
A STUDY ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India is the second highest populated country in the world. Approximately 49% of female population constitute the overall population of India. But when we compare the current status of Indian women with other countries of the world we find that the scene is not even satisfactory but the worst. Today, the female literacy level according to the census of India 2011 is 65.46% where the male literacy rate is over 80%. Indian women are generally encountered with the problems like illiteracy, domestic violence, lack of motivation and support and many more. It is very essential for the harmonious development of the country that women should go hand by hand and shoulder to shoulder with men. And for empowering the women, literacy level will play a vital role. Education helps the women to acquire their rights, dignity and security. Education is like the key to unlock the golden door of freedom for development. This paper highlights the needs of women empowerment, various national policies , constitutional provisions & special laws in support of women empowerment, different Govt. schemes for women empowerment and women educations status in India.

Key words: Empowerment, illiteracy, domestic violence,dignity,security.

INTRODUCTION

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said:

“If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered” When we talk about women's empowerment, we talk about her role as a leader. Dependent women are not empowered women. It is just a false assumption, that by giving higher education and employment they will be empowered. We must understand that empowering women doesn't mean only empowering them in technical area but also in other areas. Women should remember that they are also rational, intelligent and thinking human beings. In women empowerment education plays a vital role, this is like an important milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to face the challenges and change their life. And education is used as a most powerful tool for change their position in the society. Still large % of women population are illiterate, backward, weak, and exploited. Empowerment and capacity building provides women an avenue to acquire practical information and learning for their improved livelihoods. If women give her best efforts and ability, India can become a developed nation and which is possible when she is educated and empowered.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

H. Subrahmanyam (2011),In this paper author compares women education in India at present and Past. Author find that there has a good progress in overall enrolment of girl students in schools. But growth rate is lower than male. Doepke M. Tertilt M. (2011), Author highlights those women Empowerment Promote Economic Development. This study suggesting that money in the hands of mothers benefits children. The study developed a series of non-cooperative family bargaining models for understand what kind of frictions. Duflo E. (2011), The study highlights of inter relationships of the Empowerment and Development and to bring equality between men and women continuous policy commitment to equally for its own sake may be needed.Sethuraman K. (2008) The Role of Women's Empowerment and

Domestic Violence in child Growth and Under nutrition in a Tribal and Rural Community in South India. The author explores the relationship between Women's Empowerment and Domestic Violence, maternal nutritional status and the nutritional status. Venkata Ravi and Venkatraman (2005), author focused on the effects of SHG on women empowerment, women participation and exercising control family matters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been taken to analyse women empowerment in India. My study is totally based on secondary sources according to the need of this study.

NEED OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

year 2001 was declared as "WOMEN EMPOWERMENT YEAR". Because education of a woman leads to a better family and help in nation's growth. A progressive nation is one where all the people of the country are literate.

UNESCO's new analysis proves that:-

1. Education empowers women through education women are more likely to know their rights and to have the confidence to claim them.
2. Education helps people to understand democracy of the society and promotes the tolerance and motivates people to participate in the political life of their societies.
3. Education equality improves job opportunities and increases economic growth of the society. Per capita income would be higher in a country with equality in education.
4. Educated people are more likely to use energy and water more efficiently and to recycle household waste. Which help in solution to the environment problems
5. Through education women avoids early marriages which is helpful in avoiding child marriage.
6. Some child diseases are preventable through education. Simple solutions, such as malaria nets and clean water, can prevent some of the worst child diseases, but only if mothers are taught to use them.
7. Education saves children's lives because education helps women recognize early signs of illness, seek advice and act on it.

NATIONAL POLICIES, CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS & SPECIAL LAWS IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

A number of Articles of the Constitution repeated for the development of women, which shows the importance of women as an important human resource . These are:

- Article 14- This article gives men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.
- Article 15(1)-This article prohibits discrimination against any citizens on the grounds of religion, race, sex, caste etc.
- Article 16-This article is for equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments.
- Article 39(d)- This article help to provide equal pay for equal work to both men and women.
- Article 42-this article helps to make provision for maternity relief.

For up gradation of their status and safeguard the interests of women, Government has also enacted specific laws. These are:

- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 –This act provides women the right to parental property.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961-This is act taking of dowry an unlawful activity and which prevents the exploitation of women.
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976-This act provides equal remuneration to men and women for

equal work.

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 – This article help legalizes abortion conceding the women’s right to go for abortion for physical and mental health.
- The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1983-This act help to stop various types of crimes against women.
- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986-This act prohibits the Vulgar presentation of women in the media such as- newspapers, cinema, T.V. etc.
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005-This act protects rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The Govt. programmes for women development began as early as 1954 but the actual participation began only in 1974. At present, over 34 schemes for women operated by different department and ministries of India . Some of these are as follows:

1. RastriMahilaKosh (RMK) 1992-1993
2. MahilaSamridhiYojana (MSY) October,1993.
3. Indira MahilaYojana (IMY) 1995.
4. Women Entrepreneur Development programme, 1997-98.
5. MahilaSamakhya being implemented in about 9000 villages.
6. Swayasjdha.
7. Swa Shakti Group.
8. (STEP)Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women.
9. Crèches/ Day care centre for the children of working and ailing mother.
10. Hostels for working women.
11. Swadhar.
12. Swalamban
13. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (1975),
14. National Mission for Empowerment of Women.
15. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG).
16. The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers.
17. Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS) (2009-2010).
18. Dhanalakahmi (2008).
19. Short Stay Homes.
20. Ujjawala (2007).
21. Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan).
22. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
23. Training of Rural Youth forSelf Employment (TRYSEM).
24. Prime Minister’s RojgarYojana (PMRY).
25. Women’s Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS).
26. Working Women’s Forum.
27. Indira PriyadarahiniYojana
28. Indira Mahila Kendra.
29. SIDBI’s MahilaUdyam Nidhi MahilaVikas Nidhi.
30. MahilaSamitiYojana.
31. Khadi and Village Industries Commission.
32. SBI’s SreeShaki Scheme.
33. NGO’s Credit Schemes.

