



Problems and Prospects of Women Education in India in Perspective of Present Scenario: An Analytical Framework

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Abstract

The ancient people of India gave an honorable place to women in society. It is well known that India is one of the largest democracies in the world. Since the day of the independence, women's literacy rate is ever-increasing by day-by day. Education of a girl child implies to educate a whole family. But it is very unfortunate to state that the literacy rate of women is much lower compared to men. The present paper discusses need, current scenario, problems, and prospects of women education in India as well as suggestive measures for rapid growth rate of education.

Key words: Women education, Problems, Prospects, Gender equality, Current scenario

Introduction

“ O Learned Lady! All life is dependent on you, you impart education to all.” The Rig Veda

India is considered as a developing country. It is also treated as the largest democracies in the world. India has remarkable progress in all the spheres after independence. This was possible because of the raising in the level of education in the society. The gender equality took the country to new heights. In addition, the attachment of women in all sectors has enhanced India's GDP. Now women are represented in every sector of society. That, in turn, helps to spread out our countries' literacy rate.

Undoubtedly, we can say that women's education is a major pace toward success. Moreover, since the day of the independence, women's literacy rate is ever-increasing by day-by day. From 8.6% it is now at 64%. Although the success rate of the country in women's literacy is somewhat high but still, there are some causes of inability of women to emerge in a proper manner. Women's education in

India is one of the major milestones of the government as well as the civil society. Educated women are able to play a crucial role in all the countries in the world. India is no exception. There is a common saying that pertaining education of a girl child means to educate a whole family. Education is the road sign of the empowerment of women as education helps them to change their lives, act in response to their challenges and question their conventional roles.

Need of Women Education

India is ranked 105 amongst 128 countries in its Education for All Development Index. There is much work to be done to enhance education in India; particular attention is warranted to women's access to education. It is absolutely very important that we include the belief among women that they must stand on their two feet and the only feasible way to achieve this is through education and its suitable utilization.

As long as differences between the education levels among men and women exist in our society, the differences between the positions of men and women in the society will not lessen. Moreover, we are living in an man dominated society. We should realize that going to school is one thing; the quality of education that one gets is another aspect. Mostly there occurred overcrowded classrooms, absent teacher, unsanitary conditions within government schools which can cause parents to decide that it is not worth their child going to school. A report of National Council for Teacher Education (Survey of NCTE, 2010) showed that an additional 1.2 million teachers were needed to fulfil the RTE act requirements and merely 5 % of government schools complied with all the basic standards and infrastructure set by the act. Moreover, it was seen that 40% of classrooms had more than 30 students and over 60% didn't have any electricity and over 21% of the teachers were not professionally trained. It is very unfortunate to say that although much work has been done to get better the state of education in India, we are still a long way off from achieving standards comparable even to other developing nations.

A Notable Example of Need of Education

Malala Yousufzai is a campaigner for girls' education from Pakistan. She was shot by the Taliban in 2012 at the age of 14 years old. She was frightened but she never lost hope and now she is one of our most diligent member to organise community meetings in order to help others in the society as a whole. She survived and has continued to speak out on the importance of education. She became the youngest person ever to win the world-famous Nobel Peace Prize. She is an exemplary role model for all.

Current Scenario of Women Education in India

The literacy rate of women is significantly lower compared to men. In the Indian society which is patriarchal, girls have fewer civil liberties and lesser status than boys. Enrolment of girls are low and among them many are drop outs from school. Many girls cannot attend school due to conformist cultural attitude. Gender inequality reinforces itself in education as it is factually proved that the rate of literacy for women is 65.46% against 82.14% of men according to 2011 Census. The current Census report also shows that the rate of literacy of Indian women is even lower than the national average literacy rate i.e., 74.04%.

Studies show that the rate of unemployment in case of young females belonging to the age group of 15-24 is 11.5% compared to young males of the same age group 9.8%. In India an investigation was conducted which showed surprising fact that the rate of infant mortality is inversely related to female rate of literacy and level of education as well. This survey showed positive correlation between economic growth and education. There is an African proverb which says “If you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate an entire nation”. This is the crying need to understand at this moment in our country. In 2015, about 3.7 million eligible girls were out of school and in rural areas girls receive on an average of lower than four years of average level of schooling. About 21.9 % of people lives below poverty line in India. Therefore, poverty is considered as important obstacle for achieving education in our country.

Apart from poverty, there are many more factors such as the distance of schools from the corresponding villages, lack of sanitation facilities in schools, shortage of female teachers, gender bias in curriculum, absence of support from their respective families etc which are responsible for disrupting the fundamental right of education amongst Indian girls. There’s a common belief among rural households that girls should stop schooling after attainment of puberty because more often they are teased by boys throughout the lengthy walk from their home to school. India has the highest number of child brides in Asia and inevitably there is this code of belief surrounding young girls that educating them is a waste of time. In rural households and especially amongst the poor, the girl child is a valuable resource for housework and in the fields, an additional hand that cannot be wasted away through an education of their girl children.

According to 2011 census, the male literacy rate was estimated to be 82.14% while in case of females it was surprisingly lags behind at 65.46%. Although it is problematic to enrol in girl child in primary schools but once enrolled, girl children are more likely to continue their primary education. It was seen that at the secondary level of education, girls tend to drop out more than boys, again posing a challenge to retain the girl child for secondary education. Recently an estimate showed that for every 100 girls in rural India only a single one reaches class 12 and almost 40% of girls leave school even before reaching the fifth standard and more than 15% children in schools can’t read a simple story in Hindi, our national language.

Problems & Prospects

Problems

- Women's literacy rate is increasing slowly but still due to some reasons the growth is hampering.
- Various crimes against women take place each day. Women are not able to wander without restraint on the roads.
- Various crimes like rape, women trafficking, murders, abortion of a girl child are a indignity for the country. Furthermore, these crimes are widespread, even in the 21st Century. This is a huge hinder for the growth of our country.
- Moreover, in some rural areas like small villages, girls are not allowed to go to school. In most cases women are restrained at home to take care of the house because of the common belief of the people that women are only made to look after the house by staying back at home. Also, gender inequity and male supremacy are still common.
- Furthermore one of the main reasons for the reduced women literacy rate is the population of women in the entire country. This means the insufficiency of female gender in our society. However, there are many steps that the government is taking to promote women's education.

There are some other causes for slow progress of women education in India:

- Economic backwardness of the rural community
- Lack of proper social attitudes especially for the rural areas
- Lack of proper incentives to parents and children
- Lack of suitable curriculum

Prospects

- The encouragement of women's education should begin from the rural areas;
- Alertness to educate a female child in different villages should be taken in urgent basis;
- Mindset of the parents towards the education of women should be prepared;
- Moreover, various schools should be established in villages so that the female child may consider safe and have not to travel for far distances.
- Adequate safety for the women should be taken so that the women may not hesitate in surfacing of their houses.
- Strict actions and punishment should be there for any crime against woman so that the criminals may restrain themselves before doing any crime.
- In the earlier period, the government passed a major bill to treat the abortion of the female child a criminal act. As a result the birth rate of the female child increases a lot.
- Moreover various campaigns like "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" took place to promote women's empowerment. This further tainted the mindset of the people.

Concluding Remarks

Although the status of women education is better than pre-independence period in India but it is far from our expectation. No country can prosper until and unless spread of women education is

ensured. From time to time different commissions and committees have expressed concern regarding the slow progress of women's education in India. Therefore several measures should be taken for rapid growth of women education in India such as removing economic backwardness of rural community, developing proper social attitude, provision of adequate educational facilities, meeting the shortage of women teachers, curriculum reforms etc.

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