



Moral Qualities of Contemporary Women

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Abstract: Due to the socio cultural norms of the Indian society, gender mindset and discrimination internalized to an extent where our self image is partially determined by the fact that we male and female. In this tenderized Indian society women should be empowered and need to follow their role models and become worthy of emulation. With the aim of value based education, the ability to make moral judgments based on sound reasoning can deliberately be cultivated. Empowerment has to come from within and is not something which can be given. Women empowerment is a process of individual and social transformation; and begins in the mind from her own consciousness and her own rights, capabilities and potentials from herself image and awareness about development in all fields. From the social perspectives, value based education promotes effective learning and underpins the continuous improvement of personal, social, moral and economic well being. So, with the imposition of value education one can promote significant value to understanding, co – relationship and development of one's personality with other fellow beings. All the prerequisites of women empowerment as a member of the society can be nourished with value based education. Value based education is investment in individual capability and self responsibility. Value based education refers to a wide gamut of learning and activities ranging from training in physical health, mental hygiene, etiquette and manners, appropriate social behavior, civic rights and duties to aesthetic and even religious training. This small paper is a humble attempt to study about the importance of value based education as a means for empowering women which is a great need of the hour. If women are not empowered and discriminated as before, development of the society will be very difficult. Induction method will be employed, on the bases of both primary and secondary data, for this research study.

Key words: Education; Empowerment; Gender; Society; Women

Date of Submission: 12-10-2021

Date of Acceptance: 29-11-2021

Women, by constituting an integral part of any society and culture, are often underestimated and discriminated in different forms and respects. Many a time, the contribution of women is neither given due attention nor marginalized while formulating socio-economic development plans. Being characterized by tradition of sex discrimination and social stratification, the Indian women also occupy a place of subordination to men in many occasions. The status of women is key indicator to the progress of a society as well as of the country. But, they shares distinct and equal footsteps along with the men folk of the society. In maximum societies, women had been considered naturally unsuited to political activity and had been formally or informally excluded from it. Due to the socio cultural norms of the Indian society, gender mindset and discrimination internalized to an extent where our self image is partially determined by the fact that we are male and female. In this genderised Indian society women should be empowered and need to follow their role models and become worthy of emulation. The consciousness of right and wrong, good and evil is called moral value. The concept of good differs from person to person. But the good considered from moral point of view is regarded as the highest good. It is education, which can make people understand the nature of the highest good.(Dash-2006) structurally, pedagogically and philosophically educational institutions, need to play a far more effective role in the development of a new cultural ethos that can contribute to the realization of the goals of comprehensive development of human

material. This also requires that the educational institutions internalize the concerns for the equality of women. (Power1999) With the main aim of value based education, the ability to make moral judgment based on sound reasoning can deliberately be cultivated. Value education is inspired and kindled the quest among the students by means of one's own example of character and mastery of knowledge. It is by embodying values within ourselves that we can really radiate values to our students. Value oriented education should not be concerned as an intervention of a series of 'dos' and 'don'ts'. Value is purely individualistic and inner conception of mind. Value is an individualistic ideal. It should be inculcated from inside then people should be empowered- socially, politically and economically. Empowerment has to come from within and is not something which can be given.

WOMEN IN INDIAN SOCIETY

Socially and culturally women are still tradition bound and it is a disadvantageous position. They are well known for their hardworking nature-expert weavers and farmers, in addition to being the carrier of rich culture. After globalization, the traditional work culture and role of women is being undermined whereas mechanization and automation is prevailing in the market based economy which has adversely affected the village based traditional economy. With the advent of globalization, the same works which were women's exclusive domain came to be undertaken by men and machines, and women's works which determined their identity were snatched away reduced women to mere consumers rather than producers. Economic independence or access to an inherited or self generated income is considered to be the major means of empowering women. Thus women are still a subjugated and dominated social group instead of emancipation and empowerment. In India, in principle, women have the right to vote and can contest the election. Even women members were there in the Constituent assembly of India. In political sphere, India's women in general and Hindu women in particular, stood in the forefront of every movement. Modern Indian women are objects of admiration by people of the rest of the world for the role they played in the country's public life. Women in India have not only reached the highest positions of power, and equal political and civil rights as men without having to fight for them, but they also have been increasingly joining the higher ranks of administration. When we start making a comparison between the role and status of women in modern India and in the other countries of the world, particularly in the matter of emancipation of women, we are struck with unexpected contrasts. The part that has been played by women in the freedom struggle and in the politics has been more important than that played by women in most other countries of the world. While their Western counterparts had to struggle to get political citizenship, Indian women won the franchise at the same time as men i.e at the time of the national independence in 1947, along with favorable legislation in many other areas. In Britain, Emmeline Pankhurst founded the Women's Franchise League in 1903, with her daughter Christabel (1880-1958), the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). She fought for women to have the same political status as men. The motto of the Suffragettes was 'deeds, not words'. They fought a long historic struggle for their political equality. In June 1918, the British women over 30 won the right to vote. On 2 July 1928, just three weeks after Emmeline Pankhurst's death, a law was passed allowing all women over the age of 21 to vote. It was only in the late 1970s, that women realized that they were winners of a 'hollow fortress' as the social structures had largely remained unchanged. They have got the right to contest election just with the independence of India. Women were elected from the first Parliamentary election of 1952. But the number of women in governmental ministerial level is not increased with a desirable amount. And those countries where women received the political rights later than India are increasing the number of women in governmental ministerial level higher than India. The issues of women empowerment arises because of the stark reality that women are still marginalized and sidelined from the mainstream as a use and throw commodity. The patriarchal canopy had always denied women the warm rays of autonomy and freedom. The indeclinable gender bias has

disfigured the face of humanity. This discrimination originates well before the birth of a girl and is sustained right through her womanhood. India is a nation whose nationhood is equated with the 'Mother India'; image the 'Bharat Mata'. India is also a country having agricultural economy, where land is the main source sustenance, is connotatively associated with women in the form of 'Bhumi Devi'. It is quite ironical that in spite of these symbolical attributions, women in India are viewed as 'second sex'. (Bhowmik, 2006) EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

Education is intimately connected with life. Human life is reflected in the system of education. Again, education becomes complete and meaningful in and through the experiences of life. With change in life situations and values, education is bound to change. Every society should promote the educational and economic interests with special care and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. The ultimate aim of education is the integral development of human personality.

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