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EDUCATING GIRLS: NEED OF THE TIME

Kalpana J. Modi

Associate professor, P.V.D.T. College of Education for Women, S.N.D.T. Women's university.

Abstract:-Women's education is the stepping stone to all kinds of education. Napoleon used to say, "Give me ten good mothers, and I will give you a great nation". As the Hartog Report remarked, "The education of women will make available to the country a wealth of capacity that is now largely wasted through lack of opportunity." A mother is equal to hundred teachers. The attitude of parents towards the education of their daughters has changed considerably. Few years back, the aim of girls' education was to give some education which might prove useful to them in future.

Now the scenario is rapidly changing. Women are now aware with regard to their place, importance, respect, education, freedom and rights.

Keywords: Educating girls, Women's education, child marriage.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of women is the most significant fact in modern India. The first and most important change that is required is in the revolution in the position of women. Nearly for a century and a half, girl's education had open enemies in India. Now it is main agenda for India's social and national development. It has, however, to face many peculiar difficulties: the systems of purdah and child marriage, indifference of parents to the education of their daughters, the distrust of western system of girls' education, financial pressure on the middle classes, lack of suitable curricula for girls, scarcity of women teachers and girls' schools, and allied problems. During the last seventy-five years, however, girl's education has passed from the stage of ridicule and indifference to that of eager activity. The girl in India is no longer a step child of nature or a Cinderella of fate. She considers herself a powerful element in national life.

EARLY PERIOD OF GIRL'S EDUCATION:

In spite of such a wide awakening, it is painful to find that according to the census of 2011, the percentage of literacy among women is 65.5. In fact, the progress of girls' education had been very slow and halting during the last century and a half. The East India Company did not consider it necessary to educate girls, perhaps because lady clerks or officers were not required for administrative purposes. During the Company's rule, there were no separate state schools for girls. Only a few girls were attending boy's schools. Most of the girl's schools were run by missionaries and a few by private bodies. The private schools were conducted by British officials and non-officials in their private capacity. During 1985, the literacy for females was estimated to be twenty-nine per cent only.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION:

The place of women like men is of great importance in a democratic system. These days, women are conscious about their rights and obligations. In India, the percentage of women's education is on the increase. In the Sixth Plan, the national government had launched major schemes for the development and improvement of women's education in the country. This is very necessary for the success of democracy of a country like India.

Educationists are of the view that mother is the first educator of a child. From birth to school age, the home environment and association of other members of the family play a significant role in developing proper attitudes among children. But much more important is the influence of mother on the child. She is responsible for his or her upbringing. Most of the time, a child lives in contact with the mother and is influenced and affected by her. The habits inculcated at family stage act as a guide throughout life.

Therefore, it is very necessary that a mother is instilled with good qualities and acts as a model. She should be an efficient citizen and conscious of her rights and responsibilities. This would lead to the preparation of ideal future citizens of India, fit to bear responsibilities and discharge them properly. Thus, education of women is of great importance in our national and social life and we have to be very careful in this respect. It is the duty of the society and the government to provide adequate facilities for the education of girls because if you educate a girl, you educate the whole family.

NATIONAL POLICY OF EDUCATION (NPE):

The NPE has suggested that education can be used as a strategy for achieving a basic change in the status of women. The national education system has the following responsibilities.

- (i) Play a positive interventionist role in the social status of women
- (ii) Contribute towards the development of new values through restructured curricula and text-books
- (iii) Promote women's studies as part of various courses.

The main features of the program are:

- (i) To gear the entire education system to raise the position of women in society
- (ii) To encourage educational institutions to take up programmes for Women's Development
- (iii) To widen the access of women to programmes of vocational, technical, and Professional education
- (iv) To create a dynamic managerial structure to cope with the targets envisaged.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION FOR GIRLS :

An Enrolment of girls at this stage (Classes I to VIII) is 30.6 per cent in the relevant age of the specific population. The position is very unsatisfactory in rural areas and among the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. The girls are kept busy at home to take care of siblings and other household activities such as fetching fuel, fodder and water, or earning a day's wage. It will be desirable to establish at least a second primary or upper primary school in villages where there is a growing number of pupils in the age-group 6-14. In view of the parents' preference for sending their daughters to schools having women teachers, the number of women teachers should be increased. Additional number of non-formal education centers for girls are necessary. A novel experiment which is being tried successfully is the Duttak Putri (adoption of girls) system. According to this system, any charitable person can adopt a girl, whose father is unable to bear the financial cost of elementary education of his daughter. Normally the adopted father has to pay Rs. 30-40 per child at the elementary level.

