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**A Study on the Status of Women Education in India****Prof. S. Arunraj***HOD of English, Shevaroy's College of Arts and Science, Vazhavandi, Yercaud, (T.N.) 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 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.

**Key Words:** Education, Female Literacy Rate, Women Empowerment**1.0 Introduction**

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

Women 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.

This study adds to the existing literature on women and education in developing countries in general, and South India in particular, by recognizing the important

linkages between the family and the acquisition of female literacy in developing countries, particularly in rural areas, and by addressing some of the important familial, socio - cultural, individual-level, and institutional factors that constrain female educational attainment. While our focus is on India, findings have value for other societies as well. Specifically, we report the findings of a field study designed to elicit feedback and insight from the perspective of rural women about the form, content, and operation of literacy programs. We find that despite their own negative experiences with education, rural women seek participation in education programs suited to the specific needs of themselves, their children, and their community. Implications for community action and improved coordination between international agencies, government, nongovernmental organizations and communities for educational programs are discussed.

### **1.1 Education**

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.

### **2.0 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 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.

### **2.1 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.

**Obstacles:** 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.

### **2.2 Women and Education**

There is no doubt that India is a great nation. The nation's strength is in the hand of citizens' and it is in the form of unity. In the universe no country is like India because it is the only country in the world is having different culture for every four hundred kilo meters. And different languages for every four hundred kilo meters. The people of

India is having many ups and downs like Religion, Caste, Gender, Language, etc., but their unity stands for six letters word 'Indian'. It is a country which is enhances its position day by day in all fields. Though it is a great nation and spiritual place, which is often under some criticism. Mainly covers the status of women in India. In a recent study (January 2015) points out that India is considered one of the main unsafe countries in the world. Some countries are giving instructions to their people that they should not go to these countries for any reason. Daily news papers are great evidence for this flaw. We the people of India should think about present situation and find solution for this defect.

### **3.0 Status of Education In India**

India is the only country in the world which is giving Education with least amount. On the other hand in India Education is a big business. There is no standard common curriculum for all universities. The quality of education may vary depends upon money. The curriculum may not have the idea of encouraging one's practical mind. We should understand one thing that Education is not a business if we consider it is a business surely we are positioning our society. The Government of India is not taking much care for this issue. The present situation should be changed then only we could mould a best foundation for next generation.

### **3.1 Education and Equality**

Equality is an important one in all occasions. In our country we are having traditional family background. In which basically we are segregated by gender politics. Though



we are living in 21st century majorities are still thinking that it is waste to give higher education for female children. For an example a family is having male and female children they give special education for male children (like reputed institutions /universities) and basic education for female children (i.e. Government schools/colleges). Here Government institutions/colleges are not very poor but our people think that it is waste of money to spend for a female child's education. We are worshipping goddesses in the name of Mary, Kali, Durga, Laxmi, Saraswathi etc., what it tells? We are giving equal importance for women. What is real? Really we are not giving such importance for women. We have to overcome these problems by treating women as equal gender (human), giving them equal education and never involve their rights. Here the researcher demands good deeds not only from male society but also female. Recent research found that women create problem for women rather than men.

#### **4.0 Gender Equality in Education**

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 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.

#### **5.0 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.

### **5.1 Women's Education Prospects and Challenges**

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 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 2001 Census report indicates that literacy among women as only 54 percent it is virtually disheartening to observe that the literacy rate of women India is even much lower to national average. 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 54% against 76% of men as per 2001 Census.

### **5.2 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.

### **Education is a key to Vision**

No doubt that education is the key to success and vision from ignorance. So the Government of India is in a right situation to correct the corrupted Education environment in India.

### **6.0 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 overall 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:

1. It would empower them to know and ask for their rights to education, health, shelter, food clothing etc.
2. 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.
3. It would enable the women take decisions and accept responsibilities for taking such decisions concerning themselves.
4. It would give economic power to the women and there by enable them to contribute their quota to the economic growth of the nation.
5. 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 worldwide.

6. It would help women to reduce maternal and infant mortality through improved nutrition, improved child rearing practice, health care and prevention against killer diseases.
7. It would avail women with the opportunity of participating keenly in the world of sophisticated politics and governance as enlightened citizens.

## 6.2 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, 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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