



राष्ट्रीय महिला परिषद
'आजची स्त्री-आजची सावित्री'

Study of Role and Contribution of Education in Women's Empowerment in India

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Abstract:

The idea of an empowered woman is not only limited to a woman who is literate, but the meaning stretches far beyond. According to Wikipedia, women's empowerment includes, "accepting women's viewpoints or making an effort to seek them, raising the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training." By extension it also strives to make her independent in every aspects and skills of life that will change the quality of her life and to help her live a happy, healthy, prosperous, balanced and peaceful life. Swami Vivekananda, a great spiritual leader and reforming India, once said, "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet." So, for the overall progress of women, right guidance and education in every aspect of life is the golden key. Women empowerment is lifelong and challenging process, which should be started from the childhood of the girl's education. A good and sound education will definitely bring about the desired change in the girls and women and make them self-sufficient. This paper will discuss how education in India is a major contributor in empowering women and how it plays a prime role to make her self-sufficient and independent.

Keywords:

Girls, Women, Education, Empowerment, Self-sufficient, Independent

Objective:

To study the role and contribution of education in women's empowerment in India.

Methodology:

The methodology used in this paper is explanatory. This study is based on the observations and analysis from secondary data sources available online and offline.

History of Women's Education in India:

From ancient times, Indian culture has largely being patriarchal. Due to the corrosive effect of patriarchy, there is deep inequality between the sexes even today. The women folk have always been forced down into a secondary





position both in their families and in the community. In the past, they did not have the permission of the family or the society to receive the basic need of education. To change this pathetic situation many social reformers worked shoulder to shoulder in various parts of India. Along came Savitribai Phule (1831-1897), who took initiatives for the Indian Women's education and thus, the journey towards women's empowerment in India began. Savitribai is responsible for opening the first school for girls in India. Due to her persistent struggle and efforts in the face of a cruel patriarchal society, the foundation for the girls and women's education was laid.

Other notable female social reformers who worked towards improving women's education and women's empowerment were Fatima Sheikh (1831 - ?), Tarabai Shinde (1850-1910), Ramabai Ranade (1862-1924). Male members of the society who joined this mission were people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) and Jyotirao Phule (1827-1890) who dedicated their whole lives for girls and women education and for changing their position in the community. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820- 1891) is also one of the great Indian leaders who worked in the sector of girls and women education. These social fire brands took huge efforts and struggled to bring girls and women in the mainstream of education. Due to their tireless work, the common mindset of society started changing. Because of this pre-independence work, post-independence India has seen drastic changes in women's education. Slowly, the Indian society's perspective towards girls' and women's education has seen positive changes. Now, all around the country, people take steps towards girls and women education.

Recent Position of Women Education in India:

There are many obstacles in women's education like child marriages and early marriages, poverty, male violence against females, gender inequality, geographical barriers, health issues, religious factors and many more. But still, Indian women are continuing their fight against these evils. It is largely due to education that women are able to overcome all the above mentioned problems. The position of women's education has drastically changed in comparison to ancient days. A large section of the society is inclined to provide education to their girl children. The Indian government is also playing a very important role in the field of girls' and women's education. Numerous schools, colleges and institutions have been established and nurtured by the government. To promote girls into mainstream of education, the government has launched many government schemes.

The following Government schemes have been launched in India for Women Education:

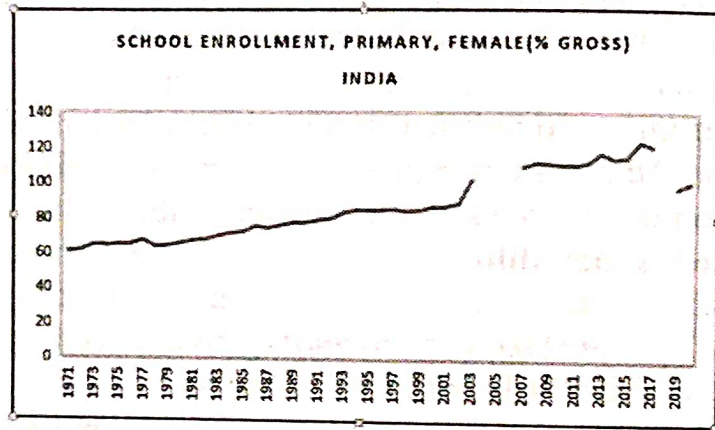
- i. Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY) (1997)
- ii. Shiksha Sahyog Yojana (2001)



