
Women Education in India

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Abstract

India is the second largest country in the world so far as population is concerned. But so far as education is concerned it is a backward country. In past, women did not receive any education at all. They were not allowed to come out of the four walls of their houses. Domestic works were their only education. During the British rule in India some noble social thinkers of the time paid their attention to the education of woman in our country. Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar was famous reformers who gave emphasis on the education of women. They put forth a very strong argument. Man and woman are like the two sides of a coin. Without one, the other cannot exist. They help each other in every sphere. So education should be given to both man and woman. Further, women are the mothers of the future generation. If women are uneducated, the future generations will be uneducated. For this reason the Greek warrior Napoleon once said, "Give me a few educated mothers; I shall give you a heroic race."

Keywords: backward country, Women Education, Purdah system, Bhakti movement, women empowerment, Literacy rate

Importance of Women Education

Almost fifty percentage of the world population constitutes women. Women are the primary caregivers in almost all societies. Therefore, if they are educated, they can contribute to the health and education of the next generation. The right to education, without discrimination and of good quality, has been reaffirmed in all major international human rights conventions. Education helps women or Girls claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. In my opinion, living without an education isn't living at all. All over India women are realizing the importance of educating themselves as well as their children.

Educating girls will soon lead to women education. Female education plays an important role in the development of the country. Women who are educated will think more rationally than the ones who aren't. They are likely to marry later and engage themselves in economic activities, outside their homes.

They tend to have fewer children. They seek medical facilities for themselves and the children and provide better nutritional food also. This reduces the probability of diseases and increases the survival rate of children. With reduction in child mortality, there will be smaller families, which reduce population. With smaller house-holds, the child care improves and school-age population shrinks. Educated women also contribute to higher productivity. They will work outside home and earn an independent income. Hence girls and women's education has been accepted as a developmental priority.

"It is the height of selfishness for men, who hilly appreciate in their own case the great advantage of a good education, to deny these advantages to women. There is no valid argument by which the exclusion of the female sex from the privilege of education can be defended. It is argued that women have their domestic duties to perform and that, if they were educated, they would bury themselves in their books and have little time for attending to the management of their households. Of course, it is possible for women as it is for men to neglect work in order to spare more time for reading sensational novels.

But women are no more liable to this temptation than men and most women would be able to do their household work the entire better for being able to refresh their minds in the intervals of leisure with a little reading. Nay, education would even help them in the performance of the narrowest sphere of womanly duty.

Women's Education in Ancient India

In ancient India, women and girls received less education than men. This was due to the set social norms. Interestingly, in the Vedic period women had access to education, but gradually they had lost this right. Women education in ancient India prevailed during the early Vedic period. In addition to that Indian scriptures Rig Veda and Upanishads mention about several women sages and seers. Women enjoyed equivalent position and rights in the early Vedic era. However, after 500 B.C, the position of women started to decline. The Islamic invasion played a vital role in restricting freedom and rights of the women. A radical change attended and there was a terrific constraint for women education India.

Women's Education in Medieval India

Women education in medieval India further weakened and declined with the introduction of Purdah system. Different customs and conventions of diverse religions like Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity further deteriorated and depreciated the state of women in the country. A range of socio religious movements contributed to the development of women literacy in the country. Many leaders took several initiatives to I make education available to the women of India. The ordered form of women education I in India was incorporated in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Women's Education in Colonial India

The position of the women education in India revived with the invasion of the British in the country and with the advent of Bhakti movement. The colonial period also introduced the institutional form of imparting learning. Women education in Colonial India witnessed an essential expansion. Various movements were launched to make women of the country literate. Further more, this progress journeyed through the y and influenced the modern Indian education system.

Women's Education in Modern India

The idea of women empowerment was introduced at the International Women Conference at Nairobi in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't ignore the significance of education in reference to women empowerment India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020. This can become reality only when the women of this nation become empowered. India presently account for the largest number of illiterates in the world. Literacy rate in India have risen stridently 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 significance 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 that have focused at women's progression in different 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 accepted as the vital concern in determining the status of women in the Indian society. 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 Panchayat and Municipalities for women, laying a sturdy basis for their contribution in decision making at the local level.

