

Education and Skill Development: Need for Gender Equity

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Abstract:

The relationship between education & development is well established and recognized. Education in its multidimensional form not only helps individuals to develop their potential by acquiring knowledge and awareness but also prepares them to contribute effectively to socio-economic development.

Education of women has a long-lasting impact on the status of women in a society. Apart from providing basic knowledge and skills to get independent earning opportunities to raise their economic status, it enables them to participate actively in the developmental process.

With the growing realization that the development of any society requires utilization of all its available human resources participation of women who constitute almost half of the world's population, in socio-economic activities has become an issue of global concern. As a result, women from both developed and developing countries including India have started joining workforce in increasing numbers for various reasons. On one hand, the ever-increasing demand for educated and skilled manpower has opened new opportunities for educated and skilled women; on the other hand, the status of woman without any adequate education and training has adversely been affected by recent changes at global level.

Thus education, training and skill development is crucial for improving economic status of women and sustainable development. Making globalization benefit Indian women who constitute educationally and economically weaker section of society is the issue of great concern in the interest of women as well as larger interest of society. The paper focuses on the need of concrete efforts for promoting women's access to good quality education combined with skill development and training to drive the benefits and face challenges of globalisation.

Keywords: Education, Skill and Gender Equity

Introduction

Education in broad refers to any process that shapes the potential of a maturing individual mind. For many, education is restricted to the work of certain special agencies such as the tutor and school, which presumably are devoted completely to the twofold task of teaching and learning. Education as the process of learning, finds diverse hypothetical explanation. Sociologists have made enormous contribution in understanding education as a social process. (1) Emile Durkheim argues that education teaches basic skills to individual which help them to perform roles in increasingly specialised occupation. Talcott Parsons argues that an essential function of education is to instill in pupils the value of individual achievements. (2) According to some intellectual people the word education has been derived from the

Latin word 'educatum' which means the act of teaching or training. A group of educationist say that it has come up to from another "Latin word 'educare' means "to bring up" or to raise".(3) All these meanings show that education seeks to nurture the good qualities in man and depict out the best in every individual. Education seeks to increase the inborn capacities of man. Since an individual in the society, he has to think critically about different issues in life and take decisions about then being free from unfairness and prejudice, false notion and blind beliefs. Thus, he has to study all these qualities of head, and heart all the way through the process of education.

Women Education and Skill Development

Women constitute almost half of the world's population and play a vital role in the development of the nations but the worth of women's work and their contribution to the economy and society has largely been ignored or undervalued for a long time in almost all societies mainly because of their involvement largely in informal, unorganised and household activities. They have been subject to discrimination, exploitation and domination by men that has resulted in gender disparity in almost all walks of social life.

The conflict perspective in sociology argues that men as warriors and rulers were able to consolidate their power and subjugate women. Engles wrote extensively on the subject. As societies moved from the hunting and gathering type to horticultural and later agrarian type, social inequality began to take root. Private property led to the accumulation of wealth. Men emerged as dominant individuals and began to control not only wealth but also power. They made sure property passed on to their sons. Upper class women were not expected to work but stay home and serve the men. Gradually women came to assume a passive and subservient role in both industrial and capitalist societies. They have become victims of exploitation. The thrust of conflict prospective is that gender equality is the result of economic inequality. (Abranhan M.Francis)

Gender inequality is a global phenomenon which manifests itself in different forms depending upon socio-economic condition of society. In 1980 The United Nations summed up the burden of gender inequality: women, who comprise half of the world's population, do two thirds of the world's work, earn one tenth of the world's income and own one hundredth of the world's property.

Gender gap is substantial in many countries and women's productivity levels remain low because of their lack of access to education and other opportunities. Social scientists generally agree that education and empowerment of women alone can achieve social justice, reduce poverty, improve the lot of children and limit population growth.(Abraham) Thus, the relationship between education & development is well established and recognized. Education in its multidimensional form not only helps individuals to develop their potential by acquiring knowledge and awareness but also prepares them to contribute effectively to socio-economic development.