- iii. SarvShikshaAbhiyan (2002)
- iv. National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (2003)
- v. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Yojana (2004)
- vi. CBSE Merit Scholarship Scheme for Single Girl Child (2006)
- vii. Bhagyalaxmi Scheme, Karnataka (2006-2007)
- viii. National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE) (2008)
- ix. Saakshar Bharat (2009)
- x. BetiBachaoBetiPadhao Scheme (2015)
- xi. SukanyaSamriddhiYojana (SSY) (2015)
- xii. MukhyamantriRajshriYojana (MRY), Rajasthan (2016)

Major Benefits Observed due to Women's Education in India:

I. School Enrollment of females has increased in India

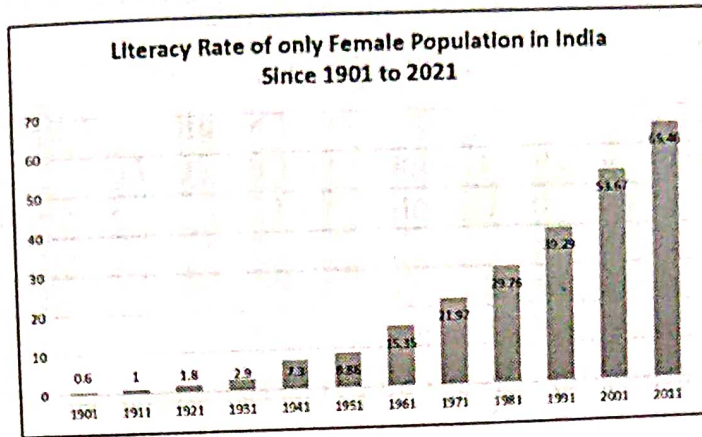


Note : Data for year 2004, 2005, 2006, 2018 is not available

As is clearly seen in the above graph, the percentage of school enrollment for the year 1971 was 60.93%, which has increased to 100.90% till 2020. Thus, it can be concluded that many females have entered into the mainstream of education. This also shows that there is an increasing positive change in the mindset of the society that girls and women should be given education for their overall growth. The rising line of the graph also promises that the future of women's education is good. It can be safely said that if the percentage of school enrollment increases then by and by the percentage of enrollment for higher education will also see improvement.

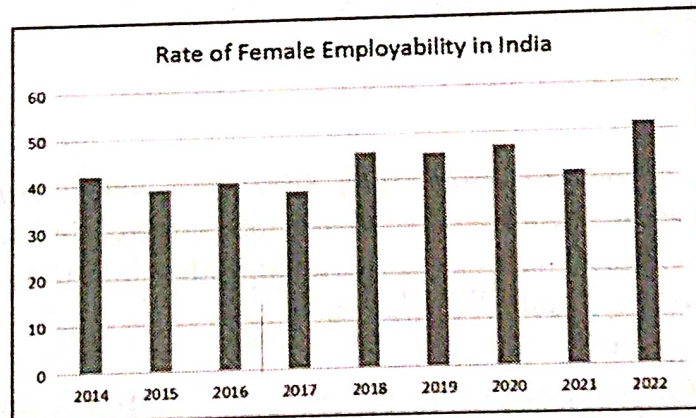


II. Literacy rate of Women in India



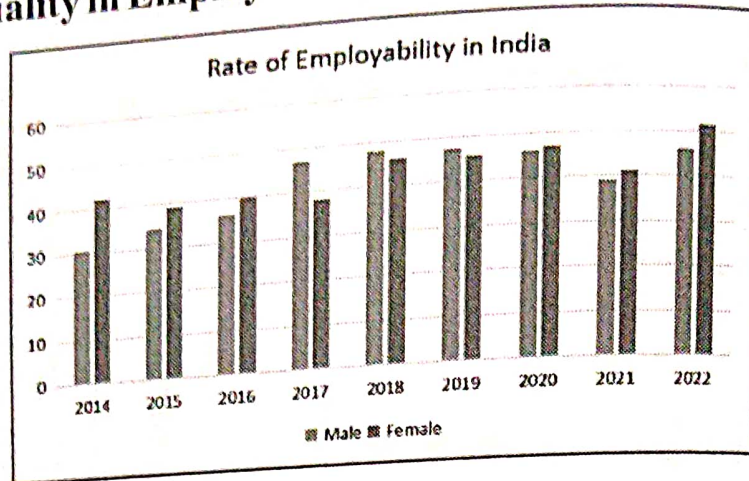
The above graph points to the increase of literacy rate of female population from a mere 0.6 % in 1901 to a substantial 65.46 % in 2021. The analysis of the above graph leads to the conclusion that there is positive and remarkable growth in literacy rate of women in India after independence. The graph also points to a positive future. It is likely that these literate women will get more job opportunities in industries, organizations, and even at handling their own businesses in a male dominated society. By extension, this could only mean more economical freedom for the women folk.

