

Empowering WOMEN

THROUGH EDUCATION

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Empowering Women through Education

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Editorial

It can be unequivocally asserted that a human being learns from his womb to tomb. The question now comes uppermost in education and its impact on society pointing to the development of the human beings. Many socio-educational views of some eminent educationists pave the way for its origination and augmentation. We have gone through the essays penned by our colleagues to abate our age old gender discrimination. Women must be given equal opportunities in every field. Moreover, they must also be given equal pay and honour. We can empower women by abolishing child marriage. Various social and state aided programmes must be held to eradicate their financial crises. They can also be taught skills by means of education to break the social strata detrimental to the society. The articles included here are enriched with the solemn views on women empowerment discussed meticulously and pedagogically. This publication will help the researchers and the common people as well. Finally, we convey our heartfelt gratitude to all the persons concerned for the publication of this volume.

15, December, 2022

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MESSAGE

I am extremely happy to welcome you all to my home, my constituency, my district headquarters of Krishnagar, Nadia which houses the Kanyashree University, the first of its kind in West Bengal. Set up by a woman Chief Minister in an area represented by a woman Parliamentarian and presided over by a woman Vice Chancellor- it is only fitting that the title of the book is Empowering Woman Through Education.

Bengal has had a long and rich history of educating its women and changing deep rooted social evils through educated and empowered woman.

I hope this edited book is the first of many to carry on our state's glorious tradition and I wish it all success.

God bless each and every one of us.

With Thanks

Mahua Moitra
Member of Parliament

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Empowering Women through Education

Prof. (Dr.) Dibyendu Bhattacharyya

Abstract

Empowering women through education has becoming a stretching issue all over the world. Empowering of women is the self-supportive mechanism starting from decision making and ending to social well-being.

Women empowerment have been partly successful to establish their status in terms of self-esteem, right to choice, access to opportunities and resources, right to control to their own lives and obviously social empowerment. However, the social situation is not the same as it is expected from empowerment. Therefore, Empowering Women through Education is an emergent need of the society to be blended with the other various form of empowerment to have its complete output.

Introduction :

What is Empowerment?

- Self-supportive mechanism starting from decision making and ending to social well-being.
- It is selective and transforming all those desired goals into effective outcomes.

Why Empowerment?

- Empowering for lacking individual right to be upgraded to women's decision making.
- Higher access in education and other social democratic set up.
- Women participation in social process is the essential condition of National development.
- Empowerment for human rights and also for social responsibilities.

Women empowerment and Education :

Some social barriers which effect the enrolment of women education listed below:

- Socio economic condition.
- Early marriage
- Social Restrictions.
- Household management.
- Gender discrimination.
- Educational opportunity.

In last decade's women literacy rate as well as their participation in higher education has been increasing remarkably but in terms of equality and empowerment, it is not possible to have had its target in a useful way leaving behind some conflicts, which includes:

1. Cognitive empowerment vs Non-cognitive empowerment.
2. Existence vs Reality.
3. Women Empowerment vs Gender empowerment.
4. Development vs Pseudo development.

Women Empowerment can be visualized with the critical analysis of several conflicts as stated. Now we are trying to find out exact components of women empowerment with the discussion based on conflicts and its real outcomes.

1. Cognitive empowerment vs Non-cognitive empowerment.

- For interpreting empowerment on the basis of education among women cognitive as well as non cognitive empowerment to be blended.
- Non cognitive empowerment stands for empowerment based on affective domain that is development of personality pattern, development of positive attitude, emotion and other non scholastic skills and abilities.

- Family Environment is another non cognitive factors affecting women empowerment. Attitude of parents and other family members to be changed so that girl students can get entry to the higher education.
- It is true that enrolment of girl students have been increased in last decades and in no way it can be said that they are lacking in higher education but unless it is incorporated into the employability self-expressive ability to be compromised.
- Social support to be provided ensuring empowerment in terms of administrative point of view and also for policy framing favouring women empowerment to be actualised.

2.Existence vs Reality:

The influence of women empowerment is partial and not it has been spreading from all rural parts of our country rather it is urban centric. Therefore it is a conflict existing between empowerment what should be and what it is in reality. The points based on empowerment and its reality were presented below in a tabular form :

Sl.no.	Empowerment	Reality
1.	Education	Near to70% of women are now literate in India. Even some of advanced states in our country where literacy status is almost 90% or more than of it but till empowerment is far from reality. Based on statistics of social victims against women are reported from those states it is clear that many miles to go for having empowerment to control victims or abuse against women.
2.	Right to choice	Legally it is satisfactory. But till choice is male dominated.

3.	Right to control to their own lives	Women have their control to their own lives specially in urban areas and some selected places of any state of India but total control is not reported.
4.	Social Empowerment	Empowerment is meaningful if it is supported by society.
5.	Decision Making	Decision making is the output of Empowerment.

3. Empowerment vs Gender empowerment.

Gender Discrimination :

Women have the right for getting equal opportunity like men in different parts of the society but when that situation is hampered is called gender discrimination. Some of the aspects shown in the table below :

Right of Women	Gender Discrimination
Equal Opportunity	When the opportunity is not available or hampered.
Gender role	Sometimes gender role of our society causes discrimination
Social role	Women are not accepted always.
Employer's role	In many workplaces, women do not get the chance to be promoted or are not given important roles.

Development vs Pseudo development

Empowerment leading to development is essential but result of empowerment is not always reflected in real situation. Suppose in my Education Department in Kalyani University in all semesters about 70% students are girl students but when we find how many faculty members in the department are female it was astonishing to see that only one out of 10 faculties is female.

So only education can not solve the matter. Suppose in Kerala almost 95% female is literate but rate of employability is just 23%. Therefore

it suggests that out of 100 literate female only 23% they can socialize themselves in working condition and take decision to their own where most of the female they are engaging household work or may be involved some unorganized sectors but they are out of main streaming where their decision making do matter.

Similarly some of the states in our country where literacy rate is higher but social victims against women are also higher. Therefore literacy can not supplement the social abuse and domestic violence against women unless social awareness and legal and administrative support is favouring the women.

Therefore to explore the true picture of women empowerment a Women Empowerment Index has been prepared considering average three aspects of women empowerment 1. Rate of Literacy 2. Employability and 3. Rate of social victims.

Therefore the formula of Women Empowerment Index(WEI) will be as follows:

$WEI = \text{Female Literacy Rate \% (A)} + \text{Employability rate\%(B)} + \text{Social Empowerment rate\%(C)} / 3$ or, $WEI = A/3 + B/3 + C/3$

In case of Literacy rate and Employability direct rate of percentage have been taken but in case of Social Empowerment it is indirectly calculated from the social victims happened statewise in India.

Calculation of Social Empowerment Scale :

1. First % of Victims statewise to be collected.
2. Subtract the amount from 100.
3. Then finally multiplied by a 8 point scale as follows:
 - if the score is high multiplied by .6
 - if the score is average multiplied by .5
 - if the score is low multiplied by .4

Table of Women Empowerment Index(WEI)

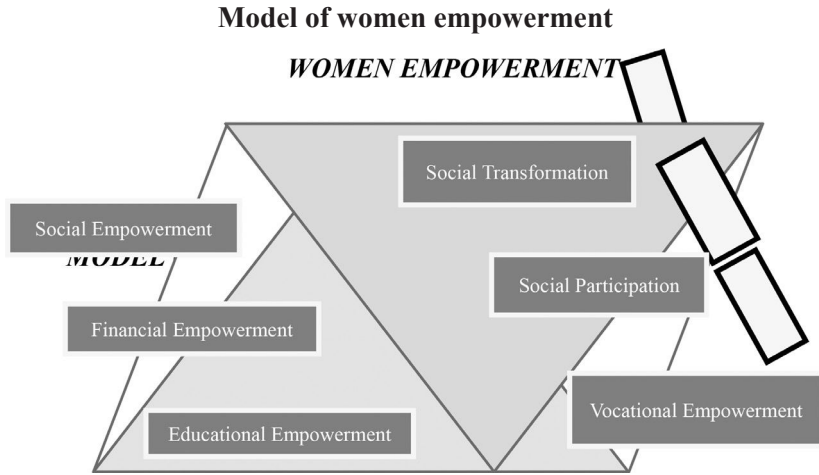
States & Union Territories	Male Literacy Rate %	Female Literacy Rate %	Average Literacy Rate %	Employment Rate	Social Victims against women in %	Social Empowerment	WEI
Mizoram	93.72	89.4	91.58	59	7.1	55.74	68.04
Nagaland	83.29	76.69	80.11	55.9	0.8	59.52	64.03
Tripura	92.18	83.15	87.75	45.3	4.5	57.3	61.91
Sikkim	87.29	76.43	82.2	48.2	3.5	57.9	60.84
Meghalaya	77.17	73.78	75.48	49.9	6.3	56.22	59.96
Chhattisgarh	85.4	68.7	77.3	54.2	7.2	55.68	59.52
Manipur	86.49	73.17	79.85	46.4	2.3	58.62	59.39
Tamil Nadu	87.9	77.9	82.9	39.3	1	59.4	58.86
Kerala	97.4	95.2	96.2	23.7	11.1	53.34	57.41
Maharashtra	90.7	78.4	84.8	32.8	3.9	57.66	56.28
Puducherry	92.12	81.22	86.55	28.1	1.3	59.22	56.18
Jharkhand	83	64.7	74.3	48.2	7.7	55.38	56.09
Arunachal Pradesh	73.69	59.57	66.95	51.6	8.6	54.84	55.33
Telangana	80.5	65.1	72.8	42.9	4.7	57.18	55.06
Andhra Pradesh	73.4	59.5	66.4	47.0	4.2	57.48	54.78
Lakshadweep	96.11	88.25	92.28	15.5	0	60.00	54.58
Karnataka	83.4	70.5	77.2	33.3	1.6	59.04	54.28
A&N islands	90.11	81.84	86.27	25.1	7.	55.8	54.24
Assam	90.1	81.2	85.9	24.5	10.5	53.7	53.13
Goa	92.81	81.84	87.4	21.2	9.4	54.36	52.46
Uttarakhand	94.3	80.7	87.6	20.5	9.6	54.24	51.81
West Bengal	84.8	76.1	80.5	20.5	2.3	58.62	51.74
Gujarat	89.5	74.8	82.4	19.9	1.6	59.04	51.24
Daman & Diu	91.48	79.59	87.07	15.2	3.1	58.14	50.97
Odisha	84	70.3	77.3	23.7	6.2	56.28	50.09

Himachal Pradesh	92.9	80.5	86.6	15.1	10	54.00	49.86
Rajasthan	80.8	57.6	69.7	31.9	15.9	50.46	49.35
Delhi	93.7	82.4	88.7	11.7	13.5	51.9	48.66
Punjab	88.5	78.5	83.7	9.4	7.1	55.74	47.88
Haryana	88	71.3	80.4	18.7	10.9	53.46	47.82
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	86.46	65.93	77.65	16.1	0	60.00	47.34
Madhya Pradesh	81.2	65.5	73.7	17.2	6.2	56.28	46.32
Bihar	79.7	60.5	70.9	17.8	1.3	59.22	45.84
Chandigarh	90.54	81.38	86.43	8.1	20.7	47.48	45.65
Jammu & Kashmir	85.7	68	77.3	7.9	3.5	57.9	44.6
Uttar Pradesh	81.8	63.4	73.0	12.0	2.8	58.32	44.57
All-India	84.7	70.3	77.7				

Findings and conclusion:

The Women Empowerment Index has been prepared with the help of above formula based on average of Female Literacy, Employability and Social Empowerment.

Similarly a model of empowerment may be suggested considering for empowerment education is essential condition but to have empowerment a reality to be merged with employability as well as social empowerment to be incorporated with it.



Women Empowerment is the self supportive mechanism started from educational empowerment and followed by economic and social empowerment . But women empowerment will be meaningful when it is blended with social transformation and it stands for when the decision making capacity of women is giving direction for social construction.

Therefore it can be interpreted that greater will be the empowerment index higher will be the possibility of social support of women leading to meaningful women empowerment.

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A Study on Women's Empowerment in India: Progress and Prospect

Dr. Abhedananda Panigrahi &
Arpita Chakrabarti

Abstract

Women empowerment is a central concept in the development of a nation. Empowering women is a multidimensional holistic approach. It covers numerous features, but economic empowerment is considered to be one of the most important aspects of the development and welfare of women. However, women's equality and empowerment have always given precedence and have been taken the utmost care of by stakeholders. This paper critically investigates the Indian status among other countries and tries to find out preparedness to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the United Nations. An argument on the account of secondary sources such as the review of existing literature published in the journals, books, reports of various NGOs, Government and international organizations and websites is developed by this paper. This paper critically examines women's empowerment in India; its various models and dimensions. Constitutional safeguards as well as plans and programmes by the government and their implementation as indicators of women's empowerment are also discussed in this paper.

Keywords : Women Empowerment; Holistic Approach; Government; Sustainable Development.

Introduction :

In the 21st century, the world is enthusiastically progressing and taking up women to partake in uplifting the society and economy of the world. Women's empowerment is the key to strengthening their participation in decision- making as it is the most important key to socio-economic development. India is a developing country and its economic status is also deficient because of its patriarchal system. Women constitute roughly 50% of the nation's population and a majority of them remain economically dependent, without employment. Women's empowerment

is crucial in creating a bright future for the family, society and country. Traditionally being a patriarchal society, women have a secondary role to play in every household in India. However, issues related to the welfare of women have always been a priority among policymakers since independence, though the path has witnessed repositioning with time and, as per the requirement from the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards, there has been a remarkable shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. India has also endorsed various global efforts such as the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993, the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development and Peace for the 21st century. In this background, this paper discusses the status of women's empowerment in India and its status on the international spectrum with regard to the achievement of SDG Goal 5 of the United Nations by 2030. The following segment deals with the review of the literature and discusses the concept of women empowerment with supportive models along with dimensions. This paper provides the research objectives and methodology of the study and analyses various legislation and government programmes for women empowerment, variegated initiatives taken for women empowerment by different N.G.O.s and corporate sectors, and international comparison regarding the status of women empowerment. This is followed by suggestions to meet the challenges and a path forward to move ahead. The overall development of our country is only possible when the women of India are empowered. So, in order to make the country fully developed, women's empowerment is an essential tool for the country in the 21st century.

Review of Literature

Empowerment refers to a situation where the powerless gain greater control over resources and ideologies. Terms like autonomy, power, status and agency has been associated with empowerment. The Indian constitution has distinctly given an equal level playing ground to women and has directed authorities to frame rules and regulations to safeguard their rights. However, feminist scholars during the 1970s created a (then)

new conceptual and strategic framework of women's empowerment as a way to challenge patriarchy and as a radical approach concerned with transforming power relations in favour of women's rights and gender equality in the 1980s (Batliwala, 1993, 2007) and as an individual process of self-transformation during the 1990s (Batliwala, 1993; Kabeer, 1994; Rowlands, 1997; Sen, 1997). They highlight the complex reciprocal relationship between women's self-understanding (Kabeer, 1994) and capacity for self-expression (Sen, 1997), as well as women's access to and control over material resources. The decade of the nineties may be considered as an impertinent phase for women's empowerment throughout the world as most of the world conferences highlighted seizing the opportunities. It accentuated issues of reproductive and sexual rights, violence against women and gender inequality. Even among the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of the UN developed in 2000, it was targeted to be achieved by 2015. Promoting gender equality and empowering women was Goal three. Women empowerment is defined as the change in the context of a woman's life, which enables her increased capacity for leading a fulfilling human life. It is reflected both in external qualities (health, mobility, education and awareness, status in the family, participation in decision-making) and internal qualities (self-awareness and self-confidence) in Human Development in South Asia (2000) (Mathew, 2003). The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been rebranded as the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the empowerment of Women.

Objectives Of The Study:

The following are the specific objectives of the study

- To know about the forms of Empowerment of Women.
- How Education has helped Women's Empowerment.
- To overview how Indian society is changing through Women's Empowerment.

Methodology Of The Study:

The present study is a qualitative study. The researchers here collected data from different secondary sources like books, magazines, journals, various government organizations, websites etc.

Discussion:

Obj 1 .Forms of Empowerment of Women :

Women empowerment means women gain more power and control over their own lives. The empowerment of women is consequential in itself, as well as the improvement of their political, social, and economic and health status. Additionally, it is necessary for the achievement of sustainable development. If it is to be elucidated beyond the two self-explanatory words, ‘Women Empowerment’ refers to the complete emancipation of women from the socio-economic shackles of dependency and deprivation. In order to equalize the value of both genders, women’s empowerment needs to be prompt action in this country. Every woman needs to be aware of her rights from her own end to be truly empowered. These are given below –

Economic empowerment :

Women’s access to economic resources and opportunities, including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information is increased by economic empowerment. For achieving sustainable development goals, women’s economic empowerment is essential.

Political empowerment :

Establishing mechanisms for women’s equal participation and equitable representative action at all levels of the political process and public life in each community and society and enabling women to articulate their needs and concerns is necessary to ensure the full and equal participation of women in the decision-making process in all areas of life. The Women’s Reservation Bill or the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, is a pending Bill in India that proposes to reserve 33% of all seats in the Lok Sabha, the Lower House of Parliament of India, and the state legislative assemblies. This Bill has been passed by the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Parliament in March 2010. It needs to be passed by the Lok Sabha and at least 50% of all state legislative assemblies before it is put before the president of India for his approval. In India, women have been able to gain some power in politics due to reform movements before and after independence and took an active part in politics.

Educational empowerment :

One of the most important means to empower women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process is education. It is a key factor for women's empowerment, development and welfare. Women's education in India plays a determining role in the overall development of the country. Education is considered as a milestone for women's empowerment because it enables them to respond to challenges, to confront their traditional roles and change their lives.

Social empowerment :

Social empowerment is a process to change the distribution of power in interpersonal relations among different people, cultures, and activities of the society. Social empowerment refers to the enabling force that builds women's social relations and their position in social structures. Social empowerment addresses the social discrimination existing in society based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion or gender.

Health empowerment :

Women's health and safety is another important area as the empowerment of women begins with a guarantee of their health and safety. The health concerns of women are paramount for the well-being of a country and are important factors in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. The government of India is conscious of the health status of women in the country. The National Health Policy 2002 pays little to no attention to the health of women, which is considered the ambit of the National Population Policy 2000. To achieve continuous improvement in female health outcomes, maintaining and expanding education for women and girls is crucial. HIV/AIDS is the leading killer of women of reproductive age in many third world countries. Better-educated women and girls are more likely to use contraception, which helps them avoid diseases, and delay childbirth. However, in maternal health care there are still many alarming concerns.

Psychological empowerment

The psychological component of women empowerment would include the development of feelings that women can act upon to improve their

condition. This means the formation of the belief that they can succeed in changing efforts.

Legal empowerment

Awareness of the civil rights, exercising legal rights whenever necessary, preparing and canvassing documents regarding legal freedom for women, providing good literacy programs regarding legal empowerment are necessary.

In the future, women's empowerment should be there from all dimensions. National development is impossible without women empowerment. Therefore, women's empowerment plays a vital role in the development of family, society and, above all, the nation.

Obj 2. How Education has helped Women Empowerment.

To develop the condition of women, the role of education is noteworthy as it can bring a change in society and culture. Education is regarded as the most vital tool for empowering women in society. It is not only limited to developing the personality of an individual, but also plays a critical role in economic, social and cultural development. UNESCO put its effort in order to achieve equal opportunity for education regardless of age, gender, race or any other difference in social and economic status. Education makes women conscious, which leads them to make an effort to change their condition. Education helps men and women claim their rights and realize their potential in the economy.

Obj 3. How Indian society is changing by Women Empowerment.

Women empowerment is used both in the general and specific sense. In the general sense, it means making women self-dependent and giving them all the freedoms and opportunities. In a specific sense, women's empowerment means improving the position of women in society's power structure. Women empowerment is a process of acquiring power for women in order to understand their rights and to perform their responsibilities towards oneself and others in the most effective way. All gender-based discrimination in all institutions and structures of society can be abolished by women's empowerment. Women's empowerment means their capacity to participate as equal partners in the cultural, social, economic and political systems of a society. In the

process of empowerment, women should consider their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats and move forward to unfold their own potential to achieve their goals through self-development. In the past few millennia, various great changes have occurred in the status of women in India. Women are actively participating in the democratic process and elections, which can lead to enhancing their status. In the nationalist movement, many women actively supported and participated, and secured eminent positions and offices in administration and public life in free India. Education of women has helped them to become aware of political problems and they are gradually becoming active participants in political life. Many women are enrolling themselves as members of political parties, attending party meetings, conventions and carrying out political programs. Some women are also attaining an influential political stature of their own and have become instrumental in shaping public opinion for the betterment of women's conditions in society.

Major Findings :

The major findings of the study are as follows:-

1. The present study reveals that there are various forms of empowerment of women. This study demonstrates that the empowerment of women occurs when they are involved in decision-making in social, economic and political spheres and they are also able to play an equal role as men in society. Sustainable development of the country should be possible if we promote the role of women in every social, political and economic activity of the development.
2. This study reveals that education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. This study shows that educated women have a greater chance of achieving high empowerment levels.
3. This study shows that the role of Indian women has been changing because of growing women's empowerment. Women's empowerment has the power to change many things in the society and country.

Suggestions :

Some of the suggestions are mentioned below:-

1. Governments should give more emphasis on female education to increase the empowerment level of women.
2. Governments should create more opportunities for women's empowerment.
3. The Government should create awareness of women's education and the availability of support services among women.
4. More schemes related to women's entrepreneurship could be a great help to empower and uplift the status of women in India.
5. It is also necessary for governments to invest more money in making the environment favourable and sensitive for girls.

Conclusions:

Therefore, we see that societies have accepted women's empowerment for the development of the world, and women are actively participating in and guiding their own development. Women's education is essential in the 21st century for women's empowerment. Education plays a critical role in enabling women and girls to participate in decisions that affect their lives and in improving their social status. Women's empowerment makes them independent decision-makers. With women's empowerment, social, political and economic development of a country is possible. So, to develop a country, women should be empowered from all directions. For this, women should be provided more opportunities and advantages.

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Empowering Rural Women Through Tourism : An Overview

Arpita Majumder

Abstract

In most developing countries, gender inequality is a great hindrance for development. Discrimination between men and women is a practice in every patriarchal society throughout the world. Women are basically designated as care giver, home maker, someone's mother, daughter, wife and so on. They have very little freedom to spend a rupee without her father or husband's consent. They have no freedom to take decision for their life as well . Women empowerment actually means the process of strengthening them to make capable for their own decision making as they can make capable themselves for their family ,community , traditional forces of gender biases and so on. Over decades tourism activities and its associated sectors are flourishing over the world in many aspect to develop the areas in local level or national level. Tourism is using as a tool to empower women and help them to increase power and control over nature and natural resources. Tourism development can be a great incentive for development and assist women for economic, educational, and political empowerment. Tourism offers many opportunities for developing countries and it can be a machine for empowering women of rural society. Many countries are practicing different kind of tourism activities and women are participating actively in this sector. Of all people employed in the tourism sector 60-70% are women (UNWTO, 2008). This paper tries to show the potentials and success of the tourism activities to empower the rural women along with the role of women in tourism development in sustainable way.

Keywords : Gender Inequality, Women's Empowerment, Tourism Development, Gender Tourism.

Introduction :

Discrimination, inequality exists everywhere. Caste prejudice , racial discrimination, gender inequality are the very olden problems of society. Our modern society also confined with this social system. In most developing countries, gender inequality is a major obstacle for development. Gender inequality is getting more dangerous than the Indian social system of Vedic period and gradually it's going to inferior. "Gender Inequality means that men and women are not treated equally. It weakens women in many areas such as health ,education, and business life."(Wikipedia) There are different form of gender inequality ,like gender bias in education, gender pay gap, access in health care facility, gender bias in agriculture, child marriage and violence , collecting water, lack of representative at decision making level. .Discrimination between men and women is a practice in every patriarchal society throughout the world. Women are basically designated as care giver, home maker ,someone's mother, daughter, wife and so on. They have very little freedom to spend a rupee without her father or husband's consent. They have no freedom to take decision for their life as well. Women Empowerment puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision making and in the economic sphere on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision making.

Over decades tourism activities and its associated sectors are flourishing over the world in many aspect to develop the areas in local level or national level .Tourism is using as a tool to empower women and help them to increase power and control over nature and natural resources .Tourism development can be a great incentive for development and assist women for economic, educational, and political empowerment. Tourism offers many opportunities for developing countries and it can be a machine for empowering women of rural society. Many countries are practicing different kind of tourism activities and women are participating actively in this sector. Of all people employed in the tourism sector 60-70% are women(UNWTO).

This paper tries to show the potentials and success of the tourism activities to empower the rural women along with the role of women in tourism development in sustainable way.

Literature Review

Now a days women empowerment is a concerning concept for the betterment of women and so many research works are going on. Tourism is one of the potential tools for the betterment of women throughout the world. In many literature, researchers stated the importance of different form of tourism for women's empowerment. Ramchurjee N. (2011) mentioned in her study that "tourism presents a wide range of income generation opportunities for women. Tourism has the potential to be a vehicle for the empowerment of women in Karnataka. It provides better opportunities for women's participation in the workforce, women's entrepreneurship, and women's leadership than other sectors of the economy." Ramjamani A, Rizal P, (2013) concluded in their study that Tourism industry is one of the important source for empowering women. Tourism can also have indirect results in greater local access to services, such as water supplies or health clinics. (Scheyvens, 2000).

In communities where culturally and environmentally appropriate forms of tourism are occurring, and where women are involved in running or servicing tourism ventures, this often leads to greater respect for women (Scheyvens, 2000).

Objective:

The main objective of the study is to highlight the potentials of tourism activities for empowering women showing some successful cases and also try to focus on the role of women in tourism development.

Methodology:

This qualitative study has been done based on secondary data collecting from different sources from websites, books, tourism related articles etc.

Gender Inequality and Women's Empowerment:

In the developing countries women are rarely seem to be equal to men in terms of social, economical and political rights. Gender inequality affects on the access to resources, economic opportunities etc. The condition of rural women is worsen in developing countries. Empowerment of women is a critical aspect of promoting gender

equality, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives (Ampamuza, Heizden, Hendriks, Klunder, et al, 2008). Women's Empowerment is a multi-dimensional concept. According to Pillai (1995), "Empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life ." Empowerment includes, Social Empowerment, Economic Empowerment and Political Empowerment. Women's empowerment is playing vital role to sustainable development.

Women's Empowerment and Tourism:

Tourism is an important part of world's GDP (more then 10%) and creates around 8% of world's employment. Of all people employed in the tourism sector 60-70% are women (UNWTO, 2008). The United Nations World travel Organization (UNWTO) implemented an Action Plan to Empower Women through Tourism. Tourism has potentials to empower women in many ways increasing their power over natural resources as well as their way of living. (Ampamuza, Heizden, Hendriks, Klunder, et al, 2008) mentioned in their study ,that women can be benefitted by tourism likewise:

“Increasing power and control over natural resources:

Tourism development could be a tool to introduce environmental conscious practices within livelihoods by stressing the importance of conservation and sustainable practices within the environment. It can help as anykind of tourism supply and thus it can be a new income generator.

Economic empowerment:

Narrowing the gap between men and women in the economic sphere, for instance through empowerment by micro-credit programs could greatly contribute to improving gender equality. Tourism can function as an instrument for economic empowerment by opening up new markets for small and medium enterprises.

Educational empowerment:

Tourism can be used as a sector where women from all hierarchies in

society, with all types of educational background, can be trained and educated for certain skills within the tourism industry. Women can engage in different forms of creative entrepreneurship which gives women a whole range of skills, like speaking different languages, hospitality skills, guiding tourists, managing project, and so on.

Political empowerment:

The equality of women to men is still not guaranteed in basic human rights, the access and/or control over land, in employment and earnings, and in participation in decision making processes in general. During the implementation or management of tourism projects this problem could be acknowledged by including women in the planning and organisational process, with the aim of giving them a voice in the process. Tourism could empower women by giving them more power and control over what happens to their community, their livelihood.”

Success of tourism for Empowerment of Rural Women:

In most of Asian countries, women’s role in the society appears to be changing in the cities but the status of the women especially in rural area is still in relatively low position. Many Asian countries now practice tourism as the tool for nation’s development .Gender based tourism now a very concerning term in tourism sector to empower the women. Besides eco-tourism, rural tourism, community based tourism are very much potential for the betterment of rural women.

There are just some broad examples of some tourism sectors in different states of India which contribute to the empowerment of rural women.

Women Empowerment through village Tourism in Gujrat:

In Gujrat,a member-based organization namely Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) tries to empower poor self-employed worker in villages. Ecotourism Site in Ganeshpura Women Tree Growers Cooperative has been developed with the help of the co-operative and the local research station of Gujrat Agriculture University using Scientific agriculture practices along with horticulture,agro-forestry educating the village women. This ecotourism centre is being a source of income generation for the rural women.Ganeshpura Women Tree

Growers Cooperative is viewed to be successful for the empowerment of women as SEWA has helped landless poor women in Mehsana district in which the areas have been developed as ecotourism site. Here also Vanlaxmi cooperative stands as a model for the entire district implementing successful collective agriculture for the poor women.

Ecotourism site in Salt pans raise awareness among the community and it will also provide free and clean environment to the community and created a chance to see the Wild Ass, Black bucks, migrant birds to the tourist. The organization developed ecotourism site in salt pans is considered to be a start as the empowerment project. Ecotourism development in the salt pans might bring some improvements to the living condition for women energizing the facilities and infrastructural development. In 1990, SEWA took up a three years rehabilitation project of 25 villages, which were affected due to the construction of Sukhi reservoir project. Sukhi Mahila SEWA Mandal (SMSM) also planned to develop ecotourism site in Sukhi Dam Area with the help of community and poor women generating income source with poultry and mushroom farming and nursery raising. It will also help in maintaining the traditional tribal culture. (Ampumuza, Heijden, Hendriks, Klunder, et al, et al 2008).

Women Empowerment through village Tourism in Rajasthan:

Rajasthan the famous destination to the tourist throughout the year for eco-tourism, heritage tourism, wild-life tourism and also pilgrimage tourism. Women of some villages such as Shyampura, Achrol, Samode etc. develop their handicrafts industry made the items like bags, cushion covers, block paintings, quilts, bangles etc. keeping in mind the tourist demand. They are also engaged in camel safari, home stay facilities for the tourists which give them economic freedom and also reduce domestic violence, child marriage from the society. (Kumari & Sankar, 2020).

Women Empowerment through village Tourism in Kerala:

In Kerala many tourist destinations specially ecotourism sites (Thenmala Ecotourism) helps to empower rural women. Many of women associated with tourism activities actively or passively. Some of them belonging

from backward classes and illiterate, though made her take up job of a tour guide in adventure zone and then enjoying women empowerment in every sense. Many of the are in the mid 40's but they are leading some groups as role model for their native women and encourage other women to join this kind of activities such as tour guide, souvenir shop, marketing of local products , catering services and so on. Most of the rural women eager to join tourism activities as it gives them chance to be self –employed , they get employed nearest to their home that's why they can manage their family and work efficiently and gives them work satisfaction also. (Kumari & Sankar, 2020)

Women Empowerment through village Tourism in Karnataka:

Anegundi village of Karnataka has lots of potentials to set up rural tourism with wide range of handicrafts and rural art products . It can promotes cottage industry and it helped in rural women empowerment (Seal,2011).Women of Bhoomi Society made their own brand namely 'Shorba' of handmade products using the fibres of banana, water hyacinth , river grass etc. with the help and training of 15 SHG and flagship project of the Kishkindha Trust (TKT). Now above 200 women getting skilled and produce attractive designer handicrafts for tourist community specifically which will make them economically empowered and give them self -confidence. (Kumari & Sankar, 2020)

Women Empowerment through village Tourism in Himachal Pradesh:

Kullu, the famous tourist destination with pleasant climatic condition and charming beauty. Though farming is the primary economic activities of the tourism associated activities play a vital role for the development of the women. Ninety percent of the women are weaver in this valley. They earn more than 5000 rupees per month weaving Pashmina shawls, mufflers, stoles which are very much renowned to the tourist. Selling these products women are getting chance to make them economically self-sufficient, increase the capacity of standard of living and get the power of decision making. (Kumari & Sankar, 2020)

Women Empowerment through village Tourism in Sikkim :

Sikkim, the state of North-East India enriched in bio-diversity is a

famous tourist place with potentials of eco-tourism and mountaineering. It has lots of scope to empower rural women with the entrepreneurial activities like handicrafts, handlooms, household business etc. The skilled and unskilled women both are actively participated in tourism activities as they are now aware that tourism is the necessity for their livelihood. (Kumari & Sankar, 2020)

Findings:

From the study of intensive literature review and collecting secondary data from different sources it has been clear that tourism has lots of potentials to empower rural women through proper assistance by the Govt. and Non- Govt. organisations. In many areas tourism development might bring some improvements to the standard of living of the rural women. Illiterate women also get job opportunities with their potentials in different ways. Women also play an important role to flourish tourism in rural areas with the potentials of the area in sustainable way. In ecotourism, gender based tourism, community based tourism women are the main key to develop the activities with their skill and touch of love and affection. But in many areas women are not so aware about the potentials of tourism activities for their betterment and not get motivated to engage with tourism activities .

Conclusion:

In changing the lives of poor women, enhancing incomes and increasing their self-esteem, there are more and more tourism projects to support women empowerment though it is not sufficient in number. There should be more organisations to train the women and make them skilled properly.

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Empowering Women : A Path to an Empowered Country

Amrita Datta

Abstract

Women empowerment implies acknowledging women's power to make them proficient in decision making for themselves. It is a widely discussed issue in today's society as gender biasness and gender discrimination has put the country's progress into hold. Women empowerment also refers to provide education to women and thus creating their own identity. Women are the strength of any country, they are truly the real architects while shaping our society. According to Henry Clinton, "women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world" This paper deals with various issues regarding women empowerment that are felt by the contemporary teacher trainees of West Bengal. A self constructed opinionnaire was used to assess the views of the teacher trainees regarding a variety of matters concerned with women empowerment. The paper concludes with an observation that easy access to education, health, freedom, employment, political and social participation will ensure a positively empowered society for the modern women.

Keywords : Women Empowerment, Gender Bias, Gender Discrimination, Empowered society.

Introduction

'EMPOWERMENT' may be described as a process which helps people to assert their control over the factors which affect their lives. Empowerment of women means developing them as more aware individuals, who are politically active, economically productive and independent and are able to make intelligent discussion in matters that affect them.

Batliwala (1974) defines empowerment as "the process of challenging existing power relation and of gaining greater control over the source of

power”. Women’s empowerment is seen as the process and the result of the process of:

1. Challenging the ideology of male domination and women’s subordinations.
2. Enabling women to gain equal access to and control over the material, human and intellectual resources.

Women a word, a manifestation, a creation, connoting itself into a multitude forms, roles and expressions. She is refined, strong, and a magnificent reflection of Mother Nature She is the Creator, Nurturer and Destroyer. She is the muse of poets, the inspiration of religious places and and the topic of writers. She is an inspiration, a sacrifice, an ambition, splendour, tenderness and an enlightenment, but sadly she needs empowerment. Women are an integral part of a society. They play an important role in determining the destiny of a nation. It has been rightly said by Swami Vivekananda, “The Best thermometer to the progress of nation is its treatment of women”. Therefore, due recognition to them in the society and their greater involvement in socio-economic and political affairs becomes all the more important. Every person should come forward to ensure equal status for women in all spheres of life.

Gender bias is often a form of unconscious or implicit bias. It happens when someone unintentionally attributes certain attitudes and stereotypes to someone else. For example, men may be considered more analytical and less emotional. As a result, they have a better chance of being hired when these skills are required.

Gender discrimination is unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on gender.

Indicators of Women Empowerment

Beijing Conference 1995 had identified certain quantitative and qualitative indicators of women empowerment. These indicators are discussed below:

Qualitative Indicators:

1. increase in self-esteem, individual and collective confidence.
2. increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness on health, nutrition reproductive rights, law and literacy.

3. increase in personal leisure time and time for child care.
4. increase on decrease of workloads in new programmes.
5. change in roles and responsibility in family and community.
6. visible increase on decrease in violence on women and girls.
7. responses to, changes in social customs like child marriage, dowry, discrimination against widows.
8. visible changes in women's participation level attending meetings, participating and demanding participation.
9. increase in bargaining and negotiating power at home, in community and the collective.
10. gain equal access to and control over the resources (material, human and intellectual).

Quantitative Indicators

1. demographic trends – maternal mortality rate – fertility rate – sex ratio – life expectancy at birth – average age of marriage
2. Number of women participating in different development programmes;
3. Greater access and control over community resources/ government schemes—creche, credit cooperative, non-formal education;
4. Visible change in physical health status and nutritional level;
5. Change in literacy and enrollment levels; and
6. Participation levels of women in political process

EMPOWERED WOMEN'S CHARACTERISTICS

1. Empowered women define their attitude, values and behaviours in relation to their own real interest. They have autonomy because they claim their freedom from existing male hierarchies, whether they live in traditional societies or modern industrial societies.

2. Empowered women maintain equal mindedness. They act out roles that challenge male dominance. They respond as equals and co-operate to work towards the common good.
3. Empowered women use their talent to live fulfilling lives. They not only survive the harshness of their own subjugation but also transcend their subjugation.
4. Empowered women maintain their strength on the face of pressures from the religion and work and contribute towards the empowerment of all women.
5. Empowered women define their values and formulate their beliefs themselves, they do not derive their sense of being from male authorities nor do they live vicariously through men.

The term women empowerment is all about authority, or the power embarked on women sharing indistinguishable rights. The term refers to the liberation of women from socio-economic restraints of reliance. Women comprise around 50% of the country's population, and a bulk of them stays economically dependent on each other without employment. In the age of feminism, a small portion of women in India are freed and can employ their free will and are permitted to carve out their lives the way they want. But there is a considerable division of the women in this nation who require optimistic support. In most Indian villages and semi-urban cities, women are still denied fundamental education and are never authorised to continue higher education despite amassing the understanding required.

Women are known for delivering multiple roles effortlessly per day, and thus, they are considered the backbone of every society. Living in male-dominating societies, women play a wide range of roles, such as caring mothers, loving daughters, and capable colleagues. The best part is that they fit the bill perfectly in every role. Nonetheless, they've also stood as a neglected bunch of society in different parts of the world. In turn, it has resulted in women surviving the brunt of unevenness, financial trustworthiness, oppression, and distinct social evils. Women have been residing under the shackles of enslavement for centuries now that impedes them from attaining professional as well as personal highs.

Dimensions and Parameters of Women Empowerment

The process of empowerment has five dimensions, viz. Cognitive, psychological, economic, political and physical:

1. The cognitive dimension refers to women having an understanding of the conditions and causes of their subordination at the micro and macro levels. It involves making choices that may go against cultural expectations and norms;
2. The psychological dimension includes the belief that women can act at personal and societal levels to improve their individual realities and the society in which they live;
3. The economic component requires that women have access to, and control over, productive resources, thus ensuring some degree of financial autonomy. However she notes that changes in the economic balance of power do not necessarily alter traditional gender roles or norms;
4. The political element entails that women have the capability to analyse, organise and mobilise for social change.
5. There is a physical element of gaining control over one's body and sexuality and the ability to protect oneself against sexual violence to the empowerment process
6. Building and strengthening partnership with civil society particularly women's organisations.
7. Enforcement of constitutional and legal provisions and safeguarding rights of women.

The parameters of women empowerment are:

1. Raising self esteem and self confidence of women.
2. Elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girl child.
3. Strengthening partnership with women organisations.
4. Enforcing constitutional and legal rights for safeguarding the rights of women.

5. Recognising women's contribution in social economic and political sphere.
6. Develop critical thinking ability among students.
7. Foster decision making and enable women to make informed choices.
8. Ensure women's participation for providing skills for self employment.

Factors Affecting Women's Empowerment in India

Gender Discrimination : The problem of gender discrimination has affected the pace of women empowerment in India. Gender discrimination in all realms of action must be checked. Women must be furnished with a resort to take an active part in decision making at every level and direction procedures to attain the motive of empowering women. They need to get due admiration and prominence, which they rightfully earn on merit basis in society to accomplish their fate.

Educational Factor : Education is the most vibrant factor of advancement and growth. It is the only significant tool for anticipating women empowerment in India & human resource development. It gives light to the possibilities for access to employment and making a livelihood, which in twirl revivify economic empowerment to women. In order to join the community of developed countries, people should understand the value and importance of women's education and, thereby, put combined efforts to make India on the progressive track. Education makes the individual conscientious, enabling them to comprehend, interpret, criticize, and eventually transform their atmosphere. It results in the accession of abundances of skills that heighten a person's enthusiasm and her proficiency to shape life in a better form.

Mass Media is Bringing the Transformation : The mass media is responsible for playing a significant function to project and propagate associated issues, most specifically about women empowerment in India. The numerous programmes pertaining to women's prestige revealed the mass media enable her husband to behave toward her wife with loads of honor and respect. He can remake his attitude and assist

her in the domestic domain to reduce stress and anxiety. The mass media performs a crucial role in repairing the attitude and way of conversation of husband and other family members towards women.