According to United Nation Human Development Report (1993) Human Development is a process of enlarging people's choices. In principle these choices can be infinite and change over time. But at all levels of development the three essential areas are for people to lead along and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these choices are not available many other opportunities remain inaccessible.

This broader definition of human development is particularly valuable in rapidly changing international climate (ref) In terms of human development objectives education is an end in itself not just a means to an end. It is a key which opens many economic, social and political doors of people. (N. Narayana). Education in its multidimensional form helps people to develop their potential and equip them

with knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to the development process. Education of women has a long lasting impact on their status in society and their education is closely linked to socio-economic transformation of society.

With the growing realization that the development of any society requires utilization of all its available human resources including women who will in turn be benefited by the process of development, participation of women in socio- economic activities has become an issue of global concern

It qualifies people by equipping them with knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to the development process. Education of women has a long lasting impact on the status of women in society. Their education is closely linked to their participation and contribution to the economic growth.

The process of globalisation has provided increased chances for women to improve their status in the society. As a result, relative increase in economic participation from both developing and developed countries including India is clearly visible. These women have started joining workforce for various socio-economic reasons. However the benefits of global economy have not been uniform for all sections of women. It has affected educated and skilled women positively by creating ever increasing demands and opportunities for them while unskilled and uneducated women have adversely been affected by recent changes and increasing competition at global level.

Various global trends pose challenge for women who are less educated and lack various skills and emphasise the need for training and skill development. In response to changing global environment is convinced about empowering role of education, training and skill development for women and there is enormous expansion in the infrastructure for education in public and private sector particularly in urban areas .

The government of India observes three dimensional strategies for development of women namely: social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice and had made development of women as one of the principal objective of successive Five Year Plans. Government has taken steps over Five Years Plans to meet the requirement of training and skill development for getting productive and decent employment. In the Eleventh Five Years Plan (2007-2012) focus was on advancement of those skills which have to be relevant to the emerging economic environment. The approach to the twelfth Five Years Plan focuses on mainstreaming skill formation in the formal education system right from class 10th onwards and establishing an institutional mechanism for providing access to information to skill inventory and skill maps on a real time basis.

Literacy Rate in India 2001 and 2011

S.NO.	India/State/UTs	Literacy Rate in India in (%)					
		2001			2011		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	India	65.38	75.85	54.16	74.04	82.14	65.46
1	Andhra Pradesh	61.11	70.85	51.17	67.04	74.08	60.0
2	Arunachal Pradesh	54.74	64.07	44.24	67	73.07	59.06
3	Assam	64.28	71.93	56.03	73.02	78.08	67.03
4	Bihar	47.53	60.32	33.57	63.08	73.05	53.03
5	Chhattisgarh	65.18	77.86	52.40	71.0	81.05	60.06
6	Delhi	81.82	87.37	75.00	86.03	91.0	80.09
7	Goa	82.32	88.88	75.51	87.04	91.0	80.09
8	Gujarat	69.97	80.50	58.60	79.03	87.02	70.07
9	Haryana	68.59	79.25	56.31	76.06	85.04	66.08
10	Himachal Pradesh	77.13	86.02	68.08	83.08	90.08	76.06
11	Jammu & Kashmir	54.46	65.75	41.82	68.07	78.03	58.0
12	Jharkhand	54.13	67.94	39.38	67.06	78.05	56.02
13	Karnataka	67.04	76.29	57.45	75.06	82.08	68.01
14	Kerala	90.92	94.20	87.86	93.09	96.0	92.0
15	Madhya Pradesh	64.11	76.80	50.28	70.06	80.05	60.0
16	Maharashtra	77.27	86.27	67.51	82.09	89.08	75.05
17	Manipur	68.87	77.87	59.70	79.08	86.05	73.02
18	Meghalaya	63.31	66.14	60.41	75.05	77.02	73.08
19	Mizoram	88.49	90.69	86.13	91.06	93.07	89.04
20	Nagaland	67.11	71.77	61.92	80.01	83.03	76.07
21	Orissa	63.61	75.95	50.97	73.05	82.04	64.04
22	Punjab	69.95	75.63	63.55	76.07	81.05	71.03
23	Rajasthan	61.03	76.46	44.34	67.01	80.05	52.07
24	Sikkim	69.68	76.73	61.46	82.02	87.03	76.04
25	Tamil Nadu	73.47	82.33	64.55	80.03	86.08	73.09
26	Tripura	73.66	81.47	65.41	87.08	92.02	83.01
27	Uttar Pradesh	57.36	70.23	42.98	69.07	79.02	59.03
28	Uttarakhand	72.28	84.01	60.26	79.06	88.03	70.07
29	West Bengal	69.22	77.58	60.22	77.01	82.07	71.02
30	Telangana	-	-	-	66.46	82.07	71.02
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	81.18	86.07	75.29	86.03	90.01	81.08
32	Chandigarh	81.76	85.65	76.65	86.04	90.05	81.04
33	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	60.03	73.32	42.99	77.07	86.05	65.09
34	Daman & Diu	81.09	88.40	70.37	87.01	91.05	79.06
35	Lakshadweep	87.52	93.15	81.56	92.03	96.01	92.0
36	Pondicherry	81.49	88.89	74.13	86.05	92.01	81.02

