

Chapter 1

The 3 L's of Empowerment

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1. What are the three essential factors for empowerment?

Ans. According to the author Christine Lagarde, the three essential factors for women empowerment are 1. LEARNING 2. LABOUR 3. LEADERSHIP. Together they are called the three L's. They must be understood in this modern world with seriousness. Women are the actual persons who must be aware of the 3 L's.

2. What is the role of learning in empowering women?

Ans. 'Thamaso ma jyothir gamaya' goes the Sanskrit slogan and true as it is, the darkness of the mind can only be removed through learning. Any change for the betterment of society can only be brought out by promoting LEARNING. Women must understand their true potential and break away from the chains which prevent them from being free to learn and work.

3. How can we promote more opportunities for women in the workplace?

Ans. 'Woman' should not be misinterpreted as woe to man (sorrow),

but instead woman must be acknowledged as the supporter to man. The responsibilities of man can be halved if the woman too works. So it is the mindset of society that has to change first. Inheritance of parent's property must be equal for a son and a daughter. Education must be made compulsory too. The health of women must be a prime issue of concern too. In offices and schools, women must be permitted equal duties and rights, so that they can work with complete freedom for the benefit of the school.

Think and Write :

1. The role of educated empowered women in building a strong nation :

Ans. 'Women empowerment' is the work of the hour and the need of the hour. Without an educated mother, the children of a family will not be fit for the modern century. When the women of the household becomes an earning member, the man has his burdens lessened. Women can contribute to the economic development of a nation by going for work. Gender equality must be made sure in every country to support women to come out of

the cocoons of being shy and kept in the kitchens. An educated and empowered mother will bring up children with a vision to rise high in life. She will be a guiding light. Her good qualities will reflect in the character of children. Thus the younger generation will be good and useful citizens for the nation. That makes the African quote: "If you educate a girl, you train a village" - a very meaningful quotation.

2. The role of learning, labour and leadership skills in making a woman liberated.

Ans.

A candle when lighted up by a spark gives light to a wide area of space. In the same way a woman lighted up with education and learning spreads knowledge, culture and wisdom to a family and society. She learns about herself, her rights and responsibilities. From learning she gets the skills to labour and professionalism. Her wealth will contribute to the economy of her society and country. And if given a chance of leadership, she becomes better than men, because she makes decisions based on consensus building, inclusion, compassion and sustainability. Men tend to take rash decisions but women appear more wiser.

3. Women should step outside their 'comfort zones'. Discuss.

The female of God's creation - the WOMAN has always been suppressed in the name of protectiveness. She was kept in the safe custody of the four walls of the home. Her father and her brother kept her from being watched by society. Education was given, but always limited to get a job of teaching, nursing and clerical works. She has thus been conditioned to these limits. She doesn't have the courage to take up a challenging job like journalism or politics because she is afraid of being abused by the public. So all these centuries women have been put in a comfort zone and she likes to remain there. But now if women are to be empowered she must be pulled out from the 'Lekshmana rekha' of comfort. She must explore the wide world of opportunities and possibilities. The fear that men will not accept the talents of a woman must be removed. Only the first step is hard once the population of today's women run out of the comfort zone, the next generation will follow without fail.

4. Women sometimes lack confidence to match their competence. Comment on the statement.

The creator has given equal intelligence, talent and creativity for the two species of humans — MAN and WOMAN. But somehow the concept that WOMAN was physically weak and that her purity of life must be maintained, has led her to lack confidence to face the challenges of society. She is competent, she is strong. In mind she can face situations very boldly and can earn her own income. She is intelligent, qualified and can be the HEAD of 'state' or the HEAD of a company. Golda Meir of Israel, Margaret Thatcher of Britain and Indira Gandhi of India are golden examples for the same. They were more manly and iron in mind than usual men. Kiran Bedi of Indian Police Service, was the reformer of the Tihar jail, which could not be done by any man. But the ordinary woman doesn't have the confidence to be like these heroines. She has a mindset to be a mother and maid to her family. She restricts getting out of the home. Women must first believe that she is no way inferior to MAN. She is equal to man, she is even better in confidence.

5. How can we build SELF-CONFIDENCE in women ?

Giving advice always is boring. It makes the listener angry and frustrated. Women must be made to do things on her own. She must share the responsibility of the home and family along with her husband. She must be guided by her father, supported by her husband and comforted by her children.

As young girls she must be made aware of the biographies of women like Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, Valentina Tereshkova and Kalpana Chawla. Religious texts and women characters with holy references must be familiarised.

Women must be made courageous and powerful with intelligence and awareness of her environment. She must view media. Women must channelise their resources in proper fields, that is responsible jobs.