

Women Education in Developing Country: India

Abstract

Education is a fundamental right of every human being, so women too have equal right to avail education as that of male. A nation can only progress if it's all citizens contribute their equal share in development. As women constitute more than half population of any country, so they have a major role in bringing prosperity of nation.

If we look into the history, women were not treated equal to men. But after independence many steps were taken to uplift the condition of women's. Education makes women aware about their rights; they can fight against violence occurring on them and become an active participant in development of nation. But certain factors are there which still hamper women to get better education, these factors should be removed and every citizen should understand the dignity and importance of women's education and their contribution in development.

Keyword: Women Education, Developing Country, Need of Women Education and Factor Affecting Women Education.

Introduction

Education is a unique investment of present time and resource for future earnings. Development of human capital is one of the most significant instruments for development, which can be achieved by educating the youth at every stage. It can facilitate transformation by raising worker's productivity in given activity and act as a catalyst which enhances empowerment and enable workers to adopt new technologies for development of country.

Education supplies the economy with human resources, with the requisite knowledge, training and qualification to meet demand for economic development (Yadav, 2010). It is a force to reduce gender inequality and access to mobility, share in decision making and contribution to national development. Hence we can say that education is a primary source to improve the quality of human resources and act as an important input for increasing production of material and non material sources.

The prosperity and growth of nation depends on the status and development of its women as they not only constitute nearly half of its population, but also influence the growth of the remaining half of the population (Verma, 1992). For this they must be motivated to come forward and work by joining hands with men and this is only possible if they are provided good education. Educating women supports their rights and obligations.

The right to avail credit or own land was diminished as earlier they were unable to understand contracts or solve simple mathematical calculations. Today poverty is not only the cause of violence against women but most of women suffer due to illiteracy. Or indirectly we can say that women's education have sturdy impact on child bearing, researches have shown that educated women are more alert about family planning and therefore inquire and believe on such services which helps to control population and hence become a part of nation to accelerate economic growth. We give opportunity to women today we build the India tomorrow (Ghosh, 1995).

Status of Women Education in India

In order to know the status of women in India firstly we have to glance into the condition of women in historical background. The place that women occupied in the medieval and later the colonial period is extremely significant. In the Shastras women were never placed on elevated platform. But during the Vedic period their place were improved and they were actively involved in religious and social matters. They were given freedom to choose match for them and even widow was permitted to remarry. But with the advancement of civilization in India social

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discrimination increased. Jainism and Buddhism emerged as powerful spiritual reform movements.

Although according to Buddhism, women's have equal spiritual capacities to men's. But the high position that women benefited during early Vedic period slowly started worsening in the late Vedic period. Ancestry began to be traced in the male line and sons were the solitary inheritor of ancestor's possessions. Even during the age of the Dharmashastras condition of women were not good. It is during this age that rules of behavior prescribing behaviour custom for women were developed. Women's were excelled out both from economic and religious sphere. The birth of girl child was considered as an ill omen and many parents went to the extent of killing the female infants. Sati practice was widely spread due ill treatment meted out to widows. During the medieval period the condition of Women in society deteriorated with the entrance of Muslims.

Several evil practices like child-marriage, sati, female infanticide and purdah` system became dominated. Hindus Kshatriyas were allowed to

maintain relation with more than one girl. During the British rule Indian education revived, as government gave attention to education with the Charter Act of 1813 and obtained full recognition in the famous Macaulay's Minute of 1835, but still women education was ignored. It was with the release of Wood's Dispatch", containing Educational development programme was passed in 1854 by the East India Company with special reference to women education and employment.

Separate primary schools for girls were opened and some women were also imparted training for appointment as teachers in girls' schools. But from 1882-1947, there was slow progress in girls' education as it was confined to affluent sections of the society or those families which were in the favour of foreign rulers. Nevertheless, starting from no education at the advent of British rule i.e. 0 per cent of the total enrolment of educational institutions under formal system, the enrolment of women increased to nearly 25 per cent of the total enrolment by the end of the British regime (1947).

Table1. Education of Girls and Women in Pre-Independent Period

Year	%age literacy of women	Primary school	Middle School	Secondary School	Universities/ College	Other institutes	Total
1981-82	0.2	124491	*	2054	6	515	127066
1901-02	.7	345397	34386	10309	264	2812	393168
1921-22	1.8	1198550	92466	36698	1529	11599	1340842
1946-47	6.0	3475165	321508	280772	23207	56090	4156742

Source: Quinquennial Report-Ministry of Education and Culture.

And finally after independence women education got a boost with government efforts, first step was appointment of University Education Commission, headed by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, the commission emphasized that present women education is entirely irrelevant to their life, does not enable them to solve daily life problems and suppress their needs and opportunities for self expression and recommended to revise women education. (Report of the University Education Commission, Government of India, 1948-49, Vol. (i), Chapter XII) After two years the country entered into a new era of planned development through the Five Year Plans, during this various commissions were appointed as Secondary Education Commission headed by A.

Mudaliar in 1952, A National Committee on Women's Education in 1958, Committee on differentiation of curricula for boys and girls in 1963, Bhaktavaslam Committee to look into the causes for the lack of public support particularly in rural areas for girl's education and to enlist public cooperation, Education Commission (1964-66), the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) emphasized eradication of illiteracy, universal primary, The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) as revised in 1992 recognized the need to redress traditional gender imbalances in educational access and achievement. The Mahila Samakhya Project was initiated in 1987-89 to translate the goals of NPE and POA into a concrete programme for the education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly of women from socially and economically marginalized groups.

The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, has been a path breaking step towards the growth of education, especially for females. Since then, Sarav Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has come up with many schemes for inclusive as well as exclusive growth of female education, such as National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) in 2003 and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV) in 2004. But, presently if we glance at literacy rate or enrolment of women in education it is still lacking behind than male literacy rate, so there is need to aware all individuals about importance of women education.

