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IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON IMPROVING STATUS OF WOMEN IN HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

Imparting Education is the best tool to raise the status of an individual in any society. The higher the education, greater the chances of employment. The same holds true in the case of women too. The women who are more educated may be contributing more to the economic structure that leads to economic improvement. Similarly, social status of women might be changing. The leaders/pioneers of all those who are partners in the system of social functioning may have a different attitude towards women- participation. Further the women after being educated may be become aware of equality and must not be submitting to the norms of subjugation. This may be especially in the cities like Haryana where women form a major force in all the spheres of activity. The women participate in family economic system and on all social activities. Perhaps it is this equality principle, which made the parliament to bring the bill for reservation for women. It is in this context that various questions have been raised in the preceding pages. There is need to have empirical basis to answer all those questions. It is in this context that the present study has been planned.

INTRODUCTION

Indian society has primarily been a fragmented society. Equality has been a major problem. The society has differentiated people on their caste and class and even based on their gender i.e. male or female. In this context Wali (2004) remarked that in India, the cultural conditioning and the socialization pattern, customs, rituals, traditions, value systems, religious ethos have been different for males and females, where a female develops a voiceless minus personality. Miller (2001) went- to the extent of observing that Indian culture maintains that women should not be given power and their views should not be taken into account during decision-making process. Though women in India are worshipped as 'deities, having supreme powers, there does not seem

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to have been a perceptible change in the status of women over ages. Ilaiah (2001) opined that division of labour is artificially imposed by one sex on the other. It argues that though a women's work consumes the same amount of time and energy as a man's, yet the increased productivity in industry, has hardly improved her position. Deutsch (2004) remarked about the prevailing view of women and suggested that women were passive and dependent while men were active and assertive.

According to Friedan (2003), women have a single option to become wives and in due course mothers. Women, who realized this as an inadequate goal, felt stirrings of independence, assertiveness and generally experienced tension. Many experts found, that being female they themselves did not realize their individuality adequately (Scarf, 2000).

Women came to be treated as second-class citizens with almost no rights and bereft of education. They have been neglected and relegated back in a male dominated society and the same might be true for all the societies in the world. Since the focus of the present study is India, the status of women has been viewed in the Indian set up. Some historical accounts project that Indian women had contributed to the development of society. In Vedic times, the women enjoyed a high status in society and there are evidences of existence of women scholars like Gargi, Maitreyi and Lopamudra. The great epics, the "Ramayana" and the "Mahabharata" are both heroine centric epics. However, if the status of women during ancient India is analysed one does find that it had been inferior to men. Draupadi for example was humiliated in the court, in the presence of all courtiers. Large number of such examples can be quoted from ancient history and culture. With the advent of foreign rule, the position further deteriorated regarding status of women. They were denied the right to face the men folk.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Dorothy (2002) had pointed out that historically women in India had a position of inferiority in the society. However, the significant point is, did the role and status of women change with the advent of modern era? Many researchers tried to find answer to this question. Mohini (2002) attempted to examine the change in the status and role of women consequent to changes towards modernisation of society. She pointed out that urbanization, education and employment have brought changes in the attitude and belief of women in terms such as equality, individuality and freedom. Mohite (2004) analysed the present stage into four categories. In the

first stage according to her, it was equality, while in the second stage, it was equity, in the third stage, it was enlightenment and in the fourth stage, it had been empowerment.

The status of women has been subservient to her role as ascribed in society. Srinivas (2000) studied that seclusion or absence of women from work has been an important indicator of her husband's status and success. Rama et al. (2000) gave a different picture of the situation. In his study majority of respondents did not consider economic independence, through education, as a worthy goal. Infact it was considered contrary to feminine role to seek economic independence. Education was looked upon as an embellishment - an attribute to charm. According to K.P. Singh (2002) women, who were forced into employment often experienced a conflict of roles to be fulfilled.

