

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AFTER INDEPENDENCE

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Article history:	Abstract:
Published: 10 th March 2022	The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decisions for their personal dependent. Empowering women is to make them independent in all aspects from mind, thought, rights, decisions, etc. by leaving all the social and family limitations. It is to bring equality in the society for both male and female in all areas. Women empowerment is very necessary to make the bright future of the family, society and country. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment India is poised to become superpower. This can become reality only when the women of this nation became empowered. India then account for the largest number no of illiterates in the world. This paper will investigate how education has been the inspiring soul of the women empowerment in independent India.

Keywords: Empowerment, milestone, limitations, illiterates, traditional role

1. INTRODUCTION (Tahoma 10 PT, BOLD-FACE)

Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussions on women's political rights are at the forefront of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women's conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decisions for their personal dependence. Empowering women is to make them independent in all aspects from mind, thought, rights, decisions, etc by leaving all the social and family limitations.[2] It is to bring equality in society for both males and females in all areas. Women empowerment is very necessary to make the bright future of the family, society and country. According to the provisions of the Constitution of India, it is a legal point to grant equality to women in the society in all spheres just like male. The Department of Women and Child Development functions well in this field for the proper development of women and child in India. Women are given a top place in India from the ancient time however they were not given empowerment to participate in all areas. They need to be strong, aware and alert every moment for their growth and development. Empowering women is the main motto of the development department because an empowered mother with a child makes the bright future of any nation. Women's participation in India's, freedom struggle began over a century before the country became independent at the time when conservative traditions and social customs had derived them their rightful place in the society.[2] Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment India is poised to become a superpower, a developed country. When the women of this nation become empowered. India then will account for the largest number no of illiterates in the world

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A nation, a race cannot develop if almost half of the population, more perfectly human resource, is put aside from the light of education and thereby empowerment. If that half of human resource is not properly empowered to share the duties and responsibilities, the pleasure and sadness, the ifs and buts of the race, that nation, that race would be deprived of half, and sometimes more than half, of the desired development. Here education plays an important role. The developmental procedure started with the first independent government of India would not achieve the desired pace as long the women would have not allowed the light of education and empowerment. This paper will investigate

how education has been the inspiring soul of the women empowerment in independent India.

The overview of the participation of women in higher education shows that women are benefitting from the expansion of educational opportunity and in some countries like the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Finland and France have equaled or overtaken men in terms of their proportion of gross enrolments. Women offer immense potential to contribute to the skills base of their countries and in many places represent a sadly under-utilized resource. It may be that those governments who have been slow to respond to discrimination against women in education may be swayed by arguments which emphasize the benefits to the country as a whole in developing the human resource potential that women represent. Improving access to higher education requires the legislative back- up to support changes in cultural attitude. Formal requirements for gender balance in the provision of financial assistance and scholarships have proved effective in increasing the participation of women in higher education [3]

2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study are

1. To investigate what government of India has done for the development of women empowerment in India.
2. To look into the developmental graph of women empowerment.
3. To observe the changing status of women in Indian society. iv. To observe how education played an important role in women empowerment in India.

2.2 Picture of women education in India

The Indian Education system has two important structures, one is formal and another one is non-formal education. Some other educational programmes also formulated to motivate women education such as online education and distance education. The main objective of the entire educational program is to make every girl child to educate. This low level of literacy not only shows a negative impact on women's lives but also on their families and country's economic development. Hence it is of foremost importance to raise the level of education amongst women. There are an estimated 33.3 million Indians enrolled in higher education courses in India, according to the HRD ministry's All India Survey on Higher education report for 2015.[4] On these, 17.9 million are boys and 15.4 million are girls as of 2014-2015. Fundamental Rights of women are equality, freedom to religion, educational rights, cultural and educational, against exploitation, freedom. Improving girls' educational levels has been demonstrated to have clear impacts on the health and economic future of young women, which in turn improves the prospects of their entire community. After the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Basic education is more than an end in itself; it is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development.[5]

