

Status of Women Education in India

Dr. Jitendra Kumar* & Ms. Sangeeta**

**Assistant Professor, DPBS (PG) College, Anoopshahr, Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh, India*

***Research Scholar, MJRP University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India*

Abstract

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 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 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. 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 provide the education to everyone, EFA programme was launched in 2002 by the Government of India after its 86th Constitutional Amendment made education from age 6-14 the fundamental right of every Indian child. But position of girl's education is not improving according to determined parameter for women. To know the present position of women education, this study conducted by us. And study concluded that the rate of women education is increasing but not in proper manner.

Keywords: Education for All (EFA), Women Education, Female Literacy Rate, Empowerment, Provisions for Girls 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

Introduction

Education means an all round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. The imperative character of education for individual growth and social development is now accepted by everyone. Investment in the education of its youth considered as most vital by all modern nations. Such an investment understandably acquires top priority in developing countries. The end of all education, all training should be man making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. Education plays a vital role in giving human beings proper equipment to lead a gracious and harmonious life.

Education is a fundamental means to bring any desired change in society, which is an accepted fact throughout the world. This can be attained only if schools become real centres of learning. Education not only helps in the development of personality of the child but also determines his future. Recent psychological research has shown that favourable attitudes towards life develop in the earliest stages of child growth. Education gives solutions for any type of problems. Through education we promote values and good habits and awareness towards corruption, terrorism and disease. Education helps to continue communication with known and unknown persons through technology and mass media. Education gives strength to the person. They get knowledge and discriminate which is wrong and which is right with the help of education. Through education we inculcate values in the students and readers.

Men and Women are just like the two wheels of a chariot. They are equal in importance and they should work together in life. The one is not superior or inferior to other. Unlike ancient times, though currently in majority of rural areas of India women are treated well, but with the orthodoxy they are cut off from the main stream of social life. The rural society did not respect them and give them the due position. They have to suffer and work inside the houses. Thus they are completely depended on men.

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. 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.

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.

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.

Women Education in Ancient Period

It cannot be clearly stated whether equal rights between men and women prevailed or not during the Vedic period. But available sources show that liberal attitudes and practices pertaining to women did exist. Women were actively involved in religious and social matters. They had some freedom to choose their partner in marriage and a widow was permitted to remarry. As India started taking steps towards civilization, social discrimination increased. Jainism and Buddhism emerged as potent religious reform movements. According to Buddha, women's spiritual capacities were equal to men's. "Buddhism began as a religion that treated women as equal to men in their capacity for personal spiritual development."¹ "The universal prejudices against women, who are said to be weak-minded, fickle, treacherous and impure are shared by the Jains and expressed in several passages of the canon and in the form of maxims." The high status that women enjoyed during early Vedic period gradually started deteriorating in the late Vedic period. Lineage began to be traced in the male line and sons were the sole heirs to family property. As the economic and social status of sons began to rise, the position of women saw a steep decline. The position of women reached an all-time low during the age of the Dharmashastras. It is during this age that codes of conduct prescribing behaviour norms for women were evolved. This period saw the exclusion of women from both economic and religious sphere. During the period of Dharmashastra, child marriage was encouraged and widow marriage was looked down upon. The birth of girl child was considered as an ill omen and many parents went to the extent of killing the female infants. The practice of Sati became quite wide spread because of the ill treatment meted out to widows.

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. In cultural reality, the women enjoyed a privileged position in the Vedic period. The women had special customs, rituals and spirituality, with which men were not allowed to interfere.