Traditionally a woman's reproductive role was considered her primary role and her role as a wage earner as secondary, but in the low-income classes, economic necessity forced a woman to support her family. Women glorified in motherhood and regarded her husband as god. Desai (2008) opined that marriage for a woman is a major goal in life. The traditional and ideal type of family used to be a joint family. This family always had a male head. It has been contended that women and younger members are the aggrieved parties in joint family structure. The authority structure rests on the criteria of sex and age. Woman is accorded a sub-ordinate position. Venkatrayappa (2006) made a study of essential facts of feminine roles and examined the extent and validity of superiority, which men assumed over women, based on biological, psychological and socio-cultural grounds. The pattern of work distribution follows sex division. Consequently, there are some functions like major decision-making, which are vested in men, while; the management of home is the responsibility of women. Mukherjee and Verma (2007) studied socio-economic backwardness in women. They studied the socio-economic role of 240 women between the age group of 15-34 years from Bhagalpur town. Social indicators indicate that social-status of lower class women is not static but is passing through a transition stage where they are neither socially backward nor fully advanced. However, economic indicators reveal an absolute economic backwardness. Majority of women are engaged in household activities like knitting, sewing etc. Men are responsible for supporting the family and to look after the general discipline among the members of his family. Women on the other hand are expected to remain at home and are in charge of kitchen. According to Gore (2008) not a single woman has taken gainful employment. The duties assigned to women are food preparation, food preservation, home care, scrubbing, sweeping and childcare and 70% of women in his study

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group were exclusively busy in such household work. As a rule women did not handle financial matters.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Education, marriage, employment and status are indirectly related to each other. Like all the traditional societies, Indian women were not given access to knowledge until the middle of the nineteenth century. The social reformers were first to recognize the need to educate women if social change was to be ushered in Kapadia et al. (2008) felt that rapid stride in education of women has created conditions for them to be self-reliant. In spite of the fact that society has accepted the value of imparting education to women, yet so many issues which require clarification such as objective behind women's education and its nature. In addition to this it is to be considered about the level of education and the nature of educational institution whether it should be co-educational or an exclusive female institution. Besides, the expectation of society from educated women, reaction of women themselves to such issues are also important factors.

Though education is considered a necessity, yet there is little clarity with regard to goals of education. In this background, Rama's respondents mentioned that neither their education was directed to any goal nor any tangible results were expected from education. In this changed circumstance, it is just desirable to educate. Barua (2008), tried to enquire how married women could utilize their education. Women's education had hardly made any significant impact on their day-to-day life both social and economic. Ghosh (2000) reflected upon education and social change in Indian society especially with reference to the relevance of present day education, which brings about social transformation through various social processes and interactions.

On account of increase in the minimum age of marriage and likelihood of scope of employment in future, many parents were encouraged to send their daughters to school as well as to college. However, the possibility of marriage proves as a powerful motivational factor in the education of girls. The education of boys ordinarily extends up to the age of 24-26 years, which indirectly enhances the age of marriageable girls who are to be educated until they get a suitable match.

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, greater the chances of employability. The same holds true in case of women. Women who are educated may be contributing more to the economic structure of the family. As a result, social status of women also changes. The guardians of all those who are partners in the system of social functioning may be having different attitudes towards women participation. Further, the women being educated develop awareness about the equality and would reject submitting to the norms of subjugation. This may especially be so in States like Haryana where women form a greater work force in fact in all the spheres of activity. Such women participate in the families' economic system and in all social activities. Perhaps it is this equality principle, which enables the Indian parliament to bring a bill on reservation for women. It is in this context that various questions have been raised in the preceding pages and need to answer all these questions on empirical basis. It is in this context that the present study has been planned.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Impact of education on improving economic and social status of women in Haryana.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the present study is to find answers to the following questions.

- a) To what extent women are conscious about their socio-economic status?
- b) To what extent workingwomen have developed the sense of independence in comparison to housewives?
- c) How far the functions of women have changed in the family on being educated?
- d) How far the status of women in the family has changed on account of their education, as per the indicators mentioned?

On being educated, how the social relations of women have changed in the existing social system?

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. Sample size of middle class educated and uneducated women of Kaithal & Kurukshetra was restricted to 200 educated and 200 uneducated women will be selected from each

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district.

2. In order 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 Brother, Father or Friend.
3. In the case study extreme cases were included. However, affluent women and extremely poor women could not be included in the study.
4. Eighteen indicators of social and economic status were selected. Other indicators, social and economic, could not be included in the study.
5. The respondents might be judgmental in giving the information about themselves.
6. Sometimes respondents considered the investigator to be intruders in their personal life and despite of repeated persuasion, it was an arduous task to convince them.

TOOLS

In order to collect data as per the objectives of the study, following tools were used.

1. Observation technique was followed to study the behaviour, attitude and functions of women.
2. A questionnaire was prepared to get information about social and economic conditions regarding equality, inequality in economic and social conditions.
3. A questionnaire of attitude towards women empowerment was developed.
4. Interview schedule was prepared to interview women regarding change in status of women.

In-depth case study of five women was prepared through naturalistic inquiry process.

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