

## Women Education In The 21st Century In India :Women Empowerment And Gender Equality

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### Abstract:

According to Indian Constitution RTE-2009 is considered as a fundamental right. It describes a right to free and compulsory education for children between 6-14 years of age irrespective of caste, creed, race and sex. Education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Discrimination of women from womb to tomb is well known. There is continued inequality and vulnerability of women in all sectors and women oppressed in all spheres of life, they need to be empowered in all walk of life. In order to fight against the socially constructed gender biases, women have to swim against the system that requires more strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment, and empowerment will come from the education. And rural development will come from women empowerment. This paper indicates the women empowerment and gender equality 21<sup>st</sup> century in India.

**Key words:** Women Education, Women Empowerment, Gender Equality, Political Field.

### Introduction

Indian scriptures speak about Masculine-Feminine Goddess. Now it is the time to establish that masculine-feminine balance in our society. If we gone through past, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Matangini Hazra, Savitri Bai Phule, Mother Teresa, Kalpana Chawla had played an important role in the development of the nation. Men and women are the two main pillars of our society. 48.80% female population and 51.80% male population i.e. half of the population of our country is women. So, without their development socio-economic progress of the nation is not be possible. For developing a nation, a woman has a prominent role. A woman can control population growth. An educated woman has capability to manage her home as well as professional life. A child first learn from home and the first teacher is mother. The status of women education from ancient age is overall good. But at

the middle age its was not too good. But now in 21<sup>st</sup> century is better.

Conservation, poverty, illiteracy, sexual harassment, malnutrition of girls and social restrictions are some of the factors which affect women education in India. The Third Millennium Development Goal aimed to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and by all levels of education not later than 2015 but still in the 21<sup>st</sup> century women are facing so many problems like- sex discrimination, high percentage of illiteracy, female infanticide, child marriage, dowry system, sexual harassment, rape etc. But well-educated women can access their rights properly. They feel self-sufficient from the dominance of the men. Now they are playing important role in the field of Education, Health, Technology as well as Politics. By giving proper education to women, gender equality, women empowerment and can be possible. Taking this situation into consideration this study has been conducted.

### Objectives of the study

1. To know the role of education in gender equality.
2. To know the role of education in women empowerment.
3. To examine the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Political Field.

### Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature. It has been done on the basis of the secondary sources of data like books, research journals, newspaper articles and different websites.

### Data Analysis

Collected data was analyzed qualitatively.

### **To know the role of Education in gender equality.**

UNICEF says Gender Equality, means that women & men and girls & boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike. Gender Equality means giving women rights and opportunities that are equal to those which men have. Achieving this equality will provide benefits to all. Millions of girls and young women across the world still face huge barriers to education. A large gender gap emerges which was highlighted Educational Statistics report released by MHRD in 2018 male literacy rate 78% while for females it lags behind at 65.8%. Article 14 of the constitution of India ensures to women the right to equality. Article 15(1) specially prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, age, caste, Birth Place.

Education is the main weapon to remove gender inequalities in our society. Through the proper education women can achieve their economic empowerment. It provides them economic support and social respect. Education help women to increase their level as male in society and all aspect of any organization. They are more conscious about their health as well as children's health and family. They can take decision on family planning which improves quality of life. The society in which we live has been shaped historically by males. Basic education helps women have access to their social and legal rights and enables them to participate in politics. When education provides women with literacy and numeracy skills, it helps them acquire critical knowledge for everyday life and they can take their own decision. That's why we need to educate women to remove gender inequalities from our society. Some strategies for gender equality are stopping sexual harassment and child marriage, raising aspiration of girls and their parents, empowering mothers so that they can enable their daughters to go to school, give proper value to, women's work and get women into power.

### **2.To know the role of education in women empowerment.**

Empowerment includes the action of raising the status of women through education, raising

awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society. Women Empowerment is included as one of the major goals in the Millennium Development Goals. Education is a milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to encounter their challenges of life. It increases women's self-confidence and enables them to find better job opportunities. Education empowers women to make choices that improve their children's health, their health, happiness, comfort, safety, prosperity etc. With the easy accessibility of e-learning men as well as women can now study from their homes freely. To eliminate gender biasness and encourage the education of women the Government should establish schools, colleges and Universities exclusively for women especially in the rural areas of the state.

The Government of India is running various welfare schemes and policies, both at State and Central levels for the empowerment of woman. Some of the major programmes are Swayamsidha programme (2001), Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme (2012), Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY, 2010), Kishori Shakti Yojana (2006), Swadgar (2002), Ujjawala (2016), Priyadarshini (2012), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana (2015), Mahila E-Haat (2016) and many more.

### **3.To examine the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Political Field.**

Greater participation of women in social and political sphere is essential to make the social and political institutions more representative. It serves as a tool for empowerment of women and contributes to gender sensitive decision making. As far as political participation is concerned, now women have a good representation in India's Lok Sabha (Lower House), Rajya Sabha (Upper House) and also in State Assemblies. A total of 78 females have been elected in the General Election 2019. Here is some important female person who has a important role in Indian politics, those are Mamata Banerjee C.M OF West Bengal, Nirmala Sitharaman is the present Finance Minister of Corporate Affairs (India), Sonia Gandhi is the president of the Indian National Congress, Smriti Irani is a Minister in the Union Cabinet of India.

### Suggestion

1. Open of more schools-a primary school for 300 pupils, a middle school for 1500 pupils within the radius of 3 miles and a secondary school within a radius of 5 miles.
2. Appointment of more women teachers.
3. Special incentives or teachers in rural areas.
4. Provision of quarters for women teachers.
5. Free education to girls.
6. Scholarships for talented girl students should be arranged. Now so many scholarships like KanyashreePrakalpa, Swami Vivekananda Scholarship, UGC grant for single girl child etc. are being provided to girl students so that they can enjoy the opportunities properly.
7. Government initiatives along with NGOs or Voluntary organizations should be executed for women education.
8. Women education has to be made compulsory in all the levels of education.
9. Strict implementation of the schemes and policies for women empowerment should be done.
10. Women should be properly aware of their rights. Law should not be restricted to papers only but the implementation of law should be there so that every woman can be familiar with rights.

### Conclusion

Great educator, philosopher Swami Vivekananda said, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved; it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing." Women play a crucial role in initiating the advancement and growth of any society in nations across the world. India is no exception to this rule.

The women of today are very conscious of their social, economic, intellectual, 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 to the problems of training and development of women. It may be pointed out here that there cannot be educated men without educated women.

Though at some level's crimes like dowry, rape, sexual harassment at office or public place and molestation, eve-teasing, even after over seventy

years of independence are exploiting women, which is the most shameful side of our society. Yet one can't deny that from 2000 to 2010 Programmes like, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' and Saakshar Bharat Mission for Female Literacy" have helped to increase the literacy rate from less than 10% to more than 50% today. India proudly possesses a glorious picture of women empowerment as stalwart women like Kalpana Chawla (first woman to go space), Arundhati Bhattacharya (first woman to become the chairperson of the State Bank of India), Indira KrishnamurtiNooyi (Chairperson & CEO of Pepsi Co.), Medha Patkar (Social Reformer), Kiran Bedi (first woman IPS officer) and many more with their outstanding achievements.

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