



Women's Education in India: Reality and Statistics

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Abstract:

Women education is very important for the proper social and economic growth of the country. Both men and women are like two sides of the coin and run equally like two wheels of the society. So both are important element of the growth and development in the country thus require equal opportunity in the education. If anyone of both goes downside, social progress is not possible.

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1. Introduction

Women education is very important for the country to fully develop. It is like an effective medicine to cure a patient completely and provide health back. Women education is a big opportunity for India to be developed socially and economically. Educated women are the weapons who yield positive impact on the Indian society through their contribution at home and professional fields. They are the reason of improved economy in the country as well as society. An educated woman has capability to handle her home and professional life. They can effectively contribute in controlling the population of India as they would like to marry at a later age in comparison to the uneducated woman.

India is considered as one of the world greatest democracies and has also surpassed China as the world's fastest growing economy in the financial quarter of October-December 2018; an achievement only made possible through ensuring education for all and gender equality. Promoting women education and ensuring female literacy have been the major factors behind India's success. The statistics reveal an unprecedented growth in development and women education in the past few decades- India is progressing fast towards her never seen before socio economic development as more and more Indian women are becoming part of its economy; through, their education and empowerment.

2. Current Status of Women Education in India (with Statistics)

The national female literacy rate when India gained independence was tragically low at 8.6%. Women, who were allowed to take part in freedom struggle, were now confined to the houses, leading to the formation of a male dominated patriarchal society. The female literacy rate of India has increased from 8.6% in 1951 to 64.63%, according to 2011 census. Though, this increase in the female literacy rate is encouraging and promising as well; unfortunately, there is also a flip side to it.

The current female literacy rate of India lags behind the male literacy rate, the former at 65.6% and the latter at 81.3%. The female education rate of India at 65.6% is significantly lower than the world average at 79.7%. The situation is more critical in rural areas, where fewer girls go to schools as compared to boys and the number of dropout rate is alarming among girls.

Statistics also reveal that India still has nearly 145 Million women, who are unable to read or write.

3. Why Do We Lag Behind?

The factors those restrict Indian women from getting educated and joining the main stream are mainly social. Below we will go through a summarization of such factors with a brief detail.

1) Patriarchal Society

Indian society is male dominated society. Women are not allowed the social status as equivalent to the men and are relegated to the confines of their houses. Though, the situation is different in urban areas, where women are more educated and employed; rural areas constituting 70% of the Indian population, still lag behind on gender equality. Educating a woman or a girl child is considered a non profitable venture in such societies. Females in many rural societies are considered a liability, which has to be ultimately transferred to other family after marriage.

2) Gender Discrimination

While we progress fast to become world's super power one day; gender inequality is the reality that screams in our society even today. Even the educated and working urban women are not aloof from the experiences of gender bias, not to mention the women in rural areas. Women in some industries are paid less than the men having same credentials. Their efficiency for a particular task or project is weighed low against that of their male counterparts. Women are grossly underestimated for promotions or for holding responsibilities. Such gender discrimination discourages the women from being educated and achieving their aspirations.

3) Crime against women

Women of India are much more susceptible to violence and threat than the men. Many crimes against women are still prevalent in Indian society, like- dowry, domestic violence, flesh trade, sexual harassment etc. such crimes only restrict the women folk to step out of their houses and enter schools or even offices, for that matter.

4) Lack of Security

Though the successive governments have worked to provide Indian women a safe and secure environment at home and also at work, still a lot remains to be done. Women working even in the safest cities of the country, lack the courage to transit alone during late night hours. Girls going to school in rural areas are pestered and eve teased. Such incidents are also responsible for high female school dropout rate. It is the responsibility of the government and the society as well to ensure a girl's safe transit to school, ensuring her education.

4. Advantages of Women/ Female Education in India

Following is the brief description of the advantages of women/female education in India-

1) Social Development

Educating women could be the key to remove many social evils of Indian society- dowry system, female infanticide and workplace harassment etc. An educated woman changes the future generations.

2) Economical Development

Educating women will definitely lead to the economical development of the nation as more women join the work force.

3) High Living Standard

An educated woman will contribute financially for the needs of her family and relatives. Two earning parents provide better growth prospects for the children as well as a raised living standard of the family.

