

WOMEN EDUCATION IN THE POST INDEPENDENCE ERA

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Abstract

As we know that education is the backbone in development of any nation, it is fact that countries with on effective system of education lead the world, both economically. The key to development in good education system. Female education has always been a priority area. It has been emphasized that gender concerns must be built into all educational processes. In India, the condition of women education has always remained deplorable. Women' education was badly neglected in the past. In the present era the Indian Society has established a number of institutions for the educational development of women and girls. These educational institutions aim for immense help and are concerned with development of women. In the modern society, women in India have come a long way. Indian women are at par with men in all kinds of tasks like reaching the moon, conquering Mount Everest and participating in all fields. All these are possible just because of education and the profound impact it has had on women. In this paper we studied about different measures for education, which taken by government. And also their effect on women education.

Keywords: Women Education, Post Independence, Development, gender

INTRODUCTION

Women education in India has been 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 India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020. Women Education helps country to raise fast. Women Education has helped a lot to women to know their rights. Now, women have entered in every field and they are walking with men.

The importance given to education as an essential instrument of nation building process by leaders of the national movement from 19th century is the not surprising since a comprehensive review of the entire education system was undertaken after independence With Independence, time came to review the whole educational process. The Constitution accordingly included a provision making education compulsory for all children up to the age of 14.

The first important action taken by leaders in the Nehruvian era (1947-64) was establishing a university education commission (UEC) headed by dr. Radha krishnan. It is very significant that the commission devoted a full chapter to women's education, discussing various dimensions. However, the views of all male commission on women's roles appeared to have advanced little beyond the views held a few decades ago. The first five year plan (1951-56) realized the significance of the problems of education for women and the need to adopt particular channel to solve them. The Muslim community was unable to take the maximum benefit of the opportunity provided by the state, because of an unsympathetic official attitude, communally surcharged

national climate and its own confusion in fixing up priorities Therefore, the Muslim community was left with the only choice of extensive voluntary hard work for elevating their educational status.

As I have noted, girls education developed largely through private initiative in the pre independence period and the State started taking interest only in the 1880s. Several education commissions and committees set up by the British rulers took cognizance of the need to educate girls and women in the larger interest of the society. After independence several committees and commissions have been set up from time to time on education, some exclusively for women's education, which as we shall notice later, has changed substantially over the last five decades.

THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMISSION (1948-49) set up by the Government of India declared, "There cannot be an educated people without educated women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, that opportunity should be given to women, for then, it would most surely be passed on to the next generation". However, the observations of the Commission given below reveal that an effort was made to emphasize the need for educating women for their roles as they obtained at that time. "The greatest profession of women is, and probably will continue to be, that of home maker. Yet her world should not be limited to that one relationship. There are varied conditions, which may properly lead a woman to seek for fulfillment of her life in other fields. Among the great contributions to human welfare have been some men who determined to forego home and family in order to commit themselves wholly to the chosen work of their lives. Women should have the same opportunity. The place of wife and mother offers opportunity for exercise of the highest qualities and skills, yet for a woman to decide that she can best fulfill her aims by living a single life should not put her under a social disability. Sometimes also, there is a period before marriage during which a young woman can do useful work, such as teaching or nursing. Sometimes, the loss of a husband makes her the bread winner for the family.

THE COMMISSION FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION (1952-53) also enunciated the view that women's education had the major task to prepare them for home. It said (Chapter IV) "It will be noticed that in this Report no particular chapter has been devoted to the education of women. The Commission feels that, at the present stage of our social evolution there is no special justification to deal with women's education separately. There was general agreement, however, that for girls - as well as for boys - education needs to be more closely connected with the home and the community. Not with the idea that women's place is restricted to the home, but because it is essential that she should be educated to fulfill her two-fold duty of family and society. If greater attention is given to Home science, with special emphasis on practical work of every day needs and problems, it will help to bridge the gulf between the school and the life of the home and the community, and be a better preparation for a girl's life after school, in which home making will necessarily play an important part.". It was followed by the establishment of National Committee on Women's Education

The question of women's education was considered a totally new and refreshing approach by the National Committee on Women's Education (1958-59) more popularly known as **The Durga Bai Deshmukh Committee**. This Committee analyzed the problem in detail and developed deep in its various ramifications. It made recommendations of far reaching consequences, which if implemented, would have changed the picture of women's education totally.

Girl's education should assume the prominence of a unique need, and special measures should be under taken on behalf of girls.