Women Education in Medieval Period

The condition of Women in society deteriorated more during the medieval period with the entrance of Muslims. At this point of time several evil practices like child-marriage, sati, and female infanticide were practiced largely. 'Purdah' system was started. These women were also forced to practice 'Zenana'. Rajput women of Rajasthan practiced 'Jauhar'. Polygamy was common in Hindu Kshatriyas. At the same time many women excelled in arts, literature, and music. Women were also rulers in the medieval period. Some of the great women rulers were Razia Sultana, the only women monarch to rule the throne of Delhi. The Gond queen Durgavati ruled for 15 long years, before she lost the battle to Asaf Ali emperor

Akbar's general. Chand Bibi also fought the Mughals in 1590's. Nur Jahan is still considered as the most effective ruler. In spite of all these successful women the condition of poor Indian women was the same. At this time, girls were married at a very tender age. Sati was also practiced where women were forced to jump in the burning funeral of their dead husband. Devdasi tradition was common in southern India where girls were married to deity or trees. The Bhakti movement tried to restore women's position. Mirabai was most popular Bhakti movement figure. In this period, education for women's was not common at every level, only few girls of rich and famous families could achieve the basic and religious education.

Women Education in British Period

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 and Periyar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India.

Women Education after Independence

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 three decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 1971 only 22% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2001 54.16% female were literate. The growth of female literacy rate is 14.87% as compared to 11.72 % of that of male literacy rate. The constitution of India guarantees the right to equality to all Indian women without discrimination. The literacy rate before independence was 2.6% rose in 1961 to 15.3% and 50% by the year 2001. And now, according to the 2011 Census, the male literacy rate is 82.14 while female literacy rate is 65.46.

Women Education in Modern Period

Kerala and Mizoram are the only states in India that have achieved universal female literacy rates. The improvement in social and economic status of women is said to be one of the reasons for literacy. In cities the literacy rate is almost equal between girls and boys in the country however the rate in rural areas continues to be less than the boys. 40% of the centers under NFE, non formal education programs are set apart for women.

According to statistics of women education in India, today 0.3 million NFE centers have primary education to 0.12 million girls out of 7.42 million children. However in tribal areas there is not much of a gender bias as compared to all other castes, tribal community statistics show lower male ratio in spite of much low income, literacy, education and other facilities several efforts are being made towards women education and empowerment. The government is taking steps to increase the rate of women education and employment.

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 NAROI 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 13 year away. This can become reality only when the women of this nation become 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 64.8% in 2001 in which enrolment of women in education have also risen sharply 7% to 54.16%. Despite the importance of women education unfortunately only 39% of women are literate among 64% of the man. 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.

Education is a Fundamental Right of All Children

Realizing the Government's sluggish attitude and delaying tactics in implementing the Constitutional commitment, the Supreme Court of India, in the Unnikrishnan Judgement way back in 1993, said: "It is noteworthy that among the several articles in part IV only Article 45 speaks of time limit, no other article does. Has it not significance? Is it a mere pious wish, even after 44 years of the Constitution?"

The 93rd Constitution Amendment 2001 enacting 'free and compulsory education for all children is a fundamental right' still remains a ray of hope to millions of children in the age group of 6-14 years. The fundamental right to free education was received with paramount importance by all. But again it is already 4 years after the amendment and there is no visible development in the field of education and literacy. Even most of the backward class parents from OBCs, schedule caste, schedule tribe and other minority communities do not know that the 93rd constitutional amendment of India in 2001 had made education of children a fundamental right which cannot be overlooked by them.

Education for All (EFA)

Education for All (EFA) means not only having access to schooling but also having quality of education for all children. The SSA programmes of Government of India is provide quality education for children's between 6 and 14 years has increased the literacy rate of girls and boy (Primary level Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Completed and Secondary Education Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is going on). In the past two decades, women's participation in primary, middle and secondary level has increased considerably. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) of the Central Government has reduced dropout rates to less than 10 percent and reduced gender gaps to less than 5 percent. One of the main objectives of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001) was to bridge gender gaps in primary and secondary education by 2010. Since even after secondary education girls may not continue, "Extension Education," a policy providing job related knowledge, was introduced for those unable to proceed with formal secondary level. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was set up in 1988 aimed to mobilize dropouts, introduce mass and functional literacy and involve the community in educating women to the Secondary level.

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.

Minorities

Article 29. Protection of interests of minorities.