4) Social Recognition

A family with educated women enjoys a good social status and is honored more than others. An educated woman conducts appropriately in the society earning laurels for the family and making it proud.

5) Improved Health and Hygiene

An educated woman recognizes the health hazards to her family and knows how to deal with them. She knows how to feed and nurture her children, telling them about good and bad hygiene.

The women education in ancient India was quite good but in the middle age it was deteriorated because of many restrictions against women. However, again it is getting better and better day by day as modern people in India understand that without the growth and development of women, the development of country is not possible. It is very true that equal growth of both sex will increase the economic and social development in every areas of the country.

Women should be given equal opportunity in education like men and they should not be isolated from any development activities. Women covers almost half population of the country means if women are uneducated the half country is uneducated which bring poor socio-economic condition. Through the women education the social and economic development will be faster in India. To spread the importance and improve the level of women education all over the country, countrywide national propaganda and awareness programmes are very necessary. An educated woman can educate her whole family and thus whole country.

In terms of population, India is the second largest country of the world due to the low level women education. If a woman is uneducated, the future of country would also be uneducated. Women education was the matter of concern in India in the middle age however; it has been now solved to a great extent. Women education has been given a lot of priority in India just like men to bring some positive changes in the social and economic status of the country. In the past women were not allowed to go out of the door of their houses. They were only limited to the domestic works as their education.

Raja Ram Mohan Ray and Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar were some famous social reformers during the British rule in India who paid their attention towards the women education. Both man and woman covers the half half population of the country. They are like two sides of the coin so need equal opportunity to participate in the country development. One cannot exist without other because women are everything as they give birth to the future generation. If they would be well educated they would give rise educated future generation and thus healthy social and economic condition in India.

The female education in India is highly necessary for the future of the country as women are the first teachers of their children means future of the nation. If education of the women is getting ignored, it would be the ignorant of bright future of the nation. An uneducated woman cannot actively participate in handling the family, proper care of the children and thus weak future generation. We cannot count all the advantages of the women education. Educated women may easily handle her family, make each family member responsible, infuse good qualities in children, participate in the social works and all would lead her towards the socially and economically healthy nation.

By educating a man, only a man can be educated however educating a woman, whole country can be educated. Lack of women education weakens the powerful part of the society. So, women should have full rights for the education and should not be treated as inferior to men.

5. For the betterment of the women education in India following programmes have been run

- Sarwa Shiksha Abhiyan
- Indira Mahila Yojana
- Balika Samridhi Yojana
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
- Mahila Samridhi Yojana
- Employment and Income Generating Training-cum-Production Centres

- Programme of Development of Women and Children in rural areas
- Short Stay Home for Women and Girls

6. Factors affecting the women education in India

- Undernourishment and malnutrition of the girl child
- Sexual harassment and abuse at early age
- Lower socio-economic status of parents
- Infections and low immunity power at childhood
- So many social restrictions and taboo in their life
- Forced to follow orders of elders in family whether at home of parents or parents-in-law
- Allowed to get only limited education

7. What is Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a national mission run by the government of India aiming to offer quality education for 8 years to all the children coming under age group 6 to 14 years. This programme was pioneered by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee to achieve the following targets:

- To cover education in all districts by the year 2002.
- To bring all children to school by the year 2003.
- To make necessary for all children to complete 5 years of education by the year 2007.
- To make necessary for all children to complete 8 years of quality elementary education by the year 2010.

8. Conclusion

India is now a leading country in the field of women education. History of India is never blank of brave women however it is full of women philosophers like Gargi, Viswabara, Maritreyi (of Vedic age) and other famous women are like Mirabai, Durgabati, Ahalyabi, Laxmibai, etc. All the famous historical women in India are inspiration for the women of this age. We never forget their contributions to the society and country. An educated woman is like a magic wand which brings prosperity, health and pride. We just have to unleash her potential and see the magic happen. We have improved a lot on women education since our independence, but still a lot remains to be improved. Factors restricting the growth of women education in India are mainly societal, and we need to recognize them and eliminate them, if we want to achieve the goals of socio-economic development.

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