Table 2. Literacy Rates (in %)

Census Year	Persons	Male	Female
1951	18.3	27.2	8.9
1961	28.3	40.4	15.4
1971	34.5	46.0	22.0
1981	43.6	56.4	29.8
1991	52.2	64.1	39.3
2001	64.8	75.3	53.7
2011	73.0	80.9	64.6

1951-1971:Aged 5+, 1981-2011:

Source: Census of India-2011.

Table 3. Level-wise Enrolment in School & Higher Education-2010-11(in 000)

Level of Education	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary	70468	64849	13531
Secondary	17453	14326	31779
Higher	15466	12033	27499

Source: Handbook of Educational Statistics At A Glance, MHRD

Need of Women's Education

To aware women about their rights and to empower them there is need to amend the outlook of women that they will direct and not follow, they will believe not qualm, they will have trust in them that they have competence to create deep impact and can make best from the given circumstances. The element which can amend their outlook is not anything else than education as it has been considered as the most important tool for altering women's subjugated position in the society. It not only builds up the individuality and rationality of individuals, but succeeds them in various economic, political and cultural events and thereby improves their socio-economic status. In such changing times, when tension free society is the greatest need of an hour, empowerment of women through education and training should be a national strategy for development of country. As Increased education of individual raises not only their own productivity but also that of others with whom interact (Perotti, 1993).

Thus education will enable women's to face challenges of changing world environment and will built faith in them that they can handle any circumstance by using their skills and self confidence. Education of women has many socio-economic benefits such as: Women will remain no more slaves of men, Improves the hygienic condition of family and increases survival rate of infants, Increases standard of family by enhancing family income, Aware them about their rights to education, health, shelter, food clothing etc, It abolishes discrimination of sex and helps them to fight against violence against them, It would broaden the area of work life by enriching them scientifically through exposure to science and technology.

Factors Affecting Women's Education

There are many factors which act as an obstacle for women's extremely low enrolment and retention to education

Poverty

Income is the major factor that many families avoid girls to send in school, colleges. They are not in condition to provide basic necessity to their children such as food, cloth and shelter and in such condition sending girl child for getting education is not even imaginable task for them. Although in India elementary education is free, but still they cannot afford their needs like stationary, school uniform and transportation fee. (Saldanha, 1996) reported that in schools enrollment, retention and achievement are closely related to poverty.

Socio- Cultural

Various socio-cultural or socio-religious reasons hinder girls to enroll themselves in schools.

1. Dominance of male in society has created bias attitude of parents towards girl and boy child. If due to some circumstance parents are in condition to afford fee of one child, it is always a male child in every family. (Desai, 1994) in 'Gender Inequalities Demographic Behaviour' asserts that parents reluctance to educate daughters has its roots in the status of women.

2. The parents are frown of sending their girls to co-educational institution due to their wrong perception that in such schools girls will be alienated from the accepted customs and norms of society.

3. The perception of parents that, ultimate home of girl is her husband's home prevent girls to get good education and they are bonded in relation of marriage at very early age.

Illiteracy of parents

There is a strong correlation between the level of education of family and that of girl's education. The illiterate parents has predisposition that girl's are born just for house-hold work as they believe that more education of girl means fading away of cultural, moral, ethical values.

Low self esteem: girls, because of the low status accorded to them by the community and their parents are bound to have low self esteem and would perceive themselves as inferior to boys. Their motivation for schooling is very low.

Ignored needs of girls

Today when India has made advancement in many sectors, but still due to geographical conditions it become inconvenient for small children, especially girls to travel long distance to get education. And the schools which are at approachable distance due to overcrowding of students are not meeting the basic needs of girls. In such schools they don't have separate toilet or recreational rooms which stop parents to send their daughters in school and decreases retention ratio.

Lack of women teachers in villages

In most cases, where parents are illiterate or less educated they want their girls to be trained under female teacher only, but there is lack of trained female teachers in villages. Lack of rural women education in India is the lack of adequate school facilities in the rural areas (Velkoff, 1998).

Bias attitude of teachers

Teachers have bias attitude, they believe that boys are more strong and intelligent than girls and hence assign task accordingly, which create negative impression on girls mind and lower their self confidence and curiosity to get more knowledge.

Alternatives to Enhance Women's Education

1. Government should take initiative to open more primary and secondary girl's school at every district level.
2. There must be a school in every locality at not more than 5km distance.
3. Separate basic facilities like toilet for girls should be built in every school.
4. Adult education programme oriented to educate parents regarding importance of girl education should be started in all those areas where female literacy rate is lower than national literacy rate.
5. Technical institutions especially for women's must be established.
6. Although many scheme under SSA is undergoing to retain girls in schools, but still there is need to open residential ladies hostel in greater number.
7. Talented and intelligent women's must be rewarded with scholarships to enhance their motivation.

8. Special rewards should be given for courageous and outstanding women's in every field.
9. Reservation of women's seat in co-educational institution should be fixed.
10. Flexibility in education should be given to women's in regard to age and job.
11. Distance mode education may be widened for women.
12. Creation and expansion of training and extension networks to develop and improve skills of women in different sectors (Gayya, 2001).

Conclusion

The pride of every nation is its women's. As it is well said proverb behind every successful man there is hand of woman. The first teacher of every child is her mother, so if the mother is well educated, well aware of facts she can give better life to her child who is future of nation. Moreover education to male means educating single person but educating female means educating whole family. The future of every nation lies in hand of its young generation and only educated mother can nourish the child in better way and inculcate love nation in a child. So we can say that education of women is not only important to raise her standard but necessary for the development of a country.

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