Steps Regarding Implementation of Women Development Programme along with Numerous Acts : Training programme based on action along with vocational programmes and the growth-oriented entrepreneurship development programmes must be organized to make women self-dependent after becoming self-employed by enhancing their efficiency. It's extremely important to check cases related to female foeticide and infanticide by prohibiting the sex determination of child. Laws correlating to marriage, succession, divorce, adoption, dowry and moral safety or protection against sexual harassment needs to be implemented for fulfilling the objective of women empowerment in India.

Changes in Women's Attitude : Women should empower themselves by becoming to be aware of their oppression, indicating initiative, and confiscating chances to bring a shift in their status. Empowerment must come from within the soul. Women need to empower themselves by bringing a massive change in their attitude.

Organization for Awareness Programmes : State and National level commissions for women, Non-Governmental Organisations, ICDS Programmes, must undertake e- awareness, the Taskforce for women & children Development DWACRA (Concerning Development of Women & Child in Rural Areas), women's rights, human rights, a campaign about legal rights, education about saving schemes, population education, environmental education, rehabilitation programmes with all integrity and solemnity.

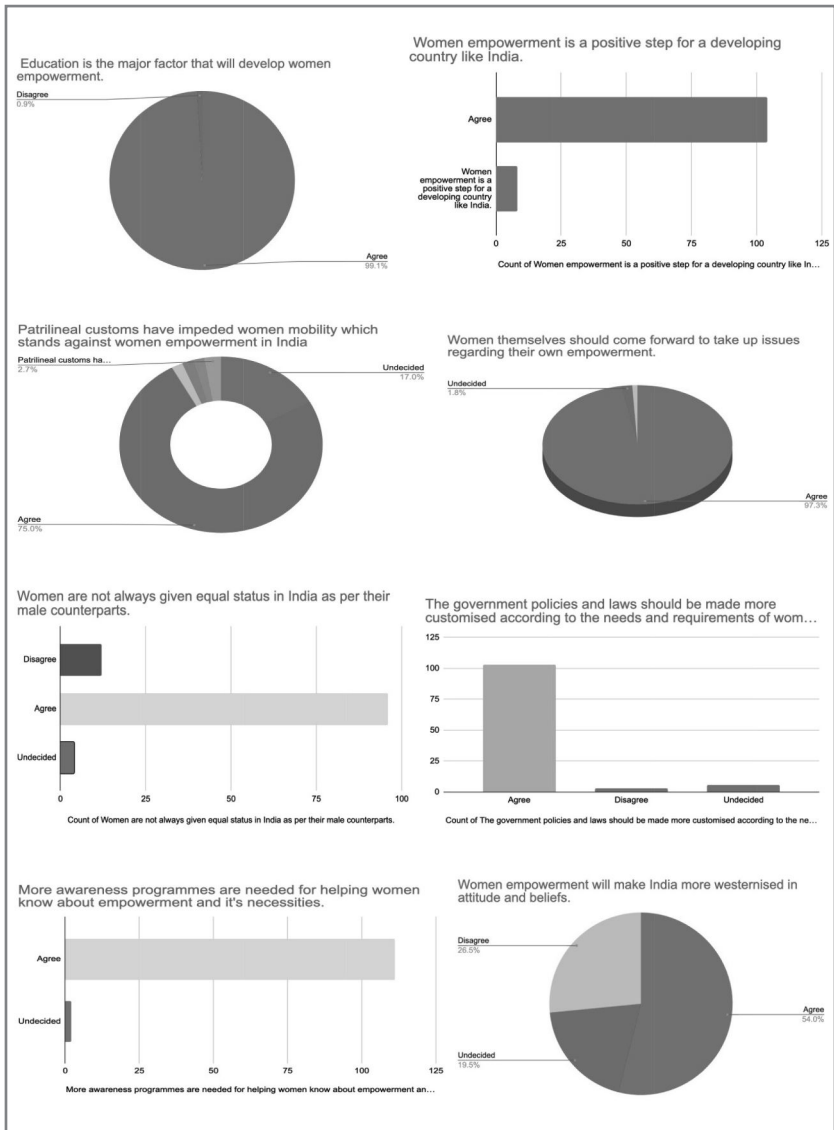
Review of Related Literature

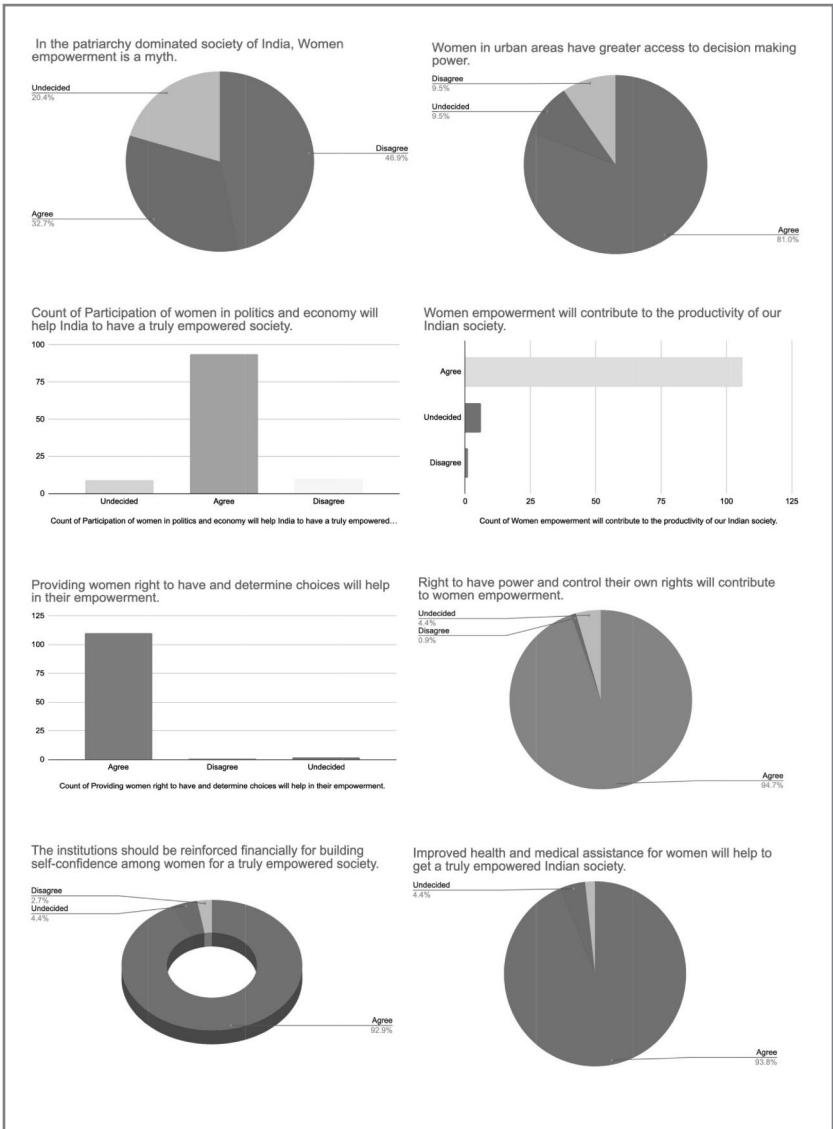
A fair amount of studies has been done on women empowerment by various researchers and scholars to pinpoint and find out the detrimental and the measures to ensure a holistic development through women empowerment in the contemporary Indian society. In a nutshell a review of related literature has been addressed below.

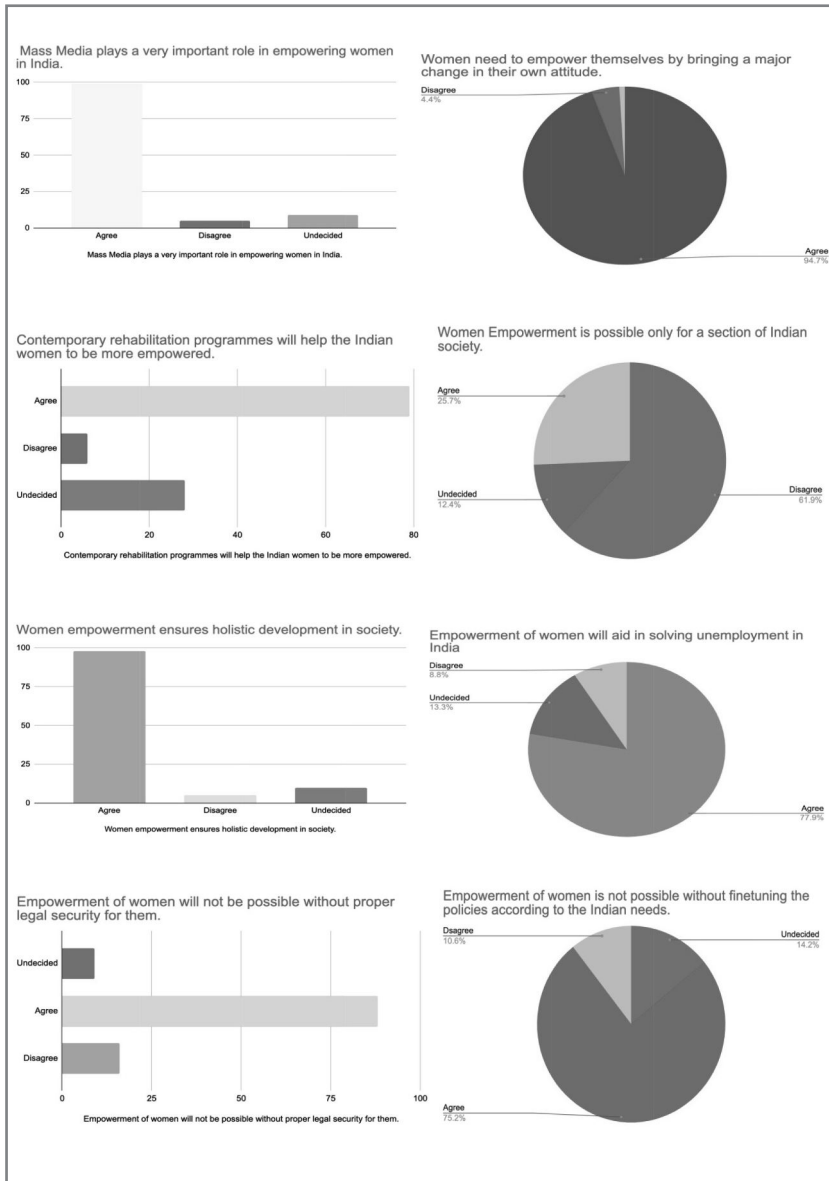
- 1) Women empowerment refers to allowing women the power of participation in the decision-making process of all the fields leading to a quality life.
- 2) Empowerment of women helps them to take their own decision with respect to life and family.
- 3) Empowering women is the process of making women independent in all aspects of thoughts, rights, decisions, and actions.
- 4) Women empowerment promotes gender equality in society and adds to the country's development.
- 5) Women's empowerment is necessary for the growth of family, society, and nation.
- 6) 'Right to Equality' act as per the Indian constitution helps in empowering the women in India.
- 7) Poverty, illiteracy, and violence against women are a few of the factors acting as a hindrance to the empowerment of women.
- 8) Women empowerment gives equal opportunities for employment, education and economic development to women.
- 9) Education plays a major role in empowering women as educated women can make well-informed decisions in life.
- 10) The Indian government has launched various schemes empowering women like 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', 'Ujjawala Scheme', 'Mahila Shakti Kendras' etc.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher has collected data with the help of a self-constructed opinionnaire based on a three point Likert scale. The data has been collected through google forms from more than 100 samples belonging to various gender and demographic categories. The samples are all teacher trainees who are in the verge of getting jobs and contributing to the Indian society. The truly represent an empowered Indian society which makes them suitable for giving opinions on the current issue. A graphical representation is shown based on their responses.







Findings

From the graphical representation it can be interpreted that

1. Most of the samples agree to the fact that Education can help in women empowerment and it is a positive step for developing a country like India.
2. A majority of the samples agree to the fact that patrilineal customs impede women mobility which stands against women empowerment and women are not given equal status as their male counterparts.
3. Nearly 98% of the samples affirm that women should themselves come forward with the issues of their empowerment and the government policies should be customised to meet the needs and demands of the women population.
4. None of the samples have disagreed that more awareness programmes should be arranged to aware women about empowerment and its necessities and also to the fact that women should be provided right to have and determine choices which will empower them.
5. It is surprising to find that nearly half of the samples agree to the fact that women empowerment will make women more westernised and in our patriarchy dominated society women empowerment is a myth.
6. Nearly 85% of the samples affirm that women of urban areas have more power in decision making and empowered women contributes to the productivity of our society.
7. A large amount of the samples contributes to the opinion that women can be more empowered if they have the right to have power and control over their own decisions and this empowerment will bring a major change to their own attitude.
8. A vast majority of the samples confirm that women empowerment can be brought upon if the self-help group institutions are reinforced financially along with improved health and physical conditions which will bring self confidence among women.

9. Nearly 95% of the samples affirm that mass media plays an important role in bringing about women empowerment which along the way ensures holistic development in the Indian society.
10. Nearly 60% of the samples disagree to the notion that women empowerment is possible only for a specific section of the Indian society and they also opine that fine-tuning the government policies will lead the path to easy empowerment of women.
11. A vast majority of the samples contribute to the fact that women empowerment will lead to solve the problems of unemployment and they also affirm that enhance security and legal security will lead to a truly empowered Indian society.

Importance of Women Empowerment

In recent times, everyone is pointing on the empowerment of women. It's right to say that women's empowerment has become the necessity of the time. Women should possess liberty, faith, and self-worth to opt for their needs and demands. Empowering women is a necessary right of women. They should have proportional rights to contribute to society, economics, education, and politics.

Ensures Holistic Development of Society

Women empowerment in India is one of the important terms for society's all-round development. There is nothing erroneous in participating in the development of society. In the world of corporates, women are playing numerous roles in meadows such as medical, engineering, and so on. Apart from taking part in the sphere of technology, they are energetically partaking in security services such as police, navy, military, etc. All these before-mentioned services are taking the community to another level.

Determine their Intelligence Level

Over the preceding decades, there has been a uniform increase in women's empowerment. Women must possess self-worth, confidence, and freedom to choose their needs and requirements. Classifying the people based on gender is unreasonable, and it has no worth. Still, women are paid less, expected to cook, and restricted by their family

members. To overcome these situations and to have an independent role in society, women's empowerment is needed.

Empowering Women is the Fundamental Right of Women.

Women can have equal rights to participate in education, society, economics, and politics. They are allowed to have higher education and treated in the way like men.

A solution to solve Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the common problems that can be seen in the developing society. The research says that half of the population consists of women. The unemployment of women and unequal opportunities in the workplace can be deferred with the help of women empowerment in India. Whenever women are facing unemployment, their true potential is being misused. To utilize the strength and potentiality of the women, they must be provided with equal opportunities

Know About their Intelligence

It is unthinkable to understand and analyze the way of living of women by peeking at them. One can foresee their level of intelligence by way of moving toward the problems and in the solution-finding. In the contemporary era, women are nicely versed in unraveling technical troubles. Making existence in work is particularly important and an advantageous one which can be a present or gift to give recognition to their work.

Conclusion

To summarise it may be said that Education is the prior way of defense for women who are always confronting life-changing circumstances that traditional lifestyle perpetuates. With a meaningful education, the women's status rises beyond the restrictions of motherliness. Advancement of education of women and girls contributes to the postponing of their marriage and the ensuing constriction in their families.

Priority should be focused on enrolment along with retention of the girl child in basic formal schooling and non-formal education via incentive methods like a supply of textbooks free of cost, midday meals, school

bags, science kits, uniform, scholarship, residential and hostel facilities as well as the eradication of gender discrimination in the curriculum. Education will go an extended way in making women familiar with their legal and personal rights and make them fight for their privileges, which will lead to protecting their constitutional rights.

Women must know that opportunities will not reach their laps. They would have to determine ways to create them. They should fight back to rebuild their prominent position in Indian communities and societies. They must flourish hard to carry out their rights and maintain justice & equality in society. They need to work vigorously for the entire elimination of poverty, dowry-ills, illiteracy, and productive implementation of all programmes and laws related to women.

Women's empowerment is valuable for the development and advancement of the family, community as well as the nation. Hence, it must be a leading concern of the Indian Government to bring women into the fore of the development strategy by empowering them via numerous development-oriented schemes.

In the current perspective it may be added that a truly empowered Indian society should have the **5Cs of courage, confidence, communication, connections and career** and this should be used to support the success of women.

Courage- Nari Shakti Purashkar is an annual award that is given by the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India to individual women of India or to institutions that work towards the cause of women empowerment. This is the highest civilian award for the Indian women and is presented by the president of India on 8th March, International Women's Day at Rashtrapati Bhawan in new Delhi. Among the various awardees who were awarded for their courage, is **Radhika Menon**, an Indian female Merchant Navy who received an IMO award for Exceptional Bravery At Sea. She rescued seven fishermen in June 2015 who were trapped in a boat for a week.

Confidence- Sandhya Dhar, an Indian disability rights activist was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at an early age and is a wheel chair user. She with huge confidence founded the Jammu Institute of General

Education and Rehabilitation (JIGER) in 2015 to support the disabled people and was awarded the Nari Shakti Purashkar .

Communication- Anita Gupta is an Indian social entrepreneur , organic farmer and tribal activist. She believes that communication is the key to women empowerment. She has arranged training for more than 50000 rural women in handicrafts, crochet and jewellery. She and her brother created the Bhojpur Manila Kala Kendra which encouraged women to get involved by telling them that if they earned money they could send their children to schools. This organisation has created employment for 10000 women. She received “Women Transforming India Award” in 2017 and also the Nari Shakti Purashkar award in 2022.

Connections- Sobha Gasti, a resident of Karnataka founded the Mattu Samrakhsan Namaste in 1997 to save former Devdasi women in 360 villages of Karnataka and help them to move forward in their lives. She also promotes children’s rights and works with Child Rights and You (CRY). In recognition of her connections with the devadasis and her success in securing them pensions, she was awarded the Nari Shakti Purashkar award in 2022.

Career- Meera Thakur, practices and teaches Sikki Grass Craft which is available only in Bohar. She runs the Hastakala Vikash Kendra where she uses these grass to make adornments, vases and boxes. Her organisation trains disadvantaged women in handicrafts . She received Skill of Excellence For Handicrafts from UNESCO in 2005 and Nari Shakti Purashkar Award in 2022 for her career choice and contribution in the society.

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Role of Kanyashree Prakalpa to prevent The Barriers of Women Education in Murshidabad District

Shreya Bhattacharjee

Abstract

Women's education is an essential need to change their status in society. An educated woman can play significant role in the socio-economic development for under developing country\state\district. But in West Bengal due to some low economic status and other barriers, the female literacy rate (55.04%) was poor compared to male (61.25%) as per the census 2011. The objective of the study is -the role of Kanyashree Prakalpa (KSP) to prevent the barrier to women's education in West Bengal especially in Murshidabad. Kanyashree Prakalpa is an innovative project of government of West Bengal. It helps to improve the life and the status of girls by helping economically backward families with a scholarship, so that families do not arrange the marriage of their girl child before age of eighteen because of their economic conditions. KSP is a conditional direct cash transfer scheme for young girls of lower-income families. This scheme (KSP) targets adolescent girls aged 13-19 years and offers a three-tier scholarship of an annual Rs 1000 for continuing education (K1) and a one-time payment of ₹25000 on completion of age 18, conditional upon the girls- remaining unmarried and continuing education until that age (K2). (k3) provides ₹2500/-per month for pursuing postgraduates in science and ₹2000/-per month for Arts and Commerce stream. The aim of the scheme is two-fold to promote secondary education among females and to stop the marriage of girls before the official age of 18 years, which reduces the school dropout rate not only in Murshidabad, reduces in whole state. KSP scheme motivates parents to send their children to school. This study also focuses on the difficulty faced by the girl students. All the data have been collected from newspaper, journals, relevant documents, books, etc. The method used in this study is documental based.

Keywords : Women Education, Kanyashree Prakalpa, Dropout, Child Marriage.

Introduction

“You educate a man you educate a man, you educate a women: you can educate a generation”- Brigham Young.

So Women’s education is an essential need to change their status in society. An educated woman can play significant role in the socio-economic development of an under developing country\ state\ district. Women’s education denotes every section of education that aims in improving knowledge and capability. But the emerging picture of women education in West Bengal was very poor. This poor condition noticeable mostly in backward district of West Bengal like Murshidabad. According to census 2011 women education rate (55.04%) was very poor in Murshidabad compare to other districts due to some low economic conditions. Especially most of the rural areas in Murshidabad mothers teach their daughter how to roll bidi from the age of five. Most of the bidi workers admit their children in school but a majority of the girls dropout after primary school to merge income also they think girl child is burden in their family. Hence child marriage rate was high. But in 2013 West Bengal government has taken an initiative that is Kanyashree Prakalpa. Kanyashree Prakalpa is improve the educational status of girl child not only in Murshidabad but in whole state. Kanyashree Prakalpa help girls who are belongs to poor family and cannot take proper education due to some low economical condition.

Background of the Study:

Kanyashree prakalpa taken by government of west Bengal to improve the life and the status of the girls by helping economically backward families with cash, so that family do not arrange the marriage of their girl child before 18+ years and send their girl child to school that they can continue their study. There are 1.73 cores of adolescents (10–19 years old) in West Bengal, and 48.11% of them are female. 10.3% of the population is between the ages of 10 to 14 years, while 9.7% of the population is between the ages of 15 to 19 years (source: Detailed table-SRS based on Census 2011; [www.censusindia.gov.in/vital statistics/](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/vital_statistics/)

SRS Report). of all the states, West Bengal has the fifth-highest rate of child marriage, with 54.7% of women who are now married (aged 20 to 24) having married before the age of 18. The incidence is even higher in rural areas (57.9%) every girl in high prevalence child marriage districts of West Bengal in Murshidabad (61.04%), Birbhum (58.03), Malda (57.07%) and Purulia (54.03), were married before they reach 18, the legal age for girls to get married. In response, the West Bengal government launches the Kanyashree Prakalpa to relieve the female child of her excruciating pain. The Vision of this prakalpa to creating an environment that is supportive of all adolescent girls' participation and meaningful contributions to society while also protecting and empowering them.

Kanyashree Prakalpa (KSP):

Kanyashree Prakalpa is one of the most important initiative project taken by govt of West Bengal. KSP is conditional cash transfer scheme, which is designed by the Department of Women Development of Social Welfare (DWSW) of West Bengal in August 2013, with the aim of improving the status and well-being of girl child in West Bengal by encouraging all schools teenage girls and delaying their marriage until the girl reach the age of 18 years. Bengali word 'Kanya' means girl and 'Shree' means beautiful, wealth. This scheme (KSP) targets adolescent girls of age between 13-19 years and offers a three-tier scholarship of an annual ₹1000 for continuing education (K1) and a one-time payment of ₹25000/- on completion of age 18, conditional upon the girls- remaining unmarried and continuing education until that age (K2), (K3) provides ₹2500/-per month for pursuing postgraduates in science and ₹2000/-per month for Arts and commerce stream. The aim of the scheme is two-fold to promote secondary education among females and to stop the marriage of girls before the official age of 18, which reduces the school dropout rate not only in Murshidabad, reduces in whole state. KSP scheme motivates parents to send their children to school.

- K1 • An annual ₹1000/ for continuing education
- K2 • One-time payment of ₹25000/
- K3 • Provides ₹2500/-per month for pursuing postgraduates in science and ₹2000/-per month for Arts and commerce stream.

Objectives of the study:

The main objective of the study is to find out the impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa to prevent the barriers of women education in Murshidabad district and analysis the problem faced by women in Murshidabad.

Review related literature:

Mandal, I, Das, L. & Kar, S. (2018) Dropout issue: An obstacle at the way of development for the ethnic group of the chain community at Farakka block in Murshidabad district: This artical identify the dropout ranges among the children of the Chain community is the main and concerned subject matter of this study and find various factors which overwhelm the dropout rate.

Biswas, H. K. (2021), Impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa on Educational Progress of School-Going Girls: A Case Study of domkal block in Murshidabad District of West Bengal: this article find out the role of Kanyashree Prakalpa on school going girls in Murshidabad district.

DAS, J. (2014), The role of Kanyashree Prakalpa In Empowering Adolescent Girls in West Bengal: This article aims to probe the role of Kanyashree Prakalpa in Empowering Adolescent Girls in West Bengal. In this article the author has been studied and observed, the District Project Management Unit (DPMU), Murshidabad has been working hard under the leadership of the District Magistrate, Murshidabad since the inception of the scheme in 2013 for successful implementation at the grass-root level.

Bhattacharyya, B. (2015), Impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa on Educational progress on school going girls in Murshidabad District:

This article wanted to prove the Role of Kanyashree Prakalpa on girls in Murshidabad District. And find that there is a significant impact of this Prakalpa to reduce child marriage and to prevent dropout of girls from schools at an early age.

Adhikary (2017) studied on – “The role of Kanyashree Prakalpa in Empowering Adolescent Girls in West Bengal” and found that, school enrolments had marginally increased and the dropout rate had significantly reduced and also the rate of child marriage had reduced” This article concluded that Kanyashree Prakalpa plays a significant role in empowering girls in West Bengal.

Methodology:

It is a Documentary analysis based Qualitative study. It is based on official documents and secondary data. The conclusion made in the study is based on secondary sources. The secondary sources data relating to the journal, article, newspaper etc. Some related information's were extracted from various websites. This data was then analysed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions.

Impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa (KSP) in Murshidabad District:

Prevention of child marriage:

Murshidabad district is the high prevalence child marriage districts in West Bengal (61.04%) according to census 2011. In this situation Kanyashree Prakalpa is like a blessing for girl child's. By using this scheme, they can continue their education and say no to marriage until the age of 18 years. This scheme is very helpful for the improvement of the study, reduces the school dropout rate as well as it reduces immature mother mortality rate in whole state.

Decrease dropout rate:

In Murshidabad district especially in rural area mothers teach their daughter how to roll bidi from the child. Most bidi worker admit their child in school but a majority of the girls dropout after primary school to merge family income. So they cannot complete the basic education. After 2013 the situation has been changed by using scholarship girls going to the school and complete their education. Hence the rate has been decreased.

Social Awareness about the Importance of Education:

Due to prevalent illiteracy among the women's in Murshidabad, they don't know the importance of education in their life as well as they even don't know that only education can change their educational, social and economic status. Most of them think that education is only needed for maintaining their life, not for getting good jobs. They consider that higher education means wasting of time. Therefore they favour to send their children for earning money. It is only due to their ignorance about education. But after implementation of Kanyashree Prakalpa kanyashree girls organized many social awareness programs. They organized seminars in schools and cultural halls. In Murshidabad district kanyashree girls arrange different kind of awareness program about women education so that they can inspire parents to send the child to go school and why women educations are important. KSP scheme increases the social awareness programme.

Make suitable Social Environment for Education:

In Murshidabad most of the children are engaged in works other than education and this has a great impact on other children of the society. So they are not getting proper motivation from others for their education. But when a girl get scholarship from Kanyashree Prakalpa the situation was changed. When the girls get scholarship she can contribute little of the scholarships money to her family to merge the family income. This scheme is really helpful to make a healthy environment for study.

Secondary Education:

In Murshidabad district the ignorance of the guardians about the need of education affects the educational environment of the children in this community. So the girl child grownup in such illiterate society such that the don't know the value of secondary education. So they lost their interest in study. But when they got scholarship they convinced their parents to allow them to attend the school and continue their study. This scheme gives us opportunity to bring girls back in school. It helps to reduce dropout rate.

Conclusion:

After carefully analysing all the information we found that the KSP scheme have been proved very successful. After KSP not only

minimizes the dropout from school in Murshidabad at early age at the same time it will make a positive impact on the prevention of early marriage of girl child. Murshidabad district performs very well to fulfilment the intension of Kanyashree Prakalpa. The scheme got international recognition in 2017, receiving the United Nations Public Service Award for “reaching the poorest and most vulnerable through inclusive services and participation.” The students especially the low economical condition girls are very motivate to continue their study.

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Empowering Women Towards a Better Future for Humanity and Achieving Gender Equity in Education in India

Dr. Sanjoy Ghosh

Abstract

Despite a high growth rate and plentiful Government measures to encourage gender equality, the gender gap still exists in India. Lack of gender equality not only limits women's access to resources and opportunities, but also imperils the life prospects of the future generation. Little has changed in terms of opinions, and an external factor like education has had little of an impact on the freeing of women from long-held biases and ideas. It is inconceivable to have a civilized growth without educating women. More women than males suffer from ignorance and illiteracy, and this scourge is particularly pervasive in rural areas and underdeveloped communities. The notion of roles in Indian culture and the advancement of women's education are inextricably related. The intention of this paper is to examine the difficulties that come with educating a female. The purpose of this paper, which considers numerous gender-responsive programmes taken by government and statistical report in this context, is to shed some light on the areas that still need to be clarified in order to achieve gender equity in education. For this purpose, the paper sheds some light on what was the state of women education prior to independence to get a clear comprehension of the subject. Furthermore, the paper reflects upon various hurdles that are needed to combat effectively in order to achieve the above-mentioned goal. The paper revolves around the fact that empowerment is not only a term that can be defined using some accepted criteria. It clarifies how educating an Indian woman gives a crucial opportunity for the country's social and economic development by favourably impacting the economy of the nation and society. Today, all development organisations concur that educating women is crucial for promoting and maintaining family education, health, nutrition, and overall wellbeing. The goal of education should be to prepare women for the roles they must fill by teaching them how to apply what they learn to their everyday activities.

Keywords : Discrimination, Education, Gender-equity, Gender-responsive programmes, Women Empowerment.

Introduction

National Education Policy (NEP), Right to Education (RTE) Act and Sarva Siksha Aviyan (SSA) always envisaged various collective measures to ensure greater enrollment to a large extent but retention has always been a major issue caused gender gaps. With the daily advancement in every field of society, be it science, art, literature etc., the term “education” is intricately associated in every form of development; rather it is the foundation stone of all round development of an individual and thus the nation eventually. However, it is frequently apparent in a nation like India that women, who are among the most vulnerable members of society, still striving hard for access to equal opportunities in the workplace, in public service, in leadership positions, and the educational sector being no such an exception. Even now, we still see people’s naïve confidence in traditions and customs surpassing the pursuit of a fundamental education, depriving women of their fundamental rights to education. For women to be self-supporting and successful, they must be literate. One requirement for human progress is the acquisition of knowledge. The concept of sustainable development, which envision an equal pace of progress for all portions of society even if it necessitates some additional privileges and rewards being granted to a particular section of society, can also be linked to the education of women. Presently, all development organisations concur that women’s education is crucial for promoting and maintaining family education, health, nutrition, and overall wellbeing.

Background : Ancient Indian women had the right to participate in the crucial Upanayana ritual, which gave them equal access to the Vedas for study. They were regrettably denied access to it and, consequently, to Vedic instruction in subsequent times. Later, women’s access to Buddhist and Jain orders boosted their education. Due to the depraved purdah rule, female education continued to decline during the Muslim era. However, a few female saint-scholars like Gautami and Khema thrived during the Buddhist and Jain movements. Female education had only token government support throughout the British era. More

initiative was taken for the quality and quantitative advancement of female education by private organisations and missionaries. There were few women's schools in rural areas during this time, and female education was mostly centred in urban areas. Missionaries and private nonprofit organisations, both Christian and Indian, were those who embraced education. They were more and more interested in the nation's efforts to advance women's education. Female Juvenile Society, a secular organization, established schools for females in 1819. Under Lady Amherst's sponsorship, the Ladies Society for Native Female Education was established in 1824. In Calcutta in 1820, David Hare founded and ran an independent girls' school. With only six female students, the Bethune School in Calcutta eventually became a college and became the first institution of higher learning for women. However, the higher education system at the time displeased Indian Nationalists. They sought to create a new, uniquely Indian system of higher education. The Banaras Hindu University was established in 1916 by eminent scholar and educationalist Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya. Aligarh Muslim University was founded by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Women still faced significant disadvantages in higher education. As a result, women's education in general and in pre-independent India had very low levels. The widespread use of basic education since independence has greatly advanced education. After Independence, several five-year programmes were put into place, with female education receiving top attention.

Literature Review : According to the (Dutta and Sen, 2020), that those girls who completed secondary or higher secondary schooling were less exposed to child marriage. Meanwhile they also found that few districts in the west Bengal, had great awareness about the negative impact of early child marriage but there were 26.17% girls dropped out between the age group of 14-18 years. All the girls who dropped out were got married of the same age group. Schultz, T.P (2002), discuss the importance of education for girls and its implication on self, child health care, job related skill development and overall well beings. The researcher also tried to find out the relationship between early marriage and dropout girls at secondary and higher secondary education. Sen and Modak (2017) found interesting facts that families with low income or

poor financial condition are not the reasons for the early child marriage in West Bengal.

Nayan (2015) depicted in his study that, poverty is one of the main determinants of girl's early marriage because poor families think of girls as an economic burden for families. He also said that, lack of education; enlightenment and awareness among the people promote child marriages in our society. According to the (ICRW, 2012) study said that the, girls with secondary and higher secondary education achievement will have a tendency to postpone their marriages in sort of to look up their prospect of better economic livelihood and independence. Indian society is a patriarchal society; the husband educational qualification is likely to matter in so far as that of the wife (Srinivasan et al., 2015) A study conducted in Howrah district on schedule tribe student's drop-outs and found that the average 40.79% girls students leaving schools at Secondary level. According to the teacher's of the schools perpetual poverty is the main reason for girl's high dropout rate and other major factors came out from the parent's end that perception of girls about schools, low performance of students, social discrimination inside classrooms and lack of educational environment inside home (Biswas and Krishnan, 2017). Meanwhile Ramanaik and Bhattacharjee (2018), discussed about the social and gender related norms which are pre-dominantly influencing a parent decision of an adolescent girl out of fear for social rejection and parent generally prefers boys over girls to invest on education and expectation for more involvement in household activities resulting unfavorable condition at home causing lower retention of girls at Secondary level. The most common problems are menstruation, rituals and restriction to stay for a longer period is also one of the reasons for low retention of girls at Secondary level. As we know that extra household workload and noncompliance with homework followed by fear from teachers also produced dropout among girls. The researchers also highlighted in their study that the, there is no relation for adolescent girls to continue their studies with their parent's qualification or financial condition and the important factor came out that aspiration of father and mother is the most crucial factor. According to the (Hunt, 2008) explained how collectively various factors resulting in dropout by depicting journey map of girl

child and identify the connect points like home, parent, community, school and the time in between home and school. The noble laureate (Banerjee and Duflo, 2013) said that if there is an arrangement of post schooling sustainable income for girls and visible to the parent, this economic value will help the parent to invest for girl's education. This study also talked that those girls students weak in study than the family surrendered and never tried hard, teachers were never proactive to teach a student who were lagging in studies. Mollah (2018), described overall status of Secondary education of all the district of WB on Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), Gender Parity Index (GPI), Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR), Student Classroom Ratio (SCR). In the same way, he emphasized the need and importance of universalization of Secondary education to improve overall health of the secondary education in West Bengal. Amina and Alhassan (2015) said that emphasized on school s and teachers' role as a guide and counselor for the girl students and parents to make them understand the value of education. They also highlighted that the, lacking proactive measures from the school, poor households' condition, and early marriage and pregnancy cumulatively forced those girls to quit schools at Secondary level. Benefits of women education is utmost important to build a healthy nation and basic hygiene factor like separate toilet for girls also causing resulting high dropout among adolescent girls. Sometimes access to school with Secondary and Higher Secondary facilities also impacted the high dropout rate among girls (Rani, 2013). According to the (Esther, 2016), major factors for dropout are influence of teachers and school, peer group, wife inheritance and economic factor of the family. According to the Ramandeep Kaur (2013) the importance of female education has a multifold impact on society as well as nation. Women as a community should participate as an active stakeholder for social, political and economic development and part of any decision making at individual level, household level and society level. Gene Sperling and Rebecca Winthrop mentioned in their book "quality education to girls to increased economic and agricultural growth". As per UNESCO "for each additional year of education that a girl completes, the chances of getting pregnant falls by 10 percent and in the age group of 15-19 years complicated pregnancy is the 2nd major reason for girls' death. Early marriage has a direct relation with infant mortality rate. A woman being

a mother takes care of their children and knowingly or unknowingly takes decision and an educated mother always can take care of herself, family and children in a better way and that leads to a healthy society. As per UNICEF among many deep rooted caused cultural beliefs and poverty are the two main reasons for gender discrimination in our society. Importance of girls' education still a far distant reality for a parent who chooses boys over girls based on affordability. Sanitation and separate toilet facilities for girls are important factors for continuing school education. Based on AC Nielson and NGO Pan India study report "23% of girls in India leave school once they hit puberty, while the girls who continue their education miss as many as 50 school days each year as a result of menstruation". Another interesting fact is RTE Act covers till age 14 students and till that age various statistics reflect girl child enrollment is relatively a minor concern for gender disparity. Annual Survey of Education Report (Aser) 2017 mentioned 32% girls are not enrolled post class VIII and in rural India for 100 Primary and Upper Primary (Std I-VII) only 14 schools are available for Secondary (Std IX-X) and only 6 schools are available for Sr. Secondary (Std. XI -XII). Among various Gov. Initiatives (Annual report 2016-17 MHRD) RTE-SSA has clear thrust of girl education by ensuring accessibility of Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary school within habitation and providing uniform textbooks free of cost. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) is a Residential Upper Primary (10+) girls' school for SC/ST/OBC/BPL/Minority communities. KGBV aims at reaching out to those backwards classes/ areas when accessibility and security is a challenge for Elementary education in India. Till date around 3600 KGBVs Are functional and 3.67 lakhs enrolled (as on March 2017). National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 consciously decided to increase visual representation of girls and women in the textbooks to remove gender biasness. Separate girls' toilet under SSA for favorable school infrastructure.

The major factors were seasonal labor for extra earning, unfavorable home conditions, taking care of their siblings, and pressure of household works (Mishra, 2015). In his study (Shadreck, 2013) found a very important factor which directly influence the dropout of girls students from the school were distance from home to school and poor

infrastructure in rural Secondary schools at last teachers were failed to connect with students.

Initiatives taken by the government ensuring Gender Parity in Education:

We are all aware that Article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees “Equality” based on sex and other like grounds. The State shall not discriminate against any citizen solely based on religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any combination of these, according to Article 15(1). Nothing in this article shall prohibit the State from adopting any provision for women and children, according to Article 15(3). In addition to being a signatory to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), India also supports equal access to opportunities in all facets of life and the prohibition of discrimination, particularly between men and women and thus engages in various programmes to implement the above-mentioned goal.

Mahila Samakhya: “The Mahila Samakhya programme, which was established in 1989, acknowledges the importance of education in enabling women to attain equality. More than 8,000 villages in 53 districts throughout the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh are now participating in the programme.”

Education outside of the classroom: There are currently 2.92 lakh non-traditional learning environments serving 73 lakh students throughout 25 States and UTs. Up to 90% of the funding for 1.15 lakh centres specifically for girls comes from the central government.

Some other leading initiatives are as follows:

BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO (2015) : The underlying objective of this scheme revolved around addressing the deeply rooted social issue of gender-based-abortions and advancing the education of women across the Nation.

CBSE Udaan Scheme : This ensures increased enrollment of women in top engineering and technical institutions across the Nation.

Balika Samriddhi Yojana, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, National Scheme of Incentive for the Girls of Secondary Education etc. are some of the leading actions taken by the Government to encourage women education.

To point out that West Bengal, however, is not falling behind when it comes to women's empowerment. 1.73 Crore adolescents (10–19 years) live in West Bengal, and 48.11% of them are female. Child marriage and human trafficking are significant social issues that are adversely impacting girls' education, health, nutritional status, growth, and development. In this regard, Kanyashree Prakalpa is a ground-breaking initiative of the West Bengal government that has the potential to improve the education, health, and nutritional status of women and children across the State. "This scheme awards the beneficiaries one time grant of Rs 25000/- and Rs 750/- as annual scholarships". This programme was chosen by the UN as one of 552 projects amongst 62 nations, and it was awarded the highest public service award for its ability to effectively combat discrimination against women in all walks of life by promoting women's education and reaching out to the most remote regions of the nation.

Sikshashree is another action plan intending to offer financial aid to SC students in grades V through VIII to increase their participation in pre-matriculation stages and cut dropout rates, particularly for female students.

Statistical Reports : "According to the Census of India, the average literacy rate was 73% in 2011, however according to the National Statistical Commission, it was 77.7% in 2017–18. Urban areas have a higher literacy rate (87.7%) than rural areas (73.5%). In India, the effective literacy rate (age 7 and above) was 84.7% for males and 70.3% for women, showing a significant gender gap."

"According to the 2011 census, West Bengal has a population of 91,347,736, or 7.55% of all Indians. Kolkata served as the capital of West Bengal during the British Raj, and the state is renowned for its advanced cultural and educational system. West Bengal is now ranked 20th in terms of literacy rate. West Bengal has a literacy rate of 77.08%, according to the 2011 census, with a difference between male and female literacy of 82.67% and 71.16%."

“In India, at least 1.6 million females are still not enrolled in school. According to NCPDR’s 2018 report, 39.4% of females between the ages of 15 and 18 are not enrolled in school.”