HIGHER SECONDARY STAGE :

During the period 1950-51, the proportion of girls to boys was 0.16 to 1 at this level of education. By 1980-81, this ratio increased to 0.42 to 1. The majority of girls are studying in boys' schools. In fact, the demand for separate schools for girls is fast decreasing. It should, however, be realized that a fair proportion of girls do not continue their studies beyond the middle stage. Hence

the courses of studies for girls should include such subjects as will impart to them adequate knowledge and training to make them good homemakers. There should be provision for career like social worker, midwife, health visitor, a craft teacher or any other similar vocation. The middle school curriculum should, therefore, also include house craft and suitable pre-vocational courses as electives for girls.

Concentrated attempts should, however, be made to enroll more girls at this stage, particularly in rural areas in the six less advanced States of Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. In order to promote women's education, the government has also introduced a scheme for the reimbursement of tuition fee to girls in Classes IX-XII in schools in the States/Union territories. The Scheme was effective since 1985-86 and continued during the Seventh Plan period. During 1986-87, a sum of Rs. 1,361.05 lakh was given to the States/Union territories under this programme.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION :

The National Policy of Education (NPE 1986) has proposed that vocational and technical institutions be revamped on the following lines:

- (i) Diversification of trades and courses keeping the job potential in mind
- (ii) Encouragement of research in identified areas
- (iii) Arrangement of seminars for dissemination of information
- (iv) Encouraging teachers and researchers to handle women-related topics

HIGHER EDUCATION :

Today, India has large number of Women's Colleges in the country, and the number of girls taking higher education has increased. At the post-graduate level, the enrolment of women has increased. There are, however, a few note-worthy findings, viz.,

- (i) Girls are joining the art faculty in very large number.
- (ii) Botany and Biology sections are quite popular with girls.
- (iii) New areas like Music, Dancing, Acting, Painting, and Sculpture are attracting a large number of lady students.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION :

During the period 1960-83, the enrolment in engineering colleges increased seventeen times, while the male students continued to remain same. Engineering and Technological courses have slowly started attracting girls. Education, medicine, nursing, home science faculties have more lady students than boys. Some of the new discipline like accountancy, management, computer training, and journalism are attracting a large number of female clientele.

Modern age is the age of democracy. This system is in trend in UK, USA and other civilized countries of the world. Indian union is a sovereign democratic republic based on democracy, socialism and secularism. In India, general public includes all adults, men and women who have attained a particular age and possess certain rights and duties to perform. They have equal rights without any discrimination of sex, caste, creed, color and status. Hence, all programmes of education should proceed on an equal footing.

But in the rural areas due to illiteracy, backwardness and traditional outlook, people discriminate between a boy and a girl. There the birth of a daughter is supposed to be a curse, a burden and hence a liability. This presents a negative attitude which is unfortunate. Expansion of education these days has helped a lot in removing backwardness and superstitions from Indian society. Now more and more people are in favor of providing education to girls like boys. This had also been possible through the efforts of the women welfare associations working at different levels. At present the field of work of a woman is not limited to the four walls of the house, but has become very wide. They actively participate in all economic, political, social, cultural and religious activities. Their education is increasing at a tremendous speed in our country.

CONCLUSION:

Liberation of women is now over-due. They themselves are also conscious about it and striving to become self-supporting. It is high time they are treated them at par. They should have equal rights, enough freedom and due respect. Women in almost all countries of the world are making efforts in this direction. With these aims in view, the year 1975 was celebrated as the International Women's Year throughout the world. Steps were taken to create awareness among the world. In this, steps were taken to create awareness among women with regard to their place, importance, respect, education, freedom and rights, etc. But for executing such programmes, one year is insufficient. There in need to make constant efforts in this direction. The efforts of the government, public, social institutions and woman herself would go a long way in restoring their freedom. There is an urgent need to start a movement on a country wide basis on this front. This will help to liberate women from the grave of oppression of divorce, dowry and rape.

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Kalpana J. Modi

Associate professor, P.V.D.T. College of Education for Women, S.N.D.T. Women's university.

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