



EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN POST INDEPENDENCE INDIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSES

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INTRODUCTION:

In this article an attempt has been made to address the educational status of women in post-independence period. Nowadays the importance of women's education is growing day by day and women's education is the most blistering topic. **Nelson Mandela** said "Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world". **Swami Vivekanand** laid great stress for women education and says "No expectation of the progress of a family or a country can be achieved, where women are not educated and are leading a pitiabile life". The role of education is



regarded as an investment in human capital, where both men and women have equal responsibility. Women education is like an effective medicine to cure a patient and provide health back. Woman education is a big opportunity for India to be develop socially and economically.

In male dominated society the roles of men are given higher recognition and whatever a woman does is treated as low. As a social group woman has treated as minority group and attributed secondary importance. Women in Ancient Vedic period were entitled to very important rites of Upanayana, which gives the females; the freedom of right to study the Vedas.

In later stages they were denied from it. Women's education was at its highest in the Vedic era. Women were equal to men in knowledge and education. But this condition of female education could not be maintained further. In the Ramayana and Mahabharat; there is a reference of co-education i.e., girls and boys were educated together.

In Buddhist and Jain period gave an impetus to women education. But under Muslim regime again women education deteriorated. However, during the period of Jainism and Buddhism certain women saint scholars flourished. During British regime, only meagre efforts were put for women education. It was of the belief of the ancient Hindus that; education should prepare an individual to attain the main objectives of life like character formation, liberation and preservation of culture etc.

After independence, women were liberated from the custom of inhouse traditions. In India women comprises nearly half of the total population and education is a corner stone of socio-economic development. No country will prosper if it fails to utilize the talents and abilities of women. The proper development of children largely depends upon the education of a women. Women is considered as hub of every family and society. Education is a fundamental right of every

Indian girl and woman. As per the report the female literacy rate of India is 70.30 percent whereas the male literacy rate is estimated as 84.70 percent.

After independence there has been tremendous progress in the status of women education. It is happened only due to the policy of compulsory education, universal education, free education and various five-year plans which were encouraged for women education. The Government has also shown a strong commitment towards equal education for all. Education for all is one of the major tasks carried out by the Indian Government.

Nellie McClain advised the “society never under estimate the power of women and women education. Mother is the foundation on which child’s socialization process depends”. It is said that, mother is the first teacher and home is the first school. It is often said that a good mother is equivalent to hundred school masters. Mother will not only affect the growth of the children but also the whole family and society.

Nowadays, the significance of women’s education is growing day by day. India is considered to be one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The country has done miracles in different phases and made significant development. This is due to women’s education and empowerment. Women’s education is a pillar of light in whose light women are waving their flag of power and success from earth to space. Despite the Indian Government’s strong commitment to free and compulsory education.

Female education experienced better progress in 20th century. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya famous educationalist founded Banaras Hindu University; Sir Sayyad Ahamed Khan founded the Aligarh University. The great social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy Played a significant role in emphasizing the need for women education and Swami Dayanand Saraswathi supported for women education.

The women education rate of India has increased from 8.6 percent in 1951 to 64.63 percent in 2011 census. The current female education in India lags behind the male literacy. The former at 65.6 and later at 81.3 percent. The female education rate of India at 65.6 percent is significantly lower than the world average. According to the NSO; India’s average literacy rate is 77.7 percent as compared to global average female literacy rate of 79.7 percent (as per UNESCO).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To understand the women’s educational status in traditional society
2. To examine the women’s educational status in post-independence era
3. To focus on the barriers of women education in India
4. To explore the suggestive measure for improvement of women’s education

METHODOLOGY USED FOR THE STUDY:

Secondary data has been used to extract the information of women education. The secondary data such as reference books, text books, Journals, periodicals, Newspapers, websites, e-journals etc.

WOMEN EDUCATION IN PRE AND POST INDEPENDENT PERIOD:

Article 45 of the Indian constitution made provision to provide free and compulsory education for all until the age of 14 years. After independence women education in India went up from about 9 percent in 1951 to 39 percent in 1991 and 65% in 2011. After Independence Jyotiba Phule, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Babasaheb Ambedkar, Periyar and other social reformers took

initiatives to make education available to women folk in India. The post-independence period witnessed a remarkable progress in the sphere of higher education and marked a watershed in the history of women's education in India.