Barriers to Education of Women : Despite all the efforts and action plans by the government, there is an evident gap between the literacy rates of men and women. What factors underlie this statistical disparity, then?

- **Personal Vendetta :** Girls’ safety and security has recently been a major worry for us. We frequently read about crimes against women in various media outlets, specifically acid assaults, rape, murder, molestations, and so on. One such instance was “when a youngster threw acid on a class XII student as she returned home after tuition lessons in Krishnanagar, Nadia district, West Bengal, police said. The event occurred in Krishnanagar’s Kotwali police station area. The victim’s relatives said that the accused committed this heinous act after the girl declined his love proposal.” There are also more examples where perpetrators often attack women to satisfy personal grudges, and because school and college follow a specific schedule, perpetrators can easily trace the movements of a specific individual, making it easier for them to carry out their vengeance. Child sexual abuse in schools is also a huge worry for us these days. Parents are concerned about their children’s safety at school following the GD Birla School Incident, in which two teachers allegedly assaulted a four-year-old girl at school premises.
- **Early Marriage :** Cases of early marriage are still prevalent across various parts of India. Parents in the most remote parts of India, where illiteracy is deeply rooted due to social pressure and their blind faith in traditions and customs that exceed their intellect, are often hesitant to send their daughters to schools and colleges, believing that they will be given in marriage and thus it is pointless to send them to schools and bear the expenses, which appears to be an unnecessary burden to them. In many rural communities, females are sometimes obliged to stay at home to contribute to domestic activities such as collecting water, cooking, caring for younger siblings, and other household chores rather than attending school. Here, she loses the

ability to make decisions and the power that comes with education. There have been reports of girls being expelled from school owing to reaching puberty. Teen pregnancies are widespread, even though it is against the law, once they move in with their husband. How can a young girl balance her home life, her studies, her pregnancy, and her little children? Education is apparently the convenient choice to make.

- **Expenses :** Though Our Constitution has guaranteed our right to education under Article 21-A which ensures free and compulsory for 6-14 years of age in manner as the respective states may implement. Yet the provision is insufficient to battle the illiteracy and gender discrimination in education that we are facing today. Our Constitution guarantees the preliminary education which is of minimal standards in comparison to today's modernization. Although there are no formal educational fees to pay in many rural regions, but there is frequently a cost associated with sending a kid to school that parents must bear. These frequently include the price of school supplies like uniforms, books, and stationary, the cost of transportation, as well as the loss of employment chances and household assistance. Parents in some families may decide to send their sons to school if the cost of schooling is too high, neglecting the girls' opportunity to acquire the education they equally deserve.
- **Difficult access to Schools and Colleges:** Families in rural areas often have trouble finding suitable schools and colleges because moving closer to a town or city is not an economical option for the parents. Children have no choice but to walk for hours simply to go to school due to a lack of transit options. To shield their daughters from potential risks on their way to school, parents occasionally choose to keep their daughters at home, adding to the conflict with gender standards in the communities in which we live. We look to alternative lodging, residential schools, or hostels when distance is a barrier, which again bear expenses that is not affordable by many.
- **Minimal Number of Female Teachers:** Another potential hindrance to girls' education is a lack of female teachers. If their teachers are women, girls are more likely to attend class and do

academically well. This is especially true in nations with severe gender segregation, like India. Only 29% of elementary school teachers are female at the moment (MHRD 1993). At the university level, only 22% of professors are female, an even lower percentage than the national average (CSO 1992).

- **Gender stereotyping curriculum:** The Indian government agreed in 1965 to revise the text books so that men and women would not be portrayed in stereotypical gender roles. In contrast, a 1980's assessment of Indian textbooks revealed that men dominated the majority of the lectures. Men were depicted as being strong, courageous, and smart in these lessons, and they occupied high-status jobs. When women were included, on the other hand, they were portrayed as weak and helpless, frequently as the recipients of violence and beatings.
- **Inadequate Infrastructures:** The absence of proper educational infrastructure presents another impediment for Indian education. There are frequently not enough classrooms in schools to accommodate all the students of school age. Additionally, the available classrooms frequently lack essential amenities like water or sanitary facilities. Girls' attendance at school may suffer notably if there are no latrines available.
- **Inefficient Executives and inadequate budgets in charge of implementation of Government Policies:** Another issue with boosting girls' education is the officials in charge of education's absence of enthusiasm and commitment. We often see that various government programmes like Mid-Day Meal scheme and other like programmes are not properly implemented and the funds are misused by corrupt officials. Lack of knowledge on how to execute various programmes and provisions for girls' education at the local level among implementing organisations and community members is another major concern in this context. Budget cuts to the education sector have continued over time, especially after 2014. It remains at an astounding 3.4% of the GDP. Even as a part of project management, like the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative, which aimed to improve welfare services for girls and raise awareness

of their needs, Government spent nearly 60% of its budget on advertising in 2018–19.

Conclusion:

One of the main challenges is encouraging women to pursue education not just at the foundational level but to a significant extent where their knowledge keeps up with the pace of advancements around them. India is working very hard to realise the aforementioned aim. There is a popular UNESCO SLOGAN that if you educate a girl, you educate an entire family. The data, however, indicate that some gaps still need to be closed despite the government's efforts and action plans. Hence below listed are some of the suggestions which may be considered in this context.

- **Media and cultural programmes:** Our lives are significantly shaped by the media. Its audience receives powerful messages from it. Today, individuals have access to radios and televisions even in the most isolated locations. In light of this, it would be extremely beneficial to catch the attention of even the most illiterate individuals if programmes showing the long-term advantages of educating a female child as well as a wide awareness programme of the incentives and scholarships for doing so could be broadcasted.
- **Gender Responsive Curriculum:** Equipping teachers inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching and learning strategies. The problem is centred around equity; as learners, females will require additional attention in order to rethink their self-concept, aspirations, and life goals. It is crucial to address prejudices in the classroom that are based on caste, religion, and other categories in addition to gender. To assist girls (and boys) comprehend the structural causes of inequality and to equip them with the knowledge, abilities, and skills necessary to effect positive social change, life skill courses must be developed.
- **Flexible Schedule:** Given that most girls in rural regions are compelled to perform home chores, schools should modify their scheduling regulations. Or, to get beyond this social barrier, a few evening schools should be founded.

- **Child Protection Strategies:** All educational systems, especially residential schools for girls, should include appropriate child protection mechanisms. These procedures ought to be put in place in collaboration with organisations like the National Commission for the Protection of Children’s Rights (NCPCR), as well as law enforcement and other safety-related organisations like the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). Every school should implement gender-responsive grievance procedures, as well as protective, clearly defined norms and policies. To keep an eye on all movements inside the school grounds, CCTV cameras should be installed at every corner. If any restriction is broken, security should be increased and sanctions should be severe. Framework collaborating with local governments to make sure that schools are free from violence and offer a secure environment for girls to learn. Strategy also engages with schools to develop peer networks, mentorship programmes, and training for female instructors. It also provides social support to aid in the creation of a secure learning environment for girls.
- Gender responsive programmes and proper implementation: The government is required to support additional scholarship programmes to increase the educational opportunities for girls. Most significantly, a committee should be established every year to assess and report on the appropriate implementation of such programmes, any gaps that must be filled, and the general public’s perception of them.

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Effectiveness of Life Skills in Women Empowerment : An Overview

Shabana Yasmin

Abstract

One of the biggest effective tools for development of a Country is the empowerment of its women. To achieve this empowerment education plays a vital role. Education is the human right and essential mechanism for maintaining equality in the society. Empowerment of women is not only determined in social, economic or gender discriminations prevalence in the society but also to deal constructively with self-governance, self-maintenance and self-efficacy. And these human skills are acquired through life skills based education. According to World Health Organisations life skills are “the abilities for adaptive ad positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively the demands and challenges of everyday life”. The objective of this article is to brief about the importance of life skills and its impact on making women empowerment. It also focuses on how the women empowerment process enhances through life skills in terms of greater participation in various societal situations, greater leadership quality with decision making and problem solving abilities.

Keywords : Women Empowerment, Life skills, Equal Participation.

Introduction

In the present era of globalization and information technology education has been acclaimed as the most important integral part of every society. Therefore the educational system and polices should be framed in such a way where all round development of each and every individual of the society is possible. In the same way Women play an important role in the development of a family and society. Gender equality is today's goal and key role in playing sustainable economic growth and in societal development. Equality is the principle of very healthy society and this equality flourishes when both the genders of the society have

equal rights and opportunities to play in the society. Today's women have been actively participated in various economic & social activities, but their efforts remain unrecognized.

And the important key aspect to bring gender equality in the present society is through women empowerment. Empowerment of women through proper education system is one the major recommendation of National Policy on Education 1986. Empowerment of women means developing them as more aware individuals, who are politically active, economically productive and independent and are able to make intelligent discussion in matters that affect them. Only education plays a powerful tool to fight against all the mal practices towards women empowerment in our society. Education must be made hurdle free and easy accessible to each and every girls.

Empowerment is the process where capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those into desired actions and outcomes. Women Empowerment as a concept was defined as redistribution of social power and control of resources in favor of women.

According to National Curriculum framework (2005) where education system is regarded as "Education without Burden" and students life in school has to be connected with their real life in society which will indirectly help them to acquire abilities to adapt in every challenging environment they face. To meet this demand here comes the important role of life skills as an important factor in making better health and societal choices. Many countries have generally adopted life skills in their formal education curriculum system.

Meaning of Life Skills

A life Skill is an ability that makes a difference in everyday living. According to World Health Organization (WHO) defines Life skills as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" Life Skills empower young people to take positive action to protect themselves and promote health and positive social relations. "Life skills" are grouped under three interrelated categories they are interpersonal skills, cognitive and self management skills.

As described by WHO life skills is a term that includes different types of interpersonal and psychological skills that help individuals in taking appropriate decision making ability when in need and communicate effectively in adverse and difficult situations of life. Life skills education is approach that also helps in promoting gender sensitivity in teaching learning process. It includes highly significant topics related to gender equality, human rights and balancing equity in society and also maintain individual health and hygiene.

TYPES OF LIFE SKILLS

There are 10 life skills as proposed by World Health Organisation (WHO)

1. Communication Skill,
2. Problem Solving Skill,
3. Creative Thinking,
4. Critical Thinking,
5. Decision Making skill,
6. Interpersonal relationship skill,
7. Self - awareness building skills,
8. Empathy skill,
9. Coping with stress skills, and
10. Coping with emotions skills.

Meanings of 10 core Life Skills

- ✦ **Communication Skills** : It is the ability to express feelings, presentation skills, negotiation and refusal skills. It includes both verbal and non-verbal communication skills.
- ✦ **Problem Solving Skill** : It helps one to deal constructively with the problems in our lives.
- ✦ **Decision making Skill** : It helps one to follow constructively with decisions about our lives.
- ✦ **Creative Thinking Skill**: It enables one to explore alternatives and the consequences of our action or non actions.
- ✦ **Critical Thinking Skill**: It helps one to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner.

- ✦ **Interpersonal Relationship Skills:** It helps one to relate in positive ways with people that we interact with. It is social associations, connections or affiliations between two or more people.
- ✦ **Self Awareness Skills:** It deals with the question “Who Am I?” It recognitions of ourselves. It deals with our Desire and Dislikes.
- ✦ **Stress Management:** It deals with recognizing our life stressors and the sources of these in our lives and the way that controls our stress levels.
- ✦ **Emotion Skills:** It helps in recognizing our emotions and those of others, being aware of how emotions influences behavior and being able to respond to emotions appropriately.
- ✦ **Empathy Skills:** It deals with ability to think what life is for another person, even in situations that one may not be familiar with.

Reviews of Related Literature

Shetty & Hans (2019) in their study showed how skills based education is an integral part of education system. Skills development helps in assuring and empowering the women of today’s society. Skills based education helps women to make their own decisions not just saying yes or no but keeping forward their opinions and the ability to change and convince others perceptions as well.

Lohani and Auraida (2017) conducted their study to find out the vital role played by women in our society in environment management and development. Gender equality is positive with dual participation. Women empowerment is a process of sustainable development that encompasses socio-cultural and environmental aspects.

Khuswana & Lal (2018) conducted their study to portray how proper education with skills development helps in empowering women. The focus point of skill development is not just making them prepare for job but also for enhancing their performance and quality of work they are involved in it.

Gopikala.K.(2014) conducted a research study to understand the dimensions of women empowerment, goals and life skills for women empowerment. The researcher also thinks that the participation of

women in social life and work adjustment between her traditional role in her family and result of the study also shows that importance of women in different activities is essential for social-economic development of our country.

Vijaya & Lokhandha (2013) suggested that skill development will boost the women empowerment with high productivity & earnings. Skills lead to confidence among them to be more innovative.

Singh, H. & Dr. Gera, M. (2015) suggested that the teaching of life skills should be coupled with other teachings of hygiene, health, environment and promotion of positive attitudes and values. To fulfill the suggestions the researcher recommended that the school curriculum must be enriched with effective Life Skills programs.

Roodbari, Sahdipoor, and Ghale (2013) in the research showed that life skills training has shown a positive effect and improves social development, emotional and social adjustment, suggesting an increase in compatibility of children and public health.

Prasanna Kumar (2014) stated that it is our need to identify the areas where women are still facing problems and are unable to access resources, institutional knowledge & basic education

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study mainly is Qualitative in nature. The research done is based on secondary data. Here, the data from various research journals, websites and articles are collected in order to understand the effectiveness of Life Skills in empowering women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The basic objective of the paper is:

- ✦ To determine the effectiveness of Life Skills based Education in women empowerment.
- ✦ To suggest possible solutions for future development.

Findings of the Study

Women lack awareness and insight into their circumstances to abridge their powerlessness. They endure and accept the blissful ignorance

believing they are incompetent to change their situation. Empowerment through life Skills based education is a continuous holistic process which involves intellectual, psychological, economic dimensions in order to achieve the goal of empowering women and making them free from all restraints. Gender inequalities in education and employment have intensely damaging consequences for the life probabilities of women individuals and which indirectly can damage the national economies. Empowered women will be able to face the challenges of society and could stand for right happenings and against wrong happenings occurred to them. Education and training must be provided to women ensuring that they feel respected, confident and safe so that they can develop to their full potential. Their low efficacy to control and influence their own lives and of others is due to lack of proper life skills based education. There are various constraints to the education of women, which includes:

- ☑ Limited access to quality education in rural areas and because of different superstitious belief.
- ☑ Long distance schools and lack of public transport
- ☑ Lack of female teachers especially in rural areas.
- ☑ Non-availability of basic infrastructure like buildings, electricity etc.
- ☑ Overcrowded classrooms
- ☑ Non-availability of basic facilities-lack running water and toilets
- ☑ Lack of sanitary facilities
- ☑ Early marriage
- ☑ Restrictions on mobility
- ☑ Limited employment opportunities
- ☑ Limited access to appropriate reading materials.

Suggestions of the Study

India is the largest and fastest growing country, but the reality is that it still lags behind as compared to other in terms of accessibility of skills to women. Few suggestions to improve the situation are:

- ☑ There is a need to improve policies for women so that equal participation in every sector is possible.
- ☑ Digital platforms can be used for women empowerment.
- ☑ Empowering them through Life Skills programs would give them more opportunities to earn their living and become self-reliant.
- ☑ Expand life skills based curriculum in institutions in both remote and urban areas which will enhance employment opportunities for constant growth and development of Women.
- ☑ Provide opportunities for children to express their opinions
- ☑ Promote discussion-based teaching learning methods for both sexes (rather than lecture based)
- ☑ Encourage gender-sensitive small-group discussions and brainstorming in classrooms
- ☑ Delegation of equal responsibilities to both girls and boys in classrooms
- ☑ Rotate roles of leaders and followers among boys and girls in classrooms
- ☑ Promote student analysis of work of opposite sex
- ☑ Encourage approaches that stimulate empathy in both sexes
- ☑ Provide equal opportunities for role-playing exercises, active imagining and creativity in assignments

Conclusion

A proper implementation of life skill education is a need of an hour, for today's society. Empowering women socially, economically, educationally, politically and legally is important for socio-economic development of Indian society. Women are capable to manage life's stress and hurdles if they were given opportunity. As more and more India moves towards the development in socially, economically and in knowledge wise it becomes increasingly important to focus on the advancement of women through these skills. Life skills education, have found to be an effective psychosocial intervention strategy for promoting positive social, and mental health of women's of modern era which

plays an important role in all aspects such as strengthening in coping strategies and developing self-confidence and emotional intelligence. Strategic policies on education, research, and training must be made to eliminate constraints in the way of women education.

Life skills based education system is highly aimed to acquire positive social behavior, maintain balance in attitude, thinking, skills and knowledge. Inculcation of life skills in regular curriculum can be implemented in teaching learning process using techniques like role playing, group discussion, debating, simulated teaching and in collaborative team learning projects.

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The Role of ICT to Improve Quality of Education of Woman's in India

Bijay Gayen

Abstract

Nowadays we use ICT in different ways from early morning till going to sleep at night. Many people's morning starts with reading news paper then there is radio-television computer etc. Education sector is no exception ICT has had a significant impact on the education sector. Teachers can provide large amount of information to woman's in less time through the use of ICT, Woman's can also easily understand and receive information transmitted through ICT. This paper has tried to explain how ICT has helped to improve the quality of education of Woman's in India. In that case we have seen, ICT to motivate woman's in the field of education, to enrich knowledge through various sources of information, to improve conventional formal and non-formal education, in the field of teacher training, even the various administrative functions that have to be performed in the field of education have been enriched by ICT, and helped to deliver the tasks beautifully and easily.

Keywords : ICT, Teacher's and Woman's, Quality of Education, Teaching Learning Process

Introduction

The advent of ICT is a great gift to all the people of the world. We are truly indebted to modern science and technology for this gift. The impact of ICT can be seen everywhere in people's lives. The education sector has been particularly affected by ICT. As a result, we are witnessing a dynamic change in the field of education. The concept of information and communication technology is made up of two different combinations, one is information technology and the other is communication technology.

Information technology is the study and use of electronic equipment's and their interconnected system for storing, retrieving, manipulating and evaluating data or information.

Communication technology is the study and use of electronic system for sending, receiving and exchanging information's.

'Information and Communication Technology' (ICT) first appeared in the mid-1980s and was defined as "All kinds of electronic systems used for broadcasting telecommunications and mediated communications", UNESCO (2011) defined Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as "computers, mobile phones, digital cameras, satellite navigations systems, electronic instruments and data recorders, radio, television, computer networks, satellite systems...almost anything which handles and communicates information electronically".

American Library Association (1983) defined information communication technology (ICT) as the application of computers and other technologies to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information. The computers are used to process and store data, while telecommunication technology provides information communication tools, which make it possible for users to access databases and link them with other computer networks at different locations.

According to the Encyclopedia of Computer Science, "Information Communication Technology (ICT) is an imprecise term frequently applied to broad areas of activities and technologies associated with the use of computers and communications".

Rhine (2006) Information and Communication Technologies can be split into three components namely the technology part; information that the technology helps to deliver; and a communication process that the technology facilitates and serves as a medium for the information.

ICT makes progressive changes in society. ICT gives opportunity to both teacher's and woman's to adapting learning, teaching and managing the individual needs, society is forcing schools to aptly respond to this innovation. ICT has become an important part of today's teaching-learning process. Effective use of ICT can make our classes more energetic and motivated woman's.

According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (Bombay, Legislative council Debate, 27 July, 1927), "The university is an equipment

whereby education amenities are provided to all those who are intellectually capable of using those facilities to be the best advantages but who cannot avail themselves of those facilities for want of funds or for other handicaps in life”.

The people in university education shape the behavior; minds and the social and human values of the student community. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a very broad term focusing on improving the quality, quantity and speed of information to reach the students in an educational system (Bindu, 2016).

ICT provides a great flexibility in education to ensure that, learners are able to access knowledge regardless of space and time (Akele, 2013; Angadi, 2014). To structure and design the active learning opportunities as a academician and woman's engaged in learning process which help to motivate woman's and enhance learning outcome it is help us effective use of ICT.

It goes without saying that the difference between men and women in the field of education has reduced to a great extent. Now woman's are participating equally with boys in higher education and higher employment. With the passage of time, there has been a change in the needs of the society and the people, skills, qualifications etc. in the field of employment, the education system has been developed in the same way. Nowadays, technology and ICT are widely used in the field of education for girls so that girls can be introduced to this technology era so that they can acquire the skills to use this technology, As a result, the quality of education for girls is increasing as the girls become proficient in using ICT.

Role Of ICT In Education Nowadays almost all the developing and developed countries of the world have given importance to use to the ICT of education system to improve it. Our government has been trying various schemes and policies to use ICT to improve education from time to time. In education we use different types of ICT like Radio-TV Internet etc.

Enhancing Knowledge of Woman's

Knowledge plays an important role in any situation nowadays. The

more knowledge a person has, the more she can deal with a variety of problematic situations and solves the problem. Through the use of different types of ICT, we can constantly acquire different types of knowledge, Which helps in solving various problems as well as in education. In this regard, the central government has been helping various institutions in various ways.

Enhancing Teacher's Training

Present days there is a trend towards **integrating ICT into teaching and** training. At present our central government organization NCTE has given importance to the use of ICT in teacher training. After the training, the teachers are trained so that they can effectively teach the woman's through the use of different types of ICT in different institutions.

Motivated to Woman's

Any type of ICT, networked computer with internet connection can make the learner more motivate to her learning. An important task in the field of education nowadays is to motivate woman's towards learning. Because if the woman's are not properly motivated to study then the woman's are not interested in learning anything. ICT has made the education sector flexible as a result, woman's can get information anytime anywhere. When education is imparted through the use of ICT in the classroom, woman's are particularly attracted and understand the subject easily. Woman's are motivated in education only when all conditions of learning are maintained in the learning environment, ideal learning environment is created when various learning materials are provided. Woman's can learn any subject very well through the use of ICT because they are used to using these things as a means of aesthetic content in their daily life, social media likes- Twitter, Google tools, blogs, virtual learning environment, mobile device as such as smart phones and iPads, these are all common ICT tools that students are used to using regularly. ICT is the element that makes woman's motivated in learning something to know something.

Enhancing The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Educational Administration

Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays an important role in enhancing the quality of education. Administration and management applications of ICT are currently popular in schools due to its capabilities in facilitating administration activities from data storage to knowledge management and decision making.

ICT has become an essential part of educational administration, accordingly this integration in school improvement is not only for the purpose of teaching and learning, but also for educational management use. ICT helps the school administrators improve various administrative tasks of institutions, it applies equally to formal education as well as to no-forward education.

ICT Application for Quality Improvement in Formal and Non-Formal Education

ICT can play great role in formal and non formal forms of education. In the field of formal education, it goes without saying that woman's are benefiting from computers, mobile projectors, etc. Woman's can learn about any topic very easily and quickly by using all these tools. As a result, the quality of education is increasing day by day. ICT has also had a significant impact on non-formal education. People are constantly learning different things through social media, through various programs on TV, people from children to adults are getting knowledge about different things which are especially needed in daily life. By using computer smart phone one can know about any subject at any time through YouTube. However, it cannot be denied that ICT has significantly affected formal and normal education as well as improved the quality of education.

Use of ICT in Administration

ICT can improve education quality, expand learning opportunities and make education accessible. ICT play very important role for the generation of quality information and management. ICT influence to take planning in Administration. ICT promotes centralised storage of files and data. This enhances maintenance, reduces unnecessary

efforts, minimises storage place and lesson security risks. ICT enhances evaluation, daily routine, programmes as well as staff development in schools and colleges. We can Solve the problem of poor communication in Administration by the uses of ICT tools. ICT has become an essential part of educational administration, accordingly this integration in school improvement is not only for the purpose of teaching and learning,

ICT Tools

There are various ICT tools available like Radio, T.V, Internet, Mobile phone, Computer, laptop, tablets and many other hardware and software applications. Woman's can use it positively for creation of the knowledge and dissemination in the modern India. The ICT devices are the latest tools, concepts and techniques used in student-to-teacher, woman-to-woman interaction. Woman's can get various advantages by the uses of ICT tools,like,it is provide better teaching and learning methods, it is Cost-efficient, it is minimize cost and saves time, classroom teaching directly, Teachers can teach better with video and graphics, It improves the digital culture in universities, colleges, and schools etc. Similarly there are various disadvantages like Lack of security or privacy, lack of employment, Cyber bullying etc.

• Benefits Of ICT

Benefits of Woman's

- ITC helps Woman's in cognitive process. Through this, Woman's easily form a clear idea about a subject, as a result, any additional idea about that subject is prevented from memory.
- Develop problem solving attitude among Woman's through the use of ICT.
- Through the use of ICT, woman's can gain a broad understanding of a subject that is not possible through the use of text, as a result, Woman's can form a detailed understanding of a subject.
- Through the use of ICT, the weaknesses and strengths of a woman can be easily identified.
- ICT encourages Woman's in active and independent learning.
- The use of ICT in education has made the education sector flexible, Woman's can learn through it anytime anywhere.

Benefits of Teacher's

- Through the use of ICT in education, teachers can easily plan for learning, can take appropriate preparation, can design learning materials appropriately.
- Through the use of ICT, teachers can easily share their own experiences and advice with other colleagues.
- Teachers increase Woman's motivation and concentration in learning through the use of various types of ICT in the classroom.
- Through the use of ICT in education, teachers can manage the teaching process very well, woman's can also take it very easily, as a result, increases to the teachers' image by others.
- Through the use of ICT, teachers can access any information about the woman or the institute anytime, anywhere.

Benefits of Parents

- Parents can easily communicate with teachers through the use of ICT.
- Parents can easily know about daily attendance of students or school activities through the use of ICT.
- The use of ICT in education has seen parents become more involved in the teaching-learning process than ever before.

Conclusion

The use of ICT in education has enriched the education sector and increased the quality of education. Through the use of ICT in the field of education, Woman's can easily understand and acquire knowledge and knowledge in a variety of subjects such as Smoothly. By this woman's can get various educational information in less time on their own effort even sitting at home without help of others. All Areas of Education Influenced by ICT be it formal non-formal education or education administration or motivating Woman's, ICT has influenced all areas of education. But the sad thing is that we are not yet able to deliver ICT in education to all parts of India. We can say the reason for this is the interruption of electricity service, lack of appropriate ICT-based

learning environment, Ignorance of ICT among teachers and education staff, lack of money etc. Various factors are responsible. In this case, we have to try to remove all those obstacles and spread ICT in education at all ends and the government should give special importance to this.

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Modern Concept of Woman Education According to Swami Vivekananda's Views

Ranjusree Sarkar

Abstract

We were all memorised that time, where women were passing through in many critical problems every day in their life. They could not face in society for their frustration, confusion, afraid, this was always forward in mind. Because, society was not allowed women were educated, they were self dependent, they came out side of the house. Swamiji watched each and every situation of women and said that education could change human point of view. Education was evolutes in many countries through various changing conditions of social circumstances. This was true for women education in particular and the later had to face innumerable social-political and socio-cultural hurdles indifferent periods of history with in the wide space of sub-continental area.

Need of the study

Swamiji sincerely believed that a nation could rise only by paying proper respect to women. He says 'There is no hop of rise for that family or country where there is no education of women, where they live in sadness'. The women educational system usually reflected the ideas of the nation and these enabled us to understand the spirit of the philosophy of life in women. Swamiji's idea of women's education included ideal daughters, ideal wife's and ideal mothers. So, it was very essential to known, how Swami Vivekananda established women empowerment on that time and also decided his great contribution for women education in modern perspective.

Objectives of the study

- To understand the background, this inspired Swamiji, to move and developed women's life by dint of education.

- To identify Swamiji's contribution of educational philosophy this changed women, to prove their self respect, self-satisfaction, self-dignity etc.
- To analyze Swamiji's ideas of education that was influenced women education in modern period.
- To discussed about the quality level of women which was revived in modern time by education, to the perspective of Swamiji's period.

Methodology of the study

This study described Swamiji's view of women education. It is very important to know, how women education changed after the period of Swami Vivekananda. This study find out many aspect of women education past and present. This study establish the facts through which women education could achieve.

Analysis and Interpretation of the study

- Swami Vivekananda said, "It is very difficult to understand why in this country so much difference is made between men and women, whereas the Vedanta declares that one and the same conscious self is present in all beings. You always criticize the women, but what have you done for their enlishment?" There was no change for the welfare of the world, unless condition of women was improved. It was the value learnt at home, that affected through the suitable messages of presents often indicate that the girl will be going to another household, while the boy will earn and would inherit the family's wealth. But they did not believed the truth, which was men and women have equal access to education.
- Swamiji was presented a comprehensive curriculum for women so that they may develop high character, courage and confidence. In that purpose he said, "Sewing, culinary art, rules of domestic work and upbringing of children will also

be taught while 'Japa' warship and meditation, etc, shall form and indispensable part of teaching." He considered women to be the incarnation of power and asked men to respect them in every way. He also recommended a modest curriculum for them which include history, puranas, house-keeping, sewing and other domestic arts. Ideal women must learn the duties of home life.

- Swamiji says, "Oh, India, do not forget the ideal of womanhood-Sita, Sabitri and Damayanti." Here, seen the fact of ancient women, they were all unique, every type of the true Indian woman. They were always suffering in our society and proved that they were representative of ever pure wife, the ideal of the people. But, any attempt to modernize women, if it tried to take out women away from that ideal of them, was immediately failure as we seen in every day, because they learned to fight for self-defence by education.
- He proudly states that "women in statesmanship, managing territories, governing countries, even making war, have proved themselves equal to men, if not superior. In India I have no doubt of that whenever they have had the opportunity; they have proved that they have as much ability as men." Therefore, there need reformed to solve the problems of women, so that to reach its benefit to all women belonging to various sections in the society.
- Vivekananda understand the causes of the degeneration of women in the modern age and he evolved his ideal teaching method of women solving in many problems such as to take out the causes of female subordination feminists seek women's identity, women's language as a means by which to secure political, social and economical, equality for women.
- Swami Vivekananda was travelling in western countries and highlighted some real picture of those countries. He has seen

that how women in America brought highly educated and trained, worked shoulder to shoulder with men in the service of their nation. He said, “All nations attain greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that which does not respect women has never become great nor will ever be in future”. In 21st century, it was proved that the line was absolutely right and truth on that time. Because, female was a part of family, family was a part of society and society was a part of country. If, a female was not literate a country was never progressed in any way.

Major Findings of the study

- Vivekananda always encouraged the child and women to motivate their mind, body and sense organs within the teacher activities. In that case, Teacher was inspired student to develop their knowledge and understanding ability by dint they solved any problem in their life. Here, established a teaching-learning process and today it was very affective way in education.
- In modern time, it was truth that maximum women were chosen in teaching profession and they were very efficiently doing this work. Female were playing their role like a mother. Now, they joined girl ‘as well as boys’ school or colleges. It was clear that, Swamiji’s idea very affectively used in present time.
- Swami Vivekananda presented a positive system of women education in 19th century. He believed that education should spread to every household in the century. If the children and women did not come to school the teacher should reached them. We know that, at present ICDS, SSK, MSK schools set up in our country and school teachers were going to the students houses for brought them in school.
- Swamiji framed some curriculum for women education such as house-keeping, sewing and meditation, domestic arts, history

etc. The modern period just revised the curriculum and subject became modified such as Home-Science, Work-Education, Physical-Education, Fine-art, Vocational work etc.

- Education increased the quality level of women which influenced quantity level also, it female were educated naturally their quality were improved. They became higher educated and attend in many jobs. So, the quality and quantity were related factor of education.

Recommendation of the Study

- Swami Vivekananda's messages of women education announced and published for development of knowledge in human beings.
- Women hostility removed in society and gave importance them in every religion.
- Opportunity increased of higher education and employment for women.
- Mass communication system used to increase public consciousness for progress of women education.
- Through education the masses women to change the parental attitude towards girl children that somehow they have to dispose of a girl to marriage.

Conclusion

Swami Vivekananda was a great educator, his all lectures substantiated a true fact which was education conceived of as illumination given us a correct lead in the various spheres of life. It prepared the learner for supreme end of life. In today, his ideas of women education have vital strength to be used for a critique of modern thinking or a change in perspective. It was for helping such a necessity that the vision and views of Vivekananda were important in the modern or post-modern context. But, it also very

sorrow hell to us, because few women memorized his contribution of women education in their life.

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Relationship between Education and Women Empowerment in India

Jaba Pal

Abstract

Education is the main source of inspiration of women empowerment which relates to prosperity, development and welfare. The way of empowering women happens to be a positive attitude to change and break the conventionality. But, there is a predominance of discrimination and vulnerability of women in all walks of life. This is to be fought to eliminate this gender biasness. It's undeniable that the strength of empowerment will acquire from education which enables them to accept the challenges in view with change their lifestyle. The importance of education to women empowerment in India is poised in becoming super power like a developed country by 2022, for an example, Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM). Education of women is the most powerful tool to bring change in society, that minimizes inequality and improves their status within the family and develops the concept of participation. Education is considered as a milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges. Today, in India, the female literacy rate according to the census of 2011 are 65.46% where male literacy rate are 82.14%. This percentage shows that women is the pivotal part in society and occupies secondary position in our socially constructed hierarchy. This paper discusses the relationship between education and women empowerment as well as the challenges and changes that we must have to deal with during the process.

Keywords : Education, Women Empowerment, Literacy, Inequality, Development and Freedom.

Introduction

Empowerment of women in 21st century play vital role in the development of the country. Women constitute almost half of the population in the world but socially constructed hierarchy were divided

equal opportunities. Women education in India has been a major pre-occupation of both the Government and civil society as educated woman can play a very important role in the country.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said; If you educate a man you educate an individual, however if you educate a woman, you educate a whole family, Women empowered means mother India empowered.

As **Swami Vivekananda** said ,’All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women .That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future.

Former President **Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam** says,” Empowering women is a pre-requisite for creating a good nation ,when women are empowered, society with stability is assured, Empowered of women is essential as their thought and their value system ,lead to the development of a good family and ultimately a good nation.

Empowered of women is directly linked with education, Education is considered a key instrument for the change which is responsible for national development .The National Policy on Education 1986 States ,’Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The National education system will play a positive interventionist roll in the empowerment of women. Empowerment is a multi - dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. The core of the concept of empowerment is the ‘ idea of power’. Empowerment is an active process which enables women to realise their full identity and powers in all spares of life. Empowerment of women is very much essential to achieve sustainable development. Education enables women to understand their social and legal rights, become economically independent, and accure a voice in the affairs of the family.

Objectives of Education for women:

- decesion making ability
- Adaptation to change
- Skills of Communication
- Skills of living
- Skills of living

- Better health
- Social awareness
- Commitment to society

Women empowerment is a worldwide concern and discussion on formal or informal rights .The idea of Women Empowerment was introduced in 1985, International women conference at NAIROBI. Women’s education has too been a concern of both the Government and community as educated women can also play a crucial role in socio economic aspect. The first year of new millennium 2001 was declared as ‘Women Empowerment year’. Education of a woman leads to a better family and ultimately an ideal society to a positive progressive nation .In India, can be converted into a developed nation only if women contribute to the best of her capacity and ability which is possible when she is educated and empowered.

Literacy rate of India

Year	Male	Female	Gap
1901	9.8	0.7	9.1
1911	10.6	1.1	9.5
1921	12.2	1.8	10.4
1931	15.6	2.9	12.7
1941	24.9	7.3	17.6
1951	24.9	7.3	17.6
1961	34.4	13.0	21.4
1971	39.5	18.7	20.8
1981	46.9	24.8	22.1
1991	63.9	39.2	24.7
2001	76.0	54.0	22.0
2011	82.14	65.46	16.68

Source: Census of India, 2011

According to the table that the literacy rate for women very low percentage comparison to literacy rate of men. This table shows that literacy rate of women has risen from 0.7% to 7.3% where is the literacy

rate of men has risen in from 9.8% to 24.9% during these four decades. Female literacy rate increase during the decade 1981-2001. From this analysis the female literacy rate is lagging behind the male literacy rate. The lack of women education is the main cause of exploitation, superstition and carelessness. On the table we cannot see that no point could the literacy rate of women match of the men as a result after 75 years of independence women occupy a secondary position in our social hierarchy. Within the Indian States, Kerala has shown the highest literacy rate of 90.02% whereas Bihar averaged is lower than 50% literacy the lowest in India.

Women Empowerment Through Education :

Women empowerment is the pivotal part in any society, state and country. It is a woman who plays a dominant role in the basic life of a child. Women are an important part of our society. Education as means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges to fight traditional role and change life. UNIFEM(United National development fund for women) that women empowerment means :

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed .
- Developing a sense of self -worth and the right to control one's life.
- Gaining the ability power.
- Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change , to create a more just social and economic order ,nationally and internationally.

India is the world's largest democracy country, where billions of people live and of course almost of half of these are women. So, Women Empowerment through education is very important. If girls are not educated, families suffered too. Educated women use their knowledge to improve the health of the children and other family members. Their knowledge about health risk protects their families against illness. Child mortality rate is much higher where mothers lack education then

in families is where mothers are educated. Girls education emerging as one of the top priorities of Indian society.

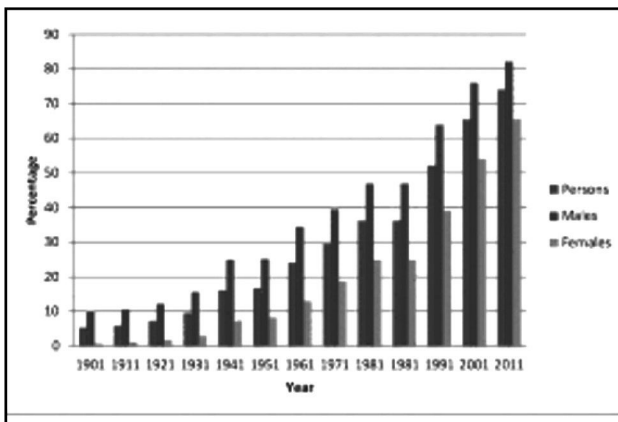
Hindrance of women empowerment:

There are some major problems that were faced by women from history and still today.

- gender discrimination
- lack of education
- household responsibilities
- child marriage
- child labour
- domestic violence
- dowry
- endogamy marriage

In Indian families especially rural areas, girl children play the role of second mother by the responsibilities of household work .So many household work such as looking after the siblings, fetching water, collecting wood ,cleaning and cooking etc and discourage girls to go to school.

The second major evil is bonded labor system. In rural and urban areas women education neglected by this cause.



Source : Ignited Minds Journals

Picture : Ratio of female to male schooling around in India

Dowry system and other social practices act as main cause of the neglect of the women education and discrimination. In many families especially poor and down-trodden think that if their daughters are educated more they have to accumulate more assets and properties to provide as dowry. The lower enrollment of girls in school is one of the fundamental factors which stand as stumbling block for women education. In India, the school environment and textbook for girls is not really interesting and encouraging the methods of teaching are mostly outdated, rigid and an interesting in school textbooks gender discrimination are bad effect in society, which creates discrimination between men and women.

TABLE -2 STATE-WISE PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE LITERACY IN THE COUNTRY AS PER 2011 CENSUS

S. No.	Name of the State	Female Literacy
1.	Andhra Pradesh	59.7%
2	Arunachal Pradesh	59.6%
3	Assam	67.3%
4	Bihar	53.3%
5	Chhattisgarh	60.6%
6	Goa	81.8%
7	Gujarat	70.7%
8	Haryana	66.8%
9	Himachal Pradesh	76.6%
10	Jharkhand	56.2%
11	Karnataka	68.1%
12	Kerala	92.0%
13	Madhya Pradesh	60.0%
14	Maharashtra	75.5%
15	Manipur	73.2%
16	Meghalaya	73.8%
17	Mizoram	89.4%
18	Nagaland	76.7%
19	Odisha	64.4%
20	Punjab	71.3%
21	Rajasthan	52.7%
22	Sikkim	76.4%
23	Tamil Nadu	73.9%
24	Tripura	83.1%
25	Telangana(Latest data)	57.9%
26	Uttar Pradesh	59.3%
27	Uttarakhand	70.7%
28	West Bengal	71.2%

UNION TERRITORIES

S. No.	Name of UT	Female Literacy
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	81.8%
2	Chandigarh	81.4%
3	Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman Diu	65.9% & 79.6%
4	Delhi	80.9%
5	Jammu & Kashmir	56.4%
6	Ladakh	69.7%
7	Lakshadweep	88.2%
8	Pondicherry	81.2%
	All India	65.46%

State wise percentage of female literacy rate in the country as per 2011 census

According to the picture the state wise literacy rate of female had an average of 65.46% in all India basis according to 2011 census. The high literacy rate is 90.04% in Kerala and low literacy rate is 52.7% in Rajasthan. In contrast to literacy rate of female is 11% increase in 2011 census as increased from 54.6% 65.46% womens are growing well in the last 10 years. Central and state government has been taken various schemes and policies launched specially for women in every section of society.

Constitutional provisions, laws and policies in support of Women Empowerment :

In Indian constitution that safeguards the women and enriched women education and empowerment which has not only policies that is women empowered with state.

Article 14- grants equal rights and opportunities to men and women in the socio , economic and political spheres.

Article 15 (1)- It prohibits discrimination against any people on the basis of their sex cast religion race and place of birth.

Article 39 (d)- grants equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

Article 16- equality of opportunities in method of public appointments for all citizens.

