



Education as a Human Right for Indian Women and Its Effect on Human Capital

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Abstract:

In India, education provides a vital opportunity for social and economic development. By contributing to the economy of the country and the society, an educated Indian woman will have a positive impact on Indian society. Women who are educated reduce the likelihood that their children will die before they are five. Educational opportunities for girls will play a very significant role in the development of the country. As employment plays a crucial role in improving women's status in society, education of girls is of prime importance in any programme geared towards empowering women (Dominic and Jothi, 2012). As well as enabling the development of half of human capital, it also enhances the quality of life both in and outside the home. A formal and a non-formal education structure are important components of the Indian education system. As well as online education and distance education, other educational programs are also formulated to motivate the girls to go to school. Every educational programme is designed to educate every girl child. There are numerous negative effects of low literacy not only on women's lives but also on their families and the economy of the country. In this regard, raising the level of education of girls is of prime importance. It has recently been demonstrated that improving girls' educational levels has a significant impact on their health and economic future, which, in turn, improves the prospects of their communities as a whole of their entire community. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared that education is more than an end in itself; it is the basis for lifelong learning and human development (Ramachandran, 1998).

Keywords: *Girls' Education, Women Empowerment, Human Capital.*

Introduction:

Women are an integral part of society, and educating them means educating the entire society. In order to understand the extent to which people want their nation to develop, the attitude they have towards women's education is crucial. A key component of women's empowerment is education. It improves their employment prospects, facilitates their participation in public life, and also increases their social status. It is true that women have made considerable progress with regards to literacy and education, but the overall structure still remains less favorable to them. A family, society, and country cannot progress without the contribution of women. Together with the men, women must be educated in order to make democracy a success in the country. Education is the real source of happiness for a family. The importance of education for women empowerment lies in the fact that it enables them to respond to the challenges, to look beyond their traditional roles, and to change their lifestyles (Bhat, 2015).

“Educate a Girl, Empower a Nation” Women play a pivotal role in nation building. As a nation, we are reliant on women more than men in terms of our economic wealth in this century. Women’s involvement in society has been improved by the government focusing mainly on education and increasing employment opportunities for them. In India, the female literacy rate is lower than the male literacy rate. There are fewer girls enrolled in schools and many of them drop out compared to boys. Considering these circumstances, it is imperative that we improve the level of gender equality, literacy, and empowerment of women in every corner of India. To assist them in making the transition into traditional development, the Indian Government has launched a number of programs and schemes. Observable changes have been made to the socioeconomic conditions of women due to these actions.

The benefits of Girls’ Education

There are several benefits of Girls’ education; some of them are noted as below:

- 1. Improvement of the social environment:** Through girls’ education, the issues and problems in society can be sorted out. Education was recommended as a mechanism for social advancement by the Kothari commission in 1968. The development of India’s social base can be achieved through education for women.
- 2. Equal rights for men and women:** Among the unprivileged sections of society, women are among the most vulnerable. With education, the gender gap in society can be bridged. For instance, coeducational institutes teach men to give respect to women.
- 3. The productivity of the economy:** Women’s education is beneficial in raising the economic level and a nation’s GDP through the empowerment of women.
- 4. Reduction in infant mortality:** Education allows women to assess their family situation and make wiser decisions in their family to avoid disputes among the family members. Education for women in India also reduces infant mortality rates.
- 5. A better standard of living:** The education of a woman will automatically increase her employment prospects. The chances of getting a good job and a better standard of living are greatly increased for women who are well educated.
- 6. Enhancing democracy:** Educating women increases their attention to politics, which translates into greater involvement in democracy through their increased participation. Women can assert their rights through political mobilization.

Education as a human right for Indian women and its effect on human capital

Education as a human right is one of the strongest forces for development. Furthermore, it is a powerful tool for reducing poverty, promoting health, gender equality, peace, and stability. It is the strongest economy that delivers high, consistent returns in the long run and one that ensures equal opportunity for men and women across the board. Through education, which is an essential tool for reducing poverty, promoting development, and promoting peace and stability, we can improve development, health, gender equality, and peace and stability. A significant number of children in a developing country like India are now in primary school due to tremendous progress in getting children into classrooms.

