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Role of education in women empowerment

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Abstract

Education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare with self-confidence, skills and knowledge which is necessary to participate fully in the development process. Women empowerment is an important tool to bring the required social changes in the society and the mindset of the people. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges and changes their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment India is poised to becoming a developed country by 2020 with social and economic development. Education of a woman changes her life and the quality of her family and will definitely support the education of her children especially a girl child. An educated woman will easily give an independent and progressive outlook, reducing the infant mortality rate and control the blossoming of the population explosion.

Keywords: Education, Literacy, Women Empowerment

1. Introduction

"If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered".

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

Women represent virtually 1/2 population however the hegemonic masculine ideology created them suffer plenty as they were denied equal opportunities in numerous areas of the planet. Rise of feminist ideas has led to the tremendous improvement of women's condition throughout the planet in recent times. Most pressing demand of the women's rights movement is access to education. Education of girls in our country has additionally been a significant preoccupation of each the govt and civil society as a result of an informed lady will play an awfully vital role within the development of nation. By 2020, Republic of India is poised to emerge in concert of the foremost developed nations with additional skill, information and economically sound altogether forefronts. No doubt, girls can play a significant role in contributively to country's economic process and development of a rustic. However we've achieved little or no bit within the space of girls authorization despite of the many reforms however an awfully great distance to travel. And our most difficult task is to incorporate girls altogether spheres with their full participation and education is that the solely thanks to attain this aim.

1.1 Women Education in India

Although within the sacred writing amount girls had access to education in Asian country, they'd bit by bit lost this right. However, within the British amount there was revival of interest in women's education in Asian country. Throughout this era, varied socio spiritual movements by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar stressed on women's education in Asian country. Sage Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and B.R.Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India. World Health Organization took varied initiatives to form education offered to the women of India but girl's education got a positive stimulus once the country got independence in 1947 and also the government has taken varied measures to supply education to any or all Indian women. As a result women's attainment rate has fully grown over the 3 decades and also the growth of feminine attainment has in truth been more than that of male attainment rate. Whereas in 1971 solely twenty second of Indian girls were literate, by the tip of 2001 54.16% feminine were literate. The expansion of feminine attainment rate is 14.87% as compared to 11.72% of that of male attainment rate

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1.2 Reasons of Low Literacy in Indian Women

Education of women is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and no single cause can be held responsible for very low literacy rate and associated with combination of many factors - social, cultural, economic, educational, demographic, political, administrative. Following are the important factors attributed for the present position of womenfolk in education.

- **Lower enrolment** of girls in the age group of 6 to 11 in schools.
- **Higher drop-out rate among girls is twice that of boys from schools** in rural, tribal and slums areas.
- **Girl child play the role of second mother** by shouldering the responsibilities of household work and make them handicapped discourages girl child to go school as it becomes secondary.
- **Bonded labour system is a social evil** as barrier for girl's education in rural areas for the underprivileged families of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes.
- **Caste system a major barrier** to low caste families from high caste communities for their selfish motives of keeping them as domestic servants and child labourers in the farms or factory.
- **Dowry system as cordon** for girl child in deprivation of right of education of poor and downtrodden thinking that if their daughters are more educated then they have to accumulate more assets and properties to give dowry.
- **Large segment of girl children engaged in labour practices** according to UN sources more than 50 million child labourers indulged in small scale industries like bricks making, mining, carpet making, quarrying, glass, bangles works, etc.
- **Poor school environment for girls and the methods of teaching** are out – dated, rigid and uninteresting and mostly schools having poor basic amenities.
- **Female age at marriage** of 18 years as prescribed by various legislations but not followed and neglected by the families having low literacy and it discourages female children to continue their schooling and higher education.
- Feeling of **Inferiority, subservience and domesticity** in the female child especially in rural, tribal and poor families because of lack of education.
- **Poverty is a major barrier** in improvement of educational and economical conditions of girl child.
- **Lack of effective laws and administration in enforcing free** and compulsory education to all children of the nation.
- **Demographic factors-** high growth rate of population, rapid urbanisation, migration all attribute immensely for the poor literacy level of girls in India.

1.3 Importance of Women Education in India

"Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process."

—ICPD Programme of Action, paragraph 4.2

Women education plays a vital role in the whole development of the country. It helps in the development of half of the human resources and improving the quality of life. Educated women not only have a propensity to promote education of her girl children and also can give better guidance to their children.