Article 42 -The state to make provision for ensuring first and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Government of India has also enacted some specific loss to protect for upgradation of women status.

- **Hindu succession act, 1956** -It provides equal right to women in parental property.
- **The dowry prohibition act, 1961** -This act declares that taking and giving of dowry and an unlawful activity.
- **Equal remuneration act, 1976**-it provide equal remuneration compare with men to women for work of equal value.

- **The medical termination of pregnancy act, 1971-** this act legalise the abortion greeting the right of women to go on the basis of physical and mental health.
- **The protection of women from domestic violence act, 2005-**This act provides more effective protection of women who are victim of violence of any kind occurring within the family and society.
- **National policy for the empowerment of women, 2001-**The policies states that -equal access to education for women and girls will be insured special strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The de -jure and de -facto to enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres- political ,economic, social ,cultural and civil

Schemes for women empowerment:

- Beti bachao,Beti padhao(2015)
- One stop centre(2015)
- **Ujjawala (2016) :** A comprehensive scheme for prevention of trafficking and rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation .
- NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR(1999)
- NIRBHAYA(2010)

Schemes launched by West Bengal Government

Kanyashree (2012) - to improve the life and the status of the girl by helping economically backward families with cash so that families do not arrange the marriage of that girl child before 18 years because of economic problem .

SAG-KP (Schemes For Adolescence Girls Kanyashree Programe) (2019) : to reduce dropouts and prevent early child marriage .This program in view of a holistic development of adolescence girls from the age group of 11 to 18 years to address their multi dimensional vulnerability in education, nutrition protection and health.

Lakshmi Bhandar (2012) : the main objective of the Scheme is to empower women this scheme to give much needed economic support and empowered to women.

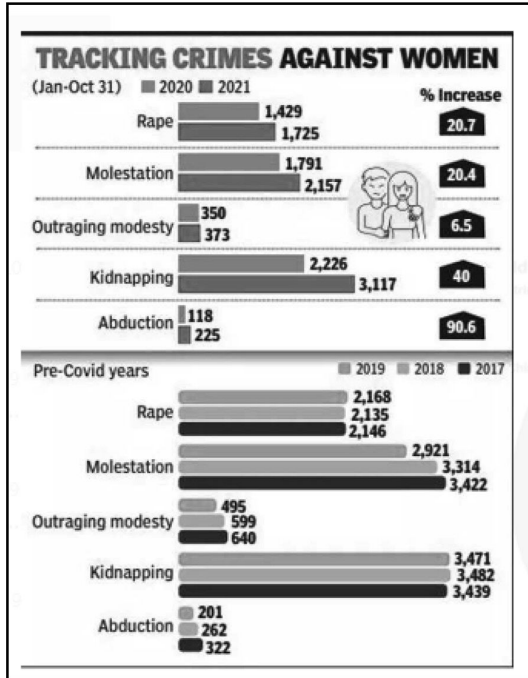
Needs of women education and empowerment:

In 21st century the concept of women empowerment is pivotal part in society education of women leads to a better family to a progressive nation.

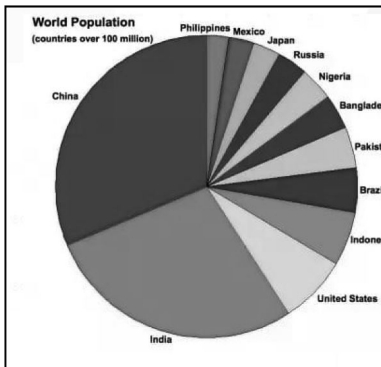
- **Education empowers women** : Educated women to know their rights and to have the gaining confidence.
- **Educating women avoids early marriage:** If education is provided to more numbers of women it will be help in avoiding child marriage.
- **Education saves children lives:** Education helps to women prevent child mortality rate.
- **Education saves mother's lives:** moments still die because of complications during pregnancy and childbirth because lack of education.
- **Education liberate** : Education liberalised the thinking, mind ,thoughts imagination, power in various field for easy to survive and achieve knowledge through education.
- **Education stow away:** education will garnishing women to defence against crime ,social devil, sexual harassment, marital rape and mental stress of society.
- **Education gives decision making power:** an education opens way to take decision it is relates to lifestyle, life partner, job ,career etc, Education learn what is wrong or what is right.
- **Analysis of UNESCO about education role in Empowerment:** UNESCO data proves approach educations transform development. It says that if all children equal access to education per capita income would increase by 23% over 40 years, and if all women had a primary education child marriage and child mortality could fall by a sixth and maternal deaths by two -thirds.UNESCO proves that education empowers women ,promote tolerance ,improves job

opportunities and increases economic growth, avoids early marriages and also saves mother's lives.

- Education can help to improve the sex ratio and controlling population explosions.
- Educated women is guiding light for the children, family, members society and Nations.
- Education helps in balanced personality development by giving due weight to various aspects of personality.



Major challenges of Women Empowerment:



The major hurdles in the process of empowering women are loads of problem that were faced by women in the first days and still today. Problems are gender discrimination ,lack of education, female infanticide ,early child marriage ,low need for achievement ,absence of ambition for the achievement. Atrocities on women such as raped, kicked,killed,subdued, humiliated and div divorced women. Violence

Source : Statista Research Department oct. 13, 2022

against women is the inaccessibility of information on victims rights among rural and less educated women.

Some other factors that challenge in realising women's empowerment are poverty, gender discrimination, health and safety, professional and household inequality, financial constraint, low mobility etc.

- Change in irrelevant and orthodox social norms can be catalytic because women's empowerment of inequitable gender attitude, behaviours and harmful practices.
- Giving women decision making power. In India, women decision making power only one third of the women. This power among employed urban women was higher than among rural and less educated women.
- Change the system towards women based sex discrimination.
- Removal gender inequality in everyday life.
- Awareness campaign to women are effectively socio economic development of the nation.
- To encourage all women belongs to rural areas to polish their own creativity.
- Enhancing self esteem and self confidence to women.
- Need to transform the attitude of the peoples who still neglects the female child or women.
- Abolish gender biasness in society.
- Encourage the women actively participate in social and political issues.
- Socially importantment of women like health, education, nutrition, sanitation, rights of the girl child and women etc.

CONCLUSION

In 21st century, the present scenario, it may be said that women in modern hi-tech society which is moving very fast. women are conscious her freedom and position in society Women empowered through education. There is a positive relationship between education

and women empowerment. But another point that the issue of women empowerment has been facing serious challenges that is evil norms and attitudes like child marriage, child labour, illiteracy, female feticides, superstition etc and its situation women empowerment is an urgent necessity. Women empowerment should be implemented in reality for empowering women in the world.

The problem that are present in our society like poverty ,unemployment and inequality cannot be eradicated by men alone but equal and active participation of women is mandatory. Without education women cannot understand about their rights and importance. Empowerment of women to motivate higher literacy rate, abolish gender discrimination,better health awareness, improve lifestyle and to achieve self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect women among women. In 2013 Government of West Bengal has been launched kanyashree scheme in 2013. This scheme aims to improving the status and well being of girl child. Reducing early marriage and preventing trafficking and exploitation of the girl child. This scheme mainly to advance the goal of women empowerment. Healthy, safe, educated women transform families, communities and countries. There is need to realise women empowerment firstly we will try to minimise the literacy gap between man and woman also give priority to educate a woman. The countries which realised the importance of empowering their women developed fast educating their women and is involving them in the decision making process of social and economic development. That is true empowerment from ‘Women for development ‘to move focus to ‘Women in development ‘.

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Indian Constitutional Jurisprudence Vis-À-Vis Women Educational Rights Concerning the State of West Bengal

Mir Shatil

Abstract

In order to achieve women's empowerment in our society and in the whole nation the effort of educating them must be adopted by the sovereign authorities of our Nation and States. Imparting proper education to women is an essential need to change their identity and uplift their status in society because an educated woman can play a pivotal role in the socioeconomic development of society. Education can be the key factor for eradicating all types of inequalities, disparities, and vulnerability that exist within and outside of the family of a woman. Education can provide empowerment, prosperity, development, welfare, and equal rights for women in the society of India. The subject of Education belongs to both the Central and State Governments as it has been brought under the Concurrent List of the 7th schedule in the Indian Constitution by an enactment of the Constitutional (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 which signifies that its growth and development are the responsibilities imposed upon both the Central and State Government. The Indian Constitution has fixed the responsibility of our federal structured Governance system to ensure that every individual irrespective of any gender has the necessary acquaintance, skills, and attitudes to carry out the responsibilities as a responsible and cooperative citizen, so that the proper functioning of democracy in the country, as well as at the international level, can be maintained with limited resources in all aspects such as social, economic, political and educational. This present paper would aim to make an analysis of various Constitutional provisions incorporated regarding equal opportunities of educational rights of women and their effective implementation through the formulation of various Governmental policies in the state of West Bengal.

Keywords : Women empowerment, Education, Indian Constitution, Governmental policies, West Bengal.

Introduction

“Educate one man, you educate one person, but educate one woman, you educate a whole civilization” -Mahatma Gandhi¹

A child’s access to education in the name of continuous learning process actually starts from a mother’s womb which signifies that education is the birth right of all children but here the word children does not denote to only for boys but also for girls as well effectively. Education is the sharp instrument for women through which they can empower themselves in every context for the development of the country. Imparting proper education to women is an essential need to change their identity and uplift their status in society because an educated woman can play a pivotal role in the socioeconomic development of society. Education is a powerful tool for both men and women to bring any desired changes in the society during the passage of time which is a universal fact accepted throughout the world. As Nelson Mandela says, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. Education can be the key factor for eradicating all types of inequalities, disparities, and vulnerability that exist within and outside of the family of a woman. This is true not only for our nation, but for countries around the world because women and men are just like two wings of a bird, or we may say that they are the two wheels of a single chariot.

So, in order to achieve women’s empowerment in our society and in the whole nation the effort of educating them must be adopted by the Constitutional authorities of our Nation and the States. The subject of Education belongs to both the Central and State Governments as it has been brought under the Concurrent List of the 7th schedule in the Indian Constitution by an enactment of the Constitutional (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 which signifies that its growth and development are the responsibilities imposed upon both the Central and State Government. The Indian Constitution has fixed the responsibility of our federal

1. My experiments with truth: Gandhi, an autobiography

structured Governance system to ensure that every individual irrespective of any gender has the necessary acquaintance, skills, and attitudes to carry out the responsibilities as a responsible and cooperative citizen, so that the proper functioning of democracy in the country, as well as at the international level, can be maintained with limited resources in all aspects such as social, economic, political and educational. This present paper would aim to make a study of various provisions incorporated in our Indian Constitution regarding equal opportunities of educational rights of girls and women and their effective implementation through the formulation of various Governmental policies in the state of West Bengal.

Constitutional Provisions Related To Women Education

• Right to Education:

The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine². The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.

The judicial decision from which the right to education emanated as a fundamental right was from the one rendered by the Supreme Court in **Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka**³. In this case the Supreme Court through a division bench comprising of justice Kuldeep Singh and R.M. Sahai, deciding on the constitutionality of the practice of charging capitation held that **“the right to education flows directly from the right to life. The right to life and the dignity of an individual cannot be assured unless it is accompanied by the right to education”**.

The rationality of this judgment was further examined by a five-judge bench in **J.P. Unnikrishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh**⁴ where the

2. Indian Constitutional Law, M.P. Jain

3. Indian Constitutional Law, M.P. Jain

4. Constitutional Law of India, J.N. Pandey

enforceability and the extent of the right to education was clarified in the following words: **“The right to education further means that a citizen has a right to call upon the State to provide educational facilities to him within the limits of its economic capacity and development and It would be therefore incumbent upon the State to provide facilities and opportunity as enjoined under Article 39 (e) and (f) of the Constitution and to prevent exploitation of their childhood due to indigence and vagary.”**⁵

The Constitution contains a number of articles and clauses that directly or indirectly address education and divide educational responsibilities between the Centre and the States. In a nutshell, the Indian Constitution states the following educational provisions:

❑ Fundamental Rights(Part III)

- Article 15(1): “The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.”
- Article 15 (3): “Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children”.
- Article 28 (1): “No religious instructions shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of state funds”.
- Article 29(2): “No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds on grounds only or religion, care caste, language or any of them.
- Article 30(1): “All minorities whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.”
- Article 30(1A): “In making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to in Clause (1), the state shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law

5. Constitutional Law of India, D.D. Basu

for the acquisition of property issued as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under the clause”.

- Article 30(2): “The state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management for minority, whether based on religion or language”.

❑ **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV):**

- Article 39(a): “The state shall in particular, direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women, equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.”
- Article 39(d): “That there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women”.
- Article 39 (e): “that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength”.
- Article 46: The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

❑ **Relations between Union and the States (Part XI):**

- Article 257 (1): The executive power of every State shall be so exercised as not to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union, and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of such directions to a State as may appear to the Government of India to be necessary for that purpose.

❑ **FINANCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CENTRE AND THE STATES (PART XII):**

- Discretionary Grants [Article 282]: It empowers both the Centre and the states to make any grants for any public purpose, even if it is not within their respective legislative competence. Under this provision, the Centre makes grants to the states. These grants are

known as discretionary grants, the reason being that the Centre is under no obligation to give these grants and the matter lies within its discretion. These grants have a two-fold purpose: to help the state financially to fulfil plan targets; and to give some leverage to the Centre to influence and coordinate state action to effectuate the national plan.

Kanyashree Prakalpa

Kanyashree Prakalpa was launched by the Chief Minister, Ms Mamata Banerjee, in West Bengal. Kanyashree Prakalpa Yojana was designed by the Department of Women Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal on 8th March 2013. This scheme performs as a conditional cash transfer plan aiming to improve and progress the status of the girl child. The scheme is a flagship project introduced by the state government to promote the development of girl children across regions within the state. One of the major aspects of the scheme launched by the state government, a girl child belonging to a poor family can be helped to continue with her education prior to attaining a marriageable age.

Incentivisation has been provided to a large extent to support such development schemes through funding at various levels. The scheme aims at improving the status and wellbeing of girl child by:

- Discouraging early marriage of girls to ensure compliance with the legal provisions pertaining to the minimum age at marriage.
- Incentivize through scholarships, the continuation of education of the girl child in Secondary and Higher Secondary classes and those undergoing vocational training or sports training.
- Improving IMR (Infant mortality rate) and MMR (Maternal mortality rate) by delaying the age of marriage and consequently increasing the median age of first birth.
- Reducing the incidence of drop outs, especially amongst girls from poor families.
- Eradicating undernutrition and mal-nutrition of girl child.
- Preventing trafficking and exploitation of the girl child.

The scheme has two components:

- The first is an Annual incentive of Rs. 750/- to be paid annually to the girls in the age group 13 to 18 years (studying in Class VIII equivalent or above for every year that they remained in education, provided they are unmarried at the time.
- The second is a One-Time Grant of Rs. 25,000/-, to be paid after a girl turns 18, provided that she was engaged in an academic or occupational pursuit and was unmarried.

Kanyashree Prakalpa has received various National and International recognition for its design and features of good governance, such as:

- 1st Place Winner in UNPSA(United Nations Public Service Awards) Award, 2017
- Finalist in GEM-Tech Awards 2016 organized by ITU(International Telecommunication Union)and UN Women.
- United Nations WSIS(The World Summit on the Information Society Forum)Prize 2016 Champion in e-Government Category (WSIS Action Line C7)
- CSI-Nihilent Award, 2014-15.
- Skoch Award and Order of Merit 2015 for Smart Governance.
- National E-governance Award 2014 – 2015 awarded by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India.
- Manthan Award for Digital Inclusion for Development (South Asia and Asia Pacific) 2014 under the category E-Women and Empowerment.
- West Bengal Chief Ministers Award for Empowerment of Girls, 2014.

The Scheme was appreciated as a good practice at:

- Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Enclave organized by U. S. Consulate & Shakti Vahini (Siliguri, February 2016).

- National Workshop on “Conditional Cash Transfers for Children: Experiences of States in India” organized by NITI Aayog, India (Delhi, December 2015).
- Consultation on “Empowerment of Adolescent Girls” organized by the World Bank (Ranchi, May 2015).
- Consultation on “Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancies” organized Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Delhi, March 2015).
- The “Girls Summit organized by DFID and UNICEF (London, July 2014) ⁷

Issues Regarding Proper Implementation Of Policies

Despite of framing and striving hard for properly executing such a remarkable policy by the Government of West Bengal still there are some factors identified as responsible for creating problems and loopholes in proper implementation of Government policies. The problems are of mixed type including societal, Administrative and Judiciary which are as follows:

a. PARENTS’ NEGATIVE ATTITUDE:

Parents’ negative attitude towards their girls’ child is very common obstacle against their education. They think that girls are born for others and after their marriage they leave parents’ house permanently. They also think that a women peace and happiness remain in her husband feet only.

b. LESS NUMBERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

In our country, a smaller number of higher education institutions is a big obstacle for women to access further education. Sufficient higher institutions are not available in every local governing area like semi urban and rural places. For example, in a village, there are two or three primary school and only one high school.

7. www.wbkanyashree.gov.in

c. UNAVAILABLE SCHOOLINFRASTRUCTURE:

It is acceptable fact that girls have some biological and physical factors for which they should be provided free health care in the school where they spend whole the day. Therefore, infrastructure like separate toilet, latrine, girls' common room, medical facilities, water availability, library etc. are essential but, in many schools, these are not available properly.

d. GIRLS' HARASSMENTIN SCHOOL :

Though the government of India and school authority becomes aware against girls' harassment, yet it is still existed. In Indian school context from primary to high level girls are being harassed mentally and physically by many ways. Even in higher education women are being harassed by college politics and forced to involve political activities. Because of that they are being mentally disturb and unwilling to continue their education.

e. LACK OFFEMALE TEACHERS:

It is fact that female teachers can feel and understand the arising problems and wishes of girls during their study. Women can also share their experiences and issues related to study and others freely to female teachers during the school hours. But many schools do not have proper number of skilled female teachers in primary and upper primary level. They are facing the problems in better communication and being suffered in conflict. So, this thing fears girls to attain the school regularly.

f. DELAYS AND PENDENCY OF COURT CASES:

There are several litigations pending in the Court and not yet disposed of since long time where allegation has been made against denial of Women education rights in the form of Writ petitionsunder Article 226 and 227 or Public Interest Litigations filed at Judicature of High Court.

g. DEFICIENCY IN PROMOTION OF SCHEMES OF THE NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (NALSA):

NALSA is constituted to provide free legal services to the weaker sections of the society and to organize Lok Adalats for disposal of

disputes. A girl or woman can access this scheme if they become victims of violation of fundamental rights.

From the above discussion, it is understood that women of our society are still facing some common obstacles in the field of accessing education. Because of these obstacles, there creates a wide gap of literacy between male and female. Women education is now one of the most important components of our basic fundamental human rights and without improving this, our human rights remain incomplete. Therefore, the development of our nation depends on the status of women improvement as almost half of the country's people is covered by them. Education is a unique and powerful weapon which can develop women empowerment in every level of the country. So, this is the time for our nation to provide more quality education in drawing them at the lifeline of education as a progressive sign of our bright human rights.



Harassment in Higher Educational Institutions : Impacts on Female Students

Rukshana Aktar Mazumder

Abstract

“If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family” – Mahatma Gandhi

The inclusion of a female population in every realm is imperative for the socio- economic development and advancement of the nation. Women’s education has now become a benchmark for accessing the development of the nation. Due to this, different nations have been grappling for many decades to improve the enrollment of females in higher education and many countries have successfully improved that number. However, the battle does not end here. This further resulted in an increase in the cases of sexual harassment in higher educational institutions. Sexual harassment has become a common phenomenon in HEIs, which not only affects victims emotionally but has a devastating impact on the academic and professional performance of the individual.

This study aims to find the impact of sexual harassment targeted at female students at university level. This study further explores available policies and preventive measures to safeguard the female population at the tertiary level of education. Lastly, this study aims to provide some appropriate solutions to deal with this perilous situation.

This study found that a large number of female students face harassment in their institution and very few report such happening. Further, such victims suffer from different types of emotional disturbance, which limit their access to university facilities and adversely affect academic involvement. It is also revealed that many institutions do not have updated and proper policies to tackle such cases. Especially little attention is given to online harassment, which has a similar detrimental effect as offline harassment.

Nevertheless, many surveys have been conducted by researchers to address the issues, but these are not adequate to resolve the problem. More intensive research is required at national level to form and implement policies, educate students upon arrival at the institutions, provide training, monitor the campus, and support students to take action.

Keywords : HEI (Higher Educational Institution), bullying, generic training, online stalking, online harassment, sexual harassment, perpetrators.

1.0 Introduction:

After a long battle, nations around the world have successfully managed to involve female members in different fields. The only way to empower and remove gender inequality is through proper education of the female population. Different surveys revealed that enrollment of female students at different levels of education is escalating every year. This escalation is also contributing to the increase in female harassment in educational institutions.

Female students face such harassment both on online and offline platforms, which results in emotional turbulence. The effect of such harassment is not limited to psychological disturbance. This adversely affects their overall academic performance and their contribution to society.

This study aims to find the effect of harassment on female students at the university level and how they deal with such situations. This study further investigates the effectiveness of different policies and measures by institutions and suggests some solutions for better results.

1.1 Review of literature:

Harassment at the tertiary level of education

A study (Wood et al., 2018) conducted with 16,754 participants stated that 19% of the participants reported that they experienced faculty/ staff perpetuating sexual harassment and 30% experienced peer- perpetrated sexual harassment. Of the participants, who faced harassment from faculty/ staff- around 76% experienced two or more incidents since

enrolling and 50% experienced such behaviour thrice. On the other hand, of the people being victimised by students- around 86% of participants experienced such harassment twice or more and half of them came across such behaviour six times after enrolling in the program. Further, 84% of incidents occurred on campus and perpetrators were- 61% and 12% were faculty and staff respectively and 27% were students.

Another survey conducted by Wire using Google form with 567 current and former female participants from different higher educational institutions in India. In that survey, 57 females reported to be sexually assaulted by at least one member of the institution- 10.52%, 12.28% and 87.71% were harassed by staff members, faculty members and students respectively. Additionally, 40.3% did not share the incident, 61.4% discussed with a senior or friends and only 15.7 % reported it. The most alarming figure was that 33 out of 57 victims reported that there were connected to concerned committees of their institutions. However, the survey also investigated the reasons behind not reporting the incident. It is found that, around 56% feared character assassination, 36.84% were concerned about the backlash from the institution and 33.33 % reported a lack of a relevant committee to report the issue.

Takhar University, Afghanistan

A study (Orfan et al., 2022) was conducted with a sample of 317 female students from Takhar University in Afghanistan to investigate female student's views of sexual harassment. The study stated that after facing harassment at university, 67% of respondents had indignant feelings towards males and 60% felt depressed. More than half of the participants reported to have lost concentration and motivation for further education and 27% said they had trouble sleeping, felt lonely and could not actively participate in the class. However, almost one-fourth of the respondents reported they lost self-confidence and appetite.

To cope with the incident, more than 68% of the females avoided being alone, dressed up (intentionally) to look less attractive and avoided eye contact. Moreover, 50% continuously assessed their surroundings, left groups of friends, and overlooked harassment. Furthermore, 36% escaped the harassment spot and 48% stopped visiting harassment

places. Nevertheless, less than 30% reported the problem and expressed anger.

University of Nairobi, Kenya

Another study (Muasya, J.N., 2014) was conducted to find the effects of sexual harassment on female student's access to opportunities and university facilities. The study carried out by a sample of 30 (16 female and 14 male) students stated that student's access to campus facilities was being affected by intimidation, threats, and transactional sex.

Participants spoke about male staff trying to use their academic weakness to threaten them with examination failure. This happens particularly during the practical examination as stated by 5 women participants. Furthermore, female members said, due to experience of sexual harassment, they were not able to take part in extracurricular activities. Some students mentioned they found difficulties accessing halls of residence, library, swimming pool, cafeteria, and lecture halls due to such behaviour. Sometimes, fear of harassment limited female student's movements (including using toilets, especially at night) in residence.

A vital observation of the study was that none of the male participants mentioned fear, or about the female student's not being able to access the campus facilities.

Policies for harassment in HEIs

A report (based on two FOI requests to 135 universities in the UK) analysed the occurrence of online harassment and hate crime in HIEs. This report stated that, out of 130 HEIs who responded to FOI's request, only 21 types of policies in the student body addressed how the institution deals with online abuse. Moreover, the policy used by universities is related to the code of conduct, student discipline or regulations and more than 80 universities reported that that was the only policy they have. Furthermore, 40 institutions were reported to have proper policy, whereas 30 institutions stated that online harassment and hate crime were dealt with under their Dignity and Respect in study policy. In addition to that, 20 institutions stated such cases are solved

under their IT regulations and Acceptable Use policies and 20 other reported to have a social media policy.

Regarding training provision in the institution, 106 universities responded, and half of these do not provide any training related to online harassment. Furthermore, out of those institutions which provide training, 96% stated that online abuse and hate crime is tackled with generic training. Additionally, no institution reported to have wider generic instruction and said they cover image-based abuse, understanding online stalking and legal thresholds and 65% of universities delivered this as mandatory training.

1.2 Rationale of the study:

Women are equally contributing to all spheres as men and consistently trying to reduce the gender inequality. A high proportion of females are working and studying at different universities. Due to this, the cases of harassment, especially sexual harassment, also escalate, resulting in emotional disturbance and less participation in the concerned field. A lot of studies, projects, schemes are introduced by different nations to increase the involvement of females in education and noticeable changes are also recorded. However, just increasing the enrollment should not be the purpose. Rather, providing a safe and secure environment for female students and faculty is equally important.

The main aim of this study is to investigate the emotional turbulence female students face and how they deal with it. This study further aims to find what are the measures that can ensure a safe and healthy campus environment.

1.3 Statement of the problem:

This study aims to investigate the intensity of harassment faced by females in HEIs. This further investigates the policies and preventive measures available to give protection to this section of students.

1.4 Objectives of the study:

- To investigate the prevalence of harassment in higher educational institutions.

- To understand how difficult it is to live in such a harassing environment and how victims deal with it.
- Explore policies and measures in different institutions to deal with harassment.
- Find out some solutions which can provide maximum protection.

2.0 Methodology of the study:

This is a qualitative study in nature, conducted based on previously conducted research. Further, different reviews of related literature were also used to undertake this study.

2.1 The Design:

The study will first investigate the occurrence of harassment at the tertiary level of education. Further, it will discuss some important findings of the study conducted at Takhar University, Afghanistan and University of Nairobi, Kenya. It will further investigate policies available in HEIs to deal with such harassment and finally present some suggestions to curb such harassment.

2.2 The sample:

To complete this study, secondary sources like various related research papers, surveys carried out by FOI, Wire and policies of different universities were taken as samples.

2.3 The techniques of analysis:

Different reports and interviews were analysed to find the proportion of harassment and how the victim felt about such an experience. Further, the reports and policies were compared and analysed to find some solutions to this.

3.0 Result analysis:

Examples of good practices:

Brac University:

The university has “zero tolerance” towards all kinds of sexual harassment. The aim of the policy is to provide protection to people suffering from the consequences of harassment, procedure to file

complaints, procedure of investigation of cases, punishment for various conduct and create awareness about sexual harassment. The policy further vividly described a wide range of behaviour which can be considered as sexual harassment and measures to curtail such harassment. Moreover, it stated the structure of the complaint committee, which should have a majority female members, and the working procedure of the committee.

Princeton university:

The university has two policies- Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and University Sexual Misconduct Policy, to address issues related to sexual harassment. These policies mentioned different behaviour to identify various forms of sexual harassment and prohibited conduct. These further explain the assessment and dismissal policy of formal complaints, confidentiality, supportive measures, grievance procedure, investigation, and appeal. This further provides information about training, modification and review of the policy.

3.1 Findings:

It is found that a high proportion of females in higher educational institutions are harassed by faculty, staff and students, whereas few victims reported the problem. Further, victims feared characterized assignation, did not share the incident, left that (harassment) place or group to avoid sexual harassment. Moreover, victims face distress and negative impacts on their studies and careers.

Many universities do not have proper policies to deal with harassment faced by female students. In particular, little attention was given to online harassment and hate crime. Nevertheless, few universities have good policies and are improving their service to ensure a safe environment for females.

3.2 Recommendations:

- Educational institutions should have an anti- sexual harassment policy.
- Every HIEs should have a proper and flexible complaint registration system.
- Remediation measures (counselling, official warnings, disciplinary

actions) should be adopted considering the needs of the situation.

- Monitoring and prevention of sexual harassment by responsible bodies.
- Educate and raise awareness on campus (particularly for newcomers).

3.3 Suggestion:

This study can be conducted with primary data of a particular nation for more specific results. Further, more studies can be conducted on the effective implementation of policies by HEIs to reduce harassment can yield some fruitful findings.

3.4 Conclusion:

The women's population is consistently progressing, contributing to development at the national and international level. To catalyze this involvement, it is vital to provide a safe and secure environment in educational institutions and the workplace. Unfortunately, despite contributing towards the development of society and the nation, this section of population is not provided with safety and security.

This study provided an overview of the prevalence of sexual harassment at the tertiary level of education and analyzed reports on two universities to understand the intensity of such harassment. This study further explores the policies and measures of various universities to deal with such unacceptable behaviour and suggests some measures worth implementing.

This study revealed that female students at HEIs face harassment by staff, faculty members and students and do not report it, fearing further harassment. This practice limits their rights to different opportunities and forces students to compromise with their dreams and desires. This sort of harassment also leaves a horrific image of males in the minds of survivors, depriving them of living a healthy and peaceful life. Further, some institutions do not have appropriate policies to help and support such victims and few universities are implementing new policies to tackle these unfair activities.

It is vital to have an updated anti-sexual harassment policy in every educational institution to file complaints and take disciplinary action to

curb harassment against women. Most importantly, educate and aware new students, staff, and faculty to save them from being victimised. Furthermore, monitoring the campus and supporting victims to act can be helpful. Lastly, strict disciplinary actions against the offender can encourage and motivate the victims to report and act against such unfair behaviour. All these will not only ensure a safe and healthy environment for female students but will contribute towards the welfare of mankind.

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A Study on ‘Pygmalion Effect’: Kanyashree Prakalpa and Women Empowerment

Samrat Sikder

Introduction

Pygmalion effect is a psychological phenomenon which is positive expectations from supervisor/ teacher/ institute which subordinate/ students always strive to fulfill. So, it is an expectation about result. The West Bengal government has widened the reach of its flagship women’s welfare scheme KanyashreePrakalpa by lifting the annual family income limit. Under the scheme, unmarried girls above 13 years of age are given cash incentives to stay unmarried till 18 years. The KanyashreePrakalpa aims to transform girls into empowered women. And by their own efforts they can study without any hindrance till the age of 18 years and above. When girls become economically strong, women are naturally empowered to give their own opinions. Here the KanyashreePrakalpa works as an incentive which motivates the Kanyashree girls and later the Kanyashree girls can become empowered women.

1.1. Operational Definition of Important Terms

Pygmalion Effect : Pygmalion effect is defined external motivation towards girls’ students who are already completed their high secondary class her KanyashreePrakalpa as Pygmalion Effect towards girls students.

Kanyashree Prakalpa : KanyashreePrakalpa is defined an incentive which is worked as Pygmalion effect.

Girls students : In the present study girls students those who already completed their high secondary class between 2022 to 2020.

Empowered women : In the present study empowered women reflect those girls who are already completed their high secondary class between 2020 to 2022 and try to make an ambitious life.

1.2. Significance of the study:

When a girl has to refuse marriage, understand their rights, and be able to support their own life plans, she will try to empower herself. Kanyashreeprakalpa is a scheme of the Govt. of West Bengal which launcher on 1st October, 2013 and its aims to reduce the probability of child marriage and also increase the employability of girls for to be an empowered women. In this study investigator tries to find out that how KanyashreePrakalpa work as a Pygmalion Effect on women empowerment.

1.3. Research Questions of the Study

1. How does the KanyashreePrakalpawork as Pygmalion Effect?
2. How does Pygmalion effect transform a girl into an empowered woman?

1.4. Objectives of the Study:

- To find out the KanyashreePrakalpa work as Pygmalion Effect on girl students' year wise.
- To find out Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman year wise.

1.5. Hypothesis of the Study:

- Ho1- There is no significant difference between girls' students of passing year 2020 and 2021 on KanyashreePrakalpa work as Pygmalion Effect.
- Ho2- There is no significant difference between girls' students of passing year 2020 and 2022 on KanyashreePrakalpa work as Pygmalion Effect.
- Ho3- There is no significant difference between girls' students of passing year 2022 and 2021 on KanyashreePrakalpa work as Pygmalion Effect.
- Ho4- There is no significant difference between girls' students of passing year 2020 and 2021 on Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman.

Ho5- There is no significant difference between girls' students of passing year 2020 and 2022 on Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman.

Ho6- There is no significant difference between girls' students of passing year 2022 and 2022on Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Design of the Study

In this present study investigator used Survey method.

2.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The study has proposed to be conducted in Murshidabad district, West Bengal. The population of the study is girls' students those who already completed their high secondary class.120 girls students collected from a school as samples who are already completed their high secondary on last 3 years.

Table 1. *Description of sample*

Year	No. of Students	Get K2	Not get K2
2022	48	43	5
2021	42	36	6
2020	30	27	3
Total	120	106	14

Figure A. **Ber-graph of Sample Year wise**

2.3 Variables of the study:

Investigator worked with mainly two types of variables which are given below in the following tables.

Table 2 : Details of variables

Major Variable	Categorical Variable
Kanyashree Prakalpa worked as Pygmalion effect, Women Empowerment	Girls students who are already completed their high secondary on last 3 years.

Table 2 : Independent & Dependent Variables

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Women Empowerment, Kanyashree Prakalpa worked as Pygmalion effect	

2.4. TOOLS

A Questionnaire about KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect to build Women Empowerment (QKPPEWE) developed by investigator.

A Questionnaire about KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect to build Women Empowerment (QKPPEWE)

The detailed descriptions of the tool are presented

Description

A Questionnaire about KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect to build Women Empowerment (QKPPEWE) is constructed by the investigator. For constructing the items collect relevant information by reviewing of related literature, teacher education books, journals etc related to the Pygmalion Effect. Through these sources researcher identified two areas of this questionnaire for generating items. The areas are

- KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect
- Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman

Scale construction

The Scale initially is 30 items instrument designed to measure the characteristic for Teaching Process Scale. Initially 34 items are formed, which is evaluated by 3 experts. Finally, 34 items are selected. The scale has divided in to two parts, Positive and Negative.

Table 4 : *Dimensions of A Questionnaire about Kanyashree Prkalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect to build Women Empowerment (QKPPEWE)*

Sl. No.	Dimensions of Scale	Item no.	Total Number
1.	Kanyashree Prkalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect	p- 1,2,4,11, 12,21,22,23,24,29 n- 3,5,10, 25,30	15
2.	Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman	P- 7,8,9,13, 15, 16, 17,18 ,20, 26,27, 28 n- 6,14,19	15

(Here p- Positive items and n- Negative items)

Administration

The scale is self-administering. To ensure careful understanding of the instructions proper directions are provided by the investigator.

Time Requirement:

No time limit is assigned and there is no right or wrong responses. The students are requested to read the instructions carefully and complete it properly. The students are free to express their responses as they feel. Though there is no time, however, it takes approximately 25minutes to complete it.

Scoring:

Scoring can be done by hand provided. The mode of response to each item of the questionnaire is in the form of five-point scale.i.e. strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree, indicating complete agreement or disagreement with the proposed statement respectively.

Table 5 : Scoring Key

Sl. No.	Dimensions of Scale	Item no.	Score	Score Range
1	Kanyashree Prakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect	p- 1,2,4,11, 12,21,22,23,24,29 n- 3,5,10, 25,30	5,4,3,2,1 1,2,3,4,5	15-75
2	Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman	P- 7,8,9,13, 15, 16, 17,18 ,20, 26,27, 28 n- 6,14,19	5,4,3,2,1 1,2,3,4,5	15-75

Reliability

Reliability determined by **Cronbach alpha method**. By Cronbach alpha method the reliability of the tool is found to be **0.84**.

Validity

Content validity of the scale is measured by expert rating using the Interrater Model. The **content validity** is found to be **0.88**.

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data have been analyzed in two parts-

- In the first part, descriptive analysis done by computing the Mean and SD's of all the score.
- In the second part, inferential statistics 't' test has been done.

3.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Objective wise analyses have been done.

- To find out the KanyashreePrakalpa work as Pygmalion Effect on girl students' year wise.
- To find out Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman year wise.

Mean and SD's and 't' Test of KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect to build Women Empowerment have been done for girl students' year wise.

Table 6. Mean, SD's and 't' Test

Dimension	Year of Passing	No. of girls Students	Mean	S.D.	't' test	df	Sig.
KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect	2020	30	63.933	4.623	0.101	70	NS
	2021	42	65.366	4.1785			
	2020	30	63.933	4.623	0.335	76	NS
	2022	48	64.766	5.360			
	2022	48	64.766	5.360	0.344	88	NS
	2021	42	65.366	4.178			
Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman	2020	30	65.066	5.044	0.135	70	NS
	2021	42	66.666	5.201			
	2020	30	65.066	5.044	0.110	76	NS
	2022	48	66.933	5.854			
	2022	48	66.933	5.854	0.954	88	NS
	2021	42	66.666	5.201			

Interpretations:

H₀1 - For the result of testing **H₀1**, the table 6 showed that girls students of 2020 mean score (63.933) in Kanyashree Prakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect is less than the mean score of girls students of 2021 (65.366). For comparing the mean score the calculated t(70) is 0.101. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, **H₀1** could not be rejected.

H₀2 - For the result of testing **H₀2**, the table 6 showed that girls students of 2020 mean score (63.933) in KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect is less than the mean score of girls students of 2022 (64.766). For comparing the mean score the calculated t(76) is 0.101. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, **H₀2** could not be rejected.

H₀3 - For the result of testing **H₀3**, the table 6 showed that girls students of 2021 mean score (65.366) in KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect is less than the mean score of girls students of 2022

(64.766). For comparing the mean score the calculated $t(88)$ is 0.101. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, H_03 could not be rejected.

H_04 - For the result of testing H_04 , the table 6 showed that girls students of 2020 mean score (65.066) in Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman is less than the mean score of girls students of 2021 (66.666). For comparing the mean score the calculated $t(70)$ is 0.135. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, H_04 could not be rejected.

H_05 - For the result of testing H_05 , the table 6 showed that girls students of 2020 mean score (65.066) in Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman is less than the mean score of girls students of 2022 (66.933). For comparing the mean score the calculated $t(76)$ is 0.110. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, H_05 could not be rejected.

H_06 - For the result of testing H_06 , the table 6 showed that girls students of 2022 mean score (66.933) in Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman is same to the mean score of girls students of 2021 (66.666). For comparing the mean score the calculated $t(88)$ is 0.954. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, H_06 could not be rejected.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

Incentive creates intrinsic motivation in any student. When teachers give rewards to the students, it creates a different motivation and enthusiasm in them. Creating this motivation is one of the teacher's tasks. Kanyashree scheme is a government project which is an incentive or reward to girl students. This idea is making the girls interested in studies to a great extent. In this study investigator try to find out that, this KanyashreePrakalpa work as Pygmalion Effect on girls students who are completed Higher Secondary Board examination in 2020, 2021 and 2022 and it helping them to empowered herself.

Finding shows that, on testing H_01, H_02 and H_03 there is no significant difference found among the girl students of passing year 2020, 2021 and 2022 in realization of KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect. Result also finds that, on testing H_04, H_05 and H_06 there is no significant difference found among the girl students of passing year 2020, 2021 and 2022 in Pygmalion Effect helps girl students to empowering woman.

So, on basis of findings, study concluded that KanyashreePrakalpo worked as Pygmalion Effect on girl students who are completed Higher Secondary Board examination in 2020, 2021 and 2022 and they also feel themselves as empowered women. The study said that, the special attention of the government towards the girl students has created confidence in the minds of the girls to pursue any kind of studies. Girls have built themselves a reputation for establishing themselves separately and benefits of the Kanyashree project in the future form their ambitions. Kanyashree girls progress towards becoming established women in all fields as they study. Girls are able to choose their own subject of study and field of work. As a result, underage Kanyashree girls are able to stop their marriage. Girls are trying to engage in activities of their choice. Students are able to express their ambitions in front of everyone and get involved in vocational work on their own initiative. So, the study showed that KanyashreePrakalpa work as Pygmalion Effect to girls students to become a empowering women.

The study also suggested that further studies are required with a greater sample size and from a more scattered area considering these variables which might influence how KanyashreePrakalpa work as a Pygmalion Effect on women empowerment.

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Role of Education in Women Empowerment

Dr. Disari Roy

Abstract

Women are discriminated against in every field. To combat socially constructed gender biases, women must fight back against patriarchal system. Education is a valuable resource that enables women to be empowered and empowered women have the capability to take control of their lives. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act is an Act of the Indian Parliament enacted on 4 August 2009. The Act makes education a fundamental right under article 21a of the Indian Constitution and makes education free and mandatory for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 thereby setting minimum standards for primary school. Nevertheless, we find that the number of women is higher than that of men as far as school dropout rates are concerned. According to the 2011 Indian Census, the male literacy rate is 82.14% and the female literacy rate is 65.46%. In India, the COVID-19 lockdown has exacerbated the situation, with nearly 250 million students affected by school closures. The pandemic has brought several challenges to public and private schools, including alarming increases in dropout rates, learning disabilities, and a widening digital divide. This is a link between the empowerment and challenges faced by students, especially women, due to the lockdown due to COVID-19. Against this background, this paper attempts to put emphasis on the need for education for women and also highlights the obligation to achieve women empowerment.

