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## WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

Late pt. Jawaharlal Nehru rightly stressed that education of boy is education of one person, but education of girl is the education of the entire family. The I.E.C. also rightly emphasizes that "for full development of our human resources, the improvement of homes and molding the character of children of women is of even importance than that of man.

**KEYWORDS:** human resources, education of women, entire family.

### INTRODUCTION :

It is only through the education of women; that we can expect better atmosphere at homes, better hygienic condition, greater production, greater reduction in fertility rate (so essential for our economic prosperity) and happier family life. Education for women has become important, especially now that our



country has adopted the democratic pattern of Government; knowledge is not exclusively the property of men. All Women participate in the nation's productivity as much as men. Girls traditionally are hard working and more studious than boys. When once they begin to compete with boys in any field of study, they quite early and easily out-shine the boys. In a way, the strength of the weakness of a nation entirely depends upon the women.<sup>1</sup>

### Development in Pre-Independence Period

Conforming to the low status women have been enjoying in our country, the education of women has always been totally

neglected. It was only in the hoary age of Vedic Aryans when women enjoyed equality of status and educational opportunity with men. But during the succeeding centuries women were put at a disadvantageous position socially, economically and politically. Their rightful place was only home, and their job was only domestic.

During the Muslim period of Indian history, the Makhtabs attached to the mosques, and Tols and pathshalas attached to temples did not enroll girls, child marriage among the Hindus and pardah<sup>2</sup> among the Muslims prevented the spread of girl's education.

During the advent of the

British rule, nothing was done for girls in the beginning. It was in 1854 that Wood's dispatch advocated the promotion of female education. The Hunter commission (1884) further endorsed the view that "through female education a far greater proportional impulse is imparted to the education and moral tone of the people than by the education of men."

The Education Resolution of the Government of India of 1913 also reported that the 'education of girls remains to be organized,' and emphasized the necessity of increase of women teachers in girls schools.

In the year 1926 All India Women's Association had been founded and this organization convened its first education conference in the following year. In not only reiterated demands for equality of educational opportunities of women and the ame-

lioration of their social position. During this period Mahatma Gandhi, too, supported the cause of women's education. He held that man and women had equal status in society. He strongly opposed the pardah institution. He, therefore, laid much emphasis on the need of women's education. In her address to the all India women's conference in 1927, the Rani of Sangli summed up the whole position thus:

"There was a time when the education of girls had not only no supporters but open enemies in India. Female education has now gone through all the stages-total apathy, ridicule, criticism and acceptance. It may now be safely stated that anywhere in India the need for the education of girls as much of boys is recognized as cordinal need the sineguson of national progress.<sup>1</sup>

### Progress Towards Universal Enrolment in The Post-Independences Period

**Enrolment in primary education (Classes I-V):** Between 2000-01 and 2013-14, enrolment in primary education increased steadily up to 2010-11 and then showed a declining trend (Table 2.2.2). The enrolment in primary education reached the highest level in 2011-12 (137.1 million) and then declined to 134.8 million in 2012-13 and to 132.4 million in 2013-14. Between 2011-12 and 2013-14, the total enrolment in primary education decreased by 4.7 million, while the enrolment of girls and boys decreased by 2.5 million and 2.2 million respectively. The overall increase in enrolment in primary education during the period 2000-01 to 2013-14 was 18.6 million while the overall increase in enrolment of boys and girls respectively was 4.6 million and 14.0 million during this period (Figure 2.2.2). The enrolment in primary education is stabilizing in many States and declining in some of the States. One of the reasons for the decline in enrolment in primary education is the declining child population age 0-6 years. The child population in the age group 0-6 years has declined by 5.05 million between 2001 and 2011 (Census of India, 2001 & 2011).

**Enrolment in upper primary education (Classes VI-VIII):** Between 2000-01 and 2013-14, the enrolment in upper primary education increased by 23.7 million (from 42.8 million to 66.5 million) (Figure 2.2.3). Enrolment of girls increased by 14.8 million (from 17.5 million to 32.3 million) while that of boys increased by 8.9 million (from 25.3 million to 34.2 million) during the same period. The total enrolment in upper primary education has increased by 55.4 per cent during the period 2000-01 to 2013-14. The increase in enrolment has been much higher for girls (84.6 per cent) than that for boys (35.2 per cent). The enrolment at the upper primary education has been increasing steadily with more children moving from primary to upper primary stage of education. The transition rate to upper primary stage of education has increased from 83.7 per cent in 2006-07 to 89.6 per cent in 2013-14 (U-DISE, NUEPA).

