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## **Women Education in India & its Importance: An Analytical Study**

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### **Abstract**

*Women play a prominent role in the cultural, social, political and economic life of a country. In fact, women's education was encouraged in ancient Indian society. That is why, they are given due respect and have equal rights to receive education. According to the Vedas, women should have the opportunity to attain knowledge of Vedas. Separate organizations had been set up to provide education to the women during the Buddhist period. But no importance was given to women and their education during the Muslim period.*

*At the end of nineteenth century, some progressive Indians and Englishmen like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Gandhiji, David Hare and Annie Besant worked for making women aware of education. After independence the national government considered the expansion of women's education has been continuing and the girls belonging to remote areas and SC/ST are being encouraged to receive education.*

**Key Words:** *women education, objectives, importance, problem, recommendation of various committee and commission.*

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**Meaning of Women's Education:** The provision of all facilities and opportunities to women for education is called women's education. Our constitution gives great importance to the equality of status and opportunities for men and women. The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, caste, sex, or place or birth. Thus educational facilities and opportunities are provided to women regardless of their caste, religion or location at par with men.

**Importance of Women's Education:** Women's education becomes very essential when we accept that the mother is the first teacher of her children. In fact a good mother is better than the teachers. But there is a wide gap between the education of men and women in our country. This is because of illiteracy, child marriage, purdah system, economic backwardness, traditional outlook and ignorance, of parents. These factors discriminate in the provision of education to the boy and girl. Several attempts were made before and after independence to remove this discrimination. However the need and importance of women education was realized in free India.

1. Swami Vivekananda has emphasized, “If you do not raise the women who are living embodiments of the divine mother, don’t think that you have any other way to their social and economic status”
2. Gandhi has stated the importance of women education in these words, “I am strongly of the opinion that women should have the same facilities as men even special facilities where necessary”.
3. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has very rightly observed “Education of a boy is the education of one person but education of girl is the education of the entire family”.
4. Dr. S.Radhakrishnan (University Education Commission 1948-1949) states, “There cannot be educated people without educated women.”
5. Kothari Commission (1964-1966) has rightly remarked, ‘For full development of human resource, the improvement of human beings and for moulding the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women is of great importance than that of men”.
6. The national policy on education 1986 states, “the education of women should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation.

**Need of Women Education:** The need and importance of women’s education in India based on the views of the Indian educationist, philosophers and political b leaders:

1. The cooperation of women is necessary for the progress and prosperity of the country.
2. An educated woman produces an educated family and an educated society.
3. An educated woman makes the home happy and healthy.
4. An educated woman can mitigate the economic difficulties of the family.
5. An educated woman can help in removing social evils, and save the society from old beliefs and customs which adversely affect the progress of society.
6. Swami Vivekananda says no expectation of the progress of a family or a country can be achieved where women are not educated, and are leading a pitiable life. To him, welfare of the country is not possible until the condition of women is improved. Therefore their educational uplift is of utmost important.

**Objectives of Women’s Education:** The unit of National Council for Educational Research and training (NCERT) for Women Education has formulated the following objectives of women’s education:

1. To promote the education and the development of girls.
2. To undertake and promote research in the area of girls education and development.
3. To develop and apply concepts and methods of women studies.
4. To suitably intervene in the area of policy planning, curriculum, and teacher education, for removing gender bias and disparities.
5. To act as a national resource centre on girls education and development.
6. To provide consultancy services in the areas of girls education and development.

### **Problems of Women's Education:**

1. **Poverty:** the poor economic condition of parents is the greatest obstacle in the way of the development of women education in under developed countries like India. Education has become a costly affair.
2. **Illiteracy:** this is an undeniable fact that most of the parents of our country are illiterate and ignorant. Such parents do not know the need and importance of education. Due to the illiteracy and ignorance of parents they failed to send their daughter to educational institution.
3. **Lack of lady teacher:** there is shortage of qualified women teachers' absence of lady teachers discourages girl's education.
4. **Problem of wastage:** we find a lot of wastage in the education of girl's .it maybe owing to the negative attitude of parents toward s the education of girls or capitation fee and increasing unemployment problem.
5. **Unsuitable curriculum:** unsuitable curriculum is one of the major problems for girl's education and development in our country.

