

Women Education in India: Problems and Issues

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Abstract:

The problem of women's education in India is one which catches our attention immediately. In a country like India, due to conservative traditionalism, women's status has, through ages, been considered to be lower than that of men. During the latter part of the Vedic period the Aryans had sealed the fate of women culturally and socially by not allowing them the right to study Vedas and thus fifty percent of the population was deprived of one of the most fundamental human rights. Even today, in spite of the recognition of women's status equal to that of men, many of them suffer in primitive ignorance as ever before. Illiteracy and ignorance is prevalent more in women folk than in men-folk and this evil is rampant especially in villages and deprived communities.

The importance of women in matters of building the character, economic reconstruction of the nation and social reforms is being realized. Different Commissions and Committees appointed at times, suggested for the solution of the problems of women's education. Women education is a big opportunity for India to be developed socially and economically. Educated Women are the weapons who provide positive impact on society by their contribution at home and professional fields. Parental attitude, lack of infrastructure, lack of security, superstitions related to girls, socio-economic condition of family are the major challenges for promoting Women education in India.

Keywords-Women Education, Opportunity, Sexual Harassment, Contribution, Curriculum, Gender Inequality, Safe Transport, Co-Education

Introduction:

Education is the most important stage of every child's life because it offers opportunity to grow socially and academically. Malala Yousafzai correctly said-'One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world'. The education of girls and women is an important part of national development. Steps that are being taken to improve and expand their education will not recede to the background due to lack of finance. It must be remembered that there is still a huge gap to be filled between the education of the boys and girls, further; mother is the pivot of family life in India. Our way of life depends on her it is therefore, essential that at least the programmes for girls and women that have already been included in the current plan of government are not disturbed. The lack of coordination that existed between the home, the school and the life outside had to be remedied; and a close integration must be secured between the process of education and the social and economic life of the country. Everyone should be trained to make an adequate living and to fill effectively her appropriate place in life. The facilities for education should be adjusted as accurately as possible to the actual needs and opportunities which arise. Any wastage of training should not be tolerated in a country as poor as India.

The awakening among Indian women has been really considerable during recent years despite all challenges and difficulties women education is progressing steadily. They are making their impact felt in international affairs. Inside the country there is a demand for equal rights. Indeed, it is quite obvious that women's education must catch up with men's education as rapidly as possible and that large gap between them must be bridged. Apart from being a wife and mother, she must play a positive role in the country's planning and progress and she must develop her own talent. Our girls have all the potential qualities, mental, physical, and emotional but these will have to be nourished and cherished until they grow into the full and glorious womanhood. Our late Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru said, "The most reliable indicator of a country's character is the status and social position of women more than nothing else. He said, "I am quite convinced that in India today progress can be measured by the progress of women's of India". Women as a human being, have as

much right as men have and the honour they deserve in society depends on the degree and quality of their education. At elementary and secondary level girls' enrolment rate has been decreased from 2012 to 2015, but girls' gross enrolment ratio has been increased at higher education level from 2012 to 2015. This paper suggests that higher authorities, community members, NGOs and all citizens of India must have to take responsibility to eradicate different barriers related to girls' education From Our Society.

Benefits of Women Education:

- Women's education gives power to equality.
- Women's education helps women to voice out their opinions and views.
- Women's education would make them self-sufficient, and the age of marriage would probably extend.
- A powerful system might be established.

Factors Responsible for the Decrease in the Female Literacy Rate: Social discrimination, Gender inequality, Occupation of girl child in domestic chores, Economic exploitation.

Other reasons for girls' drop-out rates at the primary and middle school level are: Costs too much, Less interest in studies, Early-age marriage, Required for work in the family business or farm & Required for household work

The Main Problems Facing Women Education Are

- (i) Development of immorality,
- (ii) Suitable Curriculum for the education of girls;
- (iii) Lack of social consciousness among women;
- (iv) Scarcity of lady teachers;
- (v) Lack of proper physical facilities;
- (vi) Unwillingness of lady teachers to serve in rural areas;
- (vii) Financial difficulties;
- (viii) Problem of transport;
- (ix) Problem of wastage and stagnation;
- (x) Problem of co-education;
- (xi) Lack of enthusiasm and interest of the officials in-charge of education

Primary Barriers in Educating Women:

Researchers estimated that around 132 million girls across the globe are not in education. Some of the reasons as to why fewer girls are in education are discussed below:

- (i) Cultural Beliefs and Patriarchal Values-
- (ii) Poverty-
- (iii) Early Marriage and Pregnancy-
- (iv) Conflict, Violence, and Dangerous Journeys to School-
- (v) Menstruation and Female Genital Mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C)-

Cultural Beliefs and Patriarchal Values- In some cultures, girls opportunities are reduced considerably to the role of giving birth, raising kids and performing domestic work. It is belief that boys are more valuable than girls and therefore have a greater chance of success and families invest in son's education before investing in their daughters.

