



A Study on the Development of Women Education in India in the Light of Government Initiatives

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Abstract: *Indian constitution guarantees equal rights to men and women. Articles 14, 15 and 16 of part III of our constitution guarantee right to equality, but this constitution and articles are only bookies not practical. We found women being neglected in the society from the ancient period to present day. Even today's society, we see that girls are not getting equal opportunities. In the rural area, the parents keep the girls engaged in housework, who do not want to send them to the school. But day to day this picture slowly change, because different policies, committee and recommendations like Educational Commission of 1881-82, Radhakrishnan Commission 1948-49, Mudaliar Commission 1952-53, National Women's Education Committee 1958-59, National Women's Education Council 1959, Hansa Mehta Committee 1961-62, Shri M. Bhaktavatsalam Committee 1963, Kothari Commission 1964-66, The National Education Policies (1968, 1986), National Commission for Women 1992, The National Perspective Plan for Women Education 1988-2000, National Population Policy 2000, National Education Mission 2010, have strongly recommended the need for spreading education among girls. Indian Government take different developmental Schemes and Programmes for women like Vidya Dhan Yojna, Indira Mahila Samridhi Yojna, Kasturba Gandhi Education Plan, Baalika Samridhi Yojna, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Mahila Samridhi Yojna, Swami Vivekananda Scholarship for Single Girl Child, Saakshar Bharat, Udaan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Programme etc.*

Keyword: *Women Education, Empowerment, Scheme, Policy, Commission, Literacy Rate, Constitutional Provision .*

Introduction: 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. 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. 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, Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, Mohatma Ghandhi, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Kasturba Ghandhi, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Sarojini Naidu, Sucheta Kripalini, Aruna Asaf Ali, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, were some famous social reformers, who paid their attention towards the women education. 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.

Women play a prominent role in the cultural, social, political and economic life of a country. Education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Discrimination of women from womb to tomb is well known. Women comprise nearly half of the population of a country. At the 2001 census, India had a female population of 46 million which accounts 15% of world's women population, characterized by regional and culture different making it impossible to make any kind of generalization. But social discrimination and economic deprivation on the basis on gender is common to all, irrespective of religion, caste, community, and state. There many common circumstances in which Indian women live hinder their participation in social, economic and political life of the country. Throughout history their live have generally been confined to home with restricted role of a home-maker, that of mother and wives. There is no equality between men women. Women receive only small share in development opportunities and are often excluded from education, better, jobs, participation in political system and better health care, decision making, etc. Besides, they suffer from physiological, social and cultural barriers, which hinder their development. Thus, this is true of ancient, medieval and modern time. The status of women in India has been eventful subject to great much change during the course of history. The history of women in India has been eventful. Contemporary Indian cultural reflect a strong connection to its ancient history. India's past provides insight to the current status of Indian women in society.

Objectives of this Study:

- [1] To discuss the importance of women education.
- [2] To study different Recommendation about women education.
- [3] To see the present literacy condition in India of women education.
- [4] To highlight the initiatives of Indian Govt. and Constitutional Provision for Women Education.

Review of Literature:

Ghara (2016) studied on "Status of Indian Women in Higher Education". The study was taken a look on Women participation through women higher education institutes, women enrolment as compared with population. The participation in terms of distribution of institutes and enrolment has been studied for the years 2011-2016. The trend has been found as increasing but slow. Correlations have also been studied. In the study on "Girls' Education in India: Status and Challenges", Bhat (2015) studied on "Role of Education in the Empowerment of Women in India". The study was discussed that, Women education in India has a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment and India poised to becoming superpower in recent years. Education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position in society. Women education in India has been a need of the hour, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. . Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family and develops the concept of participation. Ansari & Nasreen (2014) conducted a study on "Status of Female Literacy in Various Districts of Uttar Pradesh". The present study was conducted to explore the status of female literacy in various districts of Uttar Pradesh. The female literacy rate of all the districts have been categorized under five heads: 1. Very high, 2. High, 3. Average, 4. Low and 5. Very low. Female literacy rates were plotted on graph through monochromatic colour scheme to give a clear picture and understanding of female literacy. A very high regional variation with a declining trend regarding the female literacy was observed throughout the study area. Indrani & Achin (2010) had been conduct a study on "Female work participation and gender differential in earning in West Bengal" India has the lowest number of female workplaces in West Bengal. And on the contrary, the literacy rate of