**Enrolment in elementary education (Classes I-VIII):** Between 2000-01 and 2013-14, enrolment in elementary education increased steadily upto 2012-13 before witnessing a declining trend during the academic year 2013-14. The enrolment in elementary education reached the highest level in 2012-13 (199.7 million) and then declined to 198.9 million in 2013-14 (Table 2.2.2 & Figure 2.2.4). The overall increase in enrolment in elementary education during the period 2000-01 to 2013-14 was 42.3 million (from 156.6 million to 198.9 million). Enrolment of girls has increased by 28.8 million (from 67.3 million to 96.1 million) while that of boys increased by 13.5 million (from 89.3 million to 102.8 million) during the same period. The total enrolment in Classes I-VIII has increased by 27 per cent during the period 2000-01 to 2013-14. The percentage increase in enrolment in elementary education has been higher for girls (42.8 per cent) than that for boys (15.1 per cent).

**Enrolment in primary, upper primary and elementary education (2000-01 to 2013-14) (in Millions)**

Year	Primary education			Upper Primary education			Elementary education		
	(Classes I-V)			(Classes VI-VIII)			(Classes I-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2000-01	64.0	49.8	113.8	25.3	17.5	42.8	89.3	67.3	156.6
2001-02	63.6	50.3	113.9	26.1	18.7	44.8	89.7	69.0	158.7
2002-03	65.1	57.3	122.4	26.3	20.6	46.9	91.4	77.9	169.3
2003-04	68.4	59.9	128.3	27.3	21.5	48.8	95.7	81.4	177.1
2004-05	69.7	61.1	130.8	28.5	22.7	51.2	98.2	83.8	182.0
2005-06	70.5	61.6	132.1	28.9	23.3	52.2	99.4	84.9	184.3
2006-07	71.0	62.7	133.7	29.8	24.6	54.4	100.8	87.3	188.1
2007-08	71.1	64.4	135.5	31.0	26.2	57.2	102.1	90.6	192.7
2008-09	70.0	64.5	134.5	29.4	26.0	55.4	99.4	90.5	189.9
2009-10	70.8	64.8	135.6	31.8	27.6	59.4	102.6	92.4	195.0
2010-11	70.5	64.8	135.3	32.8	29.3	62.1	103.3	94.1	197.4
2011-12	70.8	66.3	137.1	31.8	30.1	61.9	102.6	96.4	199.0
2012-13	69.6	65.2	134.8	33.2	31.7	64.9	102.8	96.9	199.7
2013-14	68.6	63.8	132.4	34.2	32.3	66.5	102.8	96.1	198.9

Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08, MHRD, GoI; Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, GoI; Statistics of School Education, 2010-11, MHRD, GoI; and U-DISE, NUEPA.

**Views of Indian Education Commission:-****1. Regarding the education of girls at the primary level IEC concludes:**

"Two problems concerning expansion of girls and of tribal's deserve notice... At the lower primary stage, the problem with regard to boys is near solution, because their enrolment is about 90 percent of the population in the corresponding age-group. But the enrolment of girls is much lower-the number of girls enrolled for every hundred being only 50.

At the higher primary stage, the gap between the education of boys and that of girls becomes wider still-although both have still a long way to go and the number of girls enrolled for every 10 boys is only 4. In fact it may be said that the problem of fulfilling the constitutional directive is essentially the problem of educating girls. This problem was carefully examined by the national committee on women's Education (1958-59) with whose recommendations we fully agree. In particular, we would like to emphasize its proposals regarding:

Educational public opinion to overcome traditional prejudices against girls' education

Appointing women teachers

Popularising mixed primary schools

Opening separate schools for girls at the higher primary stage

Providing free books and writing materials and where needed, even clothing and

Providing part-time education for girls in the age group 11-13 who cannot attend schools on a whole time basis because they are required to work at home.

**Girls Education in the Fifth Plan:****Observations regarding girls education in the draft five year plan are as under:**

There has been a large-scale expansion of facilities for girls education since 1950-51.