Source: *Statistics on Women in India 2010, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development 5, Siri Institutional Area, Haus Khas New Delhi-110016 pp,209, Census 2011.*

It is clearly shown in the above table that in all the states and union territories female literacy is lower than male but at the national level growth of female literacy is higher than male, female literacy in 2001 was 54.16% and in 2011 65.46%.

Due to the efforts of government girls enrolment in primary, secondary, tertiary level has increased. Despite these developments women remain underrepresented in almost all walks of life. As a matter of fact the enrolment of girls is much lower than that of boys at each level of education. According to 2001 census male literacy in India is more than 75.85 percent as compared to female literacy of 54.16 percent this gap in male and female literacy clearly indicates gender disparity in education. At the primary and middle stages of education girls comprises 35 percent and 31 percent respectively of the total enrolment. The magnitude of the problem of girl’s education can be accessed from fact that they constitute 70 percent of total unenrolled children in the age group of 6-14 years. The problems of universalisation of education today is in fact mainly the problem of education of girls. There is not much of an improvement in the situation at the high and higher secondary school levels as girls constitute only 35 percent and 32 percent respectively, of the total enrolment at their stage. The latter includes enrolment in general as well as vocational streams. Considering that only 4-5 percent of the total enrolment at the higher secondary stage goes to the vocational streams of which a nominal percentage is of girls. Thus the girl’s population in the vocational stream at the higher secondary stage is extremely small.

The number of women receiving technical and vocational and getting enrolled in past secondary education is very low as compared to men. One of the significant observations in this context is that the percentage of girls crossing grade 10th is also comparatively lower. (Due to low level of technical and vocational of women their work participation rate is also very low both in rural and urban areas. According to 2001 census the percentage of female work participation rate in rural areas is 30.98percent and in urban areas is 11.55percent which is fifty time low as compared to male, 52.36percent in rural areas and 51.93percent in urban areas. The main reasons of low level of work participation are lack of vocational education among women in India. Table give below show the percentage of women in workforce participation both in rural and urban areas.