(1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

(2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

Article 30. Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

(1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

(1A) In making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to in clause (1), the State shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property is such as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause.

(2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

Article 350A. Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage.

It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.

Article 15 (5) Nothing in this article or in sub-clause (g) of clause (1) of article 19 shall prevent the State from making any special provision, by law, for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in so far as such special provisions relate to their admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of article 30. (NINETY-THIRD AMENDMENT ACT, 2005)

Equality

Article 14. Equality before law.

The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

Article 15. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

(1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to—

(a) Access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or

(b) The use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.

(4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Article 17. Abolition of Untouchability.

“Untouchability” is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of “Untouchability” shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 24. Prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc.

No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment

Gender and Vulnerable Groups

Article 39. Certain principles of policy to be followed by the State.

The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing

(a) That the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood;

(e) That the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;

(f) That children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Religion

Article 25. Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.

(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.

(2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law

(a) Regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice;

(b) Providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

Explanation I.—the wearing and carrying of kirpans shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion.

Explanation II.—In sub-clause (b) of clause (2), the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.

Article 26. Freedom to manage religious affairs.

Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right

(a) To establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes;

(b) To manage its own affairs in matters of religion;

Article 28. Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.

(1) No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds.

(2) Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowment or trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution.

(3) No person attending any educational institution recognised by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto.

Educational Provisions in Centrally Sponsored Schemes in School Education (CSS)

Major Schemes for Elementary Education

1. Operation Black Board

2. Teacher Education

3. Education Guarantee Scheme & Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS & AIE)

4. Mid-day Meal Scheme

5. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

6. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

7. Shiksha Karmi
8. Mahila Samakhya
9. District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)
10. National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)
11. Lok Jumbish
12. Janshala Programme
13. Padhe Bitiya Badhe Bitiya
14. Ladali Scheme

Major Schemes for Secondary Education

1. Access and Equity
2. Quality Improvement in Schools (QIS)
3. ICT in Schools
4. Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC)
5. Vocationalisation of Education

Barriers and Problems against Women Education

In spite of certain outstanding examples of individual achievements, and a definite improvement in their general condition over the years, it remains true that Indian women still constitute a large body of under - privileged citizens. Women of course do not form a homogenous group in class or caste terms. Nevertheless, they face distinctive problems that call for special attention. The Backward Classes Commission set up by the Government of India in 1953 classified women of India as a backward group requiring special attention. The Ministry of Education clubs girls with Scheduled Castes and Tribes as the three most backward groups in education. The educational, economic, political and social backwardness of women makes them the largest group hindering the process of social change. It is inevitable that when this 'backward' group has the major responsibility of bringing up future generations the advancement of society cannot be rapid or take any significant form of development. In the report of the committee appointed by the National Council for Women's Education it was emphatically stated that what was needed to convert the equality of women from de jure to de facto status was widespread education for girls and women and a re education of men and women to accept new and scientific attitudes towards each other and to themselves.

A changing society and a developing economy cannot make any headway if education, which is one of the important agents affecting the norms of morality and culture, remains in the hands of traditionalists who subscribe to a fragmented view of the country's and the world's heritage. The differences between the positions of men and women in the society will not lessen; leave alone disappear, as long as there are differences between the education levels of men and women. Inadequate education or no education is the most important factor contributing to the backwardness of our masses, especially women. The low literacy among women brings down the national literacy. This gap which exists between the literacy rates of the two sexes also exists between the enrolment of girls and boys at all levels of education. Right from the primary school to the university, we find that the number of girl students is considerably lower than boys.