Moreover, the Central Government of India has recently launched the Saakshar Bharat Mission for Female Literacy, which aims to reduce female illiteracy and spread education and awareness even in the most remote and rural parts of the nation.

Education is a Right

Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The right to free and compulsory primary education, without discrimination and of good quality, has been reaffirmed in all major international human rights conventions. Many of these same instruments encourage, but do not guarantee, post-primary education. These rights have been further elaborated to address issues like quality and equity, moving forward the issue of what the right to education means, and exploring how it can be achieved. As a minimum: states must ensure that basic education is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable for all. (4A scheme) The right of girls to education is one of the most critical of all rights - because education plays an important role in enabling girls and women to secure other rights.

Women education in India

Women comprise approximately half of the population in the world. But the tonic masculine ideology made them bear a lot as they were denied equivalent opportunities in different parts of the world. The augment of feminist ideas has, however, led to the marvellous

development of women's condition in the society through out the world in recent times. Access to education has been one of the most urgent and important demands of these women's rights movements. Women education in India has also been a chief preoccupation of both the government and social or civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country.

In the present era, the Indian society has established a number of institutions for the educational development of women and girls. These educational institutions aim for immense help and are concerned with the development of women. In the modern society, women in India have come a long way. Indian women is at par with men in all kinds of tasks like reaching the moon, conquering Mount Everest, and participating in all fields. All this is possible just because of education and the profound impact it has had on women.

Literacy Rate in India

The government of India has already quite some time ago passed a law which says that every child of the age of 6 to 14 has a right to go to school. It is a fundamental right of every child, mentioned in the Indian constitution. They also promised they would invest money to build more schools and improve the school system. Unfortunately still India's literacy rate is far below the world average.

The responsibility for people's education in India lies for a big part with the different states. This is the reason why there are so big differences in the literacy rate from state to state. Last month I told you that Kerala is the state with the highest literacy rate, a rate of 95%. Bihar, with only 47% literacy is the state with most analphabets in India. Our state, Uttar Pradesh is on 5th last place and has a literacy rate of about 55%. This means for tourists who want to find their way to a certain address in our area, about every second person whom they ask will not be able to read the street name or write them down the directions. They may be able to explain the way but don't trust that they know where is left or right. They may have never had the chance to learn it.

There is still a big difference in between male literacy and female literacy. More boys are enrolled in primary schools than girls. And more girls drop out of school before any kind of graduation or certificate than boys. Of course the reason for result of studies is the role of women in society and the idea, especially in poor areas, that women do not need education as they take care of the house and their husband goes to work and earns money. Even if girls get a basic education, they are often called to back to stay at home when they start their teenage because they have to learn how to keep house in order to prepare for their future marriage.

This is one of the problems which we also face in our school and experienced many times. So the government efforts have to focus on bringing up the literacy especially among girls and women. Another effect of this will be that couples will use more contraceptives and plan their families. Studies have shown that the use of contraceptives is directly related with the literacy of women.

The Literacy rate in India has improved a lot over the last one decade, especially after the implementation of free education in the villages the literacy rate has gone up tremendously in states like Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.

As per the data published by the 2011 census India has managed to achieve an effective literacy rate of 74.04 per cent in 2011. In the 2001 census the country's literacy rate stood at 64.8 percent. The most notable thing that came across in the 2011 census is the sharp rise in the literacy of females over males. According to the report released by the latest census there are almost 74 per cent literates that constitute the total population of India aged between seven and above.

Some of the States and Union Territories like Mizoram, Tripura, Goa, like Kerala, Pondicherry, Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, Daman and Diu, National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in the last one decade have done extremely well for themselves by attaining a literacy rate of almost 85.