Keywords : Women Education, Women Empowerment, Gender Equality, Gender Discrimination, Development

1. Introduction

Gender inequality is a crucial social issue. The persistence of gender inequality is most evident in the phenomenon named “Missing

Woman”, a term was coined by nobel laureate Amartya Sen in 1990. The term basically refers to that the fact that much less percentage of girls are surviving today in comparison to boys. Today, an estimated 6 million women go missing each year; of which 23% are never born, 10% go missing in early childhood, 21% go missing in reproductive age, and 38% go missing on reaching 60 years of age (World Development Report, 2012). It is a well established fact that the women are deliberately kept in an underpowered state throughout their lives. Women are discriminated against in every field. To combat socially constructed gender biases, women must fight back against patriarchal system. Women empowerment in India has been obstructed for centuries due to a number of factors, the foremost being women’s lack of access to education. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said educating a man amounted to educating an individual while educating a woman implied educating the entire family. This stands true even today. Education is one of the ways to achieve women empowerment. Higher education will be the key to increasing female labour force participation which is abysmally low in India. India has made great strides in enhancing women’s participation in higher education. Women accounted for as little as 10% of enrolments at the time of independence but the number was as high as 48.9% in 2018-19. The percentage of female teachers has also increased in the last 6 years by 4.35% to 42.2% of the total teaching population.

The mother of feminism, Mary Wollstonecraft, in her feminist book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) argued that women are not inherently inferior to men but they are believed to be so because they are uneducated. She envisions a social order based on reason, proposing that both men and women should be treated as rational beings. Wollstonecraft advocated for women’s right to education. She believed that education would bring liberation. With her sister Eliza and her friend Fanny Blood, Wollstonecraft founded a girls’ school in London in 1784. During its short existence, the school gained a respected reputation and served as the starting point for Wollstonecraft’s radical ideas about the need for equality between women and men. In both “Thoughts on Education of Daughters” (1787) and the children’s book “Original Stories from Real Life” (1788), Wollstonecraft

explored the new principles of self-discipline, honesty, thrift and social satisfaction.

A growing body of literature in developing countries examines the benefits of women's education. Most of the empirical evidence is concentrated about the benefits experienced in the formal labor market. These will lead to better employment opportunities and higher incomes. A case in point is 1900 study which points out that an additional year of schooling in Brazil resulted in a 14.7 percent increase in earnings for men and a 15.6 percent increase in earnings for women. Numerous studies have shown that higher education for mothers is associated with healthier children. John Strauss (1990) found that mother's education is strongly related to children's nutritional status as measured by weight-for-height and height-for-age. In Ghana, mother's education has a significant beneficial effect on daughters' height, but not on sons'; holding constant mother's education, father's education has a negative effect (Thomas, 1991). In Brazil, mother's income has much larger effects on both sons and daughters than does father's earnings (Thomas, 1991). In a study of Nicaragua, father's schooling was found to have no significant effect on children's nutritional status whereas mother's education was positively associated with calorie intake and standardized height (Barbara Wolfe and Jere Behrman 1987). Studies have revealed that educated mothers are better informed about hygiene and nutrition. Mother's schooling and availability of safe drinking water have an affirmative impact on the health of the child.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

- To study the impact of education on empowerment of women
- To understand the necessity of women empowerment

1.2 Methodology

The present study is based on the collection of data from secondary sources such as books, journals, etc.

2. Necessity of women empowerment

In India, a traditionally patriarchal society, women play a subordinate role in every household. Since independence, however, issues related to women's well-being have always been a priority among policy

makers, but the trajectory has been rearranged over time and with the introduction of the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-78) noticeable change has been witnessed as approach towards women's issues shifted from welfare to development. India also supports the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategy (1985), the 1993 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (1995) and Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development and Peace for the 21st century. Empowerment refers to situations in which powerless people gain greater control over resources and ideologies. It is associated with concepts such as autonomy, power, status and agency. Women's empowerment is basically the process of raising women's economic, social and political status in society. Women empowerment could be achieved through literacy. According to JJ Rousseau, women had to rely on men for their well-being because they were less rational than men. He argued that men may have wanted women, but they may not have needed women to survive, but women wanted and needed men. In "Emile," (1762) he writes about the difference between what he believes women and men need in education. In Rousseau's opinion the main purpose in life is for women is to become wives and mothers, so they do not need to be educated to the extent that men traditionally have. Such misogynist viewpoints have degraded women's position in society. The gender education gap is an important determinant of societal well-being and economic growth.

Table 1: *Literacy rate in India*

Year	Persons	Male	Female	Gap in male-female literacy rate
1901	5.4	9.8	0.6	9.2
1911	5.9	10.6	1.0	9.6
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8	10.40
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9	12.7
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3	17.6
1951	18.33	21.16	8.86	12.30

1961	28.3	40.40	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)

In independent India, illiteracy is the second most blazing problem after poverty. Literacy rate means the total percentage of the population of an area at a particular time aged seven years or above who can read and write with proper understanding. In the table given above we can see that India had only 18% literate population at the initiation of the Indian constitution which has become 74.04% as per census of 2011. Women's education is still in very deplorable condition as the population of literate women is still floating around 65% of the total population of the country. It may be noted that percentage of literate women in the country was just 9% in 1951.

Table 1 further demonstrate that between 1901 and 1941, female literacy increased from 0.7% to 7.3%, while male literacy increased from 9.8% to 24.9%. The government has implemented various programs to increase literacy. Remarkably, between 1981 and 2001, the female literacy rate rose faster than the male literacy rate. The growth is almost 6 times e.g. 7.9 % in 1951 and 54% in 2001. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act is an Act of the Indian Parliament enacted on 4 August 2009. The Act makes education a fundamental right under article 21a of the Indian Constitution and makes education free and mandatory for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 thereby setting minimum standards for primary school. Nevertheless, we find that the number of women is higher than that of men as far as school dropout rates are concerned. According to the 2011 Indian Census, the male literacy rate is 82.14% and the female literacy rate is 65.46%. From this analysis, we can conclude that female literacy is neglected. It is hypothesized that the education gap between men and women has an effect on social indicators which is independent of the effect of women's education level. This literacy gap contributes to

further female subordination and is one of the primary factors behind dis-empowerment of women. Among the literate women, many obtain education not to become financially independent but to become more eligible for marriage.

2.1 Global Gender Gap Index: Status of India

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In doing so, UN Member States took a historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions, namely, Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment.

Table 2: *India's position in global Gender Gap*

Year	Global Index	Economic Participation and Opportunity	Educational Attainment	Health and Survival	Political Empowerment
2022	135 (0.629)	143 (0.350)	107 (0.961)	146 (0.937)	48 (0.267)
2021	140 (0.625)	151 (0.326)	114 (0.962)	155 (0.937)	51 (0.276)
2020	112 (0.668)	149 (0.354)	112 (0.962)	150 (0.944)	18 (0.411)
2018	108 (0.665)	142 (.385)	114 (0.953)	147 (0.940)	19 (0.382)
2016	87 (0.683)	136 (0.408)	113 (0.950)	142 (0.942)	9 (0.433)
2014	114 (0.6455)	134 (0.4096)	126 (0.8503)	141 (0.9366)	15 (0.3855)
2012	105 (0.6442)	123 (0.4588)	121 (0.8525)	134 (0.9312)	17 (0.3343)
2010	112 (0.6155)	128 (0.4025)	120 (0.8369)	132 (0.9312)	23 (0.2913)
2006	98 (0.601)	110 (0.397)	102 (0.819)	103 (0.962)	20 (0.227)

(Source: *Global Gender Gap Report 2006, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020* by World Economic Forum)

Table 2 shows India's position in Global Gender Gap Index report. In 2016, the overall ranking improved, with India ranked 87th out of 144 countries. The reasons could be the Gross Domestic Product for the year which stood as US \$ 2073.54 billion, population growth rate at 1.15%, population sex ratio (female to male) at 0.93 and human capital optimization at 57.73%. Another impertinent reason for the increase in the parity is associated with enrolment in primary education (1.01), secondary education (1.01) and tertiary education (0.94). Parity has also been maintained in healthy life expectancy (1.05) and sex ratio at birth (0.89).

In 2020, India's rank dropped to 112 but its gap is directionally larger this year with a 33% gap yet to be bridged. The country records a decline in wage equality for similar work, succeeds in fully closing its tertiary education gender gap for the first time, and keeps primary and secondary education gaps closed for the third year running. However, it continues to rank third lowest in the world on Health and Survival, remaining the world's least-improved country on this sub index over the past decade. In fact, India actually widens the gender gap on this sub index this year. However, the condition of women in large fringes of India's society is precarious. Among the 153 countries studied, India is the only country where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gender gap.

In 2022, India's overall rank dropped to 135. So far as political empowerment is concerned, India ranks 48 out of 146 countries but its score is quite low at 0.267. India ranks a 143 out of the 146 countries in Economic Participation and Opportunity and its score has improved over 2021 from 0.326 to 0.350. In 2021, India was ranked 51 out of 156 countries. India ranked 107 out of 146, and its score has slightly deteriorated from 2021 when India's rank was 114 out of 156. India is ranked the last (146) among all the countries in Health and Survival. Its score hasn't changed from 2021 when it was ranked 155th out of 156 countries. The Covid-19 pandemic has halted and even reversed progress towards gender equality. Women bore the brunt of the recession largely because they work in hard-hit sectors such as retail and hospitality.

3. Conclusion

Gender-specific educational disparities determine the relative earning potential of men and women and, consequently, the division of labor between men and women. A husband who is more educated than his wife will draw higher wages in the labor market. On average, women earn less than men in the labor market. As a result, the husband and wife will tend to specialize, increasing the husband's hours of work in the market at the expense of his home work and the wife's home activities at the expense of her market work. In the opinion of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, it is possible to gauge the status of a nation by looking at the position accorded to its women. Women play a key role in making a country truly progressive and to ensure upliftment of a country, it is a pre-requisite to empower women through education because education is the most powerful tool for bringing about positive change in society. Women's empowerment is more than just a slogan; it is a prerequisite for the optimal overall development capacity of families, societies, nations and a sustainable world.

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Role of Education in the Empowerment of Women in India: Issue and Impact

Anusree Paul

Abstract

Women play a very important role in the progress of a family, society and country. Women education is an essential need to change their status in the society. Educated women can play a very important role in the society for socio-economic development. It is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. "Educated a girl, empower a nation." To improve the role of women in the society the government mainly concentrated on their education. We require the improvement to the level of literacy and empowerment of women in every corner in India. For that, the Indian Government has launched quite a programmes and schemes to carry them into conversational of development. Education play a vital weapon in eliminating many social crimes and evils against women prevailing in society. Female education improvises and elevates the standard of living and education makes a woman become self-reliant and eliminate her need to depend on a third person for her and her family's survival. Financially independent women raise her voice against prevailing old social custom, injustices and social exclusion. To improve this situation the government is taking steps to empower, educate and uplift the girl child. This study is purely qualitative in nature using secondary data consisting of books, journals and websites, research articles, government publication and so. In this paper, the researcher focuses on impact of education on women empowerment in West Bengal.

Keywords : Women Education, Women Empowerment.

Introduction

A popular saying goes 'while educating a man benefit him alone, educating a women benefit the whole family and society at large.' Educated women can play a very important role in the society for socio-

economic development. It is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Education provides more strength to women. Education is one of the milestones for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life-style. To improve the role of women in the society the government mainly concentrated on their education and increasing employment opportunity.

The literacy rate of women, which was 7.9 per cent in 1951, increased to 54.2 per cent in 2001. The percentage of women institutes in India is 10.17 in the year 2011-12. It increases to 10.72 in the year 2015-16, States with the percentage of women institutes below national value were Uttarakhand, Tripura, Orissa, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh. It is maximum of Chandigarh and then Rajasthan. The percentage of women (18-23 years of age) for higher education was 47.74 in 2011-12, which increases to 48.21 in 2015-16. The percentage of women enrolment in India was 44.29 in 2011-12, which increased to 45.91 in 2015-16. Education is a fundamental right, and along with education facilities, one must refrain from discrimination based on sexes or gender. The involvement of women in all sectors has improved and increased the growth rate of our country. The growth of women in various fields has expanded India's literacy rate.

Statement Of The Problem:

In recognition of the fact, the present study attempted to find out about the status of women in India and how the Present education system help to empowered themselves. So researcher attempt entitle the "ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA: ISSUE AND IMPACT".

Objectives Of The Study:

- To know the constraints of Women Empowerment in India.
- To study the impact of education in the empowerment of Women in India.
- To study the possible roadmap for empowering women in India.

Methodology:

It is a Documentary analysis based Qualitative study. It is based on official documents and secondary data. The conclusion made in the study is based on Secondary sources. The Secondary sources data relating to the journal, article, newspaper etc. Some related information's were extracted from various websites. This data was then analysed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions.

Objectives-1: The constraints of Women Empowerment in India

Violence : Violence is the prime factor which opposes women's empowerment. Physical, emotional, mental torture and agony are deep rooted in the society from ancient times which are responsible for decline in female sex ratio.

Gender inequality : Women empowerment is not only limited to economic independence of women; gender equality is the other side.

Family restrictions : Illiterate guardians who are not willing to send their female children's to educational institutions.

Early marriages : Early marriages results in dropouts from school. Lack of awareness on female education is also one of its causes.

Lack of Institutional rules and regulations: The argument here is that the girls are empowered educationally but not so much empowered. They are not free to move here and there at night because they fear the cruel people in the dominant male society. The female members face some problems in higher education such as sexual harassment by teachers and friends groups.

Parental Aspirations and Attitude : Parental aspirations regarding the process of education also differ between boys and girls. When the ambition out of a boy is relatively high, aspirations for girls is limited to making them suitable for matrimony. While parents view the education of their sons as an investment, the education of daughters is just treated as a wastage of money.

Economic inequality : Women's working hours are more than men, but they are not strong in the economic area or self- sufficient because the profit goes to men's hands. In the post-modern era, some formal

sectors try to empower the woman of rural and urban areas through different training. Females are not getting a chance to compete among men concerning economic equality.

Some Other Constraints and Problems of Women's Education

- Social Constraint
- Psychological Constraint
- Political Constraint
- Economical Constraint
- Social evils and out-dated conventions
- Uneducated countryman and their disregard for the importance of education
- Poverty and Undeveloped conditions
- Lack of girls schools and women teachers etc.

Objectives-2 : Impact of education in the empowerment of Women in India

Women education is an umbrella term that refers to the state of health and education until the tertiary level for all the countries, including the under-developed and developing countries to improve their condition of female education.

Importance of education for Women or Girls :

- **Elimination of crime against women** – Education plays a vital weapon in eliminating many social crimes and evils against women prevailing in society. Social custom such as Sati, Dowry, female infanticide, flesh trade, and other harmful customary practices can be eradicated through female education. An educated women is pivotal in a civilized society and influence the beliefs and thoughts of its members. She stands up for the injustice pitted against women in the family or society against other girls or women.
- **Improvise Standard of Living** – Female education improvises and elevates the standard of living. An educated women's family

member earns equal pay as the male members and aid and elevates the family and society.

- **Self-Reliance** – Women becomes aware of her rights and employment on an equal plank with men and fends her family’s needs. Financially independent women raised her voice against prevailing old social customs and injustices.
- **Prevents social Exclusion** – An uneducated female is likely to work as domestic help or in extreme cases, become a victim of flesh trade, over the opposite gender. Women who spend their life as domestic help or any other menial jobs often get secluded from society. The seclusion or exclusion of women by society leads to physical as well as psychological traumas and ailments. An educated women brews a balanced society.

Government Schemes and Policies for Girl child and Women Empowerment

The government is taking steps to empower, educate and uplift the girl child. Central and state government policies and schemes that are targeted at improving the lives of girl child in India are mentioned below —

- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** – Launched with initial funding of rs. 100 crore the scheme aid to address the issue of the declining child sex ratio image (CSR) and is a national initiative run jointly by the ministry of women and child development.
- **Sukanya Samridhi Yojna** – The programme encourages girls the to build a fund for future education and marriage expenses for their female child. Parents can start saving early as the minimum amount of investment required is small, and the account is active for 14 years from the date of opening the account.
- **Balika Samridhi yojna** – This scheme was launched by government of India on 15th August 1997 and covered all girls born on or after 15th august 1997 who are below the poverty line. The schemes key objects include improving the enrolment and retention of the girl child in schools and helping raise daughters until their legal age of marriage.

State government sponsored schemes for girl child in India :

Apart from the central government, the Indian state governments also actively offer several schemes that benefit girls children. Some of these include:

- ✦ Rajshri yojna — Rajasthan
- ✦ Girl children protection schemes — Andhra Pradesh
- ✦ Sivagami Ammaiyar Memorial Girl Child Protection Scheme — Tamil Nadu
- ✦ Ladli Laxmi Yojna — Madhya Pradesh
- ✦ Ladli — Delhi and Haryana
- ✦ Kishori Shakti Yojna — Odisha
- ✦ Mamta Scheme for girl child — Goa
- ✦ Saraswati Bicycle Scheme — Chhattisgarh
- ✦ West Bengal Kanyashree Prakalpa — west Bangle
- ✦ Bhagyalaxmi Scheme — Karnataka

Educational Provisions and programmes in support of women education:

- ☑ The current education system in independent India recognised the importance of education and the pivotal role in empowering women.
- ☑ This is reflected in Article 45 of the directive principal of state policy, which that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children under 14 year of age.
- ☑ The first committee appointed by Independent India in favour of gender concern was the National Committee on Women's education in 1958, under the chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh.
- ☑ The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and its Programme of Action 1992, made a significant contribution to the education system of our country in general and stressed equality of women in education in particular.

Objectives-3: Possible roadmap for empowering women in India

For women to make the most of opportunities, it is essential that they start early. Women's entrepreneurial skills need to be encouraged and supported. One of our main goals as an organisation is to make girls economically independent from an early age and giving them the opportunities to become financially independent. It has long been established that if a country wants to build a strong and sustainable economy, it needs to recognise and encourage participation by women. There are some suggestions or possible roadmaps for empowering women in India,-

- ✦ Awareness of daughter's education is essential. It is said that "educated mothers educate family which results in educated population of a nation which builds strong nation".
- ✦ Encourage participation of women in income generating activities. Proper implementation of schemes provided by the government should be done by respective agencies.
- ✦ Change the approach towards women based on sex discrimination.
- ✦ To induce the feeling of self-dependence amongst women.
- ✦ Child bearing at young ages should be prevented by preventing early marriages.
- ✦ Women should actively participate in social and political moves. Fifty % seats should be reserved for women in all the governments
- ✦ Spread the message that education of women is a pre-condition for fighting against their oppression
- ✦ Awareness needs to be generated regarding the necessity of educating girls so as to prepare them to contribute effectively to the socio-economic development of the nation
- ✦ Eliminating all forms of discrimination in employment especially to eliminate wage differentials between men and women
- ✦ In order to change the attitudes towards female education and to raise the social consciousness of the country, a conscious strategic change is required in national media and communication effort

- ✦ Education is capable of increasing women's sense of analysing which will support wider reforms in support of gender equality
- ✦ Introduce satellite schools for remote hamlets
- ✦ Be cautious and patience in the knowledge journey: it is from knowledge creation/discovery (KD) to knowledge transfer (KT)
- ✦ Encourage ICT tools and the use of internet, for the study and research by women.
- ✦ Increasing real representation of women in political bodies and governance institutions in order to move from being objects of legislation to initiators of change

Conclusion:

The conclusion drawn the status of women of Indian society is very conservative from past to present. Women's problems can be solved by participating in decision-making and planning processes and getting a share of the power to make decisions within higher educational institutions and political, economic. Higher education is a powerful tool for promoting gender equality, which would help reduce poverty, unemployment, and inequality, improving health and nutrition, thereby promoting human development. Women play an imperative role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society. 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.

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Recitation; A Prospective Way Towards Women Empowerment Needs More Institutional Support

Sujal Dutta

Abstract

The practice of recitation has been going on in Bengal for decades. Overcoming many setbacks, it has managed to establish itself as an independent form of art. Not only that, it is also finding new directions of employment, especially playing an important role in empowering women. Almost every block in West Bengal has private individual or group initiative recitation practice centers. Among the students there, the number of female students is significant. Many women today continue to perform well on the stage, in various mass media and in government organizations through the practice of recitation. Paschimbanga Kobita Academy, Department of Information and Culture is playing a positive role in promoting the art of reciting by organizing various workshops, programs and awarding artists. However, it must be said that there is a need for great initiative in this regard at the institutional level. Higher education institutions in particular have an opportunity to play an important role in this regard. Coochbehar Panchanan Barma University has already introduced a certificate course in recitation. More such organized initiatives are needed.

Keywords : Recitation, Institutional, Women Empowerment, elocution.

Introduction

There is no room for disagreement about the fact that recitation is an art. Art of recitation is claimed to be a modern creation, but many of us do not know that its origin is ancient. Recitation is the art of creating a wonderful bridge between the poet and the public, and that is what a successful recitalist does. If we look at the present time, we can see that recitals are not only for the needs of the industry but also provide the bread and sustenance of many people.

Out of the sixty-four arts that were practiced in the Arya Yuga, I think two of them belong to the art of recitation today, “Sampathya and Mansi Kavya Kriya”. Competence is reading the subject correctly. To inform the listener or to create interest in his mind. According to Yasodhara, the annotator of the Kamasutra – the Sampathya is generally recited by one person and assisted by another. In Sanskrit thought, reading the dimensions, lines, disjunctions, rhythms, arrangements etc. correctly in front of the public is the Mansi Kavya action. If we observe these, we can easily understand the transformation of the art of recitation. Aurti is said to be the great darkness of all scriptures according to Hindu scriptures.

The modern concept of elocution came in India with the British education system during the period of Renaissance in 19th century. The oratory skill became an important to inspire people to explore ideas and new philosophy and also, to rise voices against the British. Bengal produced great orators in this time period, who took lead roles in the freedom fighting and the social reforms. The newly founded colleges and universities became centers of learning and practicing elocution. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio of the Presidency College, Kolkata, can be cited as an example whose oratory skill inspires a large number of youngsters.

From the pure literary point of view, Michel Madhusudan Dutta was a great recitalist and admirer of oral performance of poems. He believed that a successful communication of poetry can be made only in a combination of cultivated voice and trained ears. Kazi Nazrul Islam, Swami Vivekanda was famous for inspiring people with recitation of their own work. University Institute was established in Kolkata in the beginning of the 20th century. Professor Binayendra Sen, Professor of Presidency College and one of the key person of the institute had keen interest in elocution. Thus recitation of Bengali, English and Sanskrit poem was a regular practice in this institute. Among the elocutionist the role of two female elocutionist was significant- Malina Devi and Prabhavati Devi.

After independence IPTA and similar organization used recitation to create mass awareness and mass-motivation. Women also played significant role in this regard.

Due to the tireless efforts of many artists over several decades, recitation has established itself as an independent art, and women have been playing a major role at the center of this art. Gouri Ghosh, Bijoylaxmi Barman are the few name who gave tireless effort in this regard. Then Bratati Bandopadhaya made the paradigm shift in this art form. Following her many more women elocutionist came forward and took the baton to move ahead. Based on this recitation practice, well-educated women are able to stand on their own feet, not only as stage artists, but also as anchor, editors, presenters, orator in radio-television, mass media, and social media. Although there is one or more recitation practice centers in almost every village, town, small or big city of West Bengal, all of them are private group or individual initiatives. If arrangements can be made to teach recitation as a subject in government schools, colleges and universities, then this institutional recognition will facilitate the path of women to stand on their own feet, accepting recitation as a means of livelihood. Thus a special aspect will be revealed in women's empowerment.

Aims and Objectives : In this paper, as well as finding ways of life and livelihood of women through recitation, it is also tried to point out the direction of how to strengthen the way of life and livelihood through institutional cooperation.

Materials and method : This study is based on information from interviews of various upcoming female elocutionist, list of artists obtained from the office of various district information cultural officers, honourium received by artistes after the program, information about students of recitation training centers spread across the state, success of women working as reciting artists through multiple mass media, social media.

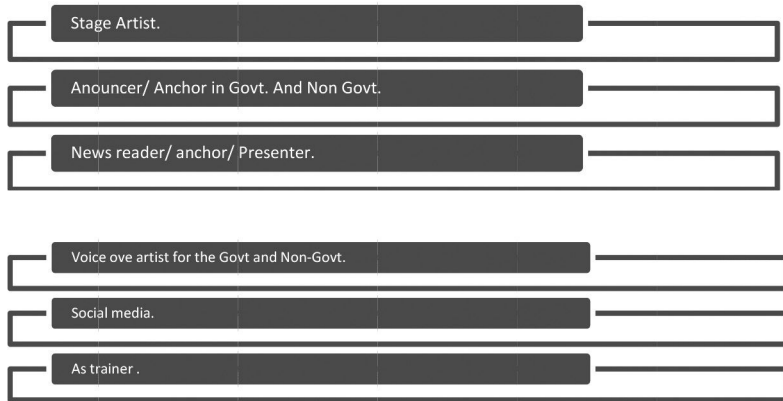
Findings: Almost every block in West Bengal has private individual or group initiative recitation practice centers. Among the students there, the number of female students is significant. The following table shows that the female students are more comparatively more in number in some of the eminent Recitation Centers.

Name of the Institution	No. of total bonafide students	No. of the female student
Bratati Parampara/ Kabyan	750	503
Shankhamala	145	86
Aryabarta	98	69
Bak	92	55
Abrittlok	75	58
Shristinagar	211	170
Ref: Data received from the concerned institute.		

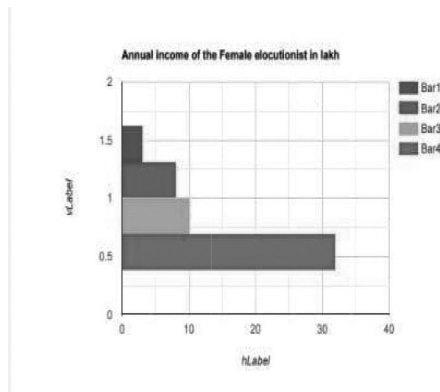
List of the artist (elocutionist) had been collected from the Office of District Information and Cultural officer of 6 different District all over West Bengal. The data had been analyzed and presented in the table below which shows the dominance of female artist.

Name of the District	No. of Listed Elocutionist	No. of Female Elocutionist	Percentage of female Elocutionist
Darjeeling- Siliguri	79	51	64.55
Malda	87	62	71.26
Purba Medinipur	101	69	68.32
Bankura	47	29	61.70
Hooghly	88	59	67.04
North 24 PGS	104	51	49.03
Ref :List of Artist from DICO up to March,2022			

The listed artists and also the other recitation practitioners have different working fields which have been showed in the following chart.

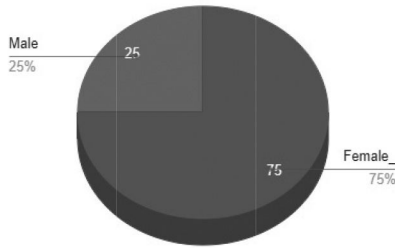


Date about the annual income of some upcoming elocutionist all over the west Bengal has been collected through personal interview and analyzed through the following bar diagram which shows the light of hope in respect of women empowerment.



Paschim Banga Bangla Academy is taking initiatives to assist the elocutionist by organizing training, workshops, and seminars. They also introduce Abul Kashem Rahimuddin Puraskar to inspire young elocutionist. The following pie chat shows that among the awardees the number of females are significantly more till date.

Percentage of female awardees



As a light of hope recently Coochbehar Panchanan Barma University introduced a 1-Year Diploma course in Recitation.

 (A UGC Recognized Public University founded in 2012) Panchanan Nagar, Vivekananda Street, Cooch Behar – 736101, West Bengal, India Website: www.cbpbu.ac.in, Email ID: admission@cbpbu.ac.in				
ADMISSION NOTIFICATION : CERTIFICATE/ DIPLOMA/ PG DIPLOMA COURSES (SELF-FINANCE)				
COURSE	Total Intake	Course Duration	Eligibility	Age Limit
Certificate Course in Spanish Language	30	6 Months (One Semester)	Students who have passed Higher Secondary or Equivalent Examination.	18 Years and Above
Certificate Course in Rajbangshi Bhasa	85	6 Months (One Semester)	Students who have passed Higher Secondary or Equivalent Examination.	18 Years and Above
Certificate / Diploma Course in Bhaowaiya	30	1 Year (Two Semesters)	Students who have passed Higher Secondary or Equivalent Examination.	18 – 45 Years
Certificate / Diploma Course in Natok and Natyavinay	40	1 Year (Two Semesters)	Students who have passed Higher Secondary or Equivalent Examination.	18 – 50 Years
Certificate / Diploma Course in Recitation	30	1 Year (Two Semesters)	Students who have passed Higher Secondary or Equivalent Examination.	18 Years and Above

Framework of the course:		
Code of the Paper	Name of the Paper	Marks
C-I-T-I(Theory)	Recitation; Definition, Characteristics and History	100
C-I-T-I(Theory)	History of Bengali Poetry	100

Code of the Paper	Name of the Paper	Marks
C-I-P-I(Practical)	Voice Practices	
C-I-P-I(Practical)	Voice Practice, Control of Breathing, Rhythm and pace, Swaracharcha, Swar niyantran, Taal o Loy.	200

Scope:

Recitation may be introduced Ability Enhancement Compulsory Courses (AECC)/ Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC) / Discipline Specific Elective (DSE) in CBCS syllabus of Bengali/ English Literature. Elocutionist can get preference in working education sector.

Conclusion:

Recitation can definitely be the prospective way towards women empowerment. The Govt. Aided universities should take initiatives to introduce Recitation course. The course should include technology equipped practicum, internship.

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Women Empowerment and Use of Information and Communication Technology in the Context of Urban Women of West Bengal

Ms. Ambika Thapa • Dr. Barnali Mandal

Abstract

Women empowerment is a multidimensional process which helps women gain self-confidence, self-dependence in other words control over their own lives and structured choices. Unlike yester-years, access to ICT and/or digital resources is available now-a-days to women in urban areas at least. This paper aims to find out how urban women use ICT facilities available within their reach in the context of West Bengal and point out how ICT can facilitate women empowerment in reference to six dimensions — social empowerment, psychological empowerment, political empowerment, technological empowerment, economical empowerment, and educational empowerment. For this research an online survey was conducted using a self constructed questionnaire (assessed with 3 point linear scale). Data from 82 respondents were collected, analysed and graphically represented. The findings suggest that most of the urban women have common limited purposes (online shopping, entertainment, communicating etc.) of using ICT. Few of them use ICT for entrepreneurship, informal learning, to access information and to avail public service facilities which in turn help in empowering them economically, educationally, psychologically etc. It appears that awareness must be increased among urban women and they should be encouraged to use ICT tools for unlimited varied purposes to unleash their autonomy to explore all their avenues in order to live a life truly versatile.

Keywords : ICT, women empowerment, digital resources, dimensions of empowerment, autonomy

Introduction and Related Literature

After years of male dominance, women are finally getting their foothold in today's society. From going for higher studies to becoming self-dependent through service or entrepreneurship, women from all strata of society have been empowering themselves by overcoming barriers on the way. Balancing home and work with equal dexterity and through multitasking they are proving their worth one step at a time.

However, delving a little deeper into the past, we see a stark contrast between yesteryear and today's women. Then, what is it that initiated this paradigm shift? It's perhaps a change in the social structure; a change of mindset and the changing needs of the times. Behind all these 'changes' are the utilities or tools-in-aid that have made them possible. There is a saying nowadays that as the knowledge widens, the smaller the world gets. Indeed, it has become so small as to fit in our laps or should I say in the palm of our hands! **Information and Communication Technology** is one such powerful tool that has surely helped the weaker sex to achieve strength.

ICT or Information and Communication Technology is an umbrella term that covers the tools, technologies and various digital resources to extract, store, analyze, synthesize and share data or information as well as for synchronous and/or asynchronous communication. ICT refers to the "Diverse set of technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information. These technological tools and resources include computers, the Internet (websites, blogs and emails), live broadcasting technologies (radio, television and webcasting), recorded broadcasting technologies (podcasting, audio and video players and storage devices) and telephony (fixed or mobile, satellite, visio/video-conferencing, etc.)." (Guide to Measuring Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education. <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/guide-to-measuring-i...>). ICT is an important tool in the process of women empowerment. Women empowerment is a global concern. United Nations as Sustainable Development Goal 5 denotes "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" by 2030 (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>).

ICT helps women to raise their voice, share concern, exchange information within social groups, online platform, discussion forum; make structured choices, decisions; become self-dependent through entrepreneurship; using digital services, e-banking etc.; Overcome physical and location barriers. “ICT can expose these women to telecommunication, broadcasts services and creat new venture for their creations...” (Sharma, P. et al., 2015, p. 42).

Lennie, (2002), Ahmed et al. (2006) and Chen, (1997) rightly said that intervention of ICT tools can bring about material change, cognitive change, perceptual change, relational change, and technological change among women.

Empowerment signifies transforming oneself from the position of enforced powerlessness to the position of power (Batliwala, 1994). Empowerment means the expansion of humans’ potential to make decisions in life in a context that was formerly denied to them (Kabeer, 2001). Rathi and Niyogi (2015) assert Empower as a multidimensional word including social, physical, spiritual, mental, political and psychological dimensions. They rightly said

“Empower means personal growth in decision making, analyzing critical situations, coping with all circumstances and facing challenges. Internet gives them a platform where people can interact with each other with hesitation as they are unaware of each other’s identity. Especially women can show their emotions, views, feelings and opinion more openly. In text communication there is no inferior feeling of how you looks, how you talks or how somebody is looking at you. Psychological impact of writing also gives them strength.” (Rathi, S. et al, 2015).

Empowered Women are self-reliant, have autonomy over their life, determine their own choices, influence change for themselves and others. “Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities.” Un Women, Women’s Empowerment Principles, 2011 (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2011/10/women->

s-empowerment-principles-equality-means-business). Women's empowerment is women gaining a more significant share of control over resources such as material resources, human and intellectual aspects like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money, access and control over decision-making in the family, community, society, nation, and to gain power (Bisnath & Elson, 1999). Education is a mean of empowerment. In the modern age, higher education has helped women's entry into employment, enabling them to achieve economic and social independence and bring about social change. Science and technology have further emerged as a catalyst for this (Menon, S. et al., 2020).

There are several dimensions of empowerment of women. Six of them are: 1) Psychological empowerment, 2) Social empowerment, 3) Educational empowerment, 4) Political empowerment, 5) Economical empowerment 6) Technological empowerment. Urban women are considered to be in a better situation than rural women. A study carried out on the various schemes offered for uplifting women in developing nations found that women in urban regions have higher social, political, and economic empowerment. Although treated with respect, they face more mental pressure and depression than the rural women (Bhatia & Singh, 2019).

Titus *et al.* (2017) infer that though women are empowered in urban areas, final decisions in households are taken after seeking approval from husbands or parents. The role of female leaders as mayors, chairpersons, and counselors are very successful as these leaders have served as catalysts in social development and the development of girl child (Prasad, 2014).

However studies show that unlike rural women most of the urban women at least have the access to ICT tools and other digital resources.

Rationale of the study:

Studies conducted before majorly focused to explain the concept of women autonomy and empowerment specifically the issues, concerns and barriers related to women empowerment especially in rural India.

Therefore the present study aims to interpret the status of urban women

of utilizing the ample ICT tools and digital resources available within their reach to raise themselves from disempowered state and exercise their autonomy over their life, instead of waiting for others to facilitate ‘women empowerment’. This study specifically focuses on the use of ICT tools by the urban women of West Bengal

Objective of the study:

To find out for how many purposes urban women of West Bengal use ICT tools in their day-to-day life.

Research Methodology:

An online survey was conducted in the urban areas of West Bengal, India, using a self constructed Questionnaire to study the demographic details and usage of ICT tools by the women. The details like age, marital status, educational, employment status, place of residence, availability of ICT tools and the purpose of their usage etc. were collected and were assessed with 3 point (Yes/No/Can’t say) linear scale. The questionnaire was administered on a sample of 100 women associated with various institutions and organizations. The response rate was 83%. Only 83 respondents submitted the fully filled questionnaire. The collected data were interpreted and graphically represented.

Data Interpretation and Discussion:

The respondents of the survey are women from different age groups, with different educational backgrounds. They are employed variously in government sector and private sector. Table 1 provides the demographic profile of the survey participants. Majority of the women 49.4% belongs to the age group of 35—44 years; 30.1% respondents belongs to 25—34 years age group. 78.3% of them are married and 15.7% of the participants are unmarried, while only 5 women are either separated or widow. Most of the survey participants are highly educated women (33.7% Graduate, 51.8% Post Graduate, 9.6% Doctorate). 22.9% of the respondents are unemployed, 47% of them are employed in Government sectors while 18.1% are employed in private organizations. Only 10% participants are self-employed. All of them have access to ICT tools since 51.8% of the respondents use smart phones, 2.4% participants use computers only and 49.4% of them use both the devices. Only 1 respondent use

other device. However it is quite clear that most of the respondents are well educated and ICT tools are easily available to them.

Table 1: Demographic Details of the Survey Participants

	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	15—24 years	4	4.8
	25—34 years	25	30.1
	35—44 years	41	49.4
	45—54 years	9	10.8
	55 and above	4	4.8
Marital Status	Married	65	78.3
	Unmarried	13	15.7
	Separated / Widow	5	6
Educational Qualification	10th Pass	1	1.2
	12th Pass	3	3.6
	Graduation	28	33.7
	Masters	43	51.8
	Doctorate	8	9.6
Employment Status	Unemployed	19	22.9
	Self-employed	10	12
	Government employee	39	47
	Private Sector employee	15	18.1
Devices Available	Smart Phone	43	51.8
	Computer	2	2.4
	Both	41	49.4
	Other	1	1.2

Table 2 delineates in details for how many purposes these respondents use ICT tools available at their reach. The usage of ICT facilities are distributed in 10 components. Most of the respondents use ICT facilities for communication (96.4%) through whatsapp, email, telegram etc., for acquiring information (94%) through search engines, browsers and from

websites, for Entertainment (91.6%) through YouTube, other videos and audios, MP3,MP4 players etc., for E-commerce (90.4%) i.e. online shopping through Amazon, Flipcart, Myntra etc. types of shopping sites, and 86.7% respondents spend time on social networking sites like Facebook and others. The percentage of respondents significantly decreases when it comes to the point of using ICT facilities effectively for self-employment, freelancing etc. (27.5%), for entrepreneurship (14.8%), for e-learning (66.3%), for e-banking (74.4%), and for public services like ADHAR update, paying electric and telephone bills etc. (75.9%).

Table 2: *Details of purposes for using ICT facilities*

ICT Usage Facilities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Social Networking Sites	72	86.7
E-banking	61	74.4
E-commerce	75	90.4
E-learning	55	66.3
Entrepreneurship	12	14.8
Entertainment	76	91.6
Public Services	63	75.9
Acquiring Information	78	94
Communication	80	96.4
Self-employment, Freelancing etc.	22	27.5

Figure 1 : graphically represents through a bar chart the frequency of the respondents in using ICT facilities in their daily life. While Figure 2 shows through a pie chart the percentage of the respondents in using ICT facilities available to them

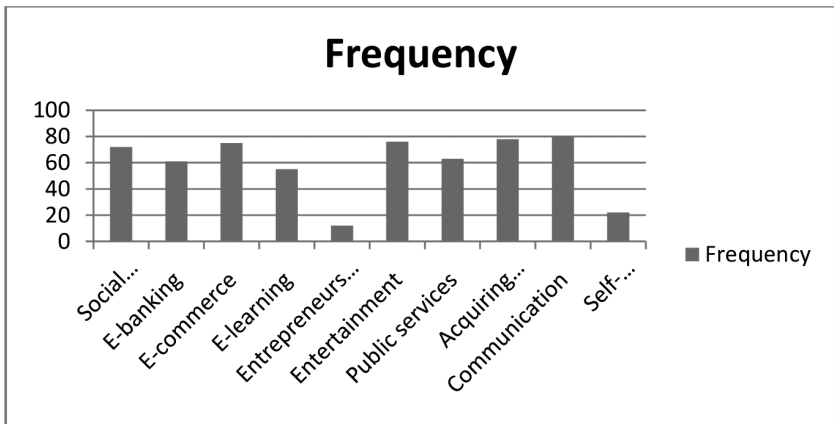


Figure 1: The frequency of the respondents in using ICT facilities

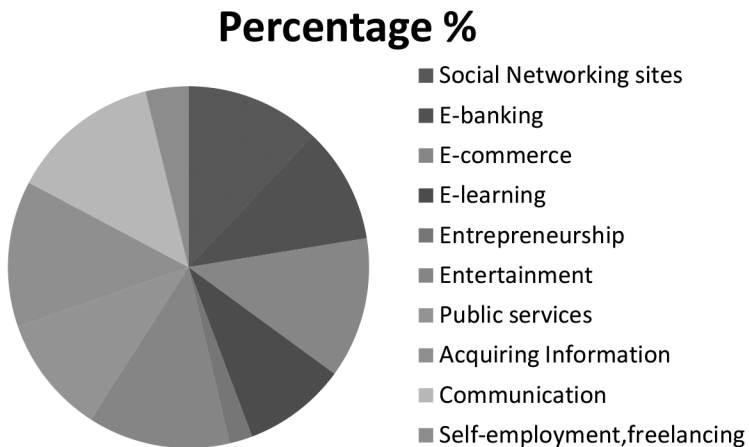


Figure 2: The percentage (%) of the respondents in using ICT facilities

The above graphical representations depict that urban women of West Bengal are engaged with ICT facilities and/or digital technologies to perform their day-to-day needs.

