

A Study on Women and Society in the Light of Education

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ABSTRACT

Education is a strong and effective tool for promoting social development from the earlier period of history. Widespread education can spark the process of social change by changing social thoughts, beliefs and customs. A good education can create the environment of social equality and gives everyone the same opportunities or possibilities regardless of caste, class, religion, or social background. Additionally, it teaches individuals how to live a healthy, prosperous life and helps them let go of social rigidity. Looking back over the last few decades, it is clear that women's place in the society has evolved significantly in many ways; among them education can be considered as the most reliable one. A well-planned education empowers women to take part in every sphere of society and gives them the courage and confidence to speak up in opposition to any kind of unfavourable aspects of society. The present study is an attempt to explore women participation in reshaping the society by eradication of social illness and inequalities. The author also recalled the name of some lesser-known women educators in the overall process of women empowerment in Indian society in comparison to the western world.

Keywords: Education, Society, Savitribai Phule, Lesser-known Women Educators, Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Montessori

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning, education has been one of the most effective tools for changing and reshaping our culture, thoughts and beliefs of the society. In contrast to the traditional view of education that only gives learners the scope of achieving specific degrees, a

true education can ensure the process of all round development among individuals and also navigates the process of social development. Rapid increasing of the percentage of women participation in every aspect of society is one of the most crucial elements for social progression (Adhikari, 2023). Their own efforts to eradicate numerous societal evils will help them to become established in every aspect of society including politics, social work, education, and other fields of employment. If the entire population can understand the significance of women in the development of society, it will be simpler for their hidden potentialities to come into light (Adhikari & Saha, 2021d). The present paper is an attempt to make insight on some Indian educators who have played a pivotal role in the establishment of social integrity and enrichment at the same time, how the western world has dealt with education and its establishment in the society.

Objectives of the Study

In the present study, the author has tried to explore an overview on women participation or engagement in the process of social development. The main objective of the study is sketching the contribution of the first lady teacher Savitribai Phule in the development of Indian society where education is the key instrument to eradicate orthodoxy from the socio-educational context. In the present paper, some lesser-known women educators are reviewed in actualizing the dream of women empowerment in Indian Society. The author

has also tried to discuss the importance of education in women participation in every sphere of the Indian society comparing it with the western society.

Efforts Made by The First Lady Teacher Savitribai Phule

Gorainand Sen (2021) tried to explore the contributions of Savitribai Phule in their study entitled, "Savitribai Phule the First Lady Teacher and Social Reformer in Nineteenth Century of India". The name Savitribai Phule is especially notable for being the first lady teacher as well as a social reformer who has dreamt for establishing a society free from inequalities. She was the lady who contributed a lot in the empowerment and emancipation of women through education. With the random support of her husband Jyotirao Phule, she successfully made her educational thoughts reality; jointly they fought for the elimination of social superstitions from the society. As a feminist she also raised her voice against child marriage, feticide, infanticide, *sati pratha*, caste and gender-based discrimination etc. She always followed the principles of justice, equality and humanity in her social service throughout the life. This social innovator had to struggle a lot in the establishment of equal rights in special regard to the untouchables. For establishing equality, the couple, Savitribai Phule and Jyotirao Phule established a well in their house for the untouchables in that period when people kept themselves far from the shadow of those untouchables. There was a time when people were reluctant to offer water to those thirsty untouchables (Katke, 2019). Her relentless fight helped women to be free from social oppression; it was her strong belief that only education can liberate women from the boundary of social discrimination. She was that woman who has played a leading role in breaking down all the stereotypes and spent entire life in securing women empowerment through promoting proper education to women (Das and Das, 2021). The university of Pune

renamed the title as Savitribai Phule Pune University in the year 2015. We can realize her contributions by the awards and honour she got for her dedication in social and educational development such as Indian Post has released a stamp in her honour on 10th March, 1998 and also Google created Google doodle to celebrate her 186th birth anniversary.

Recalling Lesser-known Women Educators in Empowering Women

Women empowerment is simply the process of enhancing women in their development of self-efficacy, self-worth and other domains of life. It is closely aligned with the sense of gender equality in a particular society. In Indian context women were only bread maker inside the home environment; women involvement is a positive sign in establishing a sustainable society (Roy et al. 2023)); it was important to raise women participation outside the home. Increasing the percentage of women in every sphere of society is considered as one of the most crucial elements of social growth or progression. Initiatives taken by women in the eradication of numerous social ills would help them to be entrenched in every aspect of society including politics, education, social service, employment, and so on. If the entire mass can comprehend the significance of women development in the advancement of society, the unfoldment of their hidden potentialities will be easier. If we turn the pages of history, there are so many well-known examples of women empowerment in versatile field of India such as the name like Kalpana Chawla, Mother Teresa, Indira Gandhi, Dipa Karmakar, Pratibha Patil etc. who act like role models in the empowerment of others. Beside the personalities like them, there are also some lesser-known Indian woman who have made significant contributions in empowering India. These notable names like Durgabai Deshmukh, Tarabai Modak, Tarabai Shinde, Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati, Fatima Sheikh, Ramabai Ranade, Pandita Brahmacharini Chandbai, Anutai Wagh,

