death of some children. Further, it appears that education of females' increases the age at marriage and through this delay, lowers the total fertility rate, i.e. number of children ever born to a woman.

Finally, some studies find that mother's education has a greater impact on the educational attainment and school achievement of children than father's education. This is plausible given the greater interaction between mother and children in most families since, in most countries, fathers are usually the main earners in the household. In this way, education of females contributes more significantly to increases in human capital, productivity, and economic growth not only in their own generation but also in the next generation.

In order to see how more girls can be educated, it is essential to ask what holds them back from gaining education currently. There are many reasons why women's education seriously lags behind men's education. The most commonly cited is that in certain societies many parents continue to envisage a strict gender division of labour. If for most of her adult life a daughter will be a housewife, it seems pointless to educate her. The immense contribution that education can make to women's efficiency in child rearing and in domestic tasks is insufficiently recognized.

b) Social benefits

Literacy has been found to have large social benefits; such as increased life expectancy, reduced child mortality, raising healthy children and educating them. Literacy is at the core of education and especially education for all with its focus on basic education. Studies have shown that increase in female schooling have been followed by declining child mortality and fertility in subsequent decades. A literate woman is exposed to the various media, an avenue where the government can reach women. Women can also help government to achieve its laudable goals and objectives through public enlightenment and national mobilization campaigns. On the whole, literacy education wipes away ignorance, political apathy and encourages mutual understanding and cooperation among the various strata of society.

c) Economic Benefits

The most important measurable forms of economic benefits include employment, earnings, enhanced general productivity, consumption behavior, fiscal capacity and intergenerational effect. One of the most consistent correlations in social sciences is between increased literacy skills and the probability of employment. The role of women in the economic development of the nation cannot be overemphasized. They constitute 70% of the group that produces food for the nation. They cultivate and grow food to feed the family and the nation at large. Women when literate are also able to participate in self employment and in the informal sector which in turn leads to higher wage earning, more access to credit and production of goods for home consumption. In her contribution, Efed (2008) said literate women create income or wealth for the family through their good and benefiting employment whether in private or public sector.

d) Political Benefits

The empowering potential of literacy can translate into political participation and thus contribute to the quality of public policies and to democracy. The relationship between education and political participation is well established. Educated people are to some extent more likely to voice more tolerant attitudes and democratic values. Literate women have been known to contribute to the political stability and peace of a country. Examples have been those of late Mrs.IndiraGandhi of India, Mrs.Bandara Vaile of Sri Lanka, Mrs. AquinoPhillippines, and Margaret Thatcher of United Kingdom. The role of women has gone beyond the four walls of their home extends to all spheres of human endeavours in the development of the nation.

CONCLUSION

Education has far reaching effects; it could enhance women's development socially, economically, politically especially it lowers the fertility rate through appropriate empowerment programmes like basic literacy, skills acquisition, and access to information regarding health, nutrition status, and legal rights. The social outcomes of educating a girl are immeasurable. It enables them to go forward in life with great courage and confidence especially in unfavorable situations. Education also helps women to take advantage of opportunities that could benefit them and their families, preparing women for the labor force and helping them understand their legal and reproductive rights. The Governments and other organizations should attempt to educate people about the equity and efficiency benefits of female education and that public policy should encourage girls' access to schooling by extra subsidies in order to compensate for the asymmetry in parental incentives to educate sons and daughters in poor societies.

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