



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Education is a powerful tool that can help improve the lives of people around the world. It is therefore clear that by allowing more women and girls to be educated would be a benefit to society as a whole. As previously stated, there is evidence that proves the advantages of empowering women through education. Education is a basic human right, and thus girls and boys all around the world should be entitled to this opportunity - consequently enforcing the ideology of gender equality. If a girl is educated statistics suggest that they will marry later and so on. It can therefore be concluded that by empowering women through education is a great advantage both to women and to society as a whole.*

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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

“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 constitute almost half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world. The rise of feminist ideas has, however, led to the tremendous improvement of women's condition throughout the world in recent times. Access to education has been one of the most pressing demands of these women's rights movements. Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country.

India is poised to emerge as one of the most developed nations by 2020, more literate, knowledgeable and economically at the forefront. No doubt, women will play a vital role in contributing to the country's development. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India this is yet to meet the requirements despite reforms. Little has been achieved in the area of women empowerment, but for this to happen, this sector must experience a chain of reforms. Though India could well become one of the largest economies in the world, it is being hindered due to a lack of women's participation.

HISTORY OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. However, in the British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. During this period, various socio religious movements led by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India. However women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and the government has taken various measures to provide education to all Indian women. As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the six decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 2001 only 54.16% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2011 65.46%



female were literate. The growth of female literacy rate is 11.30% as compared to 6.29 % of that of male literacy rate.

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political right are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020. The year 2020 is fast approaching; it is just 7 year away. This can became reality only when the women of this nation became empowerment. India presently account for the largest number no of illiterates in the world. Literacy rate in India have risen sharply from 18.3% in 1951 to 74.04% in 2011 in which enrolment of women in education have also risen sharply 7% to 65.46%. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plan and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in difference spheres. From the fifth five year plan (1974-78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission of Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the right and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local level.



On doing some more research on this topic I have found that education is truly the key to empower women and also provide for all round economic growth of countries. Education has direct impacts plus indirect impacts on societies. First and foremost education will help women with increased job opportunities thus increasing their disposable income. For example in Pakistan, working women with good literacy skills earn 95% more than women with weak literacy skills. Education has been found to increase the bond between communities and societies. Educated women will tend to support democracy which advances the countries growth. Some other interesting statistics I found were that In Turkey, citizens with secondary education are around twice as likely as those with only primary schooling to sign a petition and participate in a peaceful demonstration. Educated mothers provide their children with an opportunity to have healthier lifestyle. Malnutrition is major cause of more than a third of global child deaths. Educated mothers are more likely to ensure that their children receive the best nutrients to help them prevent or fight off ill health. Furthermore, education is also crucial for a mother's health. Almost 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, including pre-eclampsia, bleeding, infections and unsafe abortion. Educated women are more likely to avoid these dangers, by adopting simple and low cost practices to maintain hygiene, by reacting to symptoms, and by making sure a skilled attendant is present at birth. Education helps women overcome discrimination such as having to face early marriages. Education is a key factor in hastening the demographic transition to lower birth and mortality rates. For instance In Ethiopia, 32% of girls with less than primary education were married before the age of 15, compared with less than 9% of those with secondary education. Looking at the bigger picture education will have an overall improvement on a countries economic growth. Education helps individuals escape poverty through development of skills that they need to improve their livelihoods. It also also generates productivity gains that boost economic growth. For growth to reduce poverty, however, it needs to overcome inequality by improving the lives of the poorest and marginalized the most. All in all education girls would have a multipliers effect, educated women would want their own daughters to be educated too and so the cycle would continue further contributing towards economic growth. Another indirect effect worth mentioning here is, educating women would also benefit our planet. Education can encourage people to use energy and water more efficiently and recycle household waste. Investing between US\$11 billion and US\$14 billion per year in basic education for girls globally would help their households make better choices to counter the effects of expected weather-related disasters. Again this will have multiple benefits, many women work in agriculture and weather changes caused by our carbon footprints lead to droughts etc. which affect farmers harvest. Thus environmental conscious will help women farmers produce.

By:- Jaslin Kalsi



WOMEN'S EDUCATION PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Literacy and educational attainment are vital indicators of development in a society. Attainment of universal education is one of the Millennium Development goals of United Nations to be achieved by 2015. Literacy rate and educational development are considered to be key variables affecting demographic indicators like fertility, mortality (especially infant mortality) rate and migration. Higher level of literacy and educational development lead to greater awareness on one hand and help people in acquiring skills on the other hand. In spite of the forceful intervention by a bastion of female privilege, feminist critics, constitutional guarantees, protecting laws and sincere efforts by the state governments and central government through various schemes and programmes over the last 62 years and above all, the United Nation's enormous pressure with regard to the uplift of the plight of women in term of education is still in the state of an enigma in India for several reasons. The 2011 Census report indicates that literacy among women is only 64 percent it is virtually disheartening to observe that the literacy rate of women in India is even much lower to national average i.e. 74percent .The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large womenfolk of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited. Moreover education is also not available to all equally. Gender inequality is reinforced in education which is proved by the fact that the literacy rate for the women is only 64% against 84% of men as per 2011 Census. An extremely positive development in the percent decade is that the gap of 21.59 percentage point recorded between male and female literacy rates in 2001 has reduced to 16.68 percentage points in 2011. Table 1 presents the literacy rate for the country by persons, males, females and the male female gap since 1951.

Table-1: Literacy rate in India: 1951-2011

Census year	persons	Males	Females	Male-Female Literacy gap
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.3	40.4	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

Source: census- 2011



From this table one can easily infer that still the female literacy rate is wadding behind male literacy rate .The rate of school drop outs is also found to be comparatively higher in case of women. This higher rate of illiteracy of women is undoubtedly attributing for women dependence on men and to play a subordinate role. The lack of education is the root cause for women's exploitation and negligence. Only literacy can help women to understand the Indian's constitutional and legislative provisions that are made to strengthen them. Thus promoting education among women is important in empowering them to accomplish their goals as par with men in different spheres of life.

**TABLE -2 STATE-WISE PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE LITERACY IN THE COUNTRY AS PER 2011
CENSUS**

Sl. 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

According to the table -2 the state wise female literacy rate had an average of 65.46% on all India basis in 2011 census. The highest literacy rate is 92.0% in Kerala and least literacy rate is 52.7% in Rajasthan in 2011 census. Literacy rate of female has increased to 11% in 2011 census i.e. from 54.16% to 65.46%. Women's are growing well in the last 10 years.

Government of India has taken various steps and formulated plans especially for women in every planning process.

CONCLUSION

According to the Country Report of the Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power." Education of women in the education of women is the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. To bring more girls, especially from marginalized families of BPL, in mainstream education, the government is providing a package of concessions in the form of providing free books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing for the hostilities midday meals, scholarships, free circles and so on.

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