At the central level, a national council for women's education should take form to look after the national education system for women. At the state level, state councils for women's education should be created. To provide teachers for primary schools, particularly in rural areas, intensified courses for adult women (prospective teachers) should fill curricula on as large scale as possible.

Women hostels should be attached to secondary schools (grades VI to XI) so that village girls could attend classes distant from their villages. Special inducements should be offered to girls, like free books, clothing, and attendance scholarships, to encourage them to enroll in schools. The national committee noted, that, frequently, girls between the ages of six and fourteen could not attend schools during regular hours. The committee advised that volunteers and school teachers should give them non-formal education. Female teachers working in rural schools should have access to special facilities.

THE HANSA MEHTA COMMITTEE (1962-64), appointed by the National Council of Women's Education (NCWE) suggested co-education be adopted as the general pattern at the elementary stage and vigorous propaganda was made in its favor. As a traditional measure separate primary and middle schools could be provided where necessary. At the secondary level, it was left to the choice of the management and parents to evolve separate institutions for girls. Women teachers, it was recommended, should be inducted in boys' schools to encourage girls to join these institutions. The Committee recommended common curricula for boys and girls at the elementary stage, with home science as a common core subject for boys and girls at the middle stage. This Committee made several recommendations concerning provision of educational facilities for girls and for curriculum at different levels for education. The NCWE appointed another Committee under the chairmanship of M. Bhaktavatsalam in 1963 to investigate the cause for lack of public supports for education of girl's particularly in rural areas and to suggest suitable measures to secure public cooperation. It recommended that the **Syllabi** for women's education should be developed on the lines laid down by Hansa Mehta Committee, and Domestic Science should be made compulsory. It recommended that the condensed course designed by the Central Social Welfare Board should be implemented to educate adult women. State Government should enlighten the public with regard to the education of girls by organizing conferences, seminars and present of audio visual objects.

Central Government should offer economic help liberally for the education of women.

A functional curriculum should be evolved for educating adult women.

In the Teachers Training Centers, seats should be reserved for women students, hailing from rural areas.

Facilities like attractive emoluments, accommodation and conveyance allow omens etc. should be made available to women teachers 23 however the gap between the sexes continued to be there in the case of education. So Kothari Commission was appointed to avert this situation and to promote women's education by seeking new measures.

The first comprehensive **INDIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION (1964-66)** under the chairmanship of Dr, D.S. Kothari, reviewed Indian education in its totality. Linking Education with development, through developing productive skills, modernizing India and developing a scientific temper, and promoting national integration were seen as the major goals of education

in India. The Commission gave special attention to women's education and fully endorsed the recommendations of the earlier commission and committees on women's education. The commission reiterated the need to make education of women a major programme of educational development in order to close the large male female gap as early as possible by starting special schemes for this purpose. The Commission found the state of female literacy as particularly distressing and observed that the effort being made in the direction of making women literate left much to be desired. There was need to have a common school system with common curricula for both boys and girls.

THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 1968 stated that the education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on ground of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation. Equality of educational opportunities for all sections of population was emphasized. Pre-school education was seen as a necessary complement to primary education. The National Council for Women's Education which was set up by the Ministry of Education, following one of the main recommendations of the National Committee on Women's Education, at its thirteenth meeting held in 1974 made important recommendations for the education of women, through formal and non-formal channel.

The Government has taken different process for increasing women literacy. As a outcome women literacy rate has increased over the six decades (1951 census to 2001 census) and the growth rate of women literacy has in fact upper than that of male literacy rate. But the gender gap is still exists as the women literacy rate is fewer than the male literacy.

TABLE-I: LITERACY RATES IN INDIA

| Census Year | Persons | Males | Females | Gap rate |
|-------------|---------|-------|---------|----------|
| 1951 | 18.33 | 27.16 | 8.86 | 18.30 |
| 1961 | 28.33 | 40.40 | 15.35 | 25.05 |
| 1971 | 34.45 | 45.96 | 21.97 | 23.98 |
| 1981 | 43.57 | 56.38 | 29.76 | 26.62 |
| 1991 | 52.21 | 64.13 | 39.29 | 24.84 |
| 2001 | 65.38 | 75.85 | 54.16 | 21.70 |
| 2011 | 74.04 | 82.14 | 65.46 | 16.68 |

Source: Census of India 1951-2011

Table-I presents the male women literacy rates from 1951 to 2011 in India. The Male literacy has 82.14% and women literacy was 65.46% in 2011. Women literacy has improved from 54.16% in 2001 to 65.46% in 2011; whereas the Male literacy rate has increased to 82.14% in 2011 from 27.16% in 1951. The Gap in male-women literacy vitiated from 26.62% in 1981 and 16.68% in 2011. With this it is concluded that there is a increasing trend in women literacy rate. But after the hard work of six decades India is not nearing to reach this goal. Apart from this the status of women literacy is not equal to male literacy. There is wide range of different in this regard.