Poverty- Poverty is also the most important factors to a girls' education. When families cannot afford the cost of education, then girls often stay at home to take care of younger siblings. This is connected to the traditional patriarchal gender roles.

Early Marriage and Pregnancy- Early marriage and pregnancy play an important role in the significant gender gap in education. Girls once married, their role will be to stay at home and do household chores. The likelihood of these girls then becoming pregnant increases dramatically, causing a complete break to their educational journey.

Conflict, Violence, and Dangerous Journeys to School- Globally, girls are at a much higher risk of violence and sexual violence in society. Long distances to school are often common for many

girls where there is no transport available and walking these distances can be extremely dangerous as many girls experience sexual harassment. The impact of dangerous journeys, greatly affects girls' education by preventing them from even enrolling.

Menstruation and Female Genital Mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C)- Menstruation can act as a barrier to girls' education. In poor communities, sanitary products are not an option and are not provided at school thus girls will have to miss school which often leads to a permanent drop-out, in addition to this, many girls will experience FGM/C. This cultural practice, although now illegal in many countries, is still a common occurrence in communities causes excruciating pain, bleeding, or sometimes infection. This can have a detrimental effect on their health and education.

Social Reformers Who Uplifted Women's Education In India:

1. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar- He pleaded for educating women after realizing the problems of girl child education in India, and in this regard, opened many schools for girls at his own expense.
2. Raja Ram Mohan Roy He believed that unless women were educated, the country will not prosper.
3. Jyotirao Govindrao Phule Jyotirao, a social reformer worked toward the upliftment of women from the lower strata of society by providing them the opportunity for education.

Recommendations:

1. Policy level changes-
2. Creating Awareness-
3. Encouraging more women teachers-
4. Providing safe transport
5. Sanitary materials at school

Policy level changes- Policies should be focusing on sending more girls to school while also paying more attention not just to enrolment but their attendance. Families should be motivated to send their daughters to school and support their higher education. Policies should also focus on banning harmful practices like FGM and child marriage, and tacking gender based violence and child trafficking

Creating Awareness-Communications, campaigns, education, and advocacy at all levels of society are very important to changing gender and social norms.

Encouraging more women teachers- Evidence of correlation between the number of women teachers and girls enrollment, provides a strong argument for the importance of women teachers Teachers' work should positively impact girls' view of themselves, and gender relations within that community. Curriculums should also be reflecting gender equality within educational resources such as textbooks, presenting both boys and girls equally.

Providing safe transport- Safe transport for young girls is imperative for a safe journey to school.

Sanitary materials at school - Schools need the resources for girls to manage their menstruation and feel empowered to have full control over their bodies. Girls and boys should both be valued equally and have the same opportunities.

Conclusion:

A nation's well-being is defined if the women are strong and capable of withstanding any storm. Women are considered the nation's building block; empowering women is similar to empowering a nation. The government as well as private investors are investing in schemes to promote education among the girls. Indian Women have remarked their country's name and made us proud in every aspect. New strategies and initiatives like social-cultural practices promote women's education by introducing social empowerment tools with access to education, health care, and access to equal opportunities legally. The Indian Education Commission 1964-66, rightly emphasized, "For full development of our human resources, the improvement of homes and for moulding the character of children during the most impressionable years of their infancy, the education of girls is of greater importance than that of boys". However, the change in the attitude of the public towards women's education would go a long way in improving the situation, it must be mentioned that the task of the



school authorities in India is to prepare the girls for the triple role she will have to play in adult life. First, as the founder and fashioner of a happy home, secondly to be able to earn her livelihood independently and honourably if circumstances demand her to do so and thirdly to discharge her duties as a responsible and enlightened citizen.

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