Literacy of women plays as important role in reducing fertility. It may be due to many reasons, such as

- Literacy educated women tend to marry at higher ages than illiterate women and thus helps in increasing age at marriage.
- Educated women tend to be more conscious about the matters of health and hygiene of their children, so chances of survival of their children are more and hence "reduces the number of births to the extent of the couple's desired family size".
- Educated women have more likelihood to enroll their children in school, than the illiterate women. This will reduce the labour value of children and therefore, the motivation to have a lesser number of children becomes high.

Education has significant impact on components of demographics process. As level of education rise in a society, it improves and enrich the environment of society. It increases the consciousness among people. In an educated society people engage in acquiring higher education and do late marriage.

Literacy Rate in India as per census 2011

Rank	State	Literacy Rate (2011 Census)	Male Literacy Rate (2011 Census)	Female Literacy Rate (2011 Census)
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	86.3 percent	90.1 percent	81.8 percent
2	Andhra Pradesh	67.7 percent	75.6 percent	59.7 percent
3	Arunachal Pradesh	67.0 percent	73.7 percent	59.6 percent
4	Assam	73.2 percent	78.8 percent	67.3 percent
5	Bihar	63.8 percent	73.5 percent	53.3 percent
6	Chandigarh	86.4 percent	90.5 percent	81.4 percent
7	Chattisgarh	71.0 percent	81.5 percent	60.6 percent
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	77.7 percent	86.5 percent	65.9 percent
9	Daman & Diu	87.1 percent	91.5 percent	79.6 percent
10	Delhi	86.3 percent	91.0 percent	80.9 percent

11	Goa	87.4 percent	92.8 percent	81.8 percent
12	Gujarat	79.3 percent	87.2 percent	70.7 percent
13	Haryana	76.6 percent	85.4 percent	66.8 percent
14	Himachal Pradesh	83.8 percent	90.8 percent	76.6 percent
15	Jammu and Kashmir	68.7 percent	78.3 percent	58.0 percent
16	Jharkhand	67.6 percent	78.5 percent	56.2 percent
17	Karnataka	75.6 percent	82.8 percent	68.1 percent
18	Kerala	93.9 percent	96.0 percent	92.0 percent
19	Lakshadweep	92.3 percent	96.1 percent	88.2 percent
20	Madhya Pradesh	70.6 percent	80.5 percent	60.0 percent
21	Maharashtra	82.9 percent	89.8 percent	75.5 percent
22	Manipur	79.8 percent	86.5 percent	73.2 percent
23	Meghalaya	75.5 percent	77.2 percent	73.8 percent
24	Mizoram	91.6 percent	93.7 percent	89.4 percent
25	Nagaland	80.1 percent	83.3 percent	76.7 percent
26	Orissa	73.5 percent	82.4 percent	64.4 percent
27	Pondicherry	86.5 percent	92.1 percent	81.2 percent
28	Punjab	76.7 percent	81.5 percent	71.3 percent
29	Rajasthan	67.1 percent	80.5 percent	52.7 percent
30	Sikkim	82.2 percent	87.3 percent	76.4 percent
31	Tamil Nadu	80.3 percent	86.8 percent	73.9 percent
32	Tripura	87.8 percent	92.2 percent	83.1 percent
33	Uttar Pradesh	69.7 percent	79.2 percent	59.3 percent
34	Uttarakhand	79.6 percent	88.3 percent	70.7 percent
35	West Bengal	77.1 percent	82.7 percent	71.2 percent
	- INDIA	74.04 percent	82.14 percent	65.46 percent

Conclusion

According to higher conception of women's sphere, women ought to be something more than a household drudge. She ought to be able not merely to nurse her husband in sickness but also to be his companion in health. For this part of her wifely duty/ education is necessary, for there cannot be congenial companionship between an educated husband and an uneducated wife who can converse with her husband on no higher subject than cookery and servant's wages.

Also, one of a mother's highest duties is the education of her children at the time when their mind is not amenable to instruction. A child's whole future life, to a large extent, depends on the teaching it receives in early childhood and it is needless to say that this first foundation of education cannot be well laid by an ignorant mother. On all these grounds female education is a vital necessity.

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