

Blockades in Rural Women Education

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Abstract

Education is a major tool towards women empowerment but knowing the rights and duties and proper utilization of it in their surroundings is also important. It is need of the hour to mould the education as per need of the particular section of the women. Women education is one of the major concerns of the government. Since independence a lot has been done for the education of women which helped in improving their status in the society. When women are empowered, whole families benefit, and these benefits shows to future generations but women are a diverse group, in the roles they play as well as in characteristics such as age, social status, urban or rural orientation and educational attainment. That is why it is necessary to understand the problems and needs of each section of the women and provide them education as per their requirement.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an effective tool in the emancipation and empowerment of women. Women Empowerment means enhancing the position of women in the society. It means that the women have the power or capacity to regulate their day to day lives in the social, political and economic terms. It is true that Women of India gained complete legal equality very soon after independence. Our constitution grants equality as well as empower women to raise voice against any indiscrimination. Through the Panchayati Raj institutions, over a million women have actively entered political life in India.

As per the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, all local elected bodies reserve one-third of their seats for women. Nearly a million Indian women, entered village and municipal councils across the country, occupying the 30% of the seats reserved for them. Indian women are representing in each and every sphere be it- president, prime minister, ambassador, governor, scientist, space researcher, doctors, engineers, IT professionals, professors, teachers ,public services or in Army. List is exhaustive and it is the rosy picture of women's position but still women's are facing discrimination at various levels Indian social structure is multicultural and multilayered. Gender is crucial variable of social division. Women are still disadvantaged in many spheres. Women are divided by several variables as region, religion, caste. Women are a diverse group, in the roles they play as well as in characteristics such as age, social status, urban or rural orientation and educational attainment. Rural scenario is quite depressing and disheartening it is necessary to understand the problems and needs of the rural women and provide them education as per their requirement. Gender disparity is present in our society in various forms and there are many issues as-

- Continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades.
- Violence against girls/women at the domestic and societal levels.
- Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women.

- Lack of knowledge among girls about existing government schemes and programmes for promotion of girls' education, development and empowerment.
- Lack of knowledge among masses about human rights – women's rights, relevant laws, law-enforcing agencies.
- Lack of opportunities for girls and women to participate in decision-making processes.

The greatest single factors which can incredibly improve the status of women in any society is education. Education is important tool for empowerment of women as it creates modern outlook and help in social progress. But all section of our society are not privileged enough to get education. Low value is attached to female education in rural areas due to following reasons (Dreze and Saran1995) as quoted in Jandhyala (ed.) 2003-

1. General division of labour tends to reduce the perceived benefits of female education. In rural India expectation from women is to perform household work and family labour (as agriculture).
2. Norms of patrilocal exogamy –(that is women to settle in her husband's village after marriage) Rural parents feel that getting suitable boy for the girl is more important than education .At any stage of education girl have to break her education ,settle down with husbands family and further education depends upon the will of new family.
3. In many communities basic education is considered to improve daughters marriage prospect but over -education may make difficult to get her married; as well as parents prefer to invest money in marriage rather in education.

Present status

In India According to census 2011 female literacy is 65.46%. There exist huge variations in literacy rates across states (provinces) in India. According to 2011 census, percent of literate women in Kerala is 91.9%, while in Bihar it is 53.33%. In rural areas problem is more severe.

Problems with rural women are-

- lack of motivation
- Physical, material and ideological obstacles.
- Financial problem
- Lack of institution in their locality
- Unawareness about Distance education and open education
- Lack of transport facility and timings of the school.
- Gender stereotyping
- Lack of quality institutions

In rural areas girls have to look after sibling, collect firewood, organize food for domestic animals, fetch water .socio cultural biases and emphasis on domestic roles are almost universal. Problem of illiterate women includes lack of family support, lack of support system as crèche facility insensitive curriculum .It is required to overcome these problems.

Measures for Women Education

- Easy access to education for girls.-By opening up of school colleges in nearby areas.
- Awareness campaigns regarding availability of Distance education

- Safe transport and Residential school and better hostel facilities for girls.
- Vocational emphasis and job oriented education –financial independence is one of the alluring forces behind education and there is no harm. Education cannot be separated from livelihood .It should be kept in mind while formulating curriculum that at every level education can fulfill Vocational aim.
- Financial assistance /scholarship by the government for all section of the girl -many times girls do not go for professional courses as they are comparatively costlier than regular academic degrees.
- Computer literacy-computer is current language and all rural and urban women should know this language which is added advantage in every sphere of life.
- Guidance and Counseling session in rural areas for awareness regarding various opportunities as well as helping them out for their personal problems.
- Women and men are part of the society and women are also excelling in every field and showing their presence. In this scenario it is important to ensure that all subjects should be available for girls also. Many times girls have to leave mathematics and opt for home science even though they were doing fairly well in mathematics. Science subjects are not available at plus two stage in many girls school/colleges in rural areas. Informal counseling from family discourages girls from taking up science subject Girls have to take home science, music gender typed subject choice; this gender stereotyping should be discouraged.