Unlike yester-years ICT tools are accessible to urban women. Almost all of them have smart phone at least. Many of them have computer also. Improvement in the women’s situation is observable. Women’s

participation in using ICT for e-commerce, entertainment, acquiring information social networking and communication has been noticeably accelerated. Increased participation of women is necessary in using technologies effectively and efficiently in all spheres of the process of empowerment; however the use of technologies by women for political, economical, professional development does not reach satisfactory level. Women still use very limited resources to empower themselves. This study finds that despite their having easy access to ICT tools or digital resources most women largely use those for limited purposes like online social interaction, exchange pleasantries with friends, chatting, entertainment and shopping etc.

Conclusion and Suggestions

It is high-time to design and implement interactive awareness programme, policies and workshops on digital literacy for women by Govt. stakeholders and NGOs etc. so that more women use online public services, e-banking facilities with ease. Cyber security is a matter of concern. Women need to make aware to use digital platforms more effectively and efficiently to develop skills through e-learning, to empower themselves economically through entrepreneurship, to improve themselves professionally etc.

For further researches survey may be conducted on rural women to study for what purposes they use ICT facilities in their daily lives. A comparative study may be conducted on the use of ICT tools by urban and rural women of Bengal to empower themselves.

As a concluding note it can be said that the lack of awareness, the darkness that had so long been covering the mind's eye can be lifted and a whole new world of knowledge would dawn in the form of data with the potential use ICT tools and resources.

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Is Posthuman Motherhood A Step Towards Women Empowerment?

Tiyasa Dey

Abstract

*Motherhood constitutes a major part in the formation of women's identity. In most (patriarchal) societies, while being a pride to a married woman, for an unmarried woman it is synonymous to shame. With varied interpretations across cultures motherhood is seen as a blessing exclusive to women, nonetheless, the gestation period of nine months leaves permanent changes in the female body. Leading to low preferences for female employees, risk for them of losing jobs, and a constant pressure to manage their roles both as working professionals and mothers, motherhood cripples their freedom- Rosi Braidotti calls this a "posthuman predicament" (Braidotti, 2019). However, with technological advancements, detaching females from their purpose of reproduction, through methods like cloning, non-maternal birth, cyber-prosthetics and a non-bodily phenomenon of mothering, techno-aided methods of reproduction seem to promise women empowerment. Still, it problematizes the position of technological motherhood or mothers who would possibly be relegated as machines against the natural and "pure" mothers. Although as early as 1818, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, a new life emerging from disjointed corpses was a sensational representation of technological and scientific wonders, the "creature" was ultimately seen as a monster by people: this creates a hierarchy between the natural born and those emanating from artificial engineering. The paper examines several literary representations of mothering and motherhood tracing from ancient Greek myth of Athena sprouting from Zeus' head to the contemporary films with AI facilitated methods of birth, and how these impact women.*

Keywords : Posthumanism, women empowerment, female body, motherhood, technologyIntroduction.

Introduction

Critical Posthumanism as a theoretical approach is usually applied to the genre of science fiction or speculative fiction. While it decentres the human, it also debunks the established position of white-male-human, envisioning a fluid society where the binary of male-female gets blurred. There are ample instances of unnatural births and unconventional motherhood in literature and mythology. In the paper, Greek and Hindu mythology have been scrutinised, enmeshed with societal expectation (mainly England and India) from mothers, and their popular culture representation in various platforms like television, songs and films.

Motherhood and Society

Motherhood, a biological phenomenon, holds in itself several political undertones: on the one hand it provides a superior domestic position to married women especially, mother of a male child while on the other, it relegates women with daughters in the background in the domestic front. The latter are pressurized by the elders of the family to keep giving birth until a son is born, or are oftentimes fixated with the idea that begetting a male child would endow them with authority and position. However, this domestic power politics apart, women have got little visibility elsewhere as the domestic periphery constitutes their world.

In Europe, during WWI women started to earn for their living as men would be busy fighting for the country. However, their wages would not be in parity with their male counterparts, and this practice continues even today: the major reason being their irregularity in work. Myriad of factors contribute to this irregularity which are exclusive to women, such as menstruation, patrilocality post marriage and childbirth. An anatomical feature that keeps the world going by reproduction makes women a second fiddle in the world outside. Waves of feminism demanded economic, social, employmental, and educational equality, however, these have been partially fulfilled majorly in the developed countries. In the case of the developing countries, the women daily wage workers are doubly laboured since heavily pregnant women are made to do the household chores as well as field work justifying Adichie's claim, "Gender as it functions today us a grave injustice". Also, women

working in renowned IT firms and Multinational companies are denied period leaves, or are exterminated during maternity leaves.

Further, motherhood creates an internal hierarchy between the two parents. From the gestation period to breastfeeding the close proximity of the child to the mother distances the father from parental duties while the mother finds herself juggling between work and childcare. This leads to the popular myth of ‘moms are wonder-women’ or ‘she can do both’; while superficially glorifying women, this becomes a weapon to exploit them further. Thus, ‘unnatural’ births can only deburden her from the pressures of the womb; Posthumanism or techno-aided motherhood provides a way from liberating women from this obligation. In this regard the artificial womb relieves women of carrying babies as these man-made carriers nourish the embryo through the gestation period, also, Care robots are often recruited as caregivers. This is evident in the fictional representation of the robot Chitti (Shankar, 2010) and Nila (Shankar, 2018) in the cinemas of Shankar; Chitti, endowed with human emotions and feeling, is no less than a potential caregiver, who also assisted a woman give birth.

As Teresa Haffernan contends, “science and speculative fiction have played a crucial role in shaping the development of robots and it is commonplace for engineers and designers to cite particular fictional entities... fiction disrupts the linear, instrumental thrust of these fields evolution and fiction (my italics)” (2003:67). It breaks the human exceptionalism that real care is human care. Jack Halberstam, therefore, explains-

The posthuman does not necessitate the obsolescence of the human: it does not represent an evolution or devolution of the human. Rather it participates in re-distributions of difference and identity. The human functions to domesticate and hierarchies difference within the human (whether according to race, class, gender) and to absolutize difference between the human and nonhuman.(1995:10)

Mothers in Mythology

Both Greek or Hindu mythology is replete with examples of unnatural

births and unconventional concepts of motherhood. To begin with, in Greek mythology Athena sprouted from Zeus' head, Aphrodite was born from the sea foam after Ouranos' castrated testicles were thrown into it. Zeus' birth signifies the miniscule agency Rhea had whose children were all swallowed by her husband Cronus, who feared being overthrown by one of the children. A parallel can be constructed in the myth of Kansa and Krishna, where the former kills all the eight children of Devaki and Vasudev to overcome a similar fate where their eight child was prophesied to kill his maternal uncle. These events eventually lead to Yashoda becoming a Foster mother to Krishna. While motherhood becomes a joyful experience for yashoda, it is the core of Devaki's tribulations. Not only is she deprived of all motherly joys, her whole life is wasted in incarceration.

In Vyasa's epic, The Mahabharata, Ganga drowned her seven sons immediately after birth to free them from the curse of being mortal, however, her stance was questioned by Shantanu when Bhishma was born, thus, questioning if motherhood is really burden or a joy, or is there any avenue of choice for women. Amba and Ambalika both were impregnated by Rishi Durvasa, and the consequences are Pandu's pallor or Dhritarashtra's blindness due to their mother's fear of Durvasa, and the abhorrence for the act. However, non-conventional ways of birth and motherhood appear to have empowered women like Madri who could not bear a child with Pandu. By the virtue of Sage Durvasa's boon bestowed upon Kunti's, through the method of Niyog, Madri becomes mother to Nakul and Sahdev. This signifies an ancient system of artificially engineered technique of childbearing without sexual interaction. Popularly believed to be born out of fire, Draupadi in the disrobing scene disarms the ministers in logic, in the court of Dhritarashtra as to how a man (Yudhishtir) who had lost himself in the game of dice can bet his wife. Her arguments reflect sheer rational merit in spite of her position as a wife and a mother.

Motherhood in Popular Culture

In popular culture, motherhood is represented in both traditional and radical ways in various television programmes, music and films. In a 2013 cinema Her (Jonza), the Artificial Intelligence software,

Samantha, is appreciated for her brilliant ability to learn and adapt in the human environment; this leads to a love relationship between Theodore and Samantha. However a sexual consummation is unimaginable as Samantha is not a human being. Nonetheless, Theodore finds solace in her company and she sorts his life to a considerable extent. Although the film focuses on imminent human dependency on AI, it also highlights the special powers that AI has and a cohabitation of both paves the way for a better future. Now, employing the same concept to motherhood, with embryos in petri dishes and artificial wombs, these robots can aid women through gestation period and child care, giving the latter with much time to explore for themselves. This vision seems to promise gender equality endowed by AI.

In songs like Rock-a-bye baby by Sean Paul and Anne Marie, we hear the voice of a mother and the choices she made for herself and her child- this exudes in the lyrics, independence, emancipation, and gender equality. A free woman who is at her own will to choose motherhood or not, with the freedom to choose the method of giving birth is a woman who is actually equal to a man. While the womb puts the right to women whether to choose to give birth or not, stricter abortion law still has put women as scapegoats. Ironically, commercial advertisements that promote contraceptive methods like pills are aired after ten in the night and only married women are addressed there. In many cases this agency has put fathers or same gender couples into great troubles as the lack of a womb means they are denied the joys and choice of having children. Likewise, in Indian cinema motherhood is often used as a trope but in a 2012 Sujoy Ghosh flick *Kahaani*, pregnancy is used as a facade for a woman to search for her missing husband. Questions emerge as to why a pregnant woman is considered harmless and powerless; would a man have gone to this extent to search for his wife; how is a city which prepares to celebrate Durga puja situates its women to the rear. These remain for the audience to be answered. It questions if anatomy can decide the fate of half the world's population. Thus, gender equality and women empowerment can be achieved by using technology to the rescue. Cloning or cyber prosthetics as a technology, if made available to rural women they will be not subjected to multiple pregnancies and have a healthy life while continuing their education. A posthuman

approach can enable women to move out of the shackles of patriarchy where they would no longer be child bearing machines.

Conclusion

Motherhood and maternity being exclusive to women are often regarded as blessings, but in a way it burdens women by impeding their progress in other spheres of life. They have to leave education due to menstruation, marriage or maternity. In India, infertility is often blamed on women, however, with the advent of technology, women could be emancipated and empowered, and we can look forward to a gender equal society.

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Education, Women Empowerment and Islam: Problems and Prospects

Mosira Parvin

Abstract

The main factors in achieving the empowerment of women are educational attainment and economic involvement. But Muslim women have not yet fully empowered themselves, which has prevented them from achieving equality and advancement in society. They are the least empowered and one of the disadvantaged sections of the society in two ways, one; being as a woman and two; as a member of the minority community which is both educationally and economically backward. Apart from these, most of the Muslim women are unaware of the reality. The majority of them are unclear about the rights that Islam has given to them as a religion as well as the Indian constitution. This paper aims at bringing about general awareness among the Muslim women in West Bengal about their status, rights and duties and also to highlight what is spoken regarding women's rights in Islamic scripture. The study relies on secondary sources of information. The paper covers a number of methods for overcoming awareness-related barriers to expanding Muslim women's access to higher education in India as well as in West Bengal. According to the study's findings, Muslim women in India have a lower status and are less empowered than men and women from other communities. The study Also reveals that among all significant communities in India, including West Bengal, Muslims have the largest gender disparity in terms of educational achievement and access to employment. The study suggests that higher educational attainment would have a direct impact on Muslim women's socioeconomic status and it will later provide a pathway to women empowerment. Therefore, the government and NGOs must pay particular attention on it and also Muslim scholars should take on this responsibility to correct misinterpretations made for the sake of religion and highlight what Muslim scriptures have to say regarding women's rights.

Keywords : Muslim Women, Backwardness, Education in Islam, Empowerment, Gender Discrimination, Possibilities.

Introduction

Empowerment is the process of restoring power to those who previously had none, providing them with access to resources in the political, economic, legal, social, and health spheres and when the terminology is used in relation to women, it is referred to as ‘women empowerment’. The ability of women to think and act freely, exercise and make their own decisions, and fulfill their full potential as equal members of society is referred to as women’s empowerment. Currently, “Women Empowerment” is a debated issue not just in India but also around the world. There is no doubt that women are crucial to the advancement of society and the country. In both our homes and society as a whole, women play a significant role. For the progress of the nation, education and empowerment go hand in hand. Compared to the state’s and the nation’s overall female population, Muslim women still have much lower levels of education and participation in economic, social, and political activities. Muslim women’s empowerment is still at a standstill since they continue to be oppressed by social, religious, and cultural norms. The position of Muslim women is largely the same throughout the nation, including West Bengal.

Objectives of the study

The study’s stated aims are as follows:

- To bring about general awareness among the Muslim women in West Bengal about their status.
- To highlight what is spoken regarding women’s rights in Islamic scripture.
- To highlight on the constitutional provision for women in India.

Methodology

The study relies on various secondary sources of information i.e. published books, reports, research works, journals and news papers.

Discussion:

Education is consistently regarded as the most powerful weapon for empowering women. Women who receive proper education may develop the confidence they need to take control of their lives. Their involvement in global socio-political as well as financial developments might be facilitated by receiving the right education. The door to employment for women might also be opened by education. Women can become financially independent through self-help organisations, private, and public work. They may be able to take independent decisions in the society. Education may generally assist women in establishing their individuality and equal rights.

Importance of Women Empowerment

Benefits of women empowerment are as follows:

- prevent unemployment of women
- reduce gender discrimination
- overall development of society
- economic benefit
- prevent domestic violence
- increase self-esteem of women
- health improvement
- foster women education
- reduce female infanticide
- prevent dowry
- reduce early marriage

Educational Status of Muslim Women of India

According to Census 2011, 17.22 crore Muslims constitute 14.23% of total population in India. The percentage of women in the Muslim population is about 48%. The Muslim community in this country is cursed with poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy. In a previous report, the Sachar Committee estimated that 31% of Muslims are living in poverty. According to the 2011 Census, 42.7% of Muslims in India are illiterate. In India, there are more than 50% illiterate Muslim women.

This lack of literacy could hinder women's empowerment efforts. According to the National Sample Survey 2009–2010, 11 out of every 100 Muslims in India pursue higher education. This information is enough to show Muslims' unsatisfactory status in higher education. According to the report of Sachar Committee, only 4.4% Muslim entered in the graduate studies in 2004–05. According to the Census 2001, the work participation rate of Indian Muslim women is 14.1%. According to NSS 55th round Survey on Employment, 2000, just 6.03% graduate Muslim women has been found in urban areas and in the rural areas, the percentage was 1.22%.

Educational Status of Muslim Women in West Bengal

According to the Census 2011, West Bengal's literacy rate increased from 48.6% in 1981 to 57.7% in 1991 to 69.2% in 2001. While literacy rates in rural areas tend to be lower than in metropolitan areas, they have recently increased more quickly. In terms of Muslim women attending higher education, the situation is really depressing. This is due to very low transition rate of Muslim Children at school level. Transition rate refers to the number of students moving from one level to the next level out of the total pass out students and is expressed in terms of percentage. According to the National Sample Survey Organization Report 2007–2008, Muslim student enrollment at all levels of education is not only low, but it also drops off significantly as students advance through the levels. Other studies have cited erratic enrollment and attendance patterns, seasonal parental migration of children, health issues, discrimination, inadequate provision of schooling infrastructure and facilities, and inappropriate curricula that do not meet the needs of the students as contributing factors to the low transition rate of Muslim children.

Transition Rate for Muslim Children

State	Year	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary
West Bengal	2001	50.3%	26.0%	11.9%
	1948	14.6%	7.5%	3.5%

Source : Sachchar Committee Report 2006

According to DISE 2012-13 Flash Statistics report in the year 2010-11 the percentage of Muslim girls enrollment in the state West Bengal is 49.89% and in the year 2012-13 the percentage of Muslim girls is 50.04% and in India it is 49.22%. It reveals that the Muslim girls' enrolment in West Bengal is a step forward in comparison to the National enrolment rate. Various studies have shown that in West Bengal the gender gap and illiteracy rate has been reducing and also the rate of Muslim female literacy rate has been increasing.

Why are Muslim girls lagging behind?

Muslim women, who comprise for 48.24% of the state's total Muslim population and roughly 12.16% of its total population, must never be disregarded in any part of life. Nevertheless, the majority of them continue to be behind in terms of education, society, politics, and culture. Numerous factors, including child marriage, cultural views, economic difficulties, a lack of interest, parental knowledge, and social constraints, contribute to the high drop-out rates after secondary education and the low enrollment in further education. So, it requires specific attention from the government and NGOs. through the establishment of more madrasah institutions, the modernization of madrasah curriculum, based on science and technology, the creation of special opportunities for Muslim women, the attractive educational scholarship for Muslim girl students, various government and non-government services that offer reservations for Muslim women. Another important reason behind the backwardness of Muslim society is gender discrimination. In the Muslim community, there is a lot of inequality against women. Discrimination against Muslim women still exists today, which has a significant negative influence on their ability to receive a basic education, this is another barrier to women empowerment. So, when we change our thinking, we should remove the discrimination between genders from the society.

Islamic Perspective on Female Education

There is a widespread misconception that Muslims' lack of educational advancement is due to Islamic ideals. However, there is no empirical support for this misconception. Actually, Islam does not oppose its believers' pursuit of knowledge and education. Islam has put a strong

focus on getting an education and has given several guidelines for doing so. Islam says that even if one has to go to distant China to acquire knowledge, one should go. In Islam, it is a sacred duty to pursue knowledge. The first word revealed of the Quran was “Iqra” which means “Read” and Seek knowledge, educate yourselves, be educated. In terms of the right to education in Islam, men and women have equal rights. Education is strongly advocated for both. Muslim women must have the necessary education to carry out their duties in accordance with their inherent skills and passions. The Prophet remarked that every Muslim male and female is obligated to pursue knowledge. This involves general knowledge as well as knowledge of the Quran and the Hadith. Islam did not distinguish between men and women. In the time of prophet Muhammad (pbuh) women were given special privileges. They were allowed to enter the mosque for the purpose of education.

Women Empowerment and Islam

Empowerment of women as described in national policy of empowerment of women 2002 takes economic empowerment and social empowerment as its basic parameters. Economic empowerment includes poverty eradication and income generation and social empowerment includes education, health and nutrition etc. Apart from these parameters other aspects which determine women’s empowerment are mobility, self esteem and choice of career. In the case of Muslim women, the state of empowerment is still not clear hence a study about their actual status is required. In many cases we find a number of myths related to their rights being propagated by both Hindu and Muslim. It is by and large observed that while the outsiders carry a very biased view of Muslim women and are generally not aware of the reality, Muslim women also tend to not realize their actual status. Most of them are not clear about the rights given to them by Islam as a religion as well as the Indian constitution. The issues of women and Islam among masses have for quite some time attracted the interest of the intellectual and politicians. But much of this interest is caught up in misconception religion is seen to be the primary force influencing every aspect of their lives. They are still viewed as being out of the world where every move of their life is controlled by men and religious dogmas issued from time to time by various religious leaders and scholars. The spotlight is always on the

role of religion in their life. It is normally believed that they are strictly controlled by Muslim personal law.

Islam has not prohibited women from engaging in economic activity; rather, it has granted them permission while placing some reasonable restrictions on them. She can engage in economic activity, pursue her interests, and contribute her skills in a variety of spheres of life while taking her health, the environment she lives in, and her own interests into account. The house and land rights of women, both before and after marriage, are recognised by Islamic law.

Islam never differentiated between the education of the world (Dunyawi Taleem) and the education of Islam (Deeni Taleem). The drawback of the Muslims today is they have separated the education of the world with the education of Islam, which has ruined them over the years.

In the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), women were not only ahead in the field of education but also came forward and participated in the battles of Islam along with men. They used to treat the injured military of Muslims. Not only this, but women also used to encourage Muslim men on the battlefield and protected them from acting cowardly. This is the strength given by Islam to Muslim women about which most of the women of the present era are unaware of.

In addition to this, women were permitted to ride camels during the time of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that the Quraish woman, who belongs to the Macca clan and rides a camel, is the greatest woman. Seeing the criticism that women face today makes feel bad. They are forbidden from even driving a car and discouraged from leaving the house for a good cause.

Islam allows women the freedom to work in society while following to its accepted norms, which is beneficial on both an individual and collective levels. The ability of women to do a variety of tasks benefits society.

During the time of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh), a lady by the name of Bibi Fatima bint Qais (RA) had a position of inspector. Her job was to monitor the markets in Arabia and the transactions that took place there, determining whether they were honest or dishonest. But today

the condition of Muslim women is such that they are not even able to inspect their own life or the life of their homes.

Therefore, it would seem that Islam is not opposed to women's education and empowerment but rather actively encourages them. But misinterpretations of religion are a barrier to women's empowerment. The Islamic texts acknowledge women in the highest position, and there is no distinction made between men and women in Islam. Nor does it recommend that women be chained. According to a Hadith of prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the status of a mother is three times greater than the status of a father.

Ways to Empower Women

- Modifications in women's mobility and social engagement.
- Modifications in women's labour patterns
- Modifications in women's access to and control over resources.
- Changes in women's decision-making power
- Women Education
- Self-employment and self-help groups
- Minimum needs such as nutrition, health, sanitation, and housing
- Other than these, society should change its attitude toward the word "women"
- Encouraging women to develop in their specialist fields and make a career

Constitutional Assistance for women in India

India's constitution gave fundamental assistance to restore women's rights after independence.

- Article 14: Equality before law- The state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India
- Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on Grounds of religion, race, cast, sex or place of birth.

- Article 16: Equality of opportunity
- Article 21: Protection of life and personal liberty.
- Article 23: Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour.
- Article 39: Certain principles of policy to be followed by the state (equal pay for equal work, equal right to livelihood etc.)
- Article 42: Provision for just and human conditions of work and maternity relief.
- Article 45: Provision for free and compulsory education for children.
- Article 51 (E) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Like constitutional Rights, women are also enjoying legal rights. Various legislation's contain several rights and safe guards for women like: Immortal Traffic Prevention Act (1956), Dowry Prohibition Act (1961), Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1971), Indecent Representation of women Prohibition Act (1986), Commission of Sati Prevention Act (1987), National Commission for women Act (1990), Pre conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique (Prohibition of sex selection) Act (1994), Protection of women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), Sexual Harassment of Women at workplace (Prevention and Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013).

Women Empowerment Programs

- Swayamsidha
- Swa-Shakti Project
- Support to Training and Employment Program (STEP)
- Swalamban
- Day care centers for the children of working and Ailing mothers
- Hostels for working women
- Swadhar
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

Conclusion

Traditional Islamic jurists were deeply influenced by a conservative, patriarchal society. There is no rigidity or conservatism in the Islamic world. Islamic law treats both men and women as equals but unfortunately the Islamic scholars and religious leaders are misinterpreting the Islamic law giving the men power over the women. Now Purdah system is no more hindrance in women's education and employment but they have to wear proper dresses while going out of home. In villages women work in the field without purdah. Muslim women live according their religion as their day to day life is influenced by their religion. They also play a very insignificant role in family decision making and are instructed to live in purdah always but it was observed that this is undergoing change especially among the educated and economically sound families. This change is very slow though. So, all the Muslims, especially women should make it mandate upon themselves to acquire all sorts of knowledge and wisely use it for the welfare of society. The problems faced by women in Bengal Muslim society are complex in nature because the causes are deeply rooted in historical, cultural, situational, and an amalgamation of all three contributing factors, resulting in no specific reason for their problems, discrimination, unequal status, and treatment in the given society.

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The History of Women Education in India and Government Initiatives

Rakesh Kumar Roy

Abstract

“In words education brings consciousness and consciousness brings liberation”. Education has been closely related to the development of knowledge since the beginning of civilization. Hence education has been accorded a very important place in the history of human civilization. The creation of civilization has been made possible only by the contribution of half men and half women in the creation of this civilization. Since ancient times, with the progress of life, people have given as much importance to education as they have also given importance to educating women. The subject has been carefully nurtured by highlighting women’s education as a vehicle for social change. Even in ancient times, if we search the historical data, we will see that women were given special privileges in many cases than men. Even there the status of women was very high. Especially in the field of education, their participation was not less in any part. In the case of the Middle Ages, this trend was flowing. And in the modern era, more awareness of the flow of this trend has been observed. It is believed that a woman has the most contribution in creating civilization and moving the society forward. If women are educated, a whole generation will be educated, and if one generation is educated, the whole society will be educated. Because women play a major role in social and socio-economic development. A child gets his first education and manners from a woman. If women are educated, the society itself will be educated. Maternal power works in the education of women as a tool for the development of society. From the ancient times to the present time, various projects, opportunities and government initiatives have been taken with special emphasis on women’s education. Various policy schemes have been adopted by the government to achieve the welfare of all women and above all to bring women into education.

Keywords : Woman education in ancient period, Women Education in Medieval Period, Women education in British period, women education in post-independence India, Various Commission and Committee about Women Education, The Govt. Initiatives For Women Education In India.

Introduction

“When girls are educated, their countries becomes stronger and more prosperous.” – Michelle Obama.

We often hear, “Ekk naari padhegi, saat peedhi taregi”. What advantages does society get from having educated women? What are the various steps taken by the government to support women’s education in the country?

Since ancient times, women have been held in a high position as the bearers and carriers of social progress. Over time, their participation in various fields of society has been encouraged and given importance. Initially, there were some social barriers to the participation of women, but efforts have been made to overcome them. It has been proved time and again over the ages that the participation of women is absolutely necessary in the proper running of a society. It has also been proven that a society can never prosper without women. Intellectuals and thinkers have also accepted the participation of women in the management of the society and to manage the society properly. Special attention should be paid to the education of women and their participation in education is a must. The society will be developed properly only if women progress on the path of social progress. A society will get the light of education only if education spreads among them. A country will reach the door of development only if they come outside the four walls and play the role of excellence in the path of social progress. Therefore, it is necessary for the development of women to participate in the field of education. Various initiatives and government programs have been targeted so that women from all sphere of life can participate. Various efforts are being made and even various schemes have been taken up for women to become self-sufficient. An attempt has been made to overcome the gender gap and highlight women as carriers of society’s progress by giving them special reservation in the pages of the constitution. Above

all, women have been elevated to a special status by focusing on the development of education and accepting them as the backbone of the society, and the efforts to achieve all-round development are still going on today.

Progress of Woman education in ancient period

The general position of women in ancient India was unique. They enjoyed high status and independence in the society. An unmarried young learned daughter ought to be married to a learned bridegroom. Early marriage was not in vogue in those days. Even girls could freely choose their husbands. The customs of infant marriage and enforced widowhood were not prevalent in Vedic India. Women in ancient India had free access to education. They were expected to participate in Vedic sacrifices and utter mantras. Even some of the hymns of the Rigveda were composed by poetesses. We get references of such learned ladies as Visvavara, Lopamudra, Apala, Urvasi, Ghosa, Sulabha, Lilabati, Maitreyi, Saswati, Kshana, Gargi and others. Maitreyi, the celebrated wife of the most learned philosopher of ancient India, Yajnavalka, used to hold discussion on abstruse philosophical questions with her husband. Gargi also participated in debate with Yajnavalka on philosophical issues. Lilabati was a great mathematician of ancient India. Thus we find that ancient society was not conservative to provide education to women and that many of them attained to great proficiencies in learning. The ancient women had equal rights with men in respect of education.

The Upanayana (Vedic initiation) of girls should have been as common as that of boys. In the Vedic period the women not only enjoyed privileged position but also possessed high standard of morality. They had contributed positively to the educational system. The number of women who used to receive general literary and cultural education must have been fairly large. For a long time family was the only educational institution, and even boys used to receive education only from their fathers or elders. The same naturally was the case with girls. But in later times a class of women teachers came to being (Upadhyayani). There was no purdah custom in Hindu society down to the 12th century, and so there was no difficulty for women in taking to the teaching profession. Lady teachers may probably have confined themselves to the teaching

of girl-students. Panini refers to boarding houses for lady-students, chhatrisalas, and these probably were under the care of lady teachers.

Co-education was also prevalent in ancient India in mild form. Sometimes boys and girls were educated together while receiving higher education. From the 'Malatimadhava' of Bhavabhuti, written in the 8th century A.D., we learn that the nun Kamandaki was educated along with Bhurivasu and Devarata at a famous centre of education.

Progress of Women Education in Medieval Period

The position of women during medieval period had undergone with some changes. With the Moslem conquests came the Purdah system with its withering influence. The views about the use and necessity of purdah for women Minna Cowan mentions in her book, "devised by Mohammed, according to modern Moslem historians, for the protection of women in wild and lawlesstimes, it has inculcated distrust of their character and capacities. In spite of the fact that many Indian women today look upon the Purdah as a sign of prestige and of their value in their husbands' eyes, the thoughtful observer must reckon it, in its ultimate social influence, as a symbol of distrust" But this confinement precluded the freedom for education, at least of organized education outside of the home for the upper classes. "ThePurdah system stood in the way of girls beyond a certain age being sent to schools, though very young girls has some schooling where possible". Education was theoretically a must for every man and womenin the Muslim society. There were separate schools for the Muslim girls. The Muslim rulers encouraged the education including women's education during their rule. They founded libraries and literary societies, Babur started promoting the education for people by establishing public work department -Shuhrati-Am. Not only for the boys but also, Muslim rulers in India took interest in establishing educational institutions for girls. Akbar kept separate chambers in Fatehpur Sikri for girls' school. The Purdah system did not effect on the aristocratic Muslim women education in zenana. The girls belonging to the royal families were educated privately in their homes. Sultana Razziya, Gulbadan Begam, the daughter of Babar and author of Humayun-Namah, NurJahan, the celebrated wife of Jahangir, Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of Shah Jahan, Jahanara Begum, the eldest daughter of

Shah Jahan, Zibunnisa Begam, the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb were among them. Sultana Razziya who ascended the throne of Delhi was an educated princess. Mughal emperors provided liberal education to the princesses. The daughters of Rajput Chiefs were also able to read and write though there were prejudices against education of girls was in the society.

With the advent of the Muslim period, another system of education was imported in India. The traditional methods of education increasingly came under Islamic influence. There were two types of institutions namely the Madarasa and the Maktab. These were generally attached to the mosques with the objective of teaching boys and girls to read and write the Holy Koran. Though the education being imparted to women during this period was primarily to enable them to read sacred literature and at times a little more knowledge was given to „enable to manage their estate accounts, in the absence of their husbands. Thus emphasis was given more on the sacred literature.

Progress of Women education in British period

Education which has been identified as the major instrument for raising the status of women was started during British period. After the Bhakti movement, the Christian Missionaries took interest in the education of girls. A girl's school was started for the first time in Bombay in 1824. The Hunter commission too emphasised on the need for female education in 1881. The Calcutta, Bombay and Madras universities did not permit admission to girls upto 1875. After 1882 girls were allowed to go for higher education.

During British period there were two major movements which affected the position of women. These were the Social Reform Movement of the nineteenth century and the Nationalist Movement of the twentieth century. The issues which attracted the attention of the nineteenth century social reformers were the system of Sati, the ban on the widow remarriage, polygamy, child marriage, denial of property rights and education to women. Raja Ram Mohan Roy played an important role in abolition the of Sati system. He raised his voice against child marriage and Purdah system. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar also made pioneering efforts for the upliftment of the status of women

it was due to his efforts that the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 could be passed. He also pleaded for education of women. Maharshi Karve took up the problems of widow remarriage and education of women. He established SNDT Women's University in Maharashtra in 1916. Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Annie Besant and Mahatma Gandhi also took interests in the social and political rights of women.

Another very powerful force which helped to change the attitude towards women was the Nationalist Movement, particularly during Gandhian phase. In various satyagrahas which were launched, not only the upper class urban women participated but at many places simple rural women also participated. While evaluating the Gujarati women's response to Gandhi during 1920-1942 Aparna Basu has remarked, "Women indulged in various kinds of activities ranging from mass scale popular agitations, constructive work among Harijans and Advises, to formal institutionalised electoral politics" Some women's organisations such as Bharat Mahila Parishad (1904), Bharat Stri Mahamandal (1910), Women's Indian Association (1917), National Council of Women in India (1925) and All India Women's Conference (1927) took up issues like women's education, abolition of social evils, Hindu law reform, equality of rights and opportunities and women's suffrage. The factors that encouraged Indian women's movement were: impact of western education on the concept of complementary sex roles, leadership provided by educated women elites, changing socio-religious attitudes and philosophies and decreasing social hostility and opposition of males to women's association engaged in self-help activities and benevolent attitude of nationalist leaders towards women's movement. In short during the phase prior to independence, an awareness of the need to remove social disabilities of women was created, the doors of education were opened for them, women's organisation emerged to represent the needs and cause of middle class urban women.

Progress of women's education in post-independence India

After the independence of India the first thing that was given importance was the education of women and initiatives were taken through the first education commission to give importance to women's education. The initiatives of this commission are discussed below.

Recommendation of Various Commission and Committee about Women Education

Our national and social leaders feel 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 order to minimise the existing gap between the education of boys and girls and to expand and develop women's education, the Government of India has appointed different commissions and committee.

University Education Commission (1948 1949)

The university Education Commission is popularly known as Radhakrishnan Commission. This Commission analysed the problem of women's education at the college and the university level and made the following recommendation:

- **Amenities of life:** The ordinary amenities of life should be provided for Women in College originally planned for men but to which women are being admitted in increasing numbers.
- **Educational opportunities:** There should be no curtailment in educational opportunities for women but rather a substantial increase in them.
- **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.
- **Normal place in society:** Women should be helped to find their normal place in society both as citizens and as women.
- **Equal salaries:** Women teachers should be paid the same salaries as male teachers for equal work.
- **Equality in co-educational institutions:** In co-educational institutions, due weightage should be given to women.
- **Cultural and social responsibility:** Men should be encouraged to extend right courtesy and social responsibility in mixed college.

Secondary Education Commission (1952- 53)

This commission started that our constitution has guaranteed equal rights for both the sexes in all works of life (section 16 A). So every type of education open to men should also be open to women. Women have made their mark almost in all the fields which generation ago would have been considered as unsuitable for them.

National Committee on Women's Education (1958)

Accordingly, the Government of India appointed the national committee on women's education under the chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh. The committee made following recommendation:

- **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 of 11-14 by 1981.
- **Publicity programme:** Publicity programmes should be launched to awaken the people towards the need of women's education. For this purpose documentaries and films concerning women's education should be prepared and displayed.
- **Education for adult women:** Central Social Welfare Board should start condensed courses to give suitable education to adult women.
- **Scholarship:** There should be provision for an adequate number of scholarship to encourage the girls to continue their education.
- **Facilities in isolated and backward areas:** The girls students of backward, hilly and isolated areas should be provided with facility such as free transport and free residential accommodation to encourage them to get education.
- **National Council for women's education National:** Council for women's education should be set up for studying the needs and problem of women education at the national level.
- **State Council for Women's Education:** At the state level, State Council for women's education should be set up.
- **Women's education in five year plan:** Women's education should get an important place in five year plans and the planning commission should make an estimation for women's educational requirement.

- **Close up the gap:** The gap between the education of men and women should be filled as fast as possible.
- **Encouragement to co-education:** Where it is difficult to start separate School for Girls, co-education should be encouraged.
- **Improvement programme:** The recommendation made by the Central Advisory Board of Education for the improvement of women's education should be implemented. The programme includes; construction of teachers quarters, provision of school teachers, provision of rural allowance for the lady teachers working in the villages, provision of hostels, provision of uniforms, provision of mid-day-meal, construction of sanitary blocks.

Hansa Mehta committee (1961)

In 1961 the National Council for women education appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Smt. Hansa Mehta to solve the problems of a separate curriculum for girls and to suggest measure for the improvement of women's education it made the following recommendation:

- Co-education should be adopted and encourage at the primary stage.
- Separate primary school or middle school for girls should be started where there is such demand and where there is adequate enrollment.
- Separate and co-educational institutions can be started at the secondary school and college stages. parents should send their daughters to the institutions they like.
- Number of women teacher should be increased in primary school.
- There should be a common curriculum for boys and girls at the primary and Middle stages.
- Home science is a useful subject for girl at the higher secondary level.
- Girls should be encouraged to study science and mathematics at the higher secondary stage.
- Special needs of girls should be kept in view while constructing the curriculum at the University stage.

- Girls should be provided with necessary facilities such as scholarship free transport and stipends.
- Women should be given adequate representation in textbook committees.
- There should be the provision of Vocational schools at the end of Secondary Education show that girl are trained for different vocations.
- Music, drawing, painting, tailoring and fine arts are the subject of interest for girls. Therefore proper facilities should be provided in the educational institution.

Shri M. Bhaktavatsalam committee (1963)

In 1963 the National Council for rapid expansion of women education in rural areas, the chairmanship of M. Bhakat Batsalam. To equalise educational opportunity between men and women and to minimise the disparity in education between men and women. The following recommendation were made by this committee:

- **Fields of public cooperation:** Direct public cooperation should be encouraged in the fields such as; establishment of private schools, construction of school building, helping in popularization of co-education at the elementary stage, polarizing teaching profession for women, giving encouragement to marriage ladies to get part-time education in village school and work as school teachers, provision of uniform to the poor and needy children, provision of the textbook and writing materials to the needy children.
- **States responsibility:** State should take up the responsibility of creating public opinion in favour of women's education for this purpose it may adopt seminars, radio talk, school improvement, audiovisual aids, and distribution of information pamphlets etc.
- **Schools in all areas:** schools should be set up in all areas howsoever small they may be. It is the responsibility of the state to provide primary schools in each habitation with the population of 300. There should be a middle school in each habitation with a population of 1500.

- **Provision of Pre primary schools:** It is essential that pre-primary schools should be attached with the primary school particularly in rural areas.
- **Good school building:** buildings which are not suited to school functions should be changed and good school building should be provide to meet modern education needs.
- **Women teacher:** More and more women teacher should be appointed in primary school.
- **Good working conditions:** Working condition of the teacher should be good and inspiring.
- **Part-time appointment:** Some women leave the teaching profession after marriage. They should be encouraged to continue teaching and offered part-time appointment.
- **Education for adult women:** To educate adult women particularly in rural areas.
- **Relaxation in age limit:** Age limit for the married and unmarried women teacher should be relaxed.
- **Training facilities:** More training facilities should be given to women candidates to meet the increasing demand for additional teachers. and also recommended
- Posting of women teacher near their homes,
- Hostel facilities
- Residence for women teachers
- Sound inspection
- Adult education etc.

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 constructed in 1964 and considered of the Chairman, the secretary and 27 members. The main function of the Council are follows:

- To advise the government on the education of the girl at school level and the education of adult women,.
- To suggest and fixed programmes, target and priorities for the improvement and expansion of girls and women's education.
- To suggest suitable measures for creating public opinion in favour of girls and women's education.
- To create awareness in the society with regard to the importance of women's education.
- To organize seminars, survey other research work for the improvement of girls education in the country,
- To make periodic evaluation for the progress of women's education.

The Education Commission (1964-66)

The Commission said that "For all development of human resource the improvement of human beings and for moulding the character of children the education of women is of great importance than that man."

The commission suggested that :

- Women's education should be regarded as a major programme in education for some years to come and a bold and determined effort should be made to face the difficulties involved and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible;
- On priority basis funds required for them should be provided.
- There should be a special machinery at the state and central level to look after the women's education and both official and non- officials should be involved in chalking out the plan and implementation of programmes for women's education.
- Greater attention will be paid to the problems of training and employment of women teachers.
- Teaching, nursing and social service are well organised areas where women can have an useful role to play.

- Efforts should be made to accelerate the expansion of girl's education. The ratio of male and female education should come to 2:1 from 3:1 in 20 years.
- Emphasis should be placed on establishing separate School for Girls provision of hostels and part time and vocational courses.
- The present proportion of women students and men students 1:4 should be increased to about 1:3 at the University stages in order to meet the requirements of women in different fields.
- Research units should be set up in one or to universities to deal specially with women's education.

The National Education Policy (1968)

The education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation.

The National Education Policy (1986)

‘Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The National Education system will play a positive; interventionist role in the empowerment of women.

The Central Government had in 7 May 1990 appointed a committee to review NPE, 1986 under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti. The committee considered Women's Education to be a vital component of the overall strategy for securing equity and social justice in education.