Every girl and young woman deserve a quality education. The education of girls is more than just getting them to school. Additionally, this will involve making sure that females may go to school and get a degree, so they can learn and grow needed for labor market competition; acquiring the necessary socio-emotional and life skills to adapt to a changing world; making their own decisions; and contributing to their communities and the world. Both individuals and countries benefit from girls’ education. Better educated

women tend to be more informed about nutrition and healthcare, have fewer children, marry at a later age, and their children are usually healthier, should they choose to become mothers. They are more likely to participate in the formal labor market and earn higher incomes.

Growth of the economy is dependent on a combination of human, natural, and produced capital to produce goods and services. In addition, political institutions and social conditions affect economic growth. A number of studies have found that human capital and economic growth are positively correlated. This capital has long been a vital part of a country's growth and development, as well as an essential component of decreasing poverty and migration and improving the quality of its institutions and social conditions. Studying and measuring the effect of human capital on economic growth is particularly important in developing nations where the enrolment rate is low, particularly among girls and in rural areas. There has been evidence that education for women contributes directly and indirectly to economic growth by reducing fertility rates and infant mortality and increasing labour participation, total factor productivity, health, and quality of life for women.

Spending money on education is a great way to invest in people, who can then be turned into money through wages or other forms of return on investment kinds that are compensated. While Almost all of these returns are personal, they can also be seen as social ones. Human capital is built on the premise that not all labor is equal and that quality can be improved through investment. Education represents one of the best examples of investing in human capital to generate returns in the forms of wages and other forms of compensations. According to Weil (2009), human capital can be defined as a measure of the economic value of a worker's skill set. Human capital theory states that education, or training, can increase the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills, thus increasing future earning potential through increasing lifetime income (Becker, 1975). Education, according to this theory, is costly, it takes a great deal of time that can be better spent doing other things, and once it is successfully completed, it pays off, so it ought to be considered as a valuable investment. The workers are earning the return on their own investment as a result of their education (Galor & Moav, 2000). The employees are earning the returns to their own investment through higher wages and a more comfortable life. In countries with high population growth, human capital theory applies best because of the vast human resource that might become human capital. Through inputs such as education and health care, human resources can be transformed into human capital. Government thus has the greatest responsibility for fostering human capital accumulation, leading to both private and social benefits such as improved living standards and economic growth.

Human capital can be increased both directly and indirectly through female education. The direct effects include improved health, improved knowledge, and enhanced experience. Education does not guarantee that women will be able to participate in the labor market, but it does have a positive effect on future human capital. They have a positive impact on their children's health, nutrition, and school performance. Nevertheless, there might be a causal issue when it comes to the effect of female education on human capital. Due to the higher opportunity cost of female education, poverty might pose a barrier to women's educational attainment. Therefore, better basic health, better nutrition, and higher school achievements for children of educated mothers may have more to do with their financial assets than with their education.

The Challenges on the way to girls' education

It is clear that women are facing many challenges in India as they continue their educational journey. Some of these challenges are geographical, socio-cultural, rooted in gender stereotyping and gender inequality, as well as health, economic, religious, legal, political/administrative, and educational factors. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and other organizations can participate in this effort. The country still has a lot to do when it comes to gender equality and women's education. Male literacy rates are higher than female literacy rates, which is just one simple indicator. Women prefer being a housewife and living at home (Bhat, 2015).

Gender bias in schools and classrooms may also reinforce messages that negatively impact girls' aspirations, their perceptions of their roles in society, and their labor market engagement. As a result of the design of school and classroom learning environments or the behavior of faculty, staff, and peers in a child's school, gender stereotypes carry over into academic performance and choice of study. This is particularly true of young women pursuing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

There is no doubt that poverty is one of the most important factors that determine whether a girl can access and complete her education. Studies repeatedly show that girls facing multiple disadvantages - such as low family income, living in remote or underserved areas, having a disability, or belonging to an ethno-linguistic minority group - are the ones the least likely to complete their education.

Girls are also restricted from accessing and completing education by violence - many are forced to walk long distances to school, increasing their risk of violence, and many experience violence while at school. School-related gender-based violence occurs every year, and has serious consequences for the health and wellbeing of girls. This has resulted in lower attendance and higher dropout rates for girls. Ending school-related gender-based violence is crucial to ending violence at school. There is evidence that adolescent pregnancies can be the result of adolescent sexual violence or sexual exploitation. Adolescent girls who become pregnant often face strong stigma from their communities, and may even be discriminated against. These stigmas, coupled with unequal gender norms, can lead teenage girls to drop out of school.