Measures for Rural Women Literacy

- Favorable conditions to facilitate participation of women in literacy classes in terms of suitable time and place. Like immediate neighborhood of women learner.
- Literacy classes should be arranged as place of get together and sharing of experiences about work and family .That will motivate women learner to come for literary campaigns with great enthusiasm.
- Schedule of Literacy class should be according to the convenience of learner and try to maintain slow learner and volunteer ratio .good relationship between volunteer and learner will also encourage women learner of being regular to class.
- In Participatory teaching learning process learning become enjoyable and close to life.

Government Schemes

The Education for All movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. The movement was launched in 1990 by UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank. Participants endorsed an 'expanded vision of learning' and pledged to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy.

In Independent India, education acquired special significance and supported by the government through various policies and programmes. Although good progress has been made to make India literate, (as Sarve Siksha Abhiyan) still large section of women are illiterate .Government also realizing that many reforms had benefitted only upper and middle class and Illiterates are relatively more in rural areas. With the objective of reducing illiteracy, especially among women, the Government launched the **Sakshar Bharat Mission** on the

occasion of International Literacy Day. The objective of this new flagship programme of the government is to provide functional literacy to the adults over 15 years of age. It aims to achieve 100 percent literacy in 365 low literacy districts where the adult female literacy rate is 50 percent less as per the 2001 census. The goals of the programme are to achieve the 80 percent literacy by making seven corer people literate, reduce gender disparity and minimize regional disparities. **Department of women studies (NCERT)** also focus on redesigning of curricula, remove gender bias and gender stereotyping, sensitization of educational personnel, development of handbooks for teachers and teacher educators, conducting training programmes, awareness generation, advocacy for the education and development of the girl child and bringing about attitudinal changes among the parents and the communities, evaluation of schemes and programmes of government of India and above all building girl friendly environment in the schools.

CONCLUSION

Education is a major tool towards women empowerment but knowing the rights and duties and proper utilization of it in their surroundings is also important. It is need of the hour to mould the education as per need of the particular section of the women. Curriculum should be reframed as per the requirement of the girl. Financial independence of the women should be emphasized. It is necessary to bring innovative ideas in the field of women education so that more and more girls can empower themselves and stand equally with their men counterparts. Problems of girl education are-lack of institution in their locality, lack of transport facility and timings of the school. It is required to overcome these problems by easy access to education for girls, transport and hostel facilities, financial problem, vocational emphasis and job oriented education as well as financial assistance by the government for all section of the girl.

Even though rapid expansion of educational institutions took place in India, Qualitative expansion is also important. Enhanced numbers alone cannot tackle the gender disparity in our society. It is the qualitative aspect which needs to be addressed if we are really interested in bridging gender gaps. A large number of girls do have access to school but the question is what the quality of these educational institutions is. Once they manage to enter a school, girls are exposed to gender-based atmosphere. Education, which is supposed to broaden the intellectual horizons of children and lead them to emancipation, seems to fail in its fundamental objective. It is important for girls to shed the illusions of an artificially created world where they are helpless and can never improve their state of being. Education in its essence should aim at enhancing the choices and opportunities at the personal and public levels by challenging certain stereotypes regarding women in terms of their roles and expectations. But what is actually happening on the ground?

A large number of bright female students, after performing excellently in professional educational programmes, either do not take up jobs or have to quit their jobs because their husbands or in-laws do not approve of their presence in the workplace. This questions the very validity of education which has not been able to bring about any changes vis-à-vis the roles of men and women in society. It suggests that there is something lacking in the kind of education our schools are providing to the young. The missing aspect is the critical thinking that allows learners to raise questions, look for alternatives and transform their lives and ultimately their society. As we emphasize the quantitative enhancement in the female literacy

rate, we should be aware of the fact that education per se is not a source of empowerment for girls as it is not transforming their status in terms of their roles, expectations and opportunities. If we are interested in real change, we need to be concerned about the quality of education and plan to improve it in a systematic manner

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