### **Functions of Women Education:**

1. Awareness generation action
2. Re designing curriculum and educational programme
3. Orientation of curriculum and developers and text book writers.
4. In calculation of positive self image in the girl child
5. Promotion of research and innovative action projects.
6. Inputs into teacher education.
7. Data bank.
8. Interacting with the media.

**Recommendation of Commissions and Committees on Women Education:** Our national and social leaders fell that no national development can take place without women's education. Therefore education of women has been regarded as a major programme in India. In fact after the independence of our country the central government, state government and non government institutions have talking all efforts to encourage women's education. Preference has been given in the five year plans of India for the expansion and development of women's education. In order to minimize existing gap between the education of boy's and girl's and to expand and developed the women's education, the govt. of India has appointed commission and committees. Let us look at the recommendations put forth by different education commission and committees.

**University Education Commission (1948-1949):** The University Education Commission is popularly known as RadhaKrishnan Commission .This commission is analyses the problems of women education at the college and university level and the following recommendation.

1. **Amenities of life:** The ordinary amenities of life should be provided for women colleges originally planned for men but to which women are being admitted in increasing numbers.
2. **Educational opportunities:** There should be no curtailment in educational opportunities for but rather a substantial increase in them.
3. **Educational guidance:** there should be an intelligent educational guidance by qualified men and women to help women to get a clear view of their real educational interests and to provide good education according to their needs and capacities.
4. **Normal place in society:** Women should be helped to find their normal place in society both as citizen and women.
5. **Cultural and social responsibility:** Men should be encouraged to extend right courtesy and social responsibility in mixed colleges.
6. **Equality in co –educational institutions:** In co educational institutions due weight age should be given to women.

**National Committee on Women’s Education (1958):** Educational panel of the Planning commission recommended on July 1957 that, “A suitable committee should be appointed to go into the various aspects of the question relating to the nature of education for girls at the elementary, secondary, and stages and to examine where the present system was helping them to lead a happier and useful life”. The Govt. of India appointed the national committee on women’s education under the Chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh. The committee made the following recommendations:

1. **Universal enrollment:** The attempt for expansion of girls’ education should aim at universal enrollment of girls in the age group 6-11 by 1979 and in the age group 11-14 by 1981.
2. **Improvement programme:** The recommendations made by the C.A.B.E for the improvement of women education should be implementing and for this purpose cent per cent assistance should be provided.

The programmes include:

- (a) Construction of teacher quarters. (b) Provision of school teachers. (c) Provision of allowance for the lady teachers working in the villages (d) Provision of hostels (e) Provision of school uniforms. (f) Provision of mid –day –meals. (g) Construction of sanitary blocks.
3. **Facilities in isolated and back ward areas:** The girl students of backward hilly and isolated areas should be provided with facilities such as free transport and free residential accommodation to encourage them to get education.
4. **Publicity programme:** Publicity programme should be launched to awaken the people towards the need of women’s education. For this purpose documentaries and films concerning women’s should be prepared and displayed.
5. **Education for adult women:** Central Social Welfare Board should start condensed courses to give suitable education to adult women.

6. **Scholarships:** There should be provision for an adequate number of scholarship to encourage the girls to continue their education.
7. **Close up the gap:** The gap between the men and the women should be filled as per as possible.
8. **Encouragement to co –education:** Where it is difficult to start separate schools for girls co education should be encouraged.
9. **National council for women’s education:** National Council for women’s Education should be set up for studying the needs and problems of women’s education at the national level.
10. **State council for women’s education:** At the state level state council for women’s education should be set up.
11. **Women’s education in five year plan:** Women’s should get an important place in five year plans and the planning commission should make estimation for women’s education requirements.