There is also a critical challenge of child marriage. Women who marry early have a much higher chance of dropping out of school and completing fewer years of education than those who marry later. They are also more likely to have children at a young age and to be subjected to higher levels of violence. If these factors persist, educators and other members of society will suffer. There is evidence that girls with secondary schooling marry up to six times more frequently than their non-educated peers.

Education and Gender Inequality

Enrollment of boys and girls in schools is another area in which women's equality has significantly improved as a result of adult literacy programs. The gender gap in literacy levels is slowly narrowing due to women's increased involvement in literacy campaigns. A more important point is that the disparity between boys and girls enrolled in non-literate households is substantially less than in neo-literate households.

Table 1: State-Wise Percentage of Female Literacy in India as per 2011 Census

Sl. No.	Name of the State	Female Literacy (%)
1	Andhra Pradesh	59.7%
2	Arunachal Pradesh	59.6%
3	Assam	67.3%
4	Bihar	53.3%
5	Chattisgarh	60.6%
6	Delhi	80.9%
7	Goa	81.8%
8	Gujarat	70.7%
9	Haryana 66.8%	66.8%
10	Himachal Pradesh	76.6%

11	Jammu and Kashmir	58.0%
12	Jharkhand	56.2%
13	Karnataka	68.1%
14	Kerala	92.0%
15	Madhya Pradesh	60.0%
16	Maharashtra	75.5%
17	Manipur	73.2%
18	Meghalaya	73.8%
19	Mizoram	89.4%
20	Nagaland	76.7%
21	Orissa	64.4%
22	Punjab	71.3%
23	Rajasthan	52.7%
24	Sikkim	76.4%
25	Tamil Nadu	73.9%
26	Tripura	83.1%
27	Uttar Pradesh	59.3%
28	Uttarakhand	70.7%
29	West Bengal	71.2%
	Union Territories	
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	81.8%
2	Chandigarh	81.4%
3	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	65.9%
4	Daman & Diu	79.6%
5	Lakshadweep	88.2%
6	Pondicherry	81.2%
	All India	65.46%

Source: India Census (2011)

Table 1 indicates that the state-wise, female literacy rates have been averaged 65.46% in all India in 2011 census, with the highest literacy rate in Kerala at 92.0% and the lowest at 52.7% in Rajasthan. Comparing the two, female literacy rates have increased by 11% from 54.16% to 65.46%. Female literacy rates have been on the rise in the past decade.

According to the table below, the overall literacy rates for three age groups in both urban and rural areas in 2014 are observed to be lower for females belonging to all age groups in the rural area, whereas the literacy rates of females in the urban area, belonging to the age group of 5 & above and 7 & above are lower than those of males while for the 15 & above age groups are higher.