women depends on how many Muslim residents are in that block. In areas where the largest Muslim population is, most women are not able to participate in the workplace for their activities. This survey was conducted on two areas and a model was used to describe the participants in the workplace. It can be seen that the rate of earning of boys is very high and the rate of income of women is very low. Peacock (2009) was published an essay on “The “Education” of the Indian Woman against the Backdrop of the Education of the European Woman in the Nineteenth-Century” by the Forum on Public Policy. The essay was discussed the role and education of the women of India, with special reference to the women of Bengal during the nineteenth-century and a comparison is made between the education of the Indian woman and the education of the European woman during this era. The education of the Indian woman is also referenced against the backdrop of the nationalist movement in India against imperialist rule and its effects on the women of the Country.

Singh (2008) was published a paper on —Higher Education for Women in India—Choices and Challenges by the Forum on Public Policy. The paper was analysed gender disparity in education evident across the socio-economic spectrum in India. Concern for girls’ education in last few years has lead to a considerable expansion of access at the primary level. But a great number of girls especially in the rural areas drop out before they reach secondary or Higher stages of education. Many enter in to matrimony and become young mothers before having the opportunity to realize their full potential. Removed from formal schools at the onset of puberty, those who are not married, take on household responsibilities. The ones who are able to resist social and pedagogic pressures to drop out and reach the level of college or university, take studies seriously as they know this privilege will vanish after matrimony. Many are not even able to peruse their goals of further education or choice of vocation. There is a need to develop gender –specific pedagogy and provide flexibility in the system of education, in which women could fulfil their aspirations, overcoming their domestic obligations.

Research Methodology: This study is a qualitative study. This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse the development of Women Education in the light of Govt. Initiatives and also point out various policy and recommendation for Women Education. It has been done on the basis of the secondary sources of data like books, newspaper, articles, research journal, and different websites. Collected data was analysed qualitatively.

Importance of Women Education: Swami Vivekananda says no expectation of the progress of a family or a country can be achieved where women are not educated and are leading a pitiable life. 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. Let us mention the importance of women’s education in India based on the views of the educationists, philosophers and political leaders.

- **Decreased Mortality Rate-** An educated woman is more likely to marry later in life improving the chances of survival of the mother and baby. Educated mothers are more aware of their children’s needs and nutrition, and take well care of them resulting in a low child mortality rate; providing them better health, hygiene and nutrition.
- **Gender equality -** Women have the same rights to receive education as in the case of men. So, women cannot be discriminated on the basis of sex, as far as education is concerned. Women education is also important in accomplishing the world goal of gender equality. By empowering girls, this goal is achieved as they are better able to compete with their male counterparts in places such as government, learning institutions and even leadership positions.
- **Eliminating Crime against Women-** Many of the social evils and crimes against women can be easily eliminated by educating women. Incidents of dowry, flesh trade, female infanticide as well as harmful

customary practices can be eradicated by educating women of a society. An educated woman plays a very important role in a civilized family and influences the thoughts and beliefs of its members.

- **Small family planning-** Educated women understand that small families are happy families. 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.
- **Better Standard of Living- Better** standard of living for the family is one of the advantages of women/female education. It doesn't take a mathematician to conclude that a family relying on double wages is more content and happy than a family which relies on the income of a single parent.
- **Improved Health and Hygiene- Educated** girls and women are aware of the importance of health and hygiene. Through health education, they are empowered to lead a healthy life-style. Educated mothers can take better care of both herself and her baby.

Different Recommendation About Women Education: Our national and social leaders feel that no national development can take place without women's Education. Therefore, education of women has been regarded as a major programme in India. In order to minimise the existing gap between the education of boys and girls and to expand and develop women's Education, the Government of India has appointed different commissions and committee.