Workforce participation rate by sex in India, 2001

S.N O.	India/State/UT s	Work participation rate								
		Rural			urban			combined		
		female	male	total	female	male	total	female	male	total
	India	30.98	52.36	41.97	11.55	50.85	32.23	25.68	51.93	39.26
1	Andhra Pradesh	43.28	58.30	50.85	13.17	50.76	32.30	35.11	56.23	45.79
2	Arunachal Pradesh	41.33	50.66	46.20	17.15	50.53	35.50	36.54	50.63	43.98
3	Assam	22.15	49.41	36.17	10.61	52.90	33.20	20.71	49.87	35.78
4	Bihar	20.18	48.05	34.65	7.04	41.69	25.59	18.84	47.37	33.70
5	Chhattisgarh	46.54	54.12	50.32	13.19	47.18	31.11	40.04	52.81	46.46
6	Delhi	10.18	49.42	31.87	9.31	52.25	32.89	9.37	52.06	32.82
7	Goa	26.39	54.51	40.53	18.17	54.68	37.04	22.36	54.60	38.80
8	Gujarat	38.54	55.46	47.24	9.41	53.91	33.08	27.22	54.87	41.95

9	Haryana	33.91	50.73	42.93	10.55	49.23	31.49	27.22	50.30	39.62
10	Himachal Pradesh	46.42	54.67	50.57	15.23	54.22	36.96	43.67	54.62	49.24
11	Jammu & Kashmir	26.20	49.49	38.35	10.39	51.43	32.95	22.45	49.99	37.01
12	Jharkhand	31.81	49.65	40.90	6.52	42.36	25.68	26.41	47.96	37.52
13	Karnataka	39.87	58.10	49.09	16.37	53.85	35.67	31.98	56.64	44.53
14	Kerala	15.90	50.06	32.54	13.64	50.61	31.61	15.38	50.20	32.30
15	Madhya Pradesh	40.72	53.00	47.09	11.98	47.41	30.65	32.31	51.51	42.74
16	Maharashtra	43.61	53.93	48.88	12.57	52.43	33.85	30.81	53.28	42.50
17	Manipur	41.53	49.25	45.45	32.25	44.94	38.57	39.02	48.12	43.62
18	Meghalaya	38.62	49.43	44.11	20.98	43.82	32.51	35.15	48.34	41.84
19	Mizoram	54.55	59.66	57.21	40.52	54.84	47.87	47.54	57.29	52.57
20	Nagaland	42.48	47.32	45.01	15.61	43.81	31.03	38.06	46.70	42.60
21	Orissa	27.12	53.17	40.23	10.02	49.06	30.62	24.66	52.53	38.79
22	Punjab	23.37	53.88	39.51	10.44	53.06	33.49	19.05	53.60	37.47
23	Rajasthan	40.63	50.74	45.87	9.55	47.42	29.59	33.49	49.95	42.06
24	Sikkim	40.60	57.69	49.69	21.67	55.51	40.16	38.57	57.44	48.64
25	Tamil Nadu	41.40	59.10	50.28	18.94	55.80	37.54	31.54	57.64	44.67
26	Tripura	22.87	50.42	37.03	12.45	51.64	32.45	21.08	50.62	36.25
27	Uttar Pradesh	19.05	47.39	33.93	6.80	44.61	26.95	16.54	46.80	32.48
28	Uttarakhand	33.55	45.69	39.60	7.59	47.36	29.15	27.33	46.14	36.92
29	West Bengal	20.86	54.09	37.90	11.57	53.74	33.85	18.32	53.99	36.77
30	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	18.50	57.05	39.20	12.09	56.09	36.33	16.45	56.73	38.27
31	Chandigarh	11.08	63.88	43.64	14.54	55.12	37.13	14.22	56.11	37.80
32	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	45.10	61.26	53.84	14.54	65.63	44.75	38.74	62.33	51.76
33	Daman & Diu	20.03	70.78	52.03	16.74	53.80	35.42	18.61	65.47	46.01
34	Lakshadweep	6.20	40.63	23.77	8.65	44.62	27.24	7.28	42.41	25.32
35	Pondicherry	23.93	54.36	39.22	13.89	52.49	33.13	17.23	53.12	35.17

Source: *Statistics on Women in India 2010, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development 5, Siri Institutional Area, Haus Khas New Delhi-110016 pp-228*

It has been observed that there is not only a higher rate of female illiteracy in the country there also exists technological illiteracy among the literate female population due to sex stereotyping in education. Even where restrictions are not imposed by the schools while offering vocational courses, girls prefer to opt for those courses which are traditionally considered suitable for them.