India: Literacy Rate from 1981 to 2017

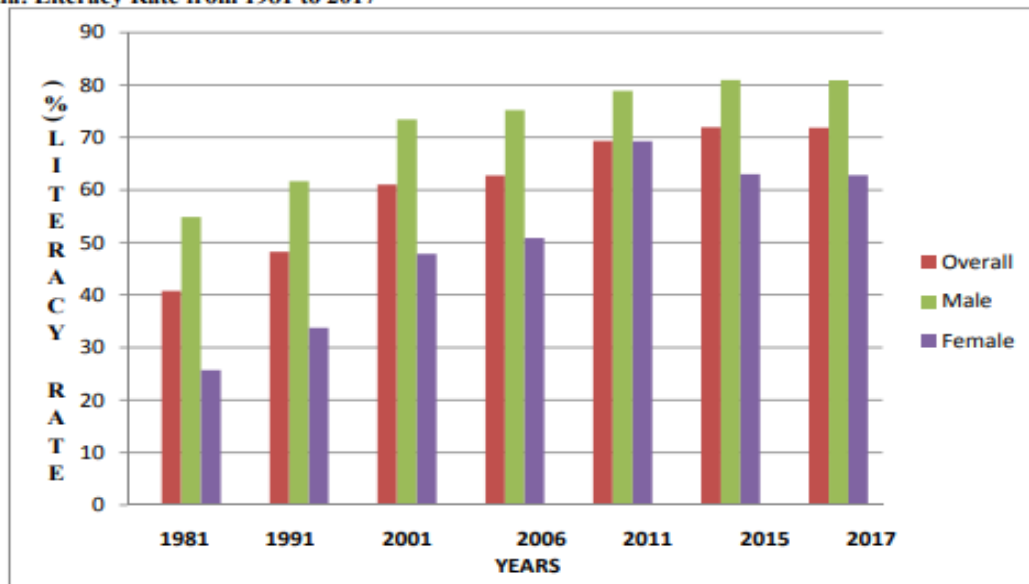


Fig. The literacy rate in India from 1981 to 2017. (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/271335/literacy-rate-in-india>)

2.3 Some statements regarding women education:

Women are the backbone of society. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule (1827, Pune) was a real philanthropist. He was the one to open first girl school in India and credited with opening first home for widows of the upper caste and a home for newborn girl children so that they can be saved from female infanticide.[6]

Highly educated women had high power of decision making and on the other hand uneducated women had low power of decision making. The major component of children's affair, level of decision making of women varies based on their level of education. Some important thoughts are:

1. "If you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation)".

Dr. James Kwegyir Aggrey

2. To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. **Mahatma Gandhi**

3. "There is no more valuable investment than in a girls' education." **Ban Ki Moon, secretary-general, United Nations**

4. "Real empowerment of women would be possible only through education, encouragement of economic self-dependence and provision of opportunities enabling the unfolding of one's full potential." **President Pranab Mukherjee**

5. I don't mind if I have to sit on the floor at school. All I want is education and I am afraid of no one." **Malala Yousufzai** .[7]

3. GOVERNMENT POLICIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA:

There is no doubt that the Government of India, since independence, has been working hard and fast to develop the status of women education in India and thereby to develop the status of women in India.[8] Several policies have been taken and several of them have been revised for better result. Here are some of them—

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), 1993: RMK is a national credit fund for women under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It was established in 1993 for socio-economic empowerment of women. It aims to provide financial services with backward and forward linkages for women in the unorganized sector through Intermediary Micro Finance Organizations (IMOs) and Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) and other organizations.

Swadhar, 1995: Swadhar's vision is to help and empower women in distress and achieve healthy development of underprivileged children through education, guidance, training and counselling, to ensure a reasonable quality of life. It started by counselling women going through a bad marriage or divorce; this was later expanded to cover all family disputes involving women. It conducts awareness programmes on domestic violence, women's rights, the need to maintain important documents, health and hygiene, etc, once every month. It has other activities as well.

Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS), 2009: Mother and Child Tracking system (MCTS) is a name-based tracking of pregnant women so that adequate and timely feedback may be given to the health workers who may, in turn, ensure that pregnant women receive adequate Ante-natal and Post-natal care besides encouraging institutional deliveries. The system also aims to track the new-borns so that timely and complete immunization may be ensured to them. MCTS has been implemented in all the States / UTs. It covers mothers from conception till 42 days after delivery. The infants are covered up to five years of age. Recently, MCTS has been included as Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). The total number of pregnant women registered under MCTS scheme recently crossed 1 crore mark.

Swayam Siddha, 2001: The long term objective of the scheme is to achieve an all-round empowerment of women, both social and economic empowerment. Direct access to and control over resources through income generating activities would be the main purpose of women SHGs under Swayam Sidha.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana Conditional Maternity Benefit plan (IGMSY-CMB), 2010: This scheme sponsored by the Central Government for pregnant women age 19 and over for their first two live births. This program provides money to help better health and nutrition of pregnant women. The beneficiary gets 4000/- in 3 installments. Any government employee doesn't come under this scheme. **Priyadarshini, 2011:** Priyadarshini is a pilot programme for Women Empowerment. This scheme offers women in seven districts, access to self-help groups and promotion of livelihood opportunities.

Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls – Sabla (RGSEAG), 2012: This scheme targets adolescent girls of 11 – 18. The scheme offers a package of benefits for improving their health and nutrition. This program offers many services on the central level to help women to become Self Supporting, to get nutritional supplementation, education, education of health, life skills and various types of vocational training.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), 1982: This scheme launched by the government to improve the socio-economic status of the poor women in the rural areas.

Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP): The Ministry of Women and Child Development has

launched this programme with the aim of developing skills of women for self and employment. The main targets of this scheme are rural women and urban poor. This scheme provides funds to help the women and poor. Funds are released to NGOs and not to the State Governments

National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)

The Mission contributes to empowering women socially, economically, erase crime and violence against women, educating women, establishing policies and programmes, and spreading awareness.

According to Business Dictionary, empowerment means, "A management practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with employees so that they can take initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance. Empowerment is based on the idea that giving employees skills, resources, authority, opportunity, motivation, as well holding them responsible and accountable for outcomes of their actions, will contribute to their competence and satisfaction".

Women Empowerment:

According to UNESCO, women empowerment means the following:

- Having decision-making power of their own
- Having access to information and resources for taking proper decision
- Having a range of options from which you can make choices (not just yes/no, either/or.).
- Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making.
- Having positive thinking on the ability to make change. [9]

4. PRESENT STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA:

The improvement in women's position and status became further evident when immediately after the independence, Indian women made their mark by becoming Governors, Cabinet ministers, and ambassadors. Several measures were taken by the Government of India to assign equal status to women in the economic, political and social fields. More avenues were opened to them to show their talents and have a sense of participation in national activities. The Constitution of India pledges equality of status and opportunity to men and women. The passage of several Acts by the Parliament and the process of social change brought about by industrialization and urbanization during the last few decades have done much for women's emancipation both legally, politically and socially. Indian women, like men, have the right to vote and the right to be elected. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the first women Prime Minister of India. a. She was considered to be the most powerful woman in the contemporary world. Women can serve on juries, and there are many women doctors, lawyers and even justices. A similar type of references are there in the field of sports and in the field of public services and so on.

CONCLUSION

The battle was started in 1947—this is the battle with the self, the battle to be mature, the battle to be self-sufficient, the battle to establish India as the best democracy in the world. The battle of the women also started on the same day. Several fights have been won, and some have been lost too. Some goals have been reached, some are yet to reach, and some other are still to be started. But the process has started of educating the women of India and to empower them. A long way is still to go. A large number of women are still in the darkness. But a huge number of women in independent India have brightened the face of India in front of the world. So, it is hoped that, though the battle is a tough one, it will surely be won, and the Indian women will go hand in hand with the rest of the world.

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