

## A Qualitative Study Based on Women Education in India

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### Abstract

Right from the Vedic period women enjoyed equivalent positions and rights in the society and keep abreast with men in the struggle of social engineering. The trend got jolt with the introduction of Purdah System. However, their position revived with the hands of some noble social thinkers and reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar stressed the importance of women education and tried their utmost to remove the distress of women and brought them to the mainstream of the society. In this context, the doctrine of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru may be recollected- "Educate a man and you educate one person. Educate a woman and you educate the whole family." And here lies the hidden truth that woman has a sign fact role to play in the eradication of illiteracy, inequalities and superstition from the society. This paper analyses various barriers of women education in India and constitutional provisions prevailing in the country. This study also analyses census report of 2011 where literacy rate of women is only 68.54% compared to national average of 74.04% and comes to a conclusion that if the mind set of the society is not changed regarding uplifting women in India then no country can survive in the long run.

**KEYWORDS:** Women Education, Barriers, Constitutional Provisions, India.

### Introduction

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 through out 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. Education is considered as a basic requirement and a fundamental right for the citizens of any nation. It is a powerful tool for reducing inequality as it can give people the ability to become independent. Women, who come across discrimination in many spheres, have a particular need for this. 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 regarded as an important milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to face the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. Education of women is the most powerful tool of change their position in the society. Still large womenfolk of our country are illiterate, backward, weak, and exploited. Education also reduces inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. Empowerment and capacity building provides women an avenue to acquire practical information and learning for their improved

livelihoods. India can become a developed nation only if women contribute to the best of her capacity and ability which is possible when she is educated and empowered.

### **Need of Women Education**

Women empowerment can only be achieved through the provision of adequate and functional education to the women folk. This is crucial because no matter how rich or vast a nation is, without an effective, efficient, adequate and functional education for all its citizens (men and women) education which is relevant to its immediate needs, goals and objectives, such a nation would find it difficult to stand on its own. The brand of education being advocated is that type of education in which is embedded the spirit of self realization and all that are needed for the country's over all development like mass literacy, economic empowerment etc.

The need for women education is also informed by the fact that purposeful occupational achievement and satisfaction is ensured by deep self-awareness and understanding which can only be achieved through the provision of effective and functional education and guidance & counseling. This, has been noted is likely to guarantee women empowerment with its root based on women struggle to improve their status. The empowerment suggested is such that entails the process of challenging power relations and of gaining wider control over source of power. This, however, cannot be achieved without the provision of reasonable access to formal and functional education to the women folk. This is based on the premise that education has been adjudged to be a viable instrument of change in the positive direction. Provision of formal and functional education is needed for the women folk, because:

- It would empower them to know and ask for their rights to education, health, shelter, food clothing etc.
- It would empower them to fight against every form of discrimination against their folk, assert themselves about their right to equal treatment with their men counterpart as bonafide citizens of this nation.
- It would enable the women take decisions and accept responsibilities for taking such decisions concerning themselves.
- It would give economic power to the women and there by enable them to contribute their quota to the economic growth of the nation.
- It would empower the women scientifically through exposure to science and technological education for the challenges of the present technological age and information computer technology break through unfolding world wide.
- It would help women to reduce maternal and infant mortality through improved nutrition, improved child rearing practice, health care and prevention against killer diseases.
- It would avail women with the opportunity of participating keenly in the world of sophisticated politics and governance as enlightened citizens.

### **Importance of Women Education**

Napoleon was once asked, what the great need of France was. He answered, "Nation's progress is impossible without trained and educated mothers. If the women of my country are not educated, about half of the people will be ignorant." A woman has to play three roles in the course of her life. Each of these roles expects some duties from her. It is only with the help of education that she would be able to do them successfully. The first duty of a woman is to be a good daughter. The second duty is to be a good wife and third duty is to be a good mother. Education teaches a woman

what she should be. It also teaches her how she should do it to be good daughter, a good wife and a good mother. Many men spend their evening time at clubs and societies. But a gentleman with an educated wife will not feel the need of a club or a society. He can share his thoughts with her. He can have her advice in trouble. He can spend his leisure in her pleasant company. An educated lady is a good friend, a clever nurse and a useful adviser to her husband. So she is a true help-mate. She can get her husband's affection and regard. An educated lady is always able to share his sorrows. There is a saying in English "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world". The meaning is that the mother exercises a very great influence over the lives of her children. She is able to mould their thoughts and character. If she is educated, she will make such impression on the mind of her children that will enable them in the later life to grow into a great man. Jeeja Bai mother of Shivaji wished to make Shivaji a great man. It was Shivaji who overthrew Mughal Empire and became what his mother wished. It is true that education will enable women to make their parents, husbands and children truly happy. Hence it is very necessary that women should be educated. An educated girl is more important than an educated boy.

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.

Gender discrimination still persists in India and lot more needs to be done in the field of women's education in India. The gap in the male-female literacy rate is just a simple indicator. While the male literary rate was more than 75% according to the 2001 Census, the female literacy rate was 54.16% and according to the 2011 Census, the male literacy rate is 82.14 while female literacy rate is 65.46 only.

#### **Objectives of the study**

1. To Study the barriers of Women Education in India
2. To Study the Constitutional Provisions prevailing in India

#### **Method**

Data has been collected from secondary sources only i.e. books, journals etc. Moreover websites of various NGO's, Government (Central+State) are also taken into account

#### **Women Education in India**

It is very important to know the historical background, if we are to make a study of status of women in India. It is not easy to find answers for questions like when did women start losing their status or who was responsible for this situation. The position that women occupied in the medieval and later the colonial period is of utmost importance. Women were never put on high pedestal in the Shastras.