Furthermore educated lady helps in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of population. Women Education creates a fundamental opportunity for the social and economic development and will yield a positive impact in the society by contributing positively to the economy of both the country and the society. An educated lady reduces the chances of her child dying before the age of five and controlling the population are high as an educated woman is likely to marry at a later age. Education of women is a big factor in empowerment and development of any country.

1.4 Education's Role in Women Empowerment

Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political right. The idea of women empowerment was introduced in 1985 at NAROIBI in the international women conference. Education is landmark of women empowerment because it enables women to face the challenges and tackle their conventional role and make better their life. We cannot abandon the significance of education in orientation to women empowerment. By 2020, India is poised to becoming superpower and a developed country; it is fast approaching just 6 years away and became reality only when the women of this nation became empowerment. India currently account for the prime number of illiterates in the world and its literacy rate have risen sharply from 18.3% in 1951 to 64.8% in 2001 in which enrolment of women in education have also risen harshly from 7% to 54.16%. In spite of importance of education of women regrettably only 39% of women are literate amongst 64% of the man. Contained by the framework of an egalitarian polity, our laws, development policies, plan and programmes have designed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the 5th five year plan (1974–78) forwards has been a noticeable move in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. Women empowerment has been recognized as the central issue in influential the status of women in recent years. In 1990 - National Commission of Women was set up by an Act of Parliament to defend the right and legal entitlements of women. 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) of the constitution have provided reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a well-built establishment for their participation in decision making at the local level.

2. Education of Women: Its Scenario and Challenges

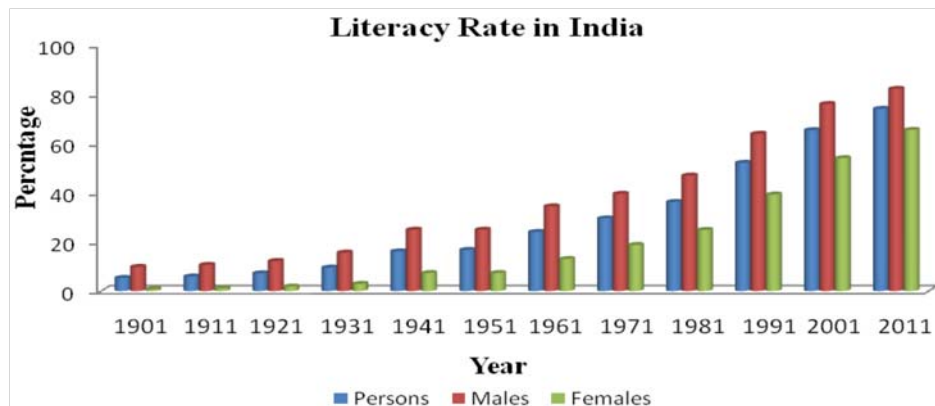
In spite of the forceful intervention by a stronghold of female opportunity, feminist critics, constitutional guarantees, protecting laws and sincere efforts by the state governments and central government through various schemes and programmes over the last 67 years and above all, the United Nation's enormous pressure with regard to the uplift of the plight of women in terms education is still in the state of an enigma in India. The Census report of 2011 indicates that literacy among women is 65.46% as compared to 82.14% of male and it is virtually depressing to observe that the literacy rate of women India is still much less than national average which is 74.04%. Women's education is very slow in rural areas due to illiteracy; they are backward, exploited and not treat equally with male because of gender inequality.

Table 1: India's Literacy Rate

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1961	24.0	34.4	13.0
1971	29.5	39.5	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source: Census of India (2011)

Table-1 shows that in pre-Independence time women's literacy rate had a very poor spurt in comparison to men literacy rate. It is witnessed from the fact that women's literacy rate has risen from 0.7 % to 7.3 % where as men literacy rate has risen from 9.8 % to 24.9 % during last four decades. Post- independence period there is substantial increase in literacy rates in general. Literacy rate of male has almost tripled over the period i.e. 25% to 82.14% from 1951 to 2011. Women's literacy rate has increased at a faster pace than the male literacy during the decade 1981 -2001 unpredictably and growth is almost 8 times i.e. 7.9 % in 1951 and 65.46 % in 2011. Conclusion is that the female literacy rate is only 1/2 of the female population are literate as compared with 3/4 of the male population are literates.



2.1 Equal Opportunity of Education

Equal opportunity of education has shown a major improvement in the area of adult literacy programs and also in the area of enrolment of children of both genders in schools and its result is higher participation of women in literacy campaigns and this lead to reduction in the gender gap in literacy levels. Still more noteworthy that disparity in enrolment of boys and girls in neo- literate households is much less compared to the non- literate householders. In other words, educated or literate people are more involved in difference in the enrolment of children.