Disparities, however, still exist in the relative utilization of available facilities by boys and girls at various

stages of education. The problem of the inadequate supply of women teachers, which is a major reason for the low enrolment of girls, would be tackled by giving scholarships to the local girls to complete their education and training leading to a teaching career, organization of condensed and correspondence course for the less educated women and girls, etc. The outlays for special programs for education of girls will be stopped up the expansion curriculum to meet their special needs as house-wives and career seekers.

#### The following steps have so far been taken by the government:

1. In some states separate cells have been created for promotion of girls education.
2. As some places, polytechnics have been established for girls.
3. Staff quarters have been established for women teachers in rural areas.
4. Assistance has been given to voluntary education institutions for promotion women's education.
5. Seminars have been held in various states to discuss problems and programmes of girls education.

The greater burden in this respect is shared by national council for women's educations.

Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Indian Constitution guarantee absences of discrimination on the grounds of sex etc., Women have got full right of franchise like men, as per directive principles of state policy.

#### EDUCATIONAL POSITION:

1. Literacy rate of women is only 18.70% as against 39.4% of men. The literacy percentage of the total population is 29%.
2. The enrolment percentage is only 70.1% at the primary level, 22% at the middle level, 13.7% at the secondary level and only 1% at the university level.
3. The percentage of drop-outs to the school stage is very high among girls.
4. Literacy percentage is very low in rural areas. It is 40% in urban areas. Out of the 40%, 10% have completed only primary education, 8% middle and 6% matriculation.

Kerala topped the states in Women's literacy the percentage being 92.1. Mizoram with 89.3 and Goa with 84.7 came second and third respectively. Among the union territories the first place was held by Lakshadweep with 87.9 percent.

5. The expenditure on girls education is very unsatisfactory there is no special outlay for this aspect. But plan only 2.5% of the National Income is earmarked for education. Out of this only a quarter will be spent on primary education.

#### 6. The role of education:

Taking into consideration the social, political and economic position of women in India, it is evident there is need for a revolution in this sphere, and the same can be brought about through education only and for this purpose the pace of development, though rapid during the past 25 years needs further acceleration.

#### Women's Education Posses Two Type of Problems:

1. Quantitative expansion and
2. Qualitative improvement.

The problem have been studied by the central government through a number of special committees, viz.,

1. National council for women's education (NCWE) set up in 1959 by the Ministry of Education.
2. Hansa Metha committee appointed by NCWE on the differentiation of curricula of boys and girls (1962)
3. Bhaktavatsalam committee appointed by NCWE (in 1963) to look into the causes for lack of public support.

NCWE has made general recommendations for overall improvement. But the problem of universalisation has been studied specially by Bhaktavatsalam committee. In this respect, this committee has taken up 3 major problems.

1. The problem of public co-operation
2. Inducement to girls to study
3. Inducement to women to lead

For qualitative improvement, major reform suggested is in the field of curriculum. This has been studied by Hansa Mehta committee.

The Indian education commission has endorsed the recommendation of NCWE as given below. It stresses that education for women SHOULD BE REGARDED as major program in education, and a determined effort should be made in this direction. The commission urges that center and the state of establish special machinery for this purpose and provide adequate funds for education of girls at all stages.

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF NATIONAL COUNCIL

1.Targets: The council states that the overall objective should be to provide the same educational facilities to boys and girls to aim 100% girls enrolment in the age group 6-11 by 1976, and in the age group 11-14 by 1981.

2.Public co-operation: The targets can be achieved with the help of the local public by getting co-operation in (i) establishing private schools, (ii) putting up schools building, (iii) contributing voluntary labour (iv) encouraging married women to teach and (v) giving special assistance to pupils in terms of mid-day meals, books and uniforms.

3.Assistance to voluntary organizations should be given by the government in the development of such activities as establishing hostels, establishing laboratories or libraries and starting projects.

4.Part time training and employment of women, should be launched as there is extreme shortage of women teachers;

5.Publicity programs should be strengthened in the form of the preparing and presenting documentaries and films concerning women's education.

6.Improvement programs: The CABE has recommended (in October 1964) the following programs with 100% central assistance during the 4th plan.

I)Construction of teachers quarters,

II)Rural allowance for women teachers,

III)Provision of schools mothers,

IV)Construction of sanitary blocks,

V)Construction of hostels,

VI)Starting crèches,

VII)Providing schools uniform and mid-day meals.