Nawab Begum Sultan Kaikhusrau Jahan etc. are not highlighted enough as the women educators in the book of India, but they tirelessly made efforts in building a new milestone in the pathway of India. Their contributions are not limited in the struggle for establishing equality, rather they made excellent efforts in advancing women with courage and will power through spreading quality education. These women educators have tried to increase the status of woman in the social ladder by their care and assistance to the huge number of rural and tribal women belong to the backward communities. They successfully made attempt in transcending the homely domain and also set a new milestone for the future (Adhikari and Saha, 2023). The main cause of women victimization is latent in the lack of educational opportunities of women. There was a similarity in the thoughts of these educators i.e., education is the only way to uplift the status of women in India as well as in abroad. They whole-heartedly worked for breaking down the gender barrier and also in securing the advancement and prosperity of women. Education can develop the courage and spirit among women to get themselves out of the boundaries of social evils and malpractices. These educators did not consider the food, cloth and shelter as the basic needs of life; they considered education as the big necessity to lead a healthy life and also in understanding the whole world (Adhikari and Saha, 2021a). Many of them significantly created as well as strengthened various national institutions in order to promote and protect the rights of women so that the thirst of education can be developed among women. Efforts were taken to include women in social, educational, political and economic background to facilitate the upward mobility of women in the existing status; otherwise, it will be a big indictment in the process of social development. These educators have dreamt of making women subordinate to men inside and outside the home environment.

Importance of Education in Women

Participation:

Increasing the percentage of women involvement in all areas of society is one of the most crucial elements of social progression. Their own initiatives to eradicate numerous social ills would help them become entrenched in every aspect of society, including politics, education, social service, employment, literary spheres (Adhikari & Saha, 2021b) and so on. Women's freedom of movement and household decision-making authority greatly depends on their age, level of education, and employment. The most reliable way to make women free from social boundaries is empowering them through providing quality education. Both gender equality and quality education are included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to establish a sustainable future. Presently we are going through the age of globalisation which is fully manipulated by the rapid use of technology (Mahato et al. 2022; Roy and Bishnu, 2018). Everyone is running to perform better than others to get a prosperous life. A true education has the power to insist women in breaking down the obstacles and facing various challenges with a positive attitude (Gorain and Roy, 2022). We all are concerned about 'Matri Shakti' or power of mother; still women are not able to realize these powers only for the absence of adequate knowledge and consciousness. In order to eradicate gender imbalances from the society, education must bring out the best in both boys and girls (Sen, 2023). A literate women can participate in each and every aspect of society in the process of development. The best way for a woman to define her existence is having equal access to education (Saha, 2023). The main moto of education is to secure human resource development and this manpower includes both male and female of the society (Adhikari and Saha, 2021b). Education can supply sufficient information to make concern about the surroundings and also provide huge opportunities to get involve

according to their needs and potentialities. There are so many examples of women empowerment in India which results in attaining prestigious posts of women in education, politics, judiciary, IT, politics, etc. (Adhikari and Saha, 2021c). In present scenario women are trying to prove themselves as the equal counterparts of men in the overall development of society which is the main moto of social equality on the basis of gender.

How the Western Society Dealt with Education and Society?

The western world has taken both education and social reformation in a very different perspective. Women educators like Mary Wollstonecraft took reforming the society by reforming the way women expressed themselves in a patriarchal society (Adhikari & Saha, 2022a, 2022c, 2022d). Wollstonecraft has been apt in dealing with psychological confrontations and showing them as a persistent problem arising from male dominance (Adhikari et al.2023b) and that it was important to educate women, if a society is to move towards progress (Adhikari & Saha,2022b). With time the necessity of the society went focused on to science education for women and child-centred education. Maria Montessori became an example of women educator (Adhikari & Saha, 2021e), who advocated to bring up children through a special method, today known as the Montessori Method (Adhikari & Saha, 2021f). The 21st century have dealt with education in a much more sympathetic manner. Educators like Nel Noddings have tried to show how ‘care’ can bring drastic change in a child’s life (Adhikari & Saha, 2021g). Perceptions towards life and society have evolved with time in the western world too just like in the Indian society.

CONCLUSION

From the early beginning, education works to uplift the status of people specially of women and underprivileged with the raising hands of various educators as well as social

reformers. It is the most trustable agent of social progress and modification which makes positive contribution in the eradication of social sins. In enables individuals to make positive changes in behavioural patterns in order to reshape our social thoughts, customs and beliefs. In the study, the author has revisited the efforts of Savitribai Phule, Maria Montessori, Mary Wollstonecraft and Nel Noddings in encompassing the development of well-being for the overall reformation of orthodoxy-based, patriarchal society. It also throws light on particularly the name of some lesser-known Indian educators who fought to avail education for all individuals reducing the gender barriers from the society. The power of human resource can be empowered only through the top employment of education which can eradicate the social imbalances and establish a well-sustained society.

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