34. National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development’s Schemes

WOMEN EDUCATION STATUS

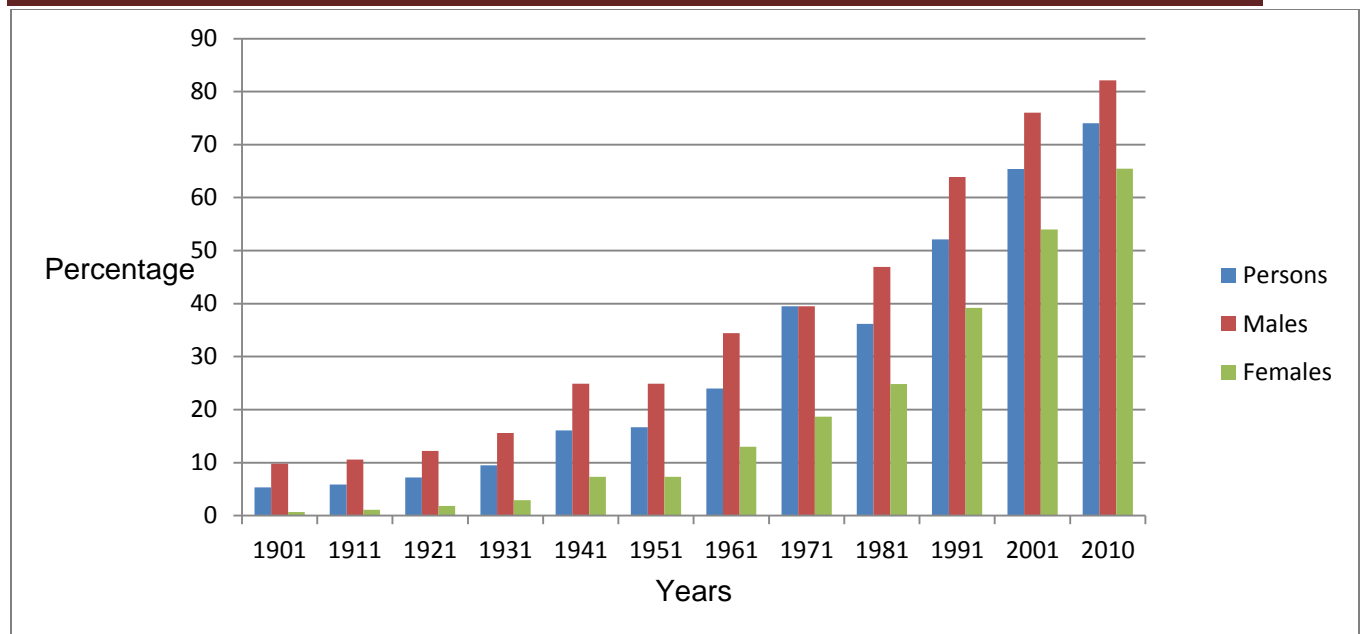
The constitutional provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years. But still the literacy level is very low in India. It is admitted by the educational experts that this failure is mainly due to the slow progress rate of literacy among girls. Literacy level is increasing for Indian women, but still there is gap between men and women literacy rate. It is shows in the following Table:

TABLE -1 LITERACY RATE IN INDIA

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1961	24.0	34.4	13.0
1971	39.5	39.5	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0
2010	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source: Census of India (2011)

According to the Table-1 In pre-Independence time literacy rate for women had a very poor in comparison to literacy rate of men. This is clear from the table that literacy rate of women has risen from 0.7 % to 7.3 % and the literacy rate of men has risen from 9.8 % to 24.9 %. During the post-independence era women literacy rates have increase in general. However the literacy rate of male increase from 25% in 1951 to 82 % in 2010. But the literacy rate of females has increased from 7% in 1951 to 65% in 2010. From this analyse we find that still the female literacy rate is only half of the female population are literates. Reason behind that the rate of school drop outs is also found to be comparatively higher in case of women. If women are not educated, families suffer too. This higher rate of illiteracy of women is undoubtedly attributing for women dependence on men and to play a subordinate role. The lack of education is the main cause of women’s exploitation .Indian’s constitutional and legislative provisions which strengthen the women can only understandable when women’s literacy level will increase. Thus promoting education among women is very important in empowering women. So women education emerging as one of the top priorities of indian society. And women education is not like an option, it is necessity of Indian society. Growth of the literacy among male and females can be show through chart given below :



SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: THERE ARE SOME WAYS TO EMPOWERING WOMEN:

1. Changes in women’s mobility and social interaction.
2. Changes in women’s labour patterns.
3. Changes in women’s access to and control over resources.
4. Changes in women’s control over Decision making.
5. Providing education.
6. Self-employment and Self-help group.
7. Providing minimum needs like Nutrition, Health, Sanitation, Housing.
8. Other than this society should change the mentality towards the word women.
9. Encouraging women to develop in their fields they are good at and make a career.
10. The electronic and print media can play significant role in building a good and positive image about girls and women.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of this study we concluded that women empowerment is vital for the growth of Indian economy. Now it is cleared that only literacy is not the ultimate solution to curb this problem but women should be highly educated to know their rights and duties and should be able to use their rights as per the need. Govt. has launched the various scheme to addressed the problems of women empowerment.

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