Empowerment of Differently Abled Women through Education and Services

Abstract: Developing nations like India, there are several initiatives are taken for the empowerment of differently abled women in education and other services. This chapter is a theoretical approach to explore about the empowerment of women with disabilities. Several state and central government schemes are helping them to cope up with the competitive economy. University Grants Commission (UGC) provides financial assistance to women especially with disabilities, through Ministry of Human Resource Development. The major goal of the government schemes and persons with disability act is to eliminate the discrimination, to provide training programmes and rehabilitation schemes and services to rural and urban women.

Keywords: Differently Abled Women, Empowerment of Differently Abled

I. INTRODUCTION

Our country has updating various law and practices to improve the services and education for women. Compulsory and free education between the age group of 6 to 14 is practiced in our country. Many programmes, schemes and policies are announced by Indian Government to empower women education. Many awareness programmes are also processed in various places of the world and India to empower women education. From 1995 women enrolment in higher education system has improved a lot. Most of the Indian families consider women as mother of a child and housewives. They are not encouraging them to achieve in education or other activities Women with disabilities in India facing some hindrance and discrimination in the field of education. Differently abled women are facing many complexities and problems due to their rural residence, low economy, lack of family support and societal discrimination. University Grants Commission through Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, provide financial assistance to women especially with disabilities.

Differently-Abled in World Context

About 15% of the world population are with physical and mental disabilities. One billion people are differently abled who are living in developing nations and 80 lakhs are women. They are also experiencing hindrance and discrimination due to their shortcomings, color, gender, nationality, religion, their social origin, age, poverty, language, etc. Government of developing nations are also launching many development and training programmes for their welfare.

Differently-Abled Women in Indian Context

Person who are having physical and mental disabilities are subjected to differently-abled, physically challenged, people having special needs and handicapped. Women who are all unable to undertake their own needs, and their family responsibilities are experiencing psychological stress in their families and in the society. Their voices are unheard, neglected and avoided by the society and hidden by their own family members.

According to the Census of India 2011, 26,810,557 people are having physical and mental disabilities in our country, among them 11,824,355 are women. They can be classified as, disability in seeing (20.2%), disability in hearing (20.2%), disability in speech (7.4%), disability in physical movements (17.5%), mental retardation (5.4%), mental illness (2.5%) and other multiple disabilities(26.7%). Age group of the disabled women also categorized by them, among the classification the women under 20-29 age group (1.7%), 30-39 age group (1.77%) and 40-49 age group (1.94%). Women ranging from 20 to 50 years are facing many challenges in surviving in the field of education and employment. Even though facing many problems, disabled women are achieving many miles in their education and employment which are not visible to the world. Differently abled women are experiencing more discrimination than males, because of their gender. Many feminist movements, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and government schemes...
are joining hands with differently able women to overcome these discriminations and to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

II. TYPES OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

According to National Sample Survey Organization Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Government of India, (2003), women with lack of physical and mental performance range as differently abled than the normal people. The types of women with disabilities are as follows:

- Blindness or visual disability - loss of ability to view physically.
- Less vision - women may perceiving light but can’t view objects or persons clearly.
- Disability to hear- unable to hear the voice or noise.
- Disability to speech or dump- unable to speak properly like normal people. Some women can able to speak but others’ can’t identified their vocal due to the enlargement of nasal sound, stammering, defects in articulation, etc.,
- Locomotor Disability –women who are unable to move appropriately due to lack of physical movements, inactivity of parts below or above hip or inactivity of adjacent side of body parts like left side or right side.
- Multiple disabilities- women may experience these type of disabilities due to disability to hear, speak and vision, sometimes may combine with multiple or locomotor disabilities.

III. FACTORS OF EMPOWERING DIFFERENTLY ABLED WOMEN

According to Meera Shenoy, (2011), National Skill Development Mission which was launched by Government of India with a target of 500 Million young people through the Department of Rural and Urban Development, Ministry of Labour and Employment. They are providing several schemes for the welfare and development of disabled women in our country. To enter into a labour market differently abled women have to overcome so many barriers like lack of literacy and financial support.

Some of those women are developing negative attitudes due to discrimination by other people. The root cause of their negative attitude are stereotyping, misunderstanding, ignorance, fear, backlashes and wrong conclusion about their coworkers. In other cases, people working with differently abled women negatively treat them or avoid them for their disabilities and shortcoming in work. These shortcoming are due to their negative attitude and co-workers’ bullying over them some times. They lost many opportunities due to the above mentioned reasons.

Gender equality should be considered by every citizen to eliminate discrimination of differently abled women. It is our duty to protect them and develop them in our society. Some of the factors influencing the empowerment of the women with disabilities are:

Education: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other global organization overall differently abled people who are educated, ranges 3% and among them 1% are women. Hence women should be provided with training programmes in their respective educational and field of services.