The Indian Education Commission (1882)

“It will have been seen that female education is still in an extremely backward condition”. For the spread of women education the commission made some important recommendations- Govt. should give more liberal grants to private girl's school. Establishment of Normal School for training of women teachers. School fees should be nominal.

University Education Commission (1948 1949)

The university Education Commission is popularly known as Radhakrishnan Commission. This Commission analysed the problem of women's education at the college and the university level and made the following recommendation:

- **Amenities of life:** The ordinary amenities of life should be provided for Women in College originally planned for men but to which women are being admitted in increasing numbers.
- **Educational opportunities:** There should be no curtailment in educational opportunities for women but rather a substantial increase in them.
- **Educational guidance:** There should be an intelligent educational guidance by qualified men and women to help women to get a clear view of their real educational interests and to provide good education according to their needs and capacities.

Initiatives of Indian Govt. And Constitutional Provision for Women Education

[1] Balika Samruddhi Yojna (1997): For girl's child development.

[2] Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (2000): To impart quality education to girls and SC, ST also.

[3] Mahila Samakhya: Started in 1989, this scheme uses education as a tool for empowerment. This scheme is being carried out in 8, 000 villages in 53 districts in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).

- [4] Nari Adalat (2007): For women justice in the society. 33% reservation in panchayet has already for women and reservation bill is pending to parliament separate reservation to women education and empowerment.
- [5] Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV): This scheme was launched in July, 2004, to provide education to girls at primary level. It is primarily for the underprivileged and rural areas where Literacy level for girls is very low. The schools that were set up have 100% reservation: 75% for backward class and 25% for BPL (below Poverty line) girls. (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).
- [6] National Programme for Education of Girls At Elementary Level (NPEGEL): This programme was launched in July, 2003. It was an incentive to reach out to the girls who the SSA was not able to reach through other schemes. The SSA called out to the “hardest to reach girls”. This scheme has covered 24 states in India. Under the NPEGEL, “model schools” have been set up to provide better opportunities to Girls. (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).

Provisions in Indian Constitution for Women Education:

The rights and safeguards enshrined in the constitution for women in India are listed below:

- [1] Article 15(1), The state shall not discriminate against any citizen of India on the ground of sex.
- [2] Article 15(3), The state is empowered to make any special provision for women. In other words, this provision enables the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women.
- [3] Article 16(2), No citizen shall be discriminated against or be ineligible for any employment or office under the state on the ground of sex.
- [4] Article 23(1), Traffic in human beings and forced labour are prohibited.
- [5] Article 39(a), The state to secure for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
- [6] Article 39(d), The state to secure equal pay for equal work for both Indian men and women.
- [7] Article 39E, The state is required to ensure that the health and strength of women workers are not abused and that they are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their Strength.
- [8] Article 42, The state shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- [9] Article 51-AE, It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices derogatory to the Dignity of women.

Conclusion: Looking at the history of women’s education in India, we can see that women education have not seen much progress due to various backwardness. But, due to various policies and recommendations at different times, women’s education has expanded rapidly. Today, girls continue to contribute in almost every field. The girls are working in parallel with the boys in the field of sports, teaching, doctor, pilot, law and politics etc. But despite the rapid expansion of current women’s education, the condition of the village society has not improved. Village girls are far behind in urban areas. In doing research, researchers have found that parents’ poverty, social prejudice, lack of social mobility, lack of security, crime against women, gender discrimination, Patriarchal society, disregard for women’s education, etc. However, it cannot be denied, that the people of the village society have become aware. Village girls are being educated in higher education today. Girl’s drop-out rates is necessary for achieving women’s education. The Initiatives of the

government through investment and infrastructure in developing education in India were examined. With regard to facilities in schools, it had improved significantly, but a lot more need to be done. In sum, the study revealed that there have been concerted efforts to encourage girls to attend schools, which would lead to higher literacy in future. The study also revealed that there are several infrastructural barriers to women education in India. The study calls for focused approach towards increasing women centred educational infrastructure so as to reduce the women drop-out rates and to improve female literacy levels in India.

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