III. Rate of Female Employability



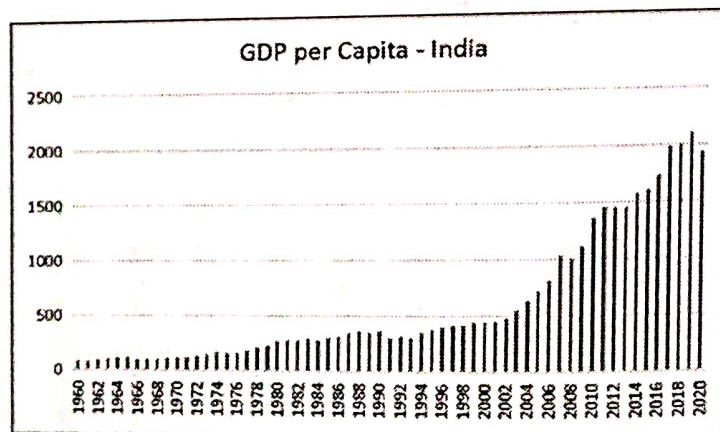
The above table is about female employability in India. The graph indicates that female employability is above average and is quite good. There is also an indication that the graph will see an upward rise as the years go by.

IV. Gender Equality in Employability due to Women's Education



The above graph shows that women employability has increased. This increase is a direct result of the educational opportunities provided for women. The graph clearly indicates that gender inequality is reduced in the field of employability. This means more women are becoming economically and financially stable. It is but logical that employed and financially stable women will feel less helpless and dependent on others. By extension, due to their self sufficiency, the domestic violence and abuse faced by them will decrease.

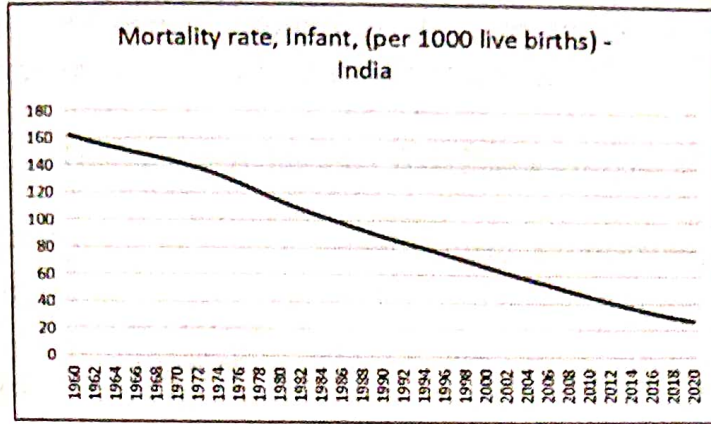
V. GDP of India has seen an increase



The above graph shows that there is growth in the overall GDP of the Nation. In 1960 the GDP was 82.18% which increased to 1927.70% in 2020. It is the researcher's opinion that this increase is because of the increase in employability of women. In a family, if both the partners are employed, the living standard of the family will become better. It is the researcher's view that the improvement in the family's living standard in turn improves the overall nation's living standard. On the other hand, the crushing poverty of the nation will be reduced.



VI. Due to Women's Education, Mortality rate in infant has decreased in India



The above graph shows that the mortality rate in infants was 161.8 % in 1960 which dramatically reduced to 27% till 2020. By looking at above graph it can be concluded that health awareness in women has increased in Indian Women. They are becoming very health conscious and have started to focus on nutrition. It is the researcher's opinion that this increase in health awareness is because of the increase in education of women. Educated women generally marry after the completion of their education or after crossing the marriage age limit set by the Indian Government which is 18 years for women. They are more knowledgeable about family planning and pregnancy issues, so that they can avoid destruction caused by risky and unwanted pregnancies. This reduces unsafe abortions as well as maternal deaths. Because of education, they can take care of their own health as well as their children's health properly.

Conclusion :

Education has and will play a crucial role in the women's empowerment. Due to education, general awareness in women has increased. Women are increasingly becoming aware about their rights in places like their home, office, society. Due to increased literacy, women are getting more aware about management in sectors like their home, office and society. They are also focusing on their health and their family's physical health, mental health, physical safety as well as economical security by raising their voice against any crime. Because of education, mortality rate has decreased. There is more reduction in the gender inequality gap, thus, improving the family status. Due to education, there is growth in women employment which in turn increases the overall per capita income of family, which in turn increases the overall GDP of the nation. Educated women become more self-sufficient, independent, confident and empowered. They can live their life happily and confidently. Thus, the researchers conclude that for women empowerment education is essential and must.





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