. Table 2: Literacy Rates: 2014

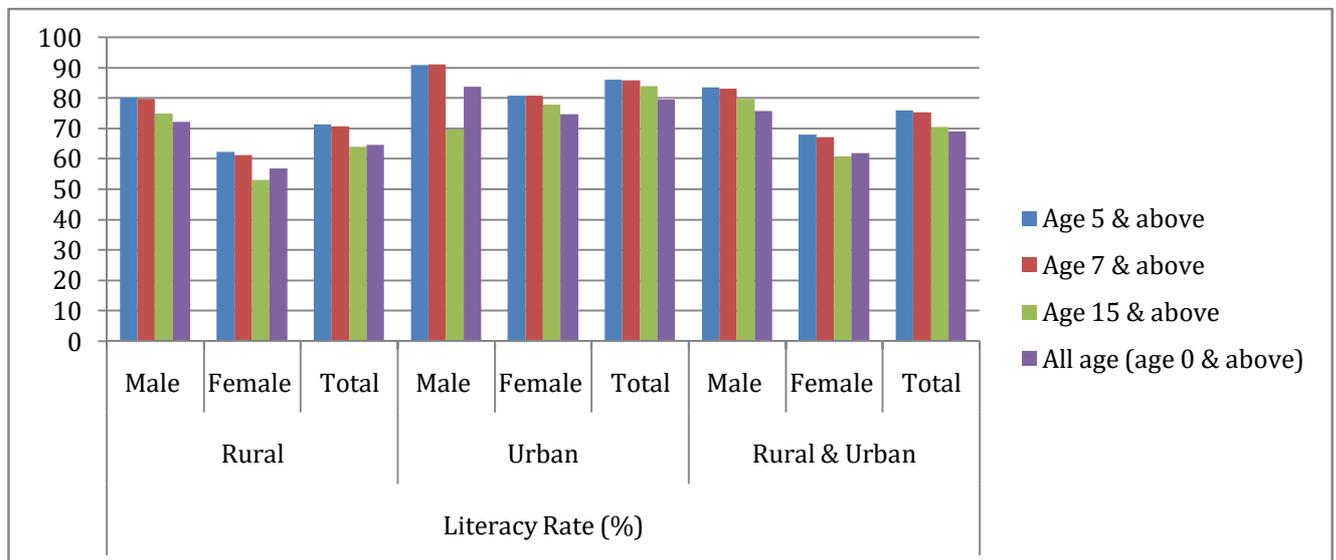
Age	Literacy Rate (%)								
	Rural			Urban			Rural & Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Age 5 & above	80.3	62.4	71.4	91	80.9	86.1	83.6	68.1	76
Age 7 & above	79.8	61.3	70.8	91.1	80.8	85.9	83.2	67.1	75.4
Age 15 & above	75	53.1	64.1	69.7	77.9	84	79.8	60.8	70.5
All age (age 0 & above)	72.3	56.8	64.7	83.7	74.8	79.5	75.7	62	69.1

Data Source: National Sample Survey Office.

Department of School Education & Literacy

The overall picture of the female literacy rate is lower compared to the male literacy rates which can be seen clearly in the figure below:

Figure 1. Literacy Rates: 2014



Policies that promote girls' education in India

In the aftermath of India's independence, women nationalists made a significant contribution. Women were given equal rights under the Indian Constitution, which considered them to be citizens of the country and as equal to men on freedom and opportunity grounds. As per the 86th Amendment of the Indian Constitution, the right to free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 and 14 is a fundamental right of Indian citizens. Although the Indian government has taken initiatives like the "*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*" (which aims to provide primary education particularly to the girl children from rural areas), there are still many obstacles that prohibit women's education.

India has had high ambitions regarding universal education since the 1960s and has made significant progress. There has been an overall decrease in the number of children out of school, and foreign investments have increased along with economic growth. Women should be given the opportunity to learn through informal schooling and to consider revising societal and cultural norms in order to empower them. Over the past few decades, the SSA has devised a number of schemes to develop Indian education as a whole, including schemes designed to help foster growth among females in general.

The following schemes are the most important ones:

- **Mahila Samakhya:** This programme was launched in 1988 as part of the New Education Policy (1968). Rural women, particularly those from economically and socially marginalized backgrounds, are the intended beneficiaries of this program. A committee was initially formed for the SSA to review this program, to figure out how it was performing, and to recommend changes that could be made.
- **Kazturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV):** This scheme was introduced in July, 2004 to provide education for girls in primary school. It serves primarily the rural poor and those living in underprivileged areas where female literacy levels are very low. Schools that have been set up have 100% reservation: 75% of seats for backward classes and 25% for BPL (below poverty line) females.
- **The National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)** was launched in July 2003. The SSA used it as an opportunity to reach girls who it otherwise couldn't reach through other initiatives. The SSA targeted the most challenging girls. The scheme has been implemented in 24 states across India. As part of the NPEGEL, "model schools" have been established to provide better opportunities for girls.

Conclusion

In a highly populated country like India with expensive universal education, girls' education becomes more essential. Girls' education has been found to be a highly effective factor in reducing fertility rates and enhancing human capital. Directly and indirectly, education of girls increases income per capita, which in turn increases economic growth. It is important for economic growth to reduce fertility rate and population growth in order to increase income per capita, and make it easier for governments to provide better infrastructure, health care, and education. In summary, investments in girls' education combined with a higher human capital will stimulate economic growth thereby attracting foreign direct investment.

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