#### **Suggestions of Durgabai Deshmukh Committee (1959):**

1. The central and state governments should give priority to the education for girls.
2. In the central ministry of education, a department of women’s education should be created
3. For proper education of girls, a director of women’s education should be appointed in each state.
4. Co –education should be properly organized at the higher level of education.
5. In the first phase of development, provision of free education should be made for girls up to class 8.
6. Facilities in choice of optional subject should be made available for girls.
7. Education of girls should be given due encouragement in rural areas.
8. Programmes for development of adult women’s education be properly initiated and encouraged.
9. Girls should get training facilities on a liberal basis.
10. A large number of seats in various services should be reserved for them.

**Recommendations of Hansa Mehta Committee (1962):** National council of women’s education appointed Hansa Mehta Committee in 1962 to suggest measures for the improvement of women’s education. It made the following recommendation.

1. Co-education should be adopted and encouraged at the primary stage.
2. Separate primary school or middle school for girls should be started where there is such demand and where there is adequate enrolment.
3. Separate and co-educational institutions can be started at secondary school and college stage. Parents should send their daughters to the institutions they like.
4. Girls should be encouraged to study Science and Mathematics at the higher secondary stage.

5. Number of women teachers should be increased in primary schools. Women's teacher should also be appointed in all institution at the secondary and college stages which are meant for boys but where girls are also admitted.
6. Home science is a useful subject for girls at the higher secondary levels.
7. Girls should be provided with necessary facilities such as scholarship, free transport and stipend.
8. There should be a common curriculum for boys and girls at the primary and middle stages.
9. Women should be given adequate representation in textbook committees.
10. There should be the provision of vocational schools and at the end of secondary educations. So that girls are trained for different vocation.

**Recommendations of Bhaktavatsalam Commission: (1963):** The national council for woman education endorsed the suggestion made by the union education minister that a small committee should be appointed to look into the reasons for the lack of public support, particularly in rural areas for women education. The chair man of the National Council for Women's Education appointed a committee in May 1963 under the Chairmanship of Shri M. Bhaktavatsalam, the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, to, to, suggest ways and means of achieving substantial progress in the field. The committee submitted its report was published in 1965. The following recommendation was made by the committee:

1. **Fields of public co-operation:** Direct public co-operation should be encouraged in the such as (a) establishment of private school.(b)construction of school building.(c)provision of text books written material to the needy children.(d)organization of school betterment committees and improvement conference.(e)provision of Mid-Day-Meal.
2. **State's responsibility:** State should take up the responsibility of creating public opinion in favors of women's education. For this purpose it may adopt:
  - (a) Seminars.
  - (b) Radio talks.
  - (c) School improvement.
  - (d) Audio visual aids and distribution of information pamphlets.
  - (e) Organization of enrolment drives.
3. **Provision of pre-primary school:** It is essential that pre primary schools should be attached with primary schools, particularly in the rural areas. These schools will help the children to get accustomed to schooling at the early stage.
4. **Women teacher:** More and more women teacher should be appointed in primary schools. The number of female teachers should be more than that of male teachers. Such a provision will create confidence in parents and they will feel encouraged to send their girls to school.
5. **Relaxation in age limit:** Age limit for the married and unmarried women teacher should be relaxed. This relaxation will help in attracting women to the teaching profession.

- 6. Education for adult women:** To educate adult women particularly in rural areas, condensed courses should be organized.
- 7. Hostels facilities:** Adequate hostels facilities are essential for the enrollment of girls. So it should be one of the main objectives of the plan of states to provide financial assistance for the construction of hostels.
- 8. Training facilities:** More training should be given to women candidates to meet the increasing demand for additional teachers.
- 9. Residence for women teachers:** Women can be attracted to the teaching profession by providing them with residential quarters near the school. So teacher's quarter should be built to enable the teachers to leave near the school.
- 10. Adult education:** While organizing programmes for adult education every effort should be made to liquidate illiteracy among rural women.