According to Article 45 of the Constitution, universal compulsory and free education until the age of 14 was to be achieved by the year 1960. Looking at the present condition of primary education in villages, it is doubtful whether we can achieve 100% enrolment of girls. It is unfortunately true of our society that children are sent to school not according to their intelligence or aptitude but according to their sex. The reasons for not sending girls to school are both economic and social. In rural areas, girls are required to help in household work. The

resources of the rural poor are so limited that they do not have anything to spare for children's education. If resources are available, it is the boy who is sent to school first. Parents also do not see the value of educating especially a daughter who would get married and remain a housewife. Since they cannot see any direct relationship between education and economic betterment, they have very little motivation to send their children to school. It is still not being realized that there is definite connection between education, good motherhood and efficient house management. The management of millions of households and the upbringing of millions of children is thus in the hands of illiterate women. It is here that a change is required if our democratic and socialistic intensions are not to remain a mere pretence. People can be motivated to have their children educated only if educational system is directly linked with economic and social development.

The plight of women, in terms of education is further compounded by the negative attitude of parents toward female education. Some parents are usually reluctant to send their girl child for formal education especially to higher levels like their male counterpart. Another problem closely related to this is the reluctance to acquire western education and misunderstanding on the part of the girls themselves about the values of the acquisition of formal education. In education, equity means equal access to good schooling.

Restricted access to education by women in this country is profoundly rooted in history, religion, culture, the psychology of self, law, political institution and social attitudes which interact in several ways to limit women's access to formal education when compared with their male counterparts. It has been observed that Indian women are lagging behind their counterparts in developed and some developing nations due to the late start in educating them. This is caused by our traditions and culture which are hostile to women. This tradition reduces them to kitchen manageresses and producers of babies. Thus, their education ideally, is expected to end in kitchen a condition which ironically is detested by many parents thereby discouraging their investment in girl-child education.

Other problems against women education include the familiar problems like lack of funds, inadequate facilities, inadequate manpower, sexual harassment, conflicting societal role expectations, government policies and lack of political will power to implement the entire educational programme.

The inferiority complex observable in Indian women can be attributed to the influence of environmental manipulation. Through the traditional socialization process of the typical society, women are made to accept negative self-fulfilling prophecy, stereotyping and stigmatization that they are members of a weaker sex. At present, the forces which combine to hamper women education and development in India could be viewed broadly to include denial of access to education, early marriage, confinement to solitary living, subjugation by culture to accept choices forced on them, discrimination and harassment at work, political disenfranchisement from elective and political appointment and exposure to cruel mourning rites upon the death of their husband.

Present Position of Women Education in India

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 65.46 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 65.46% against 82.14% of men as per 2011 Census.

Table I Literacy Rate in India

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)

According to the Table I the pre-Independence time literacy rate for women had a very poor spurt in comparison to literacy rate of men. This is witnessed from the fact that literacy rate of women has risen from 0.7 % to 7.3 % where as the literacy rate of men has risen from 9.8 % to 24.9 % during these four decades. During the post- independence period literacy rates have shown a substantial increase in general. However the literacy rate of male has almost tripled over the period e.g. 25% in 1951 and 76 % in 2001. Surprisingly the female literacy rate has increased at a faster pace than the male literacy during the decade 1981 - 2001. The growth is almost 6 times e.g. 7.9 % in 1951 and 54 % in 2001.

From this analysis one can infer that still the female literacy rate (only half of the female population are literates) is wadding behind male literacy rate (three fourth of the male population are literates). 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 of great important in empowering them to accomplish their goals in par with men in different spheres of life.