So the committee reviewed the NPE and Programme of Action in the context of women's education and made recommendations with regard to the following dimensions:

- Access to education and equality of learning.
- Employment of Women.
- Training of teachers and other educational personnel.
- Research and development of women's studies. Representation of women in the educational hierarchy.
- Content of education and gender bias. Vocational education.
- Adult Education for Women.
- Resources
- Management

Programme of Action, 1992

The Janardhana Reddy Committee (JRC), in its report submitted in January, 1992, came to the conclusion that while very little of the NPE, 1986 required re-formulation the Programme of Action (POA) needed to be revised considerably.

The committee recommended that the following measures will be taken to make the education an effective tool for women's empowerment:

- Enhance self-esteem and self-confidence of women.
- Building of positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, policy and the economy.
- Developing ability to think critically.
- Fostering decision-making and action through collective processes.
- Enable women to make informed choice in areas like education, employment and health;
- Ensuring equal participation in developmental processes.
- Providing information, knowledge and skill for economic independence.
- Enhancing access to legal literacy and information relating their rights and entitlements in society with a view to enhance their participation on an equal footing in all areas.

National Population Policy (2000)

This policy emphasize on the nutrition, drinking water, sanitation, housing, environment, women in difficult circumstances, violence against women's, right of the girl child and mass media foe women's. This policy emphasizes the followings:

- Improving the infrastructure of health services to provide more health workers.
- Total fertility rates can be reduced by 2010 with various surgical procedures.

- According to our constitution, provide free and compulsory education for boys and girls the age group of upto 14 years.
- Girls should be married after the age of 20 years and at least before 18 years should not be married.
- Arrange delivery as institutionalized as possible.
- Birth-death-marriage and abortion is 100% documented.
- The Rural Community Health Service needs to improve. So that women's education is not interrupted due to poor health.
- Keeping the family size small and taking various measures for the education of women.

National Education Mission (2010)

In 8 May 2010, the Government of India announced a National Education Mission for the Empowerment of Women. The following are some of the special objectives of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women:

- Empowering women to have equal participation in decision making in social, economic and political fields.
- Healthcare services up to the highest level of education, Vocational training and vocational counseling, Work at all levels of employment occupational health protection, Social protection, ensuring equal wealth of women of different species, including financial resources.
- Establish separate court for women by specifying law against oppression at home or elsewhere.
- Strengthening the legal services infrastructure for women's justice against all forms of discrimination of women.
- Eliminating gender discrimination.
- Eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls and eliminating all forms of sexual abuse against women in public and private workplaces.
- Ensure participation of women and men equally in the social activities.

The Govt. Initiatives For Women Education In India

1) Mahila Samakhya Programme:

Mahila Samakhya (MS) is an on-going scheme for women's empowerment that was initiated in 1989 to translate the goals of the National Policy on Education into a concrete programme for the education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly those from socially and economically marginalized groups.

2) Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya Scheme (KGBV):

This scheme was launched in July, 2004, to provide education to girls at primary level. It is primarily for the underprivileged and rural areas where literacy level for girls is very low. The schools that were set up have 100% reservation: 75% for backward class and 25% for BPL (below Poverty line) girls.

Initially, KGBV ran as a separate scheme but in harmony with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Mahila Samakhya (MS) for the first two years, but in 2007, it was merged with the SSA program.

The main objectives of the Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya scheme are:

- Facilitating retention of girls in the schools.
- Ensuring effective participation of girls in education.
- Developing and promoting facilities to provide access to girls belonging to disadvantaged groups like SC and ST.

3) National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL):

This programme was launched in July, 2003. It was an incentive to reach out to the girls who the SSA was not able to reach through other schemes. The SSA called out to the "hardest to reach girls". This scheme has covered 24 states in India. Under the NPEGEL, "model schools" have been set up to provide better opportunities to girls.

NPEGEL also intends to mobilize effective community efforts and establish an innovation fund in every district.

Some of its main features are as follows:

- To develop and promote facilities in order to ensure retention of girls and to ensure active participation of women and girls in the field of education.
- To improve the quality of education through various initiatives and focus on the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment and continuous improvement.
- To strengthen the capacity of National, State and district institutions and organisations who are engaged in planning, management and evaluation of girls' education at the elementary level, and create a management structure that will be able to respond to the challenges of girls' education.
- To enable the entire education system to play a positive role in enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence of women and girls, thus building a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, polity and the economy.
- To develop community support for girls' education and provide a conducive environment for girls' education in the school, community and home.

4) National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE):

Was launched in May 2008 with the objective to establish an enabling environment to reduce the dropouts and to promote the enrolment of girl children belonging mainly to SC/ST communities in secondary schools.

5) Indira Gandhi National Scholarship Scheme:

Is provided for single girl child for pursue both higher and technical education.

6) Swami Vivekananda Scholarship for Single Girl Child:

The dropout ratio at various levels of education for girls is much higher than that of boys. Keeping Swami Vivekananda ideas of women

education and to promote girls education, UGC has introduced the Swami Vivekananda Scholarship for Single Girl Child for research in Social Sciences with an aim to compensate direct costs of higher education especially for such girls who happen to be the only girl child in their family.

7) Saakshar Bharat

The National Literacy Mission was recast with its new variant, Saakshar Bharat launched in 2009. It aims to accelerate adult education, especially for women's (in the age group of 15 years and above) who have no access to formal education, targeted female literacy as a critical instrument for women's empowerment. This has led to increase illiteracy, amongst women, from 53.67% (Census 2001) to 65.46% (Census 2011). It is also for the first time that of the total of 217.70 million literates added during the decade, women(110.07million) outnumbered men (107.63million) (source: Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India (XII th Five Year Plan).

8) Udaan

The Scheme is dedicated to the development of girl child education, so as to promote the admission of girl students. The aim is to address the teaching gap between engineering entrance examinations. It seeks to enhance the enrolment of girl student's inprestigious technical education institutions through incentives & academic support.

9) Pragati

Scholarships for Girl Child for Technical education. It aims at providing encouragement and support to girl child to pursue technical education.

10) Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

This is newly announced Scheme of the Govt. of India for enhancing girls' education in India. Mid-Day Meal Scheme: The gender gap in school participation tends to narrow, as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme helps erode the barriers that prevent girls from going to school. Mid-Day Meal Scheme also provides a useful source of employment for women and helps liberate working women from the burden of cooking at home

during the day. In these and other ways, women and girl children have a special stake in Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

From the above discussion, it is clear that Government of India has taken so many initiatives for the improvement of girls' education. In spite of that the status of girls' education has not been increased in expectation level because these initiatives have not been reached to the grass root level. So, Government of India must have to take responsibility to implement these schemes and provisions at grass root level

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Ecology and Gender based Violence: Explaining the Link between Gender - based Violence and Ecology

Dr. Shamoli Bhattacharya

Abstract

As the degrading environment and the pressure in the ecology is a matter of concern, so is gender-based violence, both of which are interlinked and the violence of one form directly leads to the violence of the other. This paper will explain gender-based violence, this will also explain how environmental degradation affects social, situational and personal factors. This paper will also explain how natural disasters lead to gender-based violence. As men in the established patriarchy treat women as unequal and violate their rights, they also exploit the rights of the nature. This does not only lead to inequality rather it leads to unemployment, decreased livelihood leading to poverty and many more problems like lack of education which primarily effect girls as they are considered to be sacrificing before the boys. The earth is feminine in nature and the problem of gender lies under the ecological and environmental crisis. As we can see patriarchy has never valued women the “other” in the society in the same way patriarchy has not valued ecology or earth and have exploited both. Women on the other hand associate themselves with nature and feels a responsibility to care for nature which will in turn provide health benefits. Thus, for the protection of nature women empowerment becomes an essential criterion. The elements of nature have not been respected. With the concept of ecofeminism, the connection between women and nature is explored. With the help of the theory of ecofeminism the paper will try to analyze the relation between gender and ecology and will discuss the relation between the oppression of nature and oppression of women. The paper will also discuss ending environmental degradation and alongside taking action for violence against women. As the paper proceeds it will talk about the impact of devaluing both nature and women and will try to encourage ways of adopting both elements of nature and the other half of the world, the women, so that both flourish

at their best and provide a wholesome society. As this will lead to a society where there would be neither ecological imbalance nor gender-based violence. It is however important to deal with the issue and stop both crises.

Keywords : Environment, Ecofeminism, Discrimination, Gender-based violence, Livelihood

1. Introduction: The Gender and Ecology

Ecology and gender go hand in hand, with the development of one another develops and prospers. Women's participation is very important in every sphere of life specially in the governing bodies, as said by Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme, on International Women's Day 2021 that "Environmental decision making – decisions we make for people and planet – need to be inclusive and involve all voices, including equal voices from women. The triple planetary crisis – of climate, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste – places a triple burden on women. According to UN Women, climate-related extreme events can lead to increased violence against women and girls. And we know that biodiversity loss places profound pressures on women and girls as land managers and resource users. And as food producers, women are frequently at greater risk through endocrine-disrupting chemicals in pesticides, or persistent organic pollutants (POPs)". As always seen women and nature has been considered as inferior to men in the past and the present, which embodies a very close relation between the former. On one hand men always have a dominance over women and on the other hand men destroyed environment for the need of their own. Indian women play an important role in protecting and preserving the environment. Women in India have also brought different perspectives to the environmental debate because of their different bases of experience. The lives of poor women are uncompartmentalized and look at issues from a broad, entire perspective. They clearly understand that economy and environment go hand in hand. Their experience teaches them that the soil, water and vegetation necessary for everyday life require care and proper management. Environmental degradation concerns not only the biosphere but also the sociosphere.

Throughout history, men have viewed natural resources as a means of generating commercial substance or income, whereas women tended to view the environment as a resource that supports basic needs. Instead of cutting down live trees, collect dead branches cut down by storms for firewood. African, Asian, and Latino women acquire knowledge of land/soil, water, and other environmental properties as they use the land to produce food for their families (Sharma and Verma, 2011)

2. Explaining Gender based violence

Gender-based violence occurs when someone is attacked or beaten in some way because of their gender. We are here to describe the gender-based violence inflicted on women and how it goes hand in hand with the exploitation of ecosystems. Both are related, and violence on one lead directly to violence on the other. It is a common scenario that patriarchy has never valued women as social ‘others’ in the same way that patriarchy has never valued the ecosystem or the planet, exploiting both. Women, on the other hand, feel the need to engage with nature and take care of it, which has many benefits.

Gender-based violence is based on power imbalances and is aimed at humiliating individuals or groups and creating feelings of inferiority. This kind of violence is deeply rooted in the social and cultural structures, norms and values that govern society, and is often perpetuated by a culture of denial and silence. Gender-based violence can occur in both the private and public spheres and disproportionately affects women. Gender-based violence, like all forms of violence, is a question of power relations. It is based on a sense of superiority and an intention to assert superiority in the family, school, workplace, community, or society at large.

3. The concept of Patriarchy, Gender Inequality and gender-based violence

The term Patriarchy describes the power relation between men and women. The roots of patriarchy are universal and its structure dominates all institutions, social and cultural norms and values in society. The concept of patriarchy has been central to many feminist theories. It is an attempt to explain the stratification of power and privilege by gender

that can be observed by many objective measures (Napikoski, January 2020).

Many eminent scholars like Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), John Stuart Mill in his book, *The Subjection of Women* (1869), Shulamith Firestone in her book, *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), Simone de Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex* (1949) argues that Patriarchal oppression is a form of slavery that could no longer be ignored and the inequality between the two genders men and women is particularly due to their gap in education. John Stuart Mill is of the view that both the genders should have equal rights as per law, they have certain natural law and the sexes should enjoy it. He said inequality on the basis of sex is a great hindrance to the development of the society. Sulamith Firestone said patriarchy is the main cause of women's inferior status in the society. Simone de Beauvoir explained about the 'other' of society, the second sex. So, all these eminent scholars talked about the upliftment and empowerment of women.

4. Why is gender-based violence a problem?

People's human rights are being violated, and it is an unrelenting assault on human dignity. Gender-based violence damages a person's sense of self-worth and self-esteem and violates the fundamental human right to be free from violence. It has an impact on both physical and mental health and can result in self-harm, social isolation, depression, and attempts at suicide. Everybody has the right to feel safe and secure, and when this isn't the case, people's capacity to operate in the family, their community, and society as a whole is likely to be hampered, since self-realization and growth are hindered. The realisation of every person's well-being, as well as their right to fulfilment and self-development, is hampered by gender-based violence. In a single sentence, it means to have control over natural resources and to lessen the effort required of individuals who strive for a healthy environment.

5. Movements initiated by women

Some of the movements started by women are described here. Amrita Bai of Khejaralli village in the Jodhpur District of Rajasthan gave her life to save the trees in her village in 1731 AD, marking the beginning

of Indian women's active concern for environmental protection. She founded the contemporary "Chipko Movement." She embraced the trees in an effort to save them, but the then-Maharaja ordered her to be cut as a result. Due to the villagers' fierce resistance, 363 individuals were slain one by one while the trees were left unharmed. Her three daughters and husband later stepped forward. In 1972, Bachni Devi and Gaura Devi of Uttar Pradesh restarted the campaign that Amrita Bai had started in 1731 A.D. They seized the woodcutters' axes and warned the contractors not to down the trees. They provided a tagline that stated that woods include soil, water, and air, all of which are necessary for human life (Sharma and Kaushik,2011)

5.1 The colonial period, movements and the connection between women and nature

The first modification to land tenure was the implementation of the zamindari system, which turned communal village resources into private property and caused their destruction. For a meagre annual price of 400 rupees, an Englishman named Mr. Wilson was granted a lease in 1850 to exploit the whole forest cover of the Tehri-Garhwal kingdom. Several forests were felled while he was in power. As a result of Mr. Wilson and the Government's example, the Tehri state realised in 1895 the importance of forests to the economy and seized control of their administration. The villagers bitterly objected to the preservation of forest areas and limits on community use in 1897 and 1899, which sparked organised protests against the authorities. The Garhwali people started a non-cooperation movement in 1930, which focused mostly on forest resources. Many regions revolted against the king's rule in 1947 and declared themselves independent panchayats. Finally in 1949 the kingdom of Tehri was liberated from feudal rule. The Gandhian movement in Garhwal in the post-Independence period had organised itself around three central issues (a) organisation of women power, (b) struggle against liquor menace; and (c) the forest problem.

India in 1906 is a superb example of female leadership in the defense of natural forests. Conflicts between loggers, the government, and peasant populations grew as the amount of forest cleared. The men were transferred away from their villages to a made-up payment

compensation site and loggers were dispatched to the forests to prevent resistance to the forest removal. The Chipko movement, an environmentalist movement started by these Indian women, was born as a result of the women who were left in the villages physically clutching trees to protest against the trees being cut down (which also is where the term tree-huggers originated). Men wanted to take down the trees to use them for industrial purposes, but the women wanted to maintain them since they were a source of food and deforestation was a problem for the local population's existence (Sharma and Kaushik, 2011). Sunderlal Bahuguna, an eco-activist who dedicated his life to convincing the locals to fight the destruction of the forests and Himalayan mountains, is credited with giving the Chipko Movement its impetus. His efforts led to the then-prime minister, Indira Gandhi, outlawing tree chopping.

Narmada Bachao Andolan is an Indian social movement against the construction of several sizable dams as part of the Narmada Dam Project across the river Narmada, led by tribal tribes, farmers, environmentalists, and human rights activists. Three states—Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra—are traversed by the river. One of the largest dams on the Narmada River is the Sardar Sarovar Dam in Gujarat, which served as one of the movement's first focus points. Sardar Sarovar Dam is a component of the Narmada Dam Project, which intends to give the residents of the aforementioned states access to irrigation and electricity (Dwivedi 1998). Court actions, hunger strikes, protests, and gatherings with support from various other sectors are all part of the NBA's campaigning strategy. The NBA won the Right Livelihood Award in 1991 with the help of its leading spokespersons, Medha Patkar and Baba Amte. The court decided in Andolan's favour, causing an immediate halt to construction at the dam and ordering the concerned states to finish the process of repair and replacement (Swain, 1997).

6. Women and Nature

Understanding the Patriarchy notion is crucial because it explains how women and nature are related. A system of political, social, and economic interactions and institutions built around the gender inequality of socially defined men and women is referred to as patriarchy in

analysis. Women are collectively denied full involvement in political and economic life in patriarchal interactions. Undervalued are the qualities deemed “feminine” or as belonging to women. Men dominate both domestic, public life and patriarchal interaction’s structure both the private and public spheres (Lerner, 1986).

As males abuse the rights of women and treat them unequally in the existing patriarchy, they also violate the rights of nature. This causes more difficulties than only inequality, such as unemployment, poor quality of life that results in poverty, and a lack of education that predominantly affects females because they are seen as making sacrifices before boys. The earth is feminine in nature, and the ecological and environmental catastrophe is rooted in the gender issue (Rico, 1998)

Starting off with the concept of ecofeminism it holds that capitalism and patriarchy are both to blame for environmental degradation and women’s dominance. Ecofeminism, also known as ecological feminism, is a subset of feminism that looks at how women and nature interact. French feminist Françoise d’Eaubonne gave it that name in 1974. The fundamental feminist ideas of gender equality, revaluing non-patriarchal or nonlinear structures, and a worldview that respects biological processes, holistic connections, and the value of intuition and cooperation are all used by ecofeminism. Ecofeminism brings a commitment to the environment as well as knowledge of the linkages created between women and nature to these ideas. This worldview specifically emphasises how patriarchal (or male-centered) society treats both nature and women (Merchant, 1980; Plumwood, 1993, 2002; Shiva, 2010, 2012).

Origin of ecofeminism- A coalition of academic and professional women organised several conferences and workshops in the US throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, which led to the creation of the current ecofeminist movement. They got together to talk about how feminism and ecology should work together to advance respect for both women and the natural world, and they were inspired by the idea that long-standing historical associations between women and nature had resulted in both being oppressed. They observed that whereas men were frequently portrayed as rational, organised, and thus capable of guiding

the use and development of women and nature, women and nature were commonly portrayed as chaotic, irrational, and in need of control. Men now have power as a result (Aggerwal, 1992).

In the words of Judith Plant when we comprehend the historical relationships between women and nature and the oppression that followed, we are compelled to speak out against the war against nature. By taking part in environmental confrontations with people who believe they have the right to rule over nature, we contribute to raising consciousness of dominance on all scales. From this angle, non-hierarchical structure and consensual decision-making are seen as universal truths. Ecofeminists highlight values like cooperation, non-violence, caring and sustainability over aggression and domination.

There are three schools of ecofeminist thought, cultural ecofeminism, social ecofeminism and socialist ecofeminists. Cultural ecofeminism believes that women, based on their biological powers of procreation and caring, have a special and deeper relationship with nature. Social ecofeminism believes women's link with nature are shaped entirely by social and material factors like education and economic status and socialist ecofeminists believe that the connection between women and nature are based both on biological and social factors.

7. Writing of some of the eminent scholar(Ecology and women in their words)

1. Susan Griffin's 1978 book *Women and Nature: the roaring inside her* was an important piece of lyrical writing that helped inspire ecofeminism. Griffin compares the brutality perpetrated against women and the brutality to nature in this book using poetry and vivid writing. She upheld the notion that women, like nature, could and were resisting by utilising their "nature."
2. Maria Mies 1998 has condemned the patriarchal and capitalist culture that are mindlessly destroying nature. with this approach, women are cast as "victims" of development. Both Capitalism and patriarchy must be blamed for women vulnerability forest conservation and forest destruction.

3. Vandana Shiva 1989 Ecofeminism and environmental understanding and theory, received a new lease with the work of Vandana Shiva who addressed this need to question and understand the link between environmental degradation and the oppression of women from a cultural perspective. Her main argument was for the need to have an awareness of the close bond between gender and the environment and the need to adopt an integrated and holistic view of humans and nature. In the following sections, we look at this relationship between women and the environment as discussed by Shiva in her seminal work, *Staying Alive*, and her other writings on women and nature.

8. Bina Agarwal : feminist environmentalism

However, the reality is that ecofeminism has mostly failed to demonstrate that it can be a remedy for the existing damaged system. This is precisely why the environmental discourse needs a new theoretical framework that actually adopts an intersectional, inclusive, and sensitive stance when talking about complex environmental problems and challenges (Rao, 2012).

We require an explicit understanding of the systemic causes, consequences, and solutions to environmental deterioration, claims Agarwal. She subsequently offers an alternative theory known as feminist environmentalism.

This alternative strategy contains many aspects of ecofeminism and emphasises several topics that are not covered by the ecofeminist strategy. Agarwal contends that to fully understand the relationship between women and nature, we must look beyond the ideological constructs of gender, environment, and inequality that Ecofeminism highlights. We must consider the material realities that influence how women of various social groups and races react to environmental problems (Agarwal, 1992).

There are material, symbolic, and ideological connections between violence against women and against the environment. Women's sources for survival were destroyed when nature was destroyed. The patriarchal ambitions of the western maldevelopment model and modern science

neglect the traditional wisdom of women about nature, which is especially widespread in the third world. We can see that the demand for an egalitarian society has a solution in the continuity between a women's movement and an environmental movement. In support of Shiva, Agarwal claims that she goes beyond western ecofeminists by examining the connections between different perspectives on development, looking at how change affects the environment, and highlighting how development is a patriarchal endeavour that devalues and marginalises both women and nature (Agarwal, 1998).

9. Conclusion

Women are the ones most impacted by environmental deterioration and play a crucial role in managing natural resources at the home and community levels. Women manage woods and agricultural land, as well as water, food, and fuel supplies in communities all over the world. In developing nations, women produce 60 to 80 percent of the food, yet inheritance rules and regional norms frequently restrict them from owning or leasing land, obtaining loans, or obtaining insurance. The 1992 UN Earth Summit, the Chipko movement in India, and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya all emphasised the importance of women's voices and perspectives in sustainable development at all levels, from the top to the bottom.

In respect to their natural surroundings, women play important roles in all locations and civilizations of the world. Women can be particularly sensitive to environmental changes or dangers since they are frequently heavily dependent on the natural resources available for food, fuel, and shelter. Women's experiences and opinions are crucial to the formulation of sustainable development policies and activities at every level, as their work is frequently focused on managing natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems. This is necessary to ensure a healthy world for future generations.

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A Study of Female Teacher Self-Empowerment of Secondary School of Paschim Medinipur District

Dr. Niranjan Maity • Dr. Smriti Roy • Dr. Arun Maity

Abstract

Teacher self-empowerment has been characterised as the ability of instructors to influence important choices concerning the circumstances of teaching and learning, leading to professional respect and esteem. The goal of the current study is to determine if there is any significance in the difference between the mean scores of the independent variables related to teacher empowerment. The objectives of the study were; (i) to study the significance of difference of mean scores of following independent variables on self-empowerment of Female teachers of secondary schools: (a) Gender; (b) Geographical Location and (c) In-service Training. Null hypotheses were framed. Data were collected by randomly selecting 125 teachers from 5 secondary schools of Paschim Medinipur district using self-constructed Female Teacher Self-Empowerment Scale. Mean, S.D. and t-value were employed for data calculation and analysis. The results of the current study's analysis showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the gender and geographic location subsets. However, it was shown that the proportion of female teachers who had in-service training was much greater than that of male teachers. The study's practical applications are discussed in relation to the teachers' in-service training.

Keywords : self empowerment, in service training, self-contracture.

1. Introduction: The Gender and Ecology

The word's etymology may be traced back to the empowerment of power, which denotes the capacity to do an action. Prefix Air-be "empowered" denotes strength, capability, power, and the ability (or sense, or manner, etc.) to overcome anything (Suparno: 2014). According to Tjiptono's remark from Kadarisman (2013), empowerment is an endeavour

to provide subordinates authority, trust their superiors, and foster creativity in order for the task to be completed as well as possible. Employees have the discretion to do whatever they thought best to satisfy clients, including managing their concerns. It is anticipated that employee empowerment would lead to a power-sharing situation in which managers and employees work collaboratively to implement change. One method of the government's and the principal's motivation for their teachers is related to the empowerment of female teachers. These methods include 1) the empowerment of women teachers through teaching duties, 2) the empowerment of women teachers improve competence qualification bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees, 3) the empowerment of women in supplemental positions in the classroom, 4) the empowerment of women through teacher training, and 5) the empowerment of women teachers through a variety of other methods.

Empowerment may signify several things depending on the political, social, and cultural setting. Both intrinsic and practical qualities may be found in it. The term's prominent characteristic is the word power that it carries. The power is wielded by either a person or a group at an economic, social, or political level; hence, it is significant to both people and groups and may be either economic, social, or political. It is significant to individuals who are powerless regardless of gender, individual, or group, and it gives them the power to attain desired goals without having any influence over others. The empowerment of women is distinctive since it is both gender-specific and multifaceted. A change in the environment of a woman's life that makes it possible for her to live a more fulfilled existence may be referred to as women's empowerment. Both internal and external quantities are included in this. - Internal quantities include self-awareness and self-assurance; external numbers include health, education, mobility, awareness, standing in the family, decision-making, and material security (Mathew, 2003).

Any organization's ability to succeed rests on the empowerment of its staff. Success is determined by a person's degree of empowerment. The ability to apply and improve one's skills, self-confidence, and knowledge allows one to overcome obstacles. A person who is empowered will think, act, and behave in accordance with their capacities. Additionally, it aids in one's fulfilment since, if one works in accordance with their or

her freedom and desires, both their career and their life will automatically be fulfilling. It is also thought that in an environment where individuals are empowered, they are more likely to cooperate, utilise their imaginations, and take initiative to solve problems. 1986, according to Lightfoot The options a person has for autonomy, choice, responsibility, and involvement in decision-making in companies are referred to as empowerment. It also promotes social, corporate, and personal progress. It takes art to teach. It cannot be done by everyone since it is a difficult job. An empowered teacher can provide effective instruction. A teacher who is empowered to make choices, who has access to chances for learning and professional development, and who is also recognised and given autonomy. A teacher who is empowered has an impact on both the school and themselves. Empowerment in a school context refers to the development of participants or staff members' abilities to manage problems and generate the desired results. According to Irwin (1991), a teacher who has the power to make decisions is one who is aware of their capacity to do so, understands the institution's ultimate authority, makes use of their skills to improve unfair community practises, and respects and defends the unique qualities and traits of each individual. The current educational system needs to empower instructors since today's curricula are extensive, vivid, and filled with obstacles. The main figure in schools is the teacher. They are referred to be society's creators or builders. Therefore, it is essential that instructors have more authority.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY : The calibre of the instructors affects the calibre of the instruction. Although instructors often possess a wealth of traits, they can fall short of their intended outcomes. Because they lack authority. They lack the authority to make decisions about their instructional objectives. Therefore, it is essential that instructors have authority in addition to all the other attributes. If instructors have decision-making freedom, they should actively participate in designing the learning process to meet the pre-set objectives. The research by F. A. Amoli and M. (2014). Investigating the link between job satisfaction and teacher empowerment among Iranian EFL teachers at Tehran Aviation University reveals that the overall level of teacher empowerment differs considerably depending on gender. In contrast, the research of Veisia,

S. & et al (2015). There is no discernible difference between teachers' empowerment and gender, according to the relationship between Iranian EFL instructors' empowerment and teachers' self-efficacy. So the researcher thinks to conduct the present research to know whether there exists Female Teacher Self-Empowerment of Secondary School of Paschim Medinipur District.

OBJECTIVES : The present study has been undertaken with the objective of finding out the significance of difference of mean scores of independent variables on self empowerment of teachers of secondary schools- Gender, Geographical location, In-service Training etc.

HYPOTHESIS : The researcher has formulated the following hypothesis-

Ho₁ - There is no significant difference in the self empowerment between the male teachers and female teachers.

Ho₂ - There is no significant difference in the self empowerment between the teachers with in service training and the teachers without in service training.

Ho₃ - There is no significant difference in the self empowerment between the Under graduate teachers and post graduate teachers.

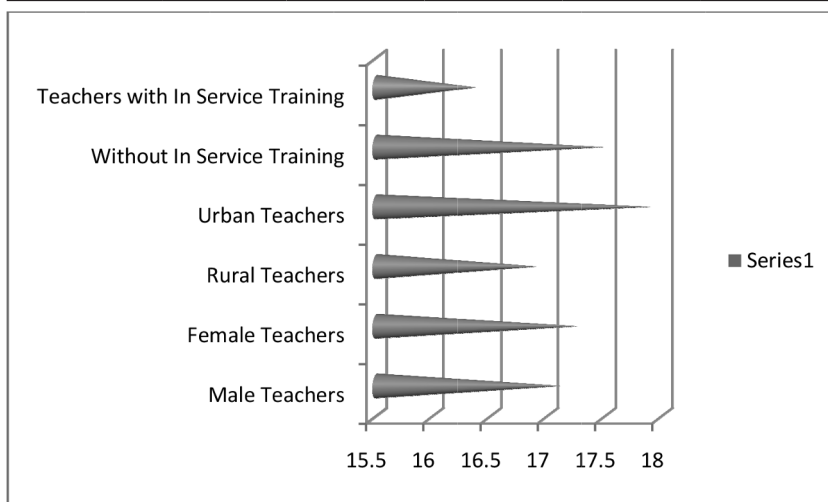
METHODOLOGY : For the current study the researcher used a sample of 125 teachers of secondary schools of Paschim Medinipur district. Self structured rating scale on the variables Gender, Location, In-service training and Academic Qualification have been used for data collection. Collected Data were analyzed with mean, standard deviation, t value and f value.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table – 1 : Mean, S.D and t value of Gender, Geographical Location and in service Training

Variable	Subsets	Mean	S.D	T value	Sig. Level
Gender	Male Teachers	169.305	17.107	0.398	
	Female Teachers	170.851	17.256		

Variable	Subsets	Mean	S.D	T value	Sig. Level
Geographical Location	Rural Teachers	170.621	16.897	0.785	
	Urban Teachers	169.865	17.895		
In Service Training	Without In Service Training	170.201	17.478	3.292	Significant at .01 level
	Teachers with In Service Training	171.432	16.365		

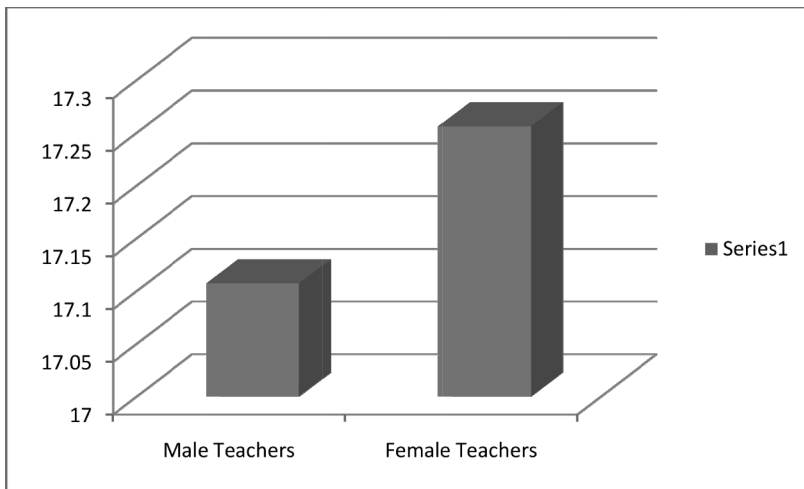


From the above table it is evident that the mean score for male teachers (169.305) and female teachers (170.851); mean score of rural teachers (170.851) and urban teachers (170.621) do not significantly differ at 0.01 level of significance on teacher self empowerment. But the mean score of teachers with in service training (171.432) and teachers without in service training(170.201) differs significantly at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the hypothesis “ There is no significant difference between the teachers with in service training and the teachers without in service training of the self empowerment” has been rejected.

Table-2 : Mean, SD and F value of Academic Qualifications

Variable	Subsets	Mean	S.D	F value	Significant Level
Academic Qualification	Graduate	170.081	16.354	1.372	
	Post Graduate	170.394	17.568		

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between the mean score of Graduate teachers (170.081) and Post Graduate teachers (170.394). Therefore Hypothesis is accepted.



Findings : The researcher has found out the following :

- No significant difference was found between the male teachers and female teachers in regard to the self empowerment.
- No significant difference was found between the rural teachers and urban teachers in respect of self empowerment.
- In respect of self empowerment the mean score of Graduate teachers differ significantly from the post graduate teachers.

Conclusion:

Empowering employees and fueling their creativity can be motivating, but it can also impose additional burdens and stress, which can affect

their daily performance. This conclusion suggests that since instructors have the ability to decide how the teaching and learning take place in their classrooms, they feel empowered. According to the instructors' overall scores, there were no statistically significant variations in the teachers' levels of self-empowerment depending on their gender, location, academic and professional backgrounds, age, and teaching experience. Teachers demonstrated above average levels of self-empowerment across all of these background factors. On the scale's overall scores, it was discovered that teachers who had in-service training outperformed those who did not. According to this finding, teachers' in-service training affects their decision-making process by increasing their competence and ability (Self-Efficacy) to act in educational settings, which encourages them to feel more devoted to their schools and their careers as teachers.

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Kanyashree Prakalpa : An Apparatus for the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls in West Bengal

Santu Biswas

Abstract

In light of the high rate of child marriage, West Bengal's current situation is very crucial. To eradicate these kinds of evil practices in our society, proper education is required. Several steps are made after independence to ensure that girls receive a proper education. In order to encourage adolescent girls to complete secondary and higher secondary education, or an equivalent programme in technical or vocational streams, and to discourage marriage until at least the age of 18, the legal age for marriage, the West Bengal government launched the conditional cash transfer programme known as KanyashreePrakalpa in 2013. Increased Kanyashree application approval rates from the 2013–2014 school year to the present show that the number of girls enrolled in formal education is rising. On the other hand Kanyashree girls campaign the evil effect of Educational development, child marriage, and also have interrupted child marriage forcefully with the help of police, BDO, NGO and others. The impact of this programme improves adolescent girls' attitudes toward education, self-confidence, and self-esteem, all of which have a good impact on the advancement of our society. By providing a supportive atmosphere for their participation and meaningful contribution to society, this programme protects and empowers all adolescent females. Everyone benefits if ladies are free to be themselves. KanyashreePrakalpa is therefore more than just a social welfare programme; it is the future. This study is purely qualitative in nature using secondary data consisting of books, journals and websites, research articles, government publications and so. In this paper, the researcher focuses on Women Empowerment in West Bengal with special reference to Kanyashree Prakalpa.

Keywords : Kanyashree Prakalpa, Adolescent Girl, Child Marriage, West Bengal.

1. Introduction

“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.” — Swami Vivekananda

Government-sponsored programmes like West Bengal’s Kanyashree Prakalpa will be implemented moving forward in every district throughout the state as a number of variables work to lower the number of girls dropping out of school. According to human rights research, child marriage, the economy, and household duties are the biggest barriers to girls’ education. Given that child marriage has a seriously detrimental influence on the lives of children, adolescents, and young women, ensuring that girls remain in school is one of the most effective preventative measures against child marriage. This plan is anticipated to have measurable positive effects on the girl’s education, health, and sense of empowerment, as well as immeasurable advantages for society at large. This initiative aims to support girls from low-income homes who, due to difficult financial circumstances, are unable to pursue higher education. The UNICEF and the Department for Worldwide Development of the United Kingdom have given it international recognition. By educating girls, we may enhance maternal health, reduce child mortality, and make communities and society wealthier, better, and safer. In the past, society considered girls to be less valuable than boys. They saw girls as a liability. Therefore, they forced the girls into early marriages and didn’t even attempt to educate them; presently, this stereotypical tradition is being challenged. Slowly, society is realising how important it is to educate them. Therefore, KanyashreePrakalpa is the Social welfare plan which is help all adolescents girl to improve their educational and Socio-economic status in West Bengal.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

There are 1.73 cores of adolescents (10–19 years old) in West Bengal, and 48.11% of them are female. 10.3% of the population is between the ages of 10 to 14 years, while 9.7% of the population is between the ages of 15 to 19 years (source: Detailed table-SRS based on Census 2011; [www.cencusindia.gov.in/vital statistics/SRS Report](http://www.cencusindia.gov.in/vital%20statistics/SRS%20Report)). Of all the states, West Bengal has the fifth-highest rate of child marriage, with 54.7% of women who are now married (aged 20 to 24) having married

before the age of 18. The incidence is even higher in rural areas (57.9%) every girl in high prevalence child marriage districts of West Bengal in Murshidabad (61.04%), Birbhum(58.03), Malda(57.07%) and Purulia(54.03), were married before they reach 18, the legal age for girls to get married. Early marriage education hinders the development of our country and, more importantly, the health of girls. In response, the West Bengal government launches the KanyashreePrakalpa to relieve the female child of her excruciating pain. The Vision of this prakalpa to creating an environment that is supportive of all adolescent girls' participation and meaningful contributions to society, while also protecting and empowering them.

Review Of Related Literature:

Biswas, H.K. (2021), Impact of KanyashreePrakalpa on Educational Progress of School-Going Girls: A Case Study of Domkol Block in Murshidabad District of West Bengal. Objective of this study to find out whether the KanyashreePrakalpa has any Effect on School-going girls of Domkol Block in Murshidabad District of West Bengal. Researcher find out that KanyashreePrakalpa not only minimize the early marriage of girls children at the same time it will make a positive impact on the prevention of drop out of girls from school at the early age.

Biswas, S., & Deb, P. (2020). A Study of Effectiveness Prakalpa in Women Empowerment in Murshidabad District of West Bengal: Role and Contribution of Teachers, Gram Panchayet and Librarians. Aim of this study is to discuss effectiveness of KanyashreePrakalpa in women empowerment and the role and contribution of the teacher, librarians a gram panchayet.

Molla, M.K., & Sarkar, M. (2020). Impact of Kanyashree Prakalpa o Academic Performance of Girls Students: A Study. This study conducted fir find out the impact of KanyashreePrakalpa on academic performance of girls students of West Bengal. The findings of the study reveal that there are significant impact Kanyashreeprakalpa and academic performance of girl's students.

Roy, K. (2018), assessed the impact of the Kanasree project in the Howrah district of West Bengal. The program, they can start their

education again and can delay marriage to at least 18 years of age. Studies have shown that the program is very helpful in improving student learning, delaying girls' marriage and reducing immaturity. The government of West Bengal needs to increase pressure on such programs to benefit more and more girls, but this is a huge effort by the government.

Ghara, K. T. & Roy K,(2017) writes on Impact of KanyashreePrakalpa –District wise analysis. The main objectives of this study is to analyse the effectiveness of the scheme across the districts of West Bengal and their uniformity over time span of 4 years 2013-14 to 2016-17. In this study the data has been calculated from the year 2013-14 to 2016-17 for each of the districts. The study steers clear that KanyashreePrakalpa not only minimizes the tendency of girl students to drop out from schools at early age, at the same time it will make a positive impact on the prevention of early marriage of girl child.

Research Gap : From the review it is observed that several studies have been done on various Educational Schemes for Women/Girls Education in different countries particularly developed ones. In India such studies are conducted only in few. Specifically no such research work done, especially on a world-renowned project like Kanyashree. But in west Bengal it is very little. So the researchers choose this topic.

Significance Of The Study

The West Bengal government has adopted numerous programmes and initiatives, but Kanyashree Prakalpa has received the greatest attention in recent years. Regarding this plan, there are some contentious viewpoints. Additionally, some people disagree with the scheme's goals. However, from a statistical perspective, this approach aids all teenagers in elevating their socio-economic standing, sense of self, and level of higher education. The need for a detailed exposition of the system was therefore realized, leading to the creation of the current article or paper.

Statement Of The Problem

In recognition of the fact, the current study made an effort to learn more about the current situation of teenage girls in West Bengal and how the KanyashreePrakalpa has helped them advance their education. It also

sought to determine how this prakalpa has affected the education of girls who are currently enrolled in school. So researcher attempt entitle the “KanyashreePrakalpa: A Stepping stone towards empowerment of adolescent girl in West Bengal”.

Objectives Of The Study

- ☑ To know the General Features of Kanyasree Prakalpa for Empowering of Adolescent girl in West Bengal
- ☑ To study the Implementation Mechanism of KanyasreePrakalpa on Adolescent girl in West Bengal.
- ☑ To find out the impact of KanyasreePrakalpa on Adolescent girl in west Bengal.

Research Questions:

The following research questions have been framed in relation to the aforementioned aims and will be tested throughout this study:

1. To what extent does the KanyashreePrakalpa help empower young women and girls in West Bengal?
2. Does have the KanyashreePrakalpa been successful in preventing girl marriage?
3. Does the Kanya shreePrakalpa have an effect on teenage girls’ educational opportunities in West Bengal?

Methodology:

It is a Documentary analysis based on Qualitative study. It is based on official documents and secondary data. The conclusion made in the study is based on Secondary sources. The Secondary sources data relating to the journal, article, newspaper etc. Some related information’s were extracted from various websites. This data was then analysed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions.

Objectives-1: General Features Of Kanyashree Prakalpa

The following are the plan’s goals:

- ☑ Giving female children financial incentives to finish their basic and secondary school as well as any approved trade or technical

education. Limiting and eventually abolishing the practice of child marriage.

- ☑ Reducing child marriage-related newborn and mother deaths by raising the median age of childbirth and spreading awareness.
- ☑ Transferring the financial support provided by the programme directly to the beneficiary female children in order to provide them the chance to choose how to spend the money and give them the option to pursue an education.
- ☑ Attempting to change the way society views things and supporting strong female role models to get more women involved in society building.
- ☑ Additionally, the plan seeks to lessen the ills of child trafficking and the exploitation of young girls.