**National Council For Women's Education (1964):** National Council for Women's Education was set up in 1959 by the Central Ministry of Education. It was reconstructed in 1964 and consisted of the Chairman the Secretary and 27 members .The main function of the council are:

1. To advise the government on the education of the girls at school level and the education of adult women.
2. To create awareness in the society with regard to the importance of women's education.
3. To suggest the suitable measures for creating public opinion in favors of girls and women's education.
4. To make periodic evaluation for the progress of women's education.
5. To organized seminars, survey, and research works for the improvement of girl's education in the country.

**Khothari Commission on Women's Education:** Khothari Commission has given a lot of importance to women's education. According to this commission women's education is very important and helpful in reducing the birth rate. It has made the following recommendation regarding women's education.

1. The gap between men's education and women's education should be closed by considering women's education as a major programmes in education for some years. More ever determined the bold effort should be made to face the difficulty involved in the expansion of women's education
2. There should be a special administrative machinery to look after the education of girls and women.
3. Special plan should be prepared for this purpose and the funds required for them should be provided on a priority basis.
4. Efforts should be made to accelerate the expansion of girls education .All the secondary level the development of the education of girls should be increased. The ratio of male and female education should come to 2:1 from 3:1 in 20 years.

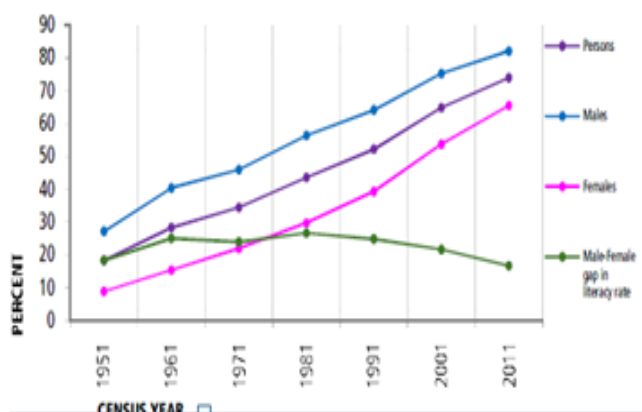
5. Emphasis should be placed on establishing separate schools for girl’s provision of hostels and part time and vocational courses.
6. Research units should be set up in one or two universities to deal specially with women’s education.

**Recommendation of National Policy on Women’s Education (1986):** National Policy on Education plays a positive role in order to provide powers to the women. In this regard its recommendations are as under:

- (a) Status of women: education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women.
- (b) Promotion of women studies: Various courses such as home science, music fine arts, tailoring and embroidery cooking and needlework will be provided for the promotion of women studies.
- (c) Improvement of women’s education: there should be improvement of women’s education through redesigned curricula, text book training and orientation of teachers should decision making on administration.
- (d) Provision of various courses: Various vocational and professional courses will be provided for the promotion of women studies.
- (e) Removal of illiteracy: Highest place would be given to eradicate women’s illiteracy. The obstacle that comes in the way of primary level of education be put to an end.

**Literacy rate in India; 1951-2011**

| Census Year | Persons | Males | Females | Male-Female gap in literacy rate |
|-------------|---------|-------|---------|----------------------------------|
| 1           | 2       | 3     | 4       | 5                                |
| 1951        | 18.33   | 27.16 | 8.86    | 18.30                            |
| 1961        | 28.3    | 40.4  | 15.35   | 25.05                            |
| 1971        | 34.45   | 45.96 | 21.97   | 23.98                            |
| 1981        | 43.57   | 56.38 | 29.76   | 26.62                            |
| 1991        | 52.21   | 64.13 | 39.29   | 24.84                            |
| 2001        | 64.83   | 75.26 | 53.67   | 21.59                            |
| 2011        | 74.04   | 82.14 | 65.46   | 16.68                            |