Employment: Due to their disabilities women only engaged in household activities like washing, cooking and take care of their children, but men with disabilities get the chances double the time than disabled women. This will be improved by providing employment opportunities to the disabled women in public and private sectors.

Rights in Family and Society: The society and family of the disabled women think that they are incapable. To fulfil the family and societal roles. They feared that those women can reproduce children with their disabilities and they can’t perform well in workplace. They are in need to overcome these wrong believes.

Health Issues: Disable women built depression due to their ignorance or self-sympathy. They have to overcome this attitude to maintain mental and physical health in their institutions and workplaces.

Verbal and Physical Violence: Disabled women are suffering both verbal and physical abuse. This will affect their educational and employment opportunities. This can be monitored to protect them from those disasters to make themselves empowered in their respective fields.

IV. PROMOTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO DISABLED WOMEN

Policies and schemes of Central and State Government for people with disabilities states that, disabled women plays an important role in women’s education and special education criteria. They have to understand the social construction of impairment and physical disability that can help them to overcome the barriers in their education. They have to think wide for their self development, education. And develop themselves as their own role models. According to Tamilnadu state policy some of the following steps will be processed:

- To detect the nature and cause of their problems in differently abled baby children, and provide medical assistance to improve their condition.
• Every disabled child should be given compulsory-free education based on their level of disability.

• To establish training centres’ and educational institutions for them to improve their skill requirements and provide them with special aids, hostel facilities, free transport and other scholarship facilities, assistive devices for them, etc., to provide a standard higher education for the disabled women.

• To arrange financial assistance for them through financial institutions and banks and provide employment opportunities for them. Like the State Government schemes, Central Government also developed many policies and schemes namely:

  • Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC)
  • Inclusive Education for Disabled (IED) under Sarva Siksha Abyan (SSA)
  • Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage Scheme (IEDSS)
  • Scheme of Assistance to the Disabled for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP)
  • National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC)

These are few schemes helping disabled women in many contexts. These schemes provide disabled women the following:

• Provided with stipend for differently abled girls after clinical and physical examination.

• Aids to access learning materials like audio tapes, braille books, transport facilities, supportive staffs, etc.,

• Supplementary and self-learning materials are provided to them.

• Implementing training other training programmes for them in schools and educational institutions.

VI. FEW IMPORTANT DIFFERENTLY ABLED WOMEN ACHIEVERS

• Hellen Keller who was the first differently abled women who has earned Bachelors’ degree in Arts. She was also a successful political activist of USA. She was having disabilities to hear and speak.

• Marla Runyan, from Georgia is having disability to see who was a successful athlete, in which she has won 3 times championship of 5000 meters running and received several accolades and medals in both national and international sports events.

• Preethi Srinivasan from TamilNadu who was captain of Indian women’s Cricket team. She lost her senses below her hip after a swimming accident. She has defeating her disability by achieved many miles through her organization ‘Soulfree’

• Sadhna Dhand, who is suffering from brittle bone disease, who was unable to walk normally and with disability of hearing from the age of 12. She has done graduation in photography and became a successful photographer and painter.

• K.V. Rabhia who lost her legs due to polio. She is from malappuram in Kerala. She has organized many literacy campaigns especially for disabled women. She had constructed a library for disabled people in her village vellaikadu, Kerala.

• Jayashree, who is an employee of Railway post mail service, having a disability of hearing. She formed an NGO organization called ‘caliper women’ and she is one of the ‘Women Achiever’ award holder from TamilNadu.

VII. CONCLUSION

Many state, central government and NGOs should orient with differently abled women to develop in education, workplace empowerment and entrepreneurship. There is a need to propagate and to develop positive and realistic vision especially through media, information technology and educational institutions. There is an important need to develop them in support services for them, providing them with rehabilitation studies and other training programmes. Technology is a main factor to empower disabled women. It will develop with innovative thinking, professional education and can address their needs easily.

Disabled women in developing countries should improvise their education and employment through the several schemes offered by the government. Women with disabilities are slightly increased than past decade. According to World Bank, among the world population 20% of the people under poverty line experiencing disabilities due to malnutrition. Developing nations like India will improvise the disable women in urban and rural India which not only develop their self and economy but also it will boost the country’s economy as well. Department of education states that, Women’s Component Plan (WCP) provides funding for the education of disabled women. Followed by them several ministries in India are also providing funds for the disabled women including their health, education,
environment, family welfare, urban-rural development, agriculture, social justice, tribal affairs, workplace development and workplace protection. These women should be handle with care and developed with proper guidance to improvise their mental stability and economical standard.

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