A number of innovative programs have been launched for the upliftment of women. With the adoption of several policies, the enrolment of girls is increasing in higher education but dropout rate is also going up. This is an obstacle to the human development in India. According to higher education

department of India, total enrolment in higher education in India is 14323566 students and only 5491818 girl students are enrolled in year 2008. The data clearly reveals that overall representation of women in higher education is very poor. (Raju Namayan Suani, kurakshetra, sept'2012) In addition to higher education, there are several technical educational institutions playing vital role in human resource development by creating skilled manpower, enhancing industrial productivity and improving quality of life. There are 15 IITs, 11 IIMS 5 Indian Institutes of science Education and Research, 30 NIT, 41 IITS, 4 National Institutes of Technical Teaching Training and Research-in total 79 technical institutions. Further 20 IITs are proposed in 11th Five Year Plan. Further All India (AICTE) has approved 6533 degree level and 2214 diploma level technical institutions with intake capacity of 13.57 lakh and 5.73 lakh students respectively (2010-11) table is given, p,28 yojana sept' 11

Conclusion

An analysis of available literature revealed various social, cultural, educational and psychological factors responsible for the problems of non-enrolment and high dropout rate and low level education among women. Some of these factors may be highlighted as follows

1. Lack of separate schools for girls
2. Shortage of female teacher.
3. Lack of motivation and general bias against women's education among parents.
4. Early marriage of girls.
5. No easy accessibility to school facilities.
6. Involvement of girls in care of siblings and household work.
7. Taboos against female education
8. Financial constraints.

Thus, the access, content and quality of women's education and employment has adversely been affected by various socio-economic and cultural factors. Access and benefit of women's education does not rely on building educational infrastructure only but also to take into account the root causes of discrimination against women which affect women's lives in different ways. In the urban areas there is discernible difference in the opportunities that women get for education and employment. There are overwhelming cultural and economic reasons in India which keep women away from getting these opportunities. If education is to become a vigorous agent for ending gender discrimination, it requires a new perception and new understanding about the origin of women's subordination.

Skill based education and training is crucial to women's access to opportunities for higher participation. Thus, women need good quality of education, training and skill development for getting productive and decent employment opportunities to raise their status in society.

It should, however, be pointed out that women's participation in economic activities does not necessarily lead to gender equality and improved status of women. Since gender inequality is multi causal and complex phenomenon. The key concern here is to identify what form of economic activity most enhance women's position and how their economic activity is linked to their educational attainment and training as in the globalised world the balance between skilled/ educated and unskilled, uneducated people has tilted in favour of more educated. This leaves less skilled or less educated people and population more vulnerable and marginalised. (N. Narayana). To enable Indian women keep pace with the emerging

possibilities and challenges from increasing globalisation, they are to be equipped with requisite and relevant knowledge and skills.

Skill based education is an effective means to provide independent employment opportunities for women and may motivate them because of consideration of economic gains which is likely to result in increasing literacy rate, level of education and better economic status. Education of comparable quality and content relevant to existing knowledge and needs will go a long way in enhancing socio-economic status of Indian women

Within the framework of democratic polity National policies and plans for women's advancement in different spheres, there has been gradual improvement in several areas of women's lives but much needs to be done. Remedy to this challenge is grass root initiative that focus attention on the problem of excluded particularly women. There is urgent need to address the inequalities in opportunities that impede women from participating in growth process. Availability of equal opportunities is likely to reduce the dependence of women on men- the root cause of all kinds' problems faced by women. Thus, challenges relating to women's education and development are to be paid attention for promoting inclusive growth.

The efforts of government to bring about educational advancement and attitudinal changes among masses in general and women in particular are to be supported at community level too. The role of women's families, community leaders and media deserves special mention here.

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