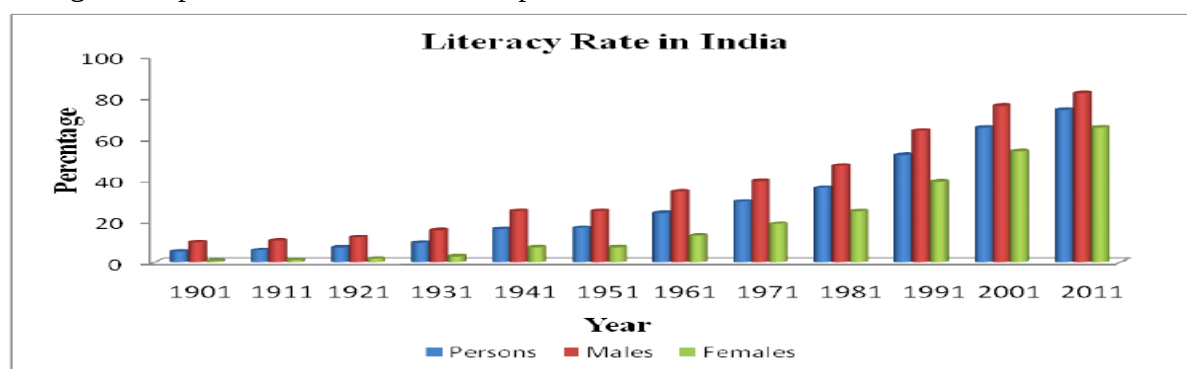


Figure I Literacy rate in India

Educational Equality

Another area in which women's equality has shown a major improvement as a result of adult literacy programs is the area of enrolment of boys and girls in schools. As a result of higher participation of women in literacy campaigns, the gender gap in literacy levels is gradually getting reduced. Even more significant is the fact that disparity in enrolment of boys and girls in neo-literate households is much lowered compared to the non-literate householders.

Table II State-Wise Percentage of Female Literacy in the Country As Per 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.	Chattisgarh	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 II the state wise female literacy rate had an average of 65.46% in all India basis in 2011 census the high literacy rate is 92.0% in Kerala and least literacy rate is 52.7% in Rajasthan in 2011 census while comparing literacy rate of female 11% increased in 2011 census is increased from 54.16% to 65.46%. Women's are growing well in the last 10

years. Government of India has been taken various steps and plans especially for women in every movement.

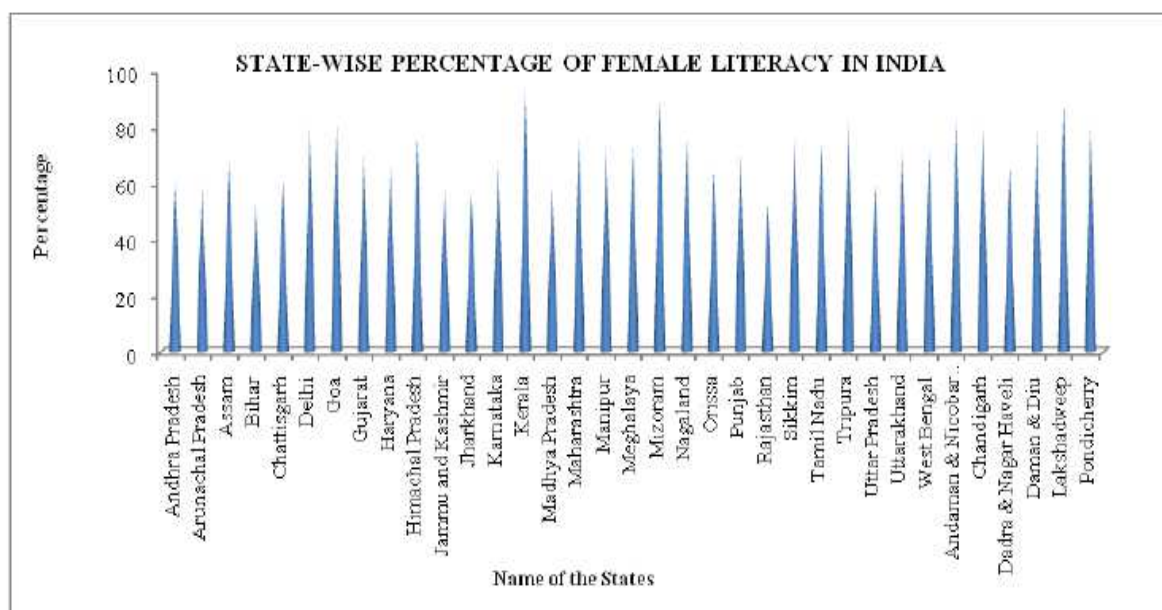


Figure II State-wise Percentage of Female Literacy in India

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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