7.Seminars on women education should be held frequently in different regions and stages in order to cause momentum in the efforts of different agencies.

8.Continuation classes may be started in the existing schools for those who have left the schools and are not in a position to join during day time due to various social and economic reasons.

9.Scholarships special emphasis should be given to provision of scholarship in large number and free education to all the girls at various schools stages.

10.Facilities in backward areas should be provided to girls students in the form of free residential accommodation free transport arrangements, and special allowance to women teachers. This holds good to rural, backward hilly and isolated areas.

11.Encouraging co-education: Co-education is the major answer to the monstrous problem of development of girls education in each village and town. There are difficulties in path but these shall have to be surmounted.

The Problem of Universalization

### Difficulties in the progress of girls education are:

i)Poor economic condition of parents

ii)Conservation and illiteracy of parents

iii)Bad customs like early marriage and purdah

iv)Lack of proper physical facilities in the schools, like hostels, lavatories, transport arrangements

v)Lack of security measures

vi)Inadequate means of transports in rural areas

- vii) Lack of qualified women teachers
- viii) Inadequate funds

### To solve the above problem two special measures are needed

- a) Procuring public co-operation
- b) Inducing girls to study
- c) Inducing educated women to teach

### Inducement to Women to Take to Education

The following measures have suggested by the various committees for inducing girls to study:

1. Flexibility of schools hours: Schools hours may be changed and shortened to suit the girls, who are rather occupied in helping their parents. Even double – shift system may be tried.
2. Free education may be provided to girls with central assistance and ancillary aid in terms of books stationary, meals, uniforms, free transport and stipends may be given.
3. Schools building may be improved so as to make them attractive and suitable for girls
4. Hostel arrangements may be made here necessary.
5. Community support may be secured for inducing parents to encourage girls education.
6. Special grant may be provided for the above purpose.

### REFORM IN THE CURRICULUM

The special committee appointed by the NCWE on the differentiation of curricula for boys and girls (1952) studied the problem and suggested the following measures of reform:

1. At the elementary stage there should be no differentiation of syllabus for boys and girls craft education should however, be encouraged to suit girls.
2. At the secondary, stages there should be sufficient diversification to suit the need of girls and subjects like music, fine arts, home economics and drafts should be encouraged.
3. In the text – books of languages and social studies special attention should be paid to the need of girls.
4. More women teachers should be trained to teach diversified courses for girls.
5. Financial assistance should be given to girls, schools for starting special courses for girls.

In the sixth plan, the programs for universalization of elementary education will be specially directed towards higher enrolment and retention of girls in schools. This would require balwadi – cum – creches attached to the schools to enable the girls to attend school. Other incentives like uniforms, free books and stationary etc already in force would be need effectively expended. Women teachers, where necessary would be appointed in rural areas to encourage girl's education. In education and training women would thus be brought to the main stream along with men to share the facilities fully. Hostel facilities for girls under centrally sponsored schemes will be increased.

The Indian constitution visualizes free and compulsory education for all children up to the age 14. Despite efforts this directive has remained unfulfilled though there is some progress. It is admitted that the slow progress of education among girls is responsible for general slow progress, at the time of the 1971 census in the age group 6 to 11 only 66% girls to school. For the same period and age groups the comparative figures of boys were 100% and 48% respectively.

Though the progress of women education since independence has been phenomenal, the female literacy figures are depressing the number of illiterate women as compared to illiterate men is steadily rising. Social attitudes to girls education very form acceptance to absolute indifference. If a choice between education a girl and a boy had to be made, the balance would tilt towards the male every time no matter how brilliant the girl or how dull the boy.

According to the Kothari commission the problem of primary education with regard to the boys is, very near to the solution because their enrolment is about 90% of near to the but the enrolment of girls is much lower there can be many factors responsible for this, such as parental poverty in difference of parents towards



education of their daughters, poor education facilities and others.

It is an encouraging fact that the rural mothers had a favorable attitude towards the primary education of their daughters on the whole. The free primary education provided by the government to the people seemed to have helped the women to have a favorable attitude towards their daughter's education. Thus the less financial burden on the part of the parents and the increased educational facilities can help to solve the illiteracy problem of our country.

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