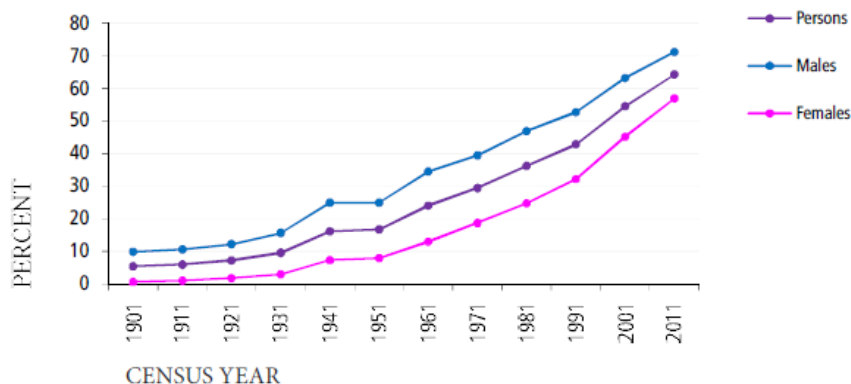


Source – Census of India 2011



**Crude Literacy rate in india by sex : 1901-2011**

| Census Year | Crude literacy rate |       |         | Change in Percent points |       |         |
|-------------|---------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------|-------|---------|
|             | Persons             | Males | Females | Persons                  | Males | Females |
| 1901        | 5.35                | 9.83  | 0.60    | -                        | -     | -       |
| 1911        | 5.92                | 10.56 | 1.05    | 0.57                     | 0.73  | 0.45    |
| 1921        | 7.16                | 12.21 | 1.81    | 1.24                     | 1.65  | 0.76    |
| 1931        | 9.5                 | 15.59 | 2.93    | 2.34                     | 3.38  | 1.12    |
| 1941        | 16.1                | 24.9  | 7.30    | 6.6                      | 9.31  | 4.37    |
| 1951        | 16.67               | 24.95 | 7.93    | 0.57                     | 0.05  | 0.63    |
| 1961        | 24.02               | 34.44 | 12.95   | 7.35                     | 9.49  | 5.02    |
| 1971        | 29.45               | 39.45 | 18.69   | 5.43                     | 5.01  | 5.74    |
| 1981        | 36.23               | 46.89 | 24.82   | 6.78                     | 7.44  | 6.13    |
| 1991        | 42.84               | 52.74 | 32.17   | 6.61                     | 5.85  | 7.35    |
| 2001        | 54.51               | 63.24 | 45.15   | 11.67                    | 10.5  | 12.98   |
| 2011        | 64.32               | 71.22 | 56.99   | 9.81                     | 7.98  | 11.84   |



**Source – Census of India 2011**

**Conclusion:** After independence, the progress of women’s education has been satisfactory. The girls belonging to remote areas, rural areas and weaker section of society are being encouraged to receive education .from the increasing number of women’s educational institutional and girls students from the primary level to the university level, we come to know that India is marching forward towards the progress of women’s education The women of today are very conclusion of their social economic and intellectual, the mental and spiritual development. Their role both within the home and outside the home has become an important feature of the social and economic life of the country. It will become more significant in the years to come. Therefore they cannot be deprived of education at any cost and greater attention should be paid problems of training and developed of women. It may be pointed out here that there cannot be educated men without educated women. If a chance has to be made between education of men and education of women in the case only women should be given opportunity to receive education because in this way education is easily reach the next generation. Hence the education of girls should be emphasized not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates economic and social

transformation and above all to achieve cent per cent literacy. According to the Country Report of the Government of India, education of girls is the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family.

To encourage the education of women at all levels and for dilution of gender bias in providing knowledge and education, established schools, colleges and universities even exclusively for women in the state. To bring more girls, especially from marginalized families of BPL, in mainstream education, the government is providing a package of concessions in the form of providing free books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing for the hostilities mid-day meals, scholarships, free circles and so on. Education for All (EFA) programme and other many educational programmes are providing various facilities to enhance the education for women, so these programmes are very helpful to improving the girl's education in India.

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