TABLE-1
PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE LITERACY IN INDIA

SRL NO.	CENSUS YEAR	PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE LITERACY (%)
1	1901	0.6
2	1911	1.0
3	1921	1.8
4	1931	2.9
5	1941	7.3
6	1951	8.86
7	1961	15.35
8	1971	21.97
9	1981	29.76
10	1991	39.29
11	2001	53.67
12	2011	65.46

Source: Census 2011, India 2016 (From Jagranjosh.com) and as per UNESCO

TABLE-2
MEN V/S WOMEN LITERACY RATE IN INDIA IN POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD -1951 to 2021

YEAR	LITERACY % (PERSONS)	MALES (%)	FEMALES (%)
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.31	40.40	15.34
1971	34.45	45.95	21.97
1981	43.56	56.37	29.75
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29
2001	65.49	75.96	54.28
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source: National Literacy Survey of India And National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) and National Statistics Office: NSO (2011-12)

TABLE- 3
LIST OF STATES BY AVERAGE LITERACY RATE- 2022

SR.NO.	STATE	AVERAGE (%)	MALE (%)	FEMALE
1	Kerala	96.2	97.4	95.2
2	Mizoram	91.58	93.72	89.4
3	Delhi	88.7	93.7	82.4
4	Tripura	87.75	92.18	83.15
5	Uttarakhand	87.6	94.3	80.7
6	Goa	87.4	92.81	81.84
7	Himachal Pradesh	86.6	92.9	80.5
8	Assam	85.9	90.1	81.2
9	Maharashtra	84.8	90.7	78.4
10	Punjab	83.7	88.5	78.5

Source: Survey by the National Statistical office (NSO) UTs & NE States based on 2011 cesus.

GOVT INITIATIVES AND POLICIES FOR WOMEN EDUCATION:

National education mission 2010 strongly recommended the need for spreading education among girls. The Government of India has taken various developmental programmes and schemes for women education viz; Vidya Dhan Yojana, Indira Mahila Samrudhi Yojana, Sankar Bharat, Balika Samrudhi Yojana, Rastriya Mahila Kosh, Swami Vivekand scholarship for Single Girl Child, Udaan, Beti Bachavo Beti Padao, Sanskar Bharat etc. These all schemes,policies and programmes, commissions and commitees helps to find out the ways for empowerment and development of women.

BARRIERS OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA:

- Gender based education and gender bias
- Women or girls required for Domestic work or domestic labour
- High dropout rates in Rural community
- Gender bias and discrimination
- Financial problems and exploitation
- Less interest in learning
- Lack of special support and encouragement to school going women
- Problem of academic advisor
- Lack of classrooms
- Sexual harassment and violence against girl child
- Low self confidence
- Lack of interest and poverty
- Lack of orientation
- Lack of teaching skills among teachers
- Lack of schools and colleges for girl students
- School in faraway places
- Shortage of female teachers in educational institutions
- Male domination in decision taking of the education of their children
- Early and compulsory marriages
- Lack of facilities in educational institutions

MEASURES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

The following are the suggestions for promoting women's education :

- To enhance women's cultural and societal standings
- To provide all sorts of educational facilities
- Addressing gender equality in higher education
- There should be the need to change the mindset of girls' parents with regard to women education
- Opening of new schools i.e. only for girls
- Schools and colleges should be within easy reach to the girl students
- Improving existing in the schools and colleges
- Building more confidence among women regarding education
- Fully recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff etc.

CONCLUSION:

Long back our late **Prime -Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru** said that; the hands that cradles, rules the world. Indian women are showing their success in every sphere of life, but their independent existence is still questioned, because modern society is still not in favour of giving them freedom completely. Yet, we have to move forward to reach the educational attainment of women in India by providing more and more facilities and creating awareness. There should be a common vision of social and human development shared by men and women. The vision proclaims that; both men and women became the agent of social change for the creation of new society.

Hilary Clinton argues that; no society can develop successfully without providing equal opportunities, and resources to the females. The best gift parents give to their daughters is education. There is an **African Proverb, which goes** "If educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family".

Women education is a critical to the country's development. Therefore, women education is a potent instrument for social change. Education is a rich cultural and scientific asset which enables personal development and promotes socio- economic and technological changes. Educated women not only tend to promote education to their children but can also provide better guidance to all the members of their family.

However; there is a wide gap between male and female education. Even though India has made considerable progress in providing women education in post independent period. Educating the females mean narrowing down of social inequalities and social disparity.

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