#### **Barriers of Women Education**

In Indian families especially rural areas, girl children play the role of second mother by shouldering the responsibilities of household work such as looking after the sibling, fetching water, collecting wood, cleaning and cooking etc. and discourage girl child to go school.

The second social evil is bonded labour system, which quite discouraging

phenomenon which stand as barrier for girls education for the underprivileged families of washer man and agricultural labour. Dowry system and other social practices act as main causes of the neglect of the girl child and discrimination against girl child. In many families especially poor and down-trodden think that if their daughters are educated more, they have to accumulate more assets and properties to provide as dowry in The lower enrolment of girls in school is one of the foundational factors which stand as stumbling block for women education. In India, more than 50% of the girls are non-starter. According to the year, every ten girls in the age group of 6-11 are still not enrolled in schools.

The incidence and prevalence of Dropouts among girls especially in rural, tribal and slums areas seem to be quite high. The main reason was poor academic record of the trainees which difficult to cope up with the subjects and mere not able to concentrate on the practical"s. The second reason was that some of the trainees were able to get job before the completion of the course. The third reason was the teachers did not teach well and also students poor economic background. According to available sources, occurrence of Dropout and stagnation amongst girls are nearly twice that of boys all over India.

In India, the school environment for girls is not really interesting and encouraging. The methods of teaching are mostly outdated, rigid and uninteresting. There are many schools with poor basic facilities such as drinking water, latrine and toilet facilities, no good infrastructure and no experienced teachers especially female teachers preferable for any parents for safety of their girl children.

According to the UN sources, India is the most child labour populous nation in the globe with more than 50 million child labourers worked in carpet making, domestic works, beedi works, glass bangles, construction etc. In most of their industries girl children are preferred for high productivity and low cast.In many Poverty stricken families, children especially girls are considered as economic assets as they bring income for livelihood as well to save from economic crises due to death or incapacity of parents.

**PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING DEMAND FOR WOMEN EDUCATION**



Source: Google

**Provisions for Women’s Education in India  
Educational Provisions in the Indian Constitution**

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment.

**Article 21A.** The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine. (EIGHTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT ACT, 2002)

**Article 41.** Right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases.

The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want.

**Article 45.** Provision for free and compulsory education for children.

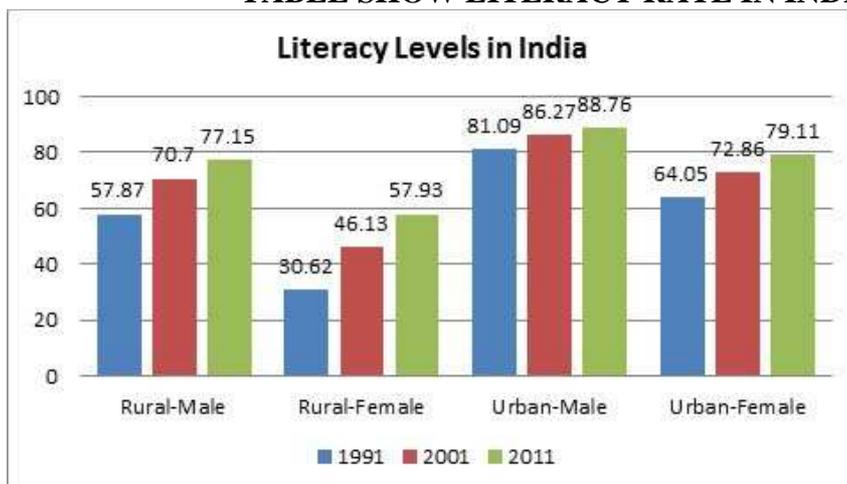
(1) The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

(2) The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years. (EIGHTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT ACT, 2002) **Article 46.** Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections.

The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

**Article 51A (k).** who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years. (EIGHTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT ACT, 2002)

**The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**, commonly known as the Right To Education (RTE) Act, is being seen with much hope to bring about the long awaited changes in education of children aged 6-14 years, addressing disparities of access and quality. The Act was notified on 27.8.2010 and is in force from 1.4.2010. While stating the duties of appropriate Government authorities at various levels, the Act has also included duties of parents and guardians to get their children /wards admitted for elementary education in neighborhood schools. The biased parental attitude towards girl child in general and to education of girl's child in particular will hopefully register a change by enforcement of the Act.

**TABLE SHOW LITERACY RATE IN INDIA**

Source: CENSUS INDIA WEBSITE DATA

### Results

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 terms education is still in the state of an enigma in India for several reasons. The 2011 Census report indicates that literacy among women as only 68.52 percent it is virtually disheartening to observe that the literacy rate of women India is even much lower to national average i.e. 74.04. 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 68.52% against 82.96% of men as per 2011 Census.

### Discussion:

Women Education is a crucial problem not only in India but also in the world too. In a men driven society in India women are considered as articles and they have come to the earth only to provide enjoyment to the men and give birth to babies. Men driven society cannot uplift the women before them both socially and financially. The question to be forwarded by us to the society is whatever may be the provisions of law in favour of women mind set of the people must be changed as men and women are the two wings of a society .

### Conclusion

According to the Country Report of the Government of India, education of girls 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 mid-day meals, scholarships, free circles and so on.

Education for All (EFA) programme and other many educational programmes are providing various facilities to enhance the education for women, so these programmes

are very helpful to improving the girl's education in India.

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