Table 2: State-Wise % Age of Female Literacy Acc. to 2011 Census

S. No.	Name of the State	Female Literacy
1	Andhra Pradesh	59.7%
2	Arunachal Pradesh	59.6%
3	Assam	67.3%
4	Bihar	53.3%
5	Chhattisgarh	60.6%
6	Delhi	80.9%
7	Goa	81.8%
8	Gujarat	70.7%
9	Haryana	66.8%
10	Himachal Pradesh	76.6%
11	Jammu and Kashmir	58.0%
12	Jharkhand	56.2%
13	Karnataka	68.1%
14	Kerala	92.0%
15	Madhya Pradesh	60.0%
16	Maharashtra	75.5%
17	Manipur	73.2%
18	Meghalaya	73.8%
19	Mizoram	89.4%
20	Nagaland	76.7%
21	Orissa	64.4%
22	Punjab	71.3%
23	Rajasthan	52.7%

24	Sikkim	76.4%
25	Tamil Nadu	73.9%
26	Tripura	83.1%
27	Uttar Pradesh	59.3%
28	Uttarakhand	70.7%
29	West Bengal	71.2%
Union Territories		
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	81.8%
2	Chandigarh	81.4%
3	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	65.9%
4	Daman & Diu	79.6%
5	Lakshadweep	88.2%
6	Pondicherry	81.2%
All India		65.46%

Source: Census of India – 2011

Table -2 shows the state wise female literacy rate with an average of 65.46% in India in 2011 census. High literacy rate is 92.0% in Kerala and low literacy rate is 52.7% in Rajasthan and literacy rate of female is increased 11% in last 10 years from 54.16% to 65.46%. Various steps and plans have been taken by Government of India especially for women in every movement.

2.2 Corrective Measures for Better Female's Literacy Level

Following measures be capable of bringing phenomenal change in the plight women's education and empowerment in India

- **Mandatory enrolment of girl's in schools** by the government for realm of compulsory education because low enrolment of girls in schools closes the doors for development and prosperity of future generation and intensive efforts must be initiated jointly by the government, parents and civil society to achieve universal enrolment for girls without any compromise.
- **Stop ongoing high drop –outs** Ministry of Education both at Centre and State level should work out especially in

rural areas with involvement of NGO's in every locality to realize zero drop-out among girls.

- **Poverty alleviation services** provided to poverty stricken families to strengthen the income thereby to enable the families to send their children to schools and colleges without much financial difficulties
- **Abolition of bonded Child labour practice** with strict administrative measures and the relieved children from bondage and integrated into schools with suitable defence social mechanism.
- **Educational authorities take appropriate steps** with the participation of communities to bring the girl children to the mainstream of education and development at every level including family and community.
- **Overcome inferiority; subservience and domesticity** of female child and give education and development.
- **Empowerment in physical, mental, economic and social dimensions of life** irrespective of its socio-cultural and economic background can take it a challenge to bring up their girl children as dignified human being.
- **Midday meal scheme** with other educational supportive services like free text books, Note books, uniforms, Bicycles, scholarships, bus passes as it is done in Tamil Nadu can be provided in all states and union territories to lift up the literacy level among girls.
- **Eliminate social evils** like dowry, child marriage, caste system and other practices which deprive the rights of education for children belonging underprivileged families and communities.
- **Mass awareness programmes** and social welfare measures should be made with full support of public, political parties; NGOs and government agencies for provide education to all children.
- **Role of electronic and print media** play significant role in building a good and positive image about girls and women in general by giving no focus for such advertisements and news fetching commercial gain at the cost of depicting women as an object and it help in changing the society's attitudes towards girls and their roles to treat every girl or woman as human being with self respect and dignity.
- **Provide free education and hostel facilities to poor girls.**

Conclusion

"Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power." - According to the Country Report of the Government of India. Education is the only most dominant tool to change the position of women in society and brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. Women education should be encouraged at all levels and for intensity of gender bias. Established schools, colleges and universities exclusively for girls to provide knowledge and education and bring more and more girls especially from marginalized families of below poverty line to the mainstream education. Concessions should be provided by the Indian government in the form of free books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing, midday meals, scholarships, free circles and so on. Popular UNESCO slogan-Educate a man and you educate an individual; educate a woman and you educate a family.

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