TABLE-II: GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO

| Years | Primary (I-V) | | | Upper Primary (VI-VIII) | | | Elementary (I-VIII) | | |
|---------|---------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total |
| 1950-51 | 60.6 | 24.8 | 42.6 | 20.6 | 4.6 | 12.7 | 46.2 | 17.7 | 32.1 |
| 1960-61 | 82.6 | 41.4 | 62.4 | 33.2 | 11.3 | 22.5 | 65.2 | 30.9 | 48.7 |
| 1970-71 | 95.5 | 60.5 | 78.6 | 46.5 | 20.8 | 33.4 | 75.5 | 44.4 | 61.9 |
| 1980-81 | 95.8 | 64.1 | 80.5 | 54.3 | 28.6 | 41.9 | 82.2 | 52.1 | 67.5 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|
| 1990-91 | 114.0 | 85.5 | 100.1 | 76.6 | 47.0 | 62.1 | 100.0 | 70.8 | 86.0 |
| 1991-92 | 112.8 | 86.9 | 100.2 | 75.1 | 49.6 | 61.4 | 101.2 | 73.2 | 87.7 |
| 1992-93 | 95.0 | 73.5 | 84.6 | 72.5 | 48.9 | 67.5 | 87.7 | 65.7 | 77.2 |
| 1993-94 | 90.0 | 73.1 | 81.9 | 62.1 | 45.4 | 54.2 | 80.2 | 63.7 | 72.3 |
| 1994-95 | 96.6 | 78.2 | 87.7 | 68.9 | 50.0 | 60.0 | 87.2 | 68.8 | 78.4 |
| 1995-96 | 97.1 | 79.4 | 88.6 | 67.8 | 49.8 | 59.3 | 86.9 | 69.4 | 78.5 |
| 1996-97 | 98.7 | 81.9 | 90.6 | 70.9 | 52.8 | 62.4 | 88.9 | 71.8 | 80.7 |
| 1997-98 | 97.7 | 81.2 | 89.7 | 66.5 | 49.5 | 58.5 | 86.4 | 70.0 | 78.6 |
| 1998-99 | 100.9 | 82.9 | 92.1 | 65.3 | 49.1 | 57.6 | 87.6 | 70.6 | 79.4 |
| 1999-00 | 104.1 | 85.2 | 94.9 | 67.2 | 49.7 | 58.8 | 90.1 | 72.0 | 81.3 |
| 2000-01 | 104.9 | 85.9 | 95.7 | 66.7 | 49.9 | 58.6 | 90.3 | 72.4 | 81.6 |
| 2001-11 | 110.5 | 92.5 | 101.2 | 72.6 | 58.6 | 66.6 | 93.2 | 75.4 | 84.3 |

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics

Table-II reveals that the enrolment ratio for girls is increasing from 1950-51 to 2001-2011 in all levels of education but it is less than the boys enrolment ratio. At the primary level Girls enrolment ratio is 24.8% whereas the boys enrolment ratio is 60.6% in 1951 and it has increased to 110.5 % and 92.5% in 2011 of girls and boys respectively. At the upper primary level it has increased to 72.6% (2011) from 20.6% (1951) for male and for the female is 58.6% in 2011 which is 4.6% in 1951. At elementary level it has increased to 93.2% and 75.4% in 2011 to 46.2% and 17.7% in 1951 for boys and girls in that order.

CONCLUSION

Education changed women's role in society dramatically. As the number of educated women grows and as the level of education increases, the expectations become greater but at the same time more liberating. Frequently, nineteenth century expectations of women were restrictive and while today's standards may call for a more difficult "juggling act" of roles of wife, mother, and career person, the female experience is much broader overall. In spite of the different process taken up by the government after Independence and even during British rule the Women haven't been completely empowered. We may be proud of women in India occupying highest offices of President, Prime Minister, Lok Sabha Speaker, Leader of the Opposition or women like Ms. Chandra Kochar occupying top positions in the Corporate Sector but the fact remains that we still observe dowry deaths, domestic violence and exploitation of women.

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