Eligibility for Kanyashree Prakalpa

The eligibility requirements for the programme are listed below.

- ✓ The girl child must live in the state of West Bengal.
- ✓ The girl child ought to be single.
- ✓ To be eligible for the K1 annual scholarship, a girl must be between the ages of 13 and 18.
- ✓ The youngster must come from a family with an income of no more than Rs. 1,20,000 per year.

Components of Kanyashree Prakalpa:

The components of the scheme along with eligibility under each part are explained below.

K1 (Annual Scholarship)

K1 is the main source of yearly financial support for female children. This scholarship is available to female students in class VIII or above who are between the ages of 13 and 18 years old. The 750 rupee annual scholarship is given to deserving female students for the duration of their tenure in the educational system. The only requirement is that the girl kid cannot be married at the time of the event.

K2 (One Time Grant)

The secondary scholarship offered by the programme is called K2. When female children turn 18 or 19 years old, they begin receiving payment. A one-time award of Rs. 25,000 has been made. For the purpose of pursuing higher education, vocational training, sports training, or occupational training, this award is given to the qualified girls. The female kid must also be unmarried in order to qualify for this payment.

Objectives-2: Implementation Mechanism:

The initiative has been put into effect by working cooperatively with other state organizations and several West Bengal government departments. The key departments responsible for carrying out the Kanyashree scheme are the departments of Child Development, Women, and Social Welfare. The department is in charge of overseeing e-governance and programme development. In particular, UNICEF is working as a technical partner to improve communication and capacity building strategies. The primary components of the Kanyashree Scheme are:

- A single-window service method effectively provides accessibility and effective service delivery. The school staff assists candidates in completing application forms, gathering and compiling supporting documentation, and coordinating with local banks to open bank accounts. Application forms are available at schools and other institutions. The number of requirements has been maintained to a minimum, and local governments or local self-governments can issue certification. In collaboration with banks, simplified one-page account opening forms have been created to make it easier to open zero balance bank accounts. Benefits are transferred directly to recipients' accounts by bank transfer.
- The entire programme is e-governed through a specific online portal with multiuser management capability to manage application submission, review, and approval as well as grievance redress. The portal assures openness, effectiveness, and no leakage while acting as a real-time reporting system.

- All primary data entry on the portal is done at the institution level to keep the process simple (school, college or vocational training centre). In the event that there is a lack of suitable infrastructure at the institution level, data entry is also carried out at the Circle Level Resource Center or the Block Development Officer's office. Examining application forms is done online through the portal for speedy monitoring and disbursement, and the same process is used to create sanction orders.
- With a State-Level Steering and Monitoring Committee made up of senior government officials from different departments who provide strategic direction, Kanyashree has a multi-tiered monitoring structure. There is a steering and monitoring committee for each district, which is led by the district magistrate. The State and District level Monitoring Committee regularly exchanges information via feedback, video conferencing, and the examination of MIS data.

Objectives-3: Impact Of Kanyashree Prakalpa

Motivating for Higher Study:

KanyashreePrakalpa incentivizing them to continue in education for a longer period of time, and complete secondary or higher secondary education, or equivalent in technical or vocational steams, thereby giving them a better footing in both the economic and social spheres.

Prevention of child marriage:

The number of child marriages in West Bengal has decreased, according to the Kanyashree Annual Report 2015–2016. When it came to the prevalence of child brides, the state was ranked fifth highest in the nation by DLHS -3-2007-08 (54.7%). (3). Before they reach maturity, the majority of these females get married. But things have changed since then. Women between the ages of 20 and 24 who were married before turning 40.7%, per NFHS-3 (2015–16). Despite the very gradual fall rates, they are nonetheless very important. The number of child marriages has decreased since the kanyashreepokalpa was introduced. Girls refuse to marry children.

Financial Support:

It is true that financial assistance can be beneficial for the growth and emancipation of women and girls. However, financial assistance alone cannot account for a girl's or woman's full development and empowerment. The programme strives to provide more than simply financial assistance. The concept and philosophy of this programme, which emphasises that separate accounts should be formed in the names of the girls, should be used to promote financial inclusion. Benefits from the initiative are thus sent directly into the girls' bank accounts, giving them control over how to spend the money.

Social and Psychological Empowerment:

The programme uses a focused behaviour change communication technique to boost the social power and self-esteem of females in order to support the benefits of delayed marriages and increased schooling. The communication plan incorporates adolescent-friendly tactics including events, competitions, and Kanyashree clubs as well as the endorsement of powerful women figures as role models to encourage social and psychological empowerment in addition to raising awareness of the programme.

Secondary and higher education:

The Kanyashree Schemes have made it possible for girls to return to school. West Bengal's society is steadily undergoing a fundamental and significant shift. The parents now support girls going to school. The Kanyashree girls receive a one-time grant of Rs. 25000 when they become 18 years old, which aids in their academic endeavours. The majority of Kanyashree girls were successful in persuading their parents to let them go to school or college. Parents are no longer afraid because they do not need to raise money for their daughter's schooling. They are content with this plan. They are pleased to give their daughters permission to pursue secondary and further education. In higher classes, dropout rates are now declining.

Social Awareness:

The Kanyashree girls spearheaded a number of social awareness campaigns, including those against dengue, Mission Nirmal Bangla,

Safe Drive-Save Life, child protection, child rights, health awareness, capacity building, and tree planting. At the block level, they held numerous workshops about cybercrime. The Kanyashree girls raise public awareness of these issues. To discourage child marriage, the PurbaBardhaman district administration produced a short film. With the aid of the Kanyashree girls, Birbhum Child Line carried out an awareness campaign on the trafficking of women and young girls. The majority of districts organise various awareness programmes with the aid of the Kanyashree girls, and it is also for them. KanyashreePrakalpa raises social awareness levels, causing our society to become more conscientious and conscious of the negative effects of child marriage. Kanyashree girls have now established themselves as a means of communication between block and district level government and the uninformed, underprivileged populace. The West Bengal government has been effective in spreading awareness of child marriage among Kanyashree girls.

Self- Employment:

Self-employment is one of the main and significant effects of kanyashreeprakalpa. Keeping the young ladies in school or colleges is insufficient. Girls from homes with socioeconomic difficulties have traditionally struggled with poverty. They are thus unable to finish their studies. They want to support their struggling families and make money. KanyashreePrakalpa provides them with the chance. The majority of West Bengal's district government set up a training programme for Kanyashree girls in food processing and preservation. They receive coaching on topics including product marketing, capital investments, and cost-benefit analyses from marketing consultants from the district's rural development unit.

Political Impact:

KanyashreePrakalpa's political impact is now firmly entrenched. Today, every Bengali has been impacted by KanyashreePrakalpa. Every home and every family have received it. With this prakalpa, MamataBenerjee and the Trinamul Congress undoubtedly reached every family. She now enjoys great popularity in addition to having a lot of money in her pocket thanks to it. KanyashreePrakalpa is a lethal tool in the battle for votes.

MamataBenerjee has her political adversary in control. She has made significant progress in the election field as a result. The popularity of this enterprise makes it impossible for the opposition to oppose it. They would be acting against their political interests if they opposed this idea. They are aware that the public will never accept KanyashreeProkalpa's criticism.

Sustainable Development:

Development that satisfies current demands without compromising the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own needs is known as sustainable development. Sustainability in the areas of the environment, the economy, and society is referred to as sustainable development (equity). 2015 saw the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals in it (SDGs). Some of these are accomplished through the Kanyashree scheme's goals. These are numbers 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 16, and 17. The kanyashree scheme's sustainable development objectives are:

- ❖ It raised educational achievement, skill, and social and familial voice.
- ❖ Lower risk of mortality and poor health for mothers and children.
- ❖ Lessening of the likelihood of violence, abuse, and exploitation.
- ❖ Social and economic inclusion, as well as equitable power dynamics.
- ❖ For females between the ages of 13 and 18, preventing child marriage, completing their education, and gaining access to financial resources.
- ❖ A shift in girls' and families' attitudes, views, and aspirations.
- ❖ A supportive environment where women and girls are treated equally and seen as essential members of society.

Towards a Social Movement:

Now, the KanyashreeProkalpa is moving in the direction of becoming a social movement. The campaign to end child marriage, support young girls in pursuing higher education, help them start their own businesses, and, of course, to give adolescent girls and women more authority.

Thousands of teachers, hundreds of BDOs, DMs, child line members, thousands of bank employees, and many more officers are involved in this movement. There are 16679 registered institutions (9). They assist the Kanyashree girls in many ways when they are with them. Kanyashree girls' parents are also ardent supporters of this cause. It will hopefully succeed as it is daily spread at the grassroots level.

Conclusion:

We can see from the debate above that the West Bengal government made a valiant effort with this programme. It becomes a huge assistance for those females who are unable to pursue their education because of financial issues. As these girls are a burden to them, their parents desired to marry them. This plan is like a gift to these kinds of girls. They can delay getting married until they are at least 18 years old and complete their studies through this plan. According to our research, this programme is very effective at boosting a girl kid's academic performance, postponing child marriage, lowering the mortality rate of young mothers, increasing learner enthusiasm in their studies, etc. But inspire of this still today a large number of girls unable to receive an education due to lack of money. So, the government needs to give more stress on these types of programs, so that more and more girls will be benefited. But it is a very appreciable effort of the Government of West Bengal

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Women Empowerment and Cyber Security: Sustaining Cyberspace through Quality Education

Subhra Shankha Chakraborty & Dr. Subhankar Ghosh

Abstract

Women comprise 48% of the total population in India (World Bank Report, 2021), signifying them as the backbone of our society. Women are equally engaged like men, in academia or several professions, i.e. schools, colleges, various government and non-government organizations, as well as in Education. While the recent past pandemic hindered the spontaneous flow of education, the world moved on towards the practice of online mode. However, while using the online platforms, women are being subjected to various cybercrimes, due to utter disdain or ignorance. Equality of women participation in cyberspace is pivotal to holistic development, both academically and professionally. Achieving confidence technically will enliven the opportunity for further growth, towards satisfying both SDG-4 and SDG-5. Quality of Education needs to be spurred though the proper accomplishment of technical education for women. Women must be encouraged to pursue their career in Cyber Security, so that the limited representation can be improved. This paper throws light on women participation in cyber security education and profession, thus creating a more inclusive cyberspace through Quality Education.

Keywords : Women Empowerment, SDGs, Cyber Security, Quality Education.

1. Introduction

“Empowering Women can help fix the Cyber Security staff shortage”
— World Economic Forum

The image of cyber security relying on lone hoody-wearing teenagers hacking in the dark needs to change. In reality, to improve cyber security, engineers, lawyers, economists, criminologists and policy

makers need to collaborate to address cyber threats with comprehensive strategies. Hence, in order to mend the necessary gap, we must prepare ourselves with Quality Education, which must include women who comprise 48% of the total population in India (World Bank Report, 2021). The recent past pandemic forced the entire world to move towards the digitalization, and the Education sector is no exception. However, while using the online platforms, women are being subjected to various cybercrimes, due to utter disdain or ignorance. Equality of women participation in cyberspace is pivotal to holistic development, both academically and professionally. In order to fulfil the dreams of Future Self-reliant India, i.e. SDG 4 and SDG 5, we must foster the vital changes without any delay. In this paper we would like to highlight the present status of women in education, cyber security as academic as well as professional choice for women, gender gap & representation of women in technical professions, barriers to women empowerment in cyber security, reasons behind not willing to select cyber security as career choice by women and why it is time to rethink about it.

Current Status of Indian Women in Education

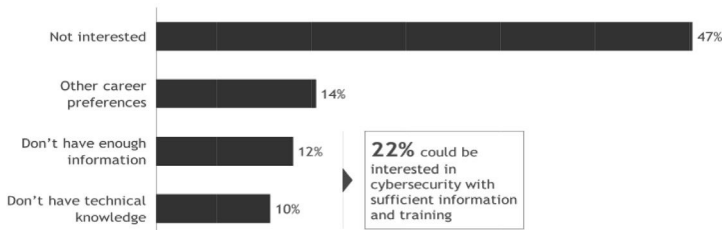
The national female literacy rate when India gained independence was extremely low at around 8.6%. Women, who were allowed to participate in freedom struggle, were now confined only to their houses, which led to the formation of a patriarchal society dominated by men. Although the literacy rate of females in India has increased from 8.6% in 1951 to 64.63%, in accordance with the 2011 census, this is still not satisfactory. In India, presently the female literacy rate (65.6%) tragically lags behind the male literacy rate (81.3%). The female education rate in India at 65.6% is significantly lower than the average rate of the world, which is at 79.7%. The situation is more critical in rural areas, where very few girls get the opportunity to go to schools as compared to the boys and the number of dropout rate is very alarming among girls. Statistics also reveal that our country India still has around 145 Million women, who are unable to even read or write.

Cyber Security as Academic & Professional Choice

The atrocious incidents against women are on a rise and in achieving a secure cyberspace, women participation is not only essential, but a

pre-requisite. While using the internet, women are being subjected to harassment on a regular basis. And in order to counter this issue properly, women must come forward and take active part in it. To understand the need of Cyber Security in daily life and also to understand that Cyber Security can be a choice at academic as well as in professional field, the education system must first implement the topic vividly. There are also some factors for women to not choosing Cyber Security as a career, here are some of them.

Women's Unwillingnessto Pursue Career in Cyber Security



Source: World Economic Forum (<https://www.weforum.org>)

During a survey by World Economic Forum, it was seen that 47% of women were not interested in pursuance of a career in Cyber Security, which means women are still lagging behind on their own, by not considering it a potential career choice, while we see that cybercrimes against women are on a rise. 14% women had other career preferences. 12% said that they do not have enough information. This is where the Education sector should come in. Formal, Non-formal and informal education should include studies regarding how to safeguard women from cyber-related crimes. 10% women did not have technical knowledge as per the report. Here, we must note that proper technical education still needs to flourish full-fledgedly to support women gather proper technical knowledge, at par their male counterparts. 22% women could be interested in Cyber Security with sufficient information and training. So, we can easily understand from this report by World Economic Forum that women are still in need of proper support in terms of Technical Knowledge as well as Cyber Security. This is a prerequisite for a developing country like India to bloom into a developed one.

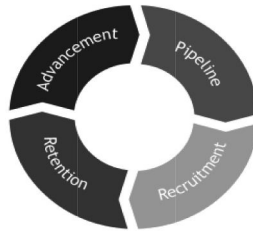
Key barriers to Women’s empowerment in Cyber Security

Advancement

- ↔ Few visible and accessible female role models
- 👥 A lack of female mentors and sponsors
- 👥 Difficulty for female entrepreneurs to access resources

Retention

- ↔ Dropout and difficulty taking time off and returning to work
- ↔ Workplace discrimination and bias
- ↔ Long working hours
- 👥 A lack of professional development
- ☠️ Imposter syndrome, elitism, and a low sense of belonging



👥 Access ☠️ Agency ↔ Access/Agency

Pipeline

- ↔ Low enrollment in STEM disciplines
- 👥 Male-dominated feeder industries
- 👥 Low awareness of cybersecurity
- 👥 Few role models
- ☠️ Negative perceptions of cybersecurity

Recruitment

- 👥 Unequal access to the job market and entrepreneurship
- 👥 Lack of access for nontechnical, non-STEM entrants
- ☠️ A perception of the industry as masculine
- 👥 Discrimination against recruiting younger women of child-bearing age

Source: World Economic Forum (<https://www.weforum.org/>)

CyberSecurity as a Career Option for Women

Decent Payment

There’s a deficit of professed professionals in the field of cyber security. This along with the rising need for these professionals leads them to get hired at a high payment. In India, these professionals earn nearly around INR 25- 26 Lakhs. The implicit ambit of cyber security is actually fantastic. The emoluments are high and the demand for professionals is swelling every day. To get the perfect jobs in the field with the elegant companies, scholars or students must choose cyber security as a specialization in Computer Science engineering. The advanced the degree, the better it’s for professionals.

Career Options are Growing

The job market for cyber security professionals is rising at an expeditious rate. This rate is quicker than other strings of work. The job opportunities and openings in the field are broad and the education demanded to land these jobs is also distinct. Uttermost employers hiring for a cyber security professional prefer someone with sound knowledge of this arena. With the accurate education and expertise, professional opportunities are vast across both the public and private sectors. Some of the topmost job roles in the field of cybersecurity are Cybersecurity Analyst, Cybersecurity Architect, Security Auditor, Cybersecurity Adviser, Network Administrator, etc.

Mastering a Skill of the Future

Cybersecurity professionals are concentrated on using creative techniques for attacking the systems that are aimed to defend and discover challenges that can be exploited by hackers. There's an accelerating number of programs in which professed white hat hackers work to change the illegal efforts of black hat counterparts by chancing and answering to the problems in the defence systems. When we complete a Computer Science Engineering degree with a specialization in the field of cyber security, we will actually be learning a skill of the future. This skill will be necessitated extensively in the future.

Networking Opportunities

For people who are looking to maximize their education, networking is crucial. Interacting with like-minded people with analogous interests in some areas makes it simple to conjugate with scholars or students, educators, and alumni. The connections that we frame in graduate academy don't just aid in finishing the degree successfully but they also assist in extending farther wisdom, perceptivity, and diversity of notion. The networking opportunities can be facilitative during graduation while advancing the career.

Gender Gap in Technological Profession

The Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Gender Equality, does not only indicate only a fundamental right, rather it signifies towards building a strong and much required foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. The situation has become even bleaker by the fallout of the socio-economic strata from the COVID-19. Bold action and commitment for perfection are very much important to accelerate progress, including promotion of Quality Education. In our 21st century, while the world is forwarding towards a technological cosmos, the defence system has also become a mandate, especially for the women. Until women come out and take the opportunity to accelerate their techno-skill, as well as taking up a technical job, these problems are not going to be eradicated easily.

- **As of 2022, women hold around 26.7% jobs in the field of technology.**

- Tech firms with more than **10,000 employees report women's representation at 26.2%**.
- The percentage of women in all technology related careers has decreased over the last 2 years.
- Women in software engineering report a lack of equal pay, **making 0.93 cents for every dollar that men in the field make.**
- Despite equal access, the percentage of women pursuing STEM subjects in higher education is on the decline, and **women achieve just 18% of new computer sciences degrees.**
- In prior years, women have received as little as **2% of all investment funds** in a given year and receive far less global venture capital funding than male entrepreneurs.
- Companies who perform pay audits **hire women at 1.3 times** the rate of other companies.

Quality Education and Sustaining Cyberspace

Ensuring inclusive and equitable Quality Education and promoting lifelong learning for all has become imperative to making the world more sustainable. Education for Sustainable Development is closely tied into the international discussion, which have grown in importance, significance and scale since, “Our Common Future” appeared in 1987, providing the first widely famous definition of sustainable development as the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Keeping this in mind, Cyber Security Education for Women has got a lot of spur by different organizations, who are offering women with relevant knowledge on Cybercrime as well as Cyber Security. Some of them offer scholarship or fellowship, some of them free courses, some offer colloquium and some even provides updates about job opportunities in the field. They also offer proper guidelines on how to begin and succeed in the Cyber Security field.

Sr. No.	Organization	Website
1.	WiCyS	https://www.wicys.org/
2.	Women’s Society of Cyberjutsu (WSC)	https://womenscyberjutsu.org/
3.	Women Who Code	https://www.womenwhocode.com/
4.	Executive Women's Forum	https://www.ewf-usa.com/
5.	Women in Identity	https://www.womeninidentity.org/cpages/home
6.	The Diana Initiative	https://www.dianainitiative.org/
7.	SANS Women's Immersion Academy	https://www.sans.org/scholarship-academics/womens-academy/

Conclusion

The increasing representation of women in our society is a positive development for the professionals themselves and for the profession as a whole. When women will succeed in the profession, they will serve as role models for other women wanting to join the cybersecurity workforce. This will make the workforce more diverse, and as a result it will help take more innovative measures and be able to solve problems far better than now, besides helping address the cybersecurity skills gap. In order to build strong, adequately staffed cybersecurity teams, employers – and the cybersecurity profession as a whole – must make cybersecurity a rewarding and welcoming career for women. Understanding the challenges the profession faces is a critical first step to accomplishing that goal and ultimately addressing the widening cyber security workforce gap.

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Women Empowerment through Education as Visioned by Raja Rammohan Roy

Sanghamitra Basu Roy & Prof. (Dr.) Mita Banerjee

Abstract

The eighteenth century, the people of the Bengal in particular were engaged in various worthless rituals, superstitions and prejudices in this time. Malpractices, conspiracies and barbarism were rampant in all segments of their social lives. Social evils like sati, infant marriage, kulinism, caste system were common phenomenon of the Hindu society at that period. Raja Rammohan Roy came forward as a saviour to rescue the society from all forms of degradations and aberrations. Rammohan visualized the stymied position of the women section in the Hindu society and felt the necessities of socio-religious reforms in favour of uplifting women's status in all spheres of social lives. Rammohan emphasized more on women's education and worked for their progress. Education is one of the milestones for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life-style. Rammohan declared that the education of women was equally necessary as for men. So, a true reformer like him felt that promotion of the education of boys would do no good alone. He believed in the education for all. Progressive education for both boys and girls was necessary for a progressive society. He believed the notion that with the education of boys, actually a single individual is educated, but with the education of girls, a family is educated. Rammohan advocated the liberty of women. He was determined to give women her proper place in the society. Besides abolishing Sati, he advocated in favour of widow remarriage. Thus, he advocated women's liberty out and out and awakened them.

Keywords : Raja Rammohan Roy, Women's education, Women empowerment, Progressive education, Liberty of Women.

1. Introduction

Raja Rammohan Roy believed in an ideal society, free from social inequality and oppression. He was opposed to all sorts of social malpractices and useless customs. He also believed in a society based on fraternity of interdependent individuals. Rammohan Roy first made an organized movement against one of the malignant disorders of popular Hinduism, sati. He was conscious about the property rights of women, which was reflected through his tracts 'Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females according to the Hindu Law of Inheritance.' He was well aware of the evil effects of polygamy, kulinism and practice of selling girls in marriage.

Raja Rammohan Roy expressed that the mode by which Sati ceremony was performed in the country was nothing but a wilful deliberate murder. He expressed his confidence that any person having common sense and common intelligence could easily understand the such a practice in the name of religion was prevalent to destroy the lives of the women. He further advocated that such a horrible and cruel rite could not be sanctioned by the Hindu Shastra, rather it would be considered by every Shastra as a ritual suicide of the women in the name of religion. Rammohan did not accept the dogma of supernatural power, or miracles. He thought that in this world things were mutually related to one another by a sequent relation of cause and effect. Rammohan also distinguish between a tradition which produced positive belief, and a tradition believed blindly by the followers of a religion.

Raja Rammohan Roy was a great scholar & independent thinker and a multilingual person. He also believed that education was prime necessity for up-liftmen of Indian society. Raja Rammohan Roy has played a crucial role in the abolition of social evils like the sati system. In 1829 Raja Rammohan Roy founded Brahma Sabha to purify Hinduism from the evils of orthodoxy, superstition and ritualism, later it called Brahma Samaj. Brahma Samaj opposed many evils, which were prevalent in the Indian Society such as castism, polygamy, child marriage and sati system & untouchability. Rammohan Roy was famous for his long & successful campaign for the abolition of 'Sati', self immolation of widows on the funeral pyre of their husband. Raja Rammohan Roy

submitted a petition to the Governor general in 1818 to stop this in human practice. And he appealed to the British Government to treat sati as murders & urged the punishment for compelling widows to burn themselves. He requested to the government to stop it, He argued, 'Those who have no reliance on the shastras & those who take delight in the self destruction of women may well wonder that we should oppose that suicide which forbidden by all shastras and by every race of man.'

Rammohan's reforming activity was also directed against the social abuses of Hindu society ,notably the regours of caste and the degrading positions of women. The part he played in abolishing the self -immolation of widows will be described later on. He also endeavoured to ameliorate the condition of helpless widows in various ways,notably by changing the Hindu laws of inheritance about women and giving them proper education.He was opposed to polygamy and various other abuses in the social system of Bengal. He also advocated re-marriage of widows undu specified circumstances.His ideals of women hood and of man's duty towards them,preached in forceful language in various tracts, were far ahead of his age and were inspired by the memories of the golden age of India. On the whole the struck the true keynote of social reform in India by upholding the cause of women and denouncing the rigours of caste and rules, the two main lines on which all social reforms have proceeded since.

Significance Of The Study:

Women education is a big opportunity for India to be developed socially and economically. Educated women are the weapon who yield positive impact on the Indian society through their contribution of home and professional fields. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges to confront their traditional role and change their life. Rammohan who understood the importance of women's participation that are status of Indian women started changing for the better. Rammohan declared that the education of women was equally necessary as for men. So, a true reformer like him felt that promotion of the education of boys would do no good alone. He believed in the education for all. Progressive education for both boys and girls was necessary for a progressive society.

So, in the present day context ,women empowerment and women education go hand in hand hence as subject of this paper ,the presenter has selected Women empowerment through education as visioned by Raja Rammohan Roy

Objectives Of The Study :

1. To know the philosophical approach of Raja Rammohan Roy .
2. To determine the role of Raja Rammohan Roy as a social reformer.
3. To know the educational contribution of Raja Rammohan Roy
4. To analyse the contribution of Raja Rammohan Roy towards women education.
5. To critically analyse the present day relevance of the social and educational contribution of Raja Rammohan Roy towards women and women education.

Research Question :

1. How much women education was influenced through the philosophical thoughts of Raja Rammohan Roy ?
2. How much significant is the educational and sociological thoughts of Raja Rammohan Roy in the present day?

Methodology :

The study is Historical and analytical in nature. Primary and secondary sources are used as sources of collecting data in this historical study. Secondary sources are more used in this study. The information for this study has been collecting from various books, articles, research journal and websites and Research thesis. Mainly qualitative information has been used in this study. So, the study is also qualitative.

Analysis The Contribution Of Raja Rammohan Roy Towards Women Education

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great scholar and independent thinker and a multilingual person. He believed that education was prime necessity for up-liftmen of Indian society. He advocated the induction of Western learning into Indian education system. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born

on **22 May 1772** in an orthodox Brahman family at **Radhanagar in Bengal**. He came from a respectable Brahmin family whose original seat was in an obscure village in the Murshidabad district. His great grandfather, Krishna Chandra Banerjee, was a man of note. He, having done some good services to the local Government, was honoured with the title of “Roy,” and as this title was afterwards made hereditary, the family has since come to be known as the “Roys,” the humbler designation of ‘Banerjee’ being merged, as it were, in the prouder one of ‘Roy.’ Shortly after the receipt of this titular distinction, Krishna Chandra was invested with the powers of collecting the revenues of the districts of Hooghly and Burdwan, and as this important office necessitated the making of Khanacool Krishnagar, in the former district, his headquarters, he built a house at Radhanagar on the banks of the Kana Darkeswar, and removed there with his family. Like Krishna Chandra, his son, was also a man of mark, he served under Sjraj-ud-dowla, and his official career was synchronous with that stirring “fateful” epoch, which witnessed the struggles of “a handful of merchants” with the Nawab— struggles which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the British Empire. The subject of this memoir was the son of this man Ramkanta and his wife, Tarini Devi, better known as “Phool Thakurani.” His family background displayed religious diversity; his father Ramkanto Roy was a Vaishnavite, while his mother Tarinidevi was from a Shivaite family.

Rammohan stayed at Banaras till his sixteenth year; and it was here that he imbibed the monotheistic tenets of the Vedanta and the Upanishads, which made him a determined enemy of idolatry. Thus, he returned home quite an altered man— one who was destined to upset the traditions of his family.

Ram Mohan Roy was given the title of ‘**Raja**’ by the titular Mughal Emperor of Delhi, **Akbar II** whose grievances the former was to present before the British king. In his address, entitled ‘**Inaugurator of the Modern Age in India,**’ Tagore referred to Ram Mohan as ‘**a luminous star in the firmament of Indian history**’.

Rammohan Roy who understood the importance of women’s participation that are status of Indian women started changing for the

better Rammohan declared that the education of women was equally necessary as for men. So, a true reformer like him felt that promotion of the education of boys would do no good alone. He believed in the education for all. Progressive education for both boys and girls was necessary for a progressive society. He believed the notion that with the education of boys ,actually a single individual is educated ,but with the education of girls ,a family is educated.

Raja Rammohan Roy equally fought against polygamy .He was very much conscious about the property rights of the women because he knew that without his right, the women could never be made independent. The status of women in Bengal in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was rather low, Almost all women above the age of ten were either married or widowed and the majority of the women were illiterate and worked in the fields. Women from the upper classes and high castes lined most of their lives in segregated antapurs. (inner houses).They received no formal education.

Raja Rammohan Roy was serious concern about the plight of women in his contemporary society and led a vigorous campaign for their emancipation. He also refuted the notion that women were intellectually and morally inferior to men. He insisted on modern education for women and their role in social reconstruction. Roy advocated women's right in family property.He always condemned those evil practices which were responsible for the plight of women. He opposed infanticide and he also tried convince the people that Hinduism does not allow a women to be burnt alive as a proof of her chastity, human reason, too, does not approve this practice. Rammohan realized that,' women constituted a substantial part of the society both numerically and qualitatively and any discrimination against them would be harmful to the social interest'. Rammohan advocated the liberty of women .He was determined to give women her proper place in the society. Besides abolishing Sati ,he advocated in favour of widow remarriage. He also told that like the sons, daughter have also their right over parental property. He also influenced the British Government to bring necessary modification in the existing law. He raised voice against child marriage and polygamy. He was the advocate of women education. Thus, he advocated women's liberty out and out to awakened them.To attain his higher

goal of women's liberation from all kinds of socio-religious-cultural barriers. Rammohan have used different platforms. In this context he formed the social organizations like Atmiya Sabha and Brahma Sabha to propagate his views among the countryman as well as the colonial rulers. Brahma Sabha in his guidance and direction played a significant role in campaigning women rights and liberties.

Rammohan had great reverence towards the women. He maintained a dignified relationship with them in his personal life. His struggle against all kind social evils, injustices and distortions particularly in women liberation context will not be forgettable.

Present Relevance

In this context of moral degradation and social appression ,there has again arisen the need of propagating Raja Rammohan Roy's ideas for reconstructing the Indian society. So it is very significant to find out the relevance of his ideologies in the context of the present day. Raj Rammohan Roy was determined to give women her proper place in the society. Apart from abolishing sati, he advocated in favour of widow remarriage. Rammohan was the pioneer of women education, also women liberty out and out to awakened them. He raised voice against child marriage and polygamy.

Findings:

Among the Indian educators ,Rammohan Roy has acquired an important place in the History of Education in India for his contribution in the development of the women education of India specifically of Bengal. He wanted to change the Indian society with the idea of modernism and scientific rationalism of the western world. He devoted his whole life for reformation of the society as well as women emancipation in Bengal. He truly realised that unless the women of the land could be educated it was impossible to emancipate and liberate them from the terrible burden of inequalities and injustice imposed on them by the cruel society of those days. So he took the proper initiative for empowerment and emancipation of women through education.

Conclusion :

Raja Rammohan Roy was not only a social reformer but also a woman awakener who paved the way for the empowerment of women. He was a man of multidimensional personality. He also believed that pure religious beliefs could eradicate many social ills and free people's minds from superstitious rituals .

In the context of moral degradation and social oppressions ,these has again arisen the need of propagating Raja Rammohan Roy 's ideas for reconstructing the Indian society. So ,it is very significant to find out the relevance of Rammohan's ideologies in the context of the present day. He tried to change conservative social system of India. He lighted a lamp of knowledge and progress to remove darkness of our society.

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Aspect Analysis of Knowledge from the Vedantic Philosophy of Swamiji on Women Education

Partha Sarathi Sarkar

Abstract

According to the Vedantic understanding all the humans are the forms of the divinity who have specific roles to play in this universe. Hence every human being is pious and divine enough to realize the ultimate potentiality which is in the sleeping and when the realization is happening then the soul can arise. In this way, the version of Swamiji who is famously known as Swami Vivekananda has told that education is the manifestation of the divinity which is already present in humans. Hence in this direction it can be said that no division has to be made in connection with the gender specification when the education is being explained. The women have many needs to be educated because they are the mothers of the future so if they are not educated then a society can be presented to the mentioned which is weak in the core. The renaissance of Bengal which was further helping the nation to understand the need of the women education has helped the nation to make some safeguards for the women after getting independence. This study is trying to see what much help can come the great philosopher and philanthropist to make some educational changes for the sake of the women.

Keywords : Vedantic understanding, Divinity, Swami Vivekananda, Education.

Introduction :

Education is a helpful social component to assure progress in human living. Indeed it is much proved that without education no society can go further to promote and develop a sense of self realization until that is learned. In this connection it can be said that education acts like a weapon in the society to end the dark of ill managed civilization. A society which has a definite future must promote upon the education. Simply having some degrees is not enough to call oneself as an educated

human until he has not altered himself with proper behavior so it can be said here in a true sense that one must help to make himself in the forefront of the society to assure a mature living then no education is possible. A good education not a collection of skills but it will also always helpful for a sincere consideration in the society for assuring a good build up of human understanding. It should broaden living horizons, gain better perspective, and teaches to think for the benefits of all. People today are quite aware and comfortable in speaking about social injustices and other pressing issues because of the education. This can really be attributed to the universal right of education around the world, which in turn has made society more accepting and open-minded. Therefore, education is an element of human evolution which is really needed in the society. The importance of education is also pronounced in areas of creativity and innovation because only learned minds can make some proper forms of abstract thinking. Education encourages thinking outside the box and experimenting with new ideas.

In the days of this twenty first century when all are much hopeful for some positive changes then also there are a lot of difference by based on the gender identity. In a nation like India in which all are much religious - centric, here religion can be helpful to work for reducing the gender based attitudes. Now a personification is required to tell what the religion of belief has already declared. In this connection, Swami Vivekananda is a most enlightened name who is accepted beyond boundaries. He himself has argued for equality of men and women by saying them as the wings of a bird. Swami Vivekananda is a name from the Hindus but he is never attached with anything except the religion of humanity, freedom and equality. Therefore his point of view in relation to the women is much beneficial for the society as well as the nation. He informed that the ignorance of the value of women in a society is a profound hindrance for the progress of India. He and his disciple sister Nivedita did gigantic help for the education of women in a captured nation. According to him education is for the man making and character building. Women education was his basic motto for delivering a championship for the social progress. He was a Vedantist so his educational perspective is still based on the applied Vedanta. He also said mother tongue is the best medium for the social and mass

education. His belief upon the humans as the divinely potential is very impressive towards women education. He made women education as a logical goal where no differentiation is possible.

After seventy six years of Indian independence, the literacy rate is not equal for both of the genders. Women education is still bound to follow various social norms which is not the case for their counterpart. In the post independent India, still women are still suffering from many chronic social problems such as physical, social, political, cultural, economical etc. This situation requires some channelized energy to be much motivated and active towards giving the best possible push to the proper education of women. Various women universities and colleges are opening today in almost all the corners of India but the question is what much help is guaranteed? Here a study is placed to understand the best possible relation of the vision of Swami Vivekananda and the present day's modern education pattern. This will surely be helpful for the complete independence in the country. We can be much positive about the inter – relation between women education and healthy society formation.

Objective

- Understanding philosophical base of education
- Discussing problems of women
- Knowing the view of Swami Vivekananda

Methodology

A simple review on the previously availed discussions will be placed here. There will be some knowledge analysis. It will be a study in the multi linear aspect and various points will be considered.

Discussion

- ❖ Problems of women education

In a patriarchal society the gender differentiation is a regular reality and in various cases the same is happening for a long period of time. It is indeed a problematic condition with which various aspects of human living is related and considered. Here the educational aspect is massive

and properly damaging the progress possibility. The problem of women's education in India is one which attracts our attention immediately. In our country, due to conservative traditionalism, women's status has, through ages, been considered to be lower than that of men. During the later part of the Vedic period the Aryans had sealed the fate of women culturally and socially by denying them the right to study Vedas and thus half of the population was deprived of one of the most fundamental human rights.

In further it can be said that the patriarchy is playing like a diasporas of power. The economic connection in the gender line is creating problem in the further condition. Even in the Manu Smriti women are portrayed and regarded as the bond slave to men for their economic dependence on them. Even today, in spite of the recognition of women's status equal to that of men, the majority of them suffer in primitive ignorance as ever before. Illiteracy and ignorance is prevalent more in women folk than in men-folk and this evil is rampant especially in rural areas and backward communities.

- **Gap in upper primary and secondary schooling:** While female enrolment has increased rapidly since the 1990s, there is still a substantial gap in upper primary and secondary schooling.
- **High drop-out rates:** Increased female enrolment is, compromised by persistently high rates of drop-out and poor attendance of girls relative to boys. Girls also constitute a large proportion of out-of-school children.
- **Inter-state variations:** There are also considerable inter-state variations in gender parity. While the greatest surges in female enrolment have been achieved in the most educationally disadvantaged states such as Bihar and Rajasthan, these states still have a long way to go to catch up with the better performing states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh.
- **Quality of education and infrastructure:** Within government schools- overcrowded classrooms, absent teacher, unsanitary conditions, absence of girl's toilet are common complaints and can cause parents to decide that it is not worth their girl child going to school.

- Social factors: Early marriages as per their social custom, girl children are not allowed to go outside the house and village because it is a social taboo, parents go to their workplaces and household activities are undertaken by the young female children, caring of younger ones at home, gender disparity at home, in society and earlier marriages in this region.

❖ Indian philosophy and women education

Women in ancient India had free access to education. They were expected to participate in Vedic sacrifices and utter mantras. Even some of the hymns of the Rigveda were composed by poetesses. We get references of such learned ladies as Visvavara, Lopamudra, Apala, Urvashi, Ghosa, Sulabha, Lilabati, Maitreyi, Saswati, Kshana, Gargi and others. Maitreyi, the celebrated wife of the most learned philosopher of ancient India, Yajnavalka, used to hold discussion on abstruse philosophical questions with her husband.

Since the earliest texts were not concerned with *sanskāras*, we can only infer whether education during this (*Samhitā-Upanishad*) period was universal. In all honesty, we can neither confirm nor deny whether girls were universally encouraged or discouraged from studying. We can say with certainty they were not prohibited.

The next juncture is the *sūtras* period circa 2,600 years ago. These (*dharma, grhya*) being normative by nature, there is plenty of evidence to examine. The ceremonies (relating to education) were described in minute detail with reference to *dvija* (twice-born) males only.

The *Therigatha*, written in 600 BC, is the earliest known collection composed solely of women's writing. These verses, written by early practitioners of Buddhism, were penned by women from a wide array of backgrounds. The contributors included a mother whose child had died, a former prostitute, a wealthy heiress who had renounced her life of pleasure, and the Buddha's own stepmother. Women from royal families had access to informal education in most countries, the *Therigatha* shows that many ordinary women were also well educated in ancient Indian society.

❖ Sayings of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda was a man of morals and he was a preacher of human rights in the modern age. Universality was his motto of knowledge. His kind presence in the history has shaped the national history at a deeper level.

Swami Vivekananda as a great patriot saint upholds and do work for the freedom and equality of women for the functioning of home and society. Vivekananda presented a philosophy of education for man making. Swamiji had a great respect for women. He stressed of his eyes for women.

Women in India during the time of Vivekananda were deprived of their educational rights. At that time women always got a secondary position. If we say about the masses we can not avoid women. Yet Vivekananda gave special importance on educating Indian women. It is because he knew that in the poor families the condition of women was worse in comparison to the male members. This made him think specially about them. He has been very vocal about the uplift of women all through his life. He held Indian women in high esteem and has appreciated their typical Indian features like spirit of service, compassion, affection, contentment and reverence. Vivekananda travelled most part of Europe, where he witnessed women driving cars, going to schools, and involved in professional commitments. But according to him, the chastity and feminine modesty of Indian women soothes the eye. He felt that modernization of women society is possible only by following the footprints of Sita.

Conclusion

Education in the nation has always been observed as the condition of literacy which is highly dependent upon the percentage of growth. But it is not always right to measure education in this way. Women are not getting equal position like the men so the society is not developing all well. In this connection it is highly accepted that the learning from Swami Vivekananda can work in this case.

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Psycho-Social Problems of Women's Education

Ujjwal Mahato, Suchismita Sau, Milan Mandal
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Abstract

The problem of women's education in India is one which attracts our attention immediately. In our country, due to conservative traditionalism, women's status has, through ages, been considered to be lower than that of men. During the later part of the Vedic period the Aryans had sealed the fate of women culturally and socially by denying them the right to study Vedas and thus half of the population was deprived of one of the most fundamental human rights. Looking at the picture of Indian women's education, it can be seen that mainly psycho-social reasons are the main obstacles in the way of women's education progress. Some of the prime problems are poverty, women violation, gender discrimination, parental attitude, unemployment etc. For this theoretical research, the researchers collected the necessary data from various secondary sources. And the researchers tried to find out the very malignant problems of women's education.

Keywords : Women Education, Malignant Problems, Obstacles, Psycho-social, Human Rights.

Introduction :

Psychological point of view, a person or a society overall development largely depends on his psycho-social sphere. According to Oxford English Dictionary (2012), "Pertaining to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behavior, and to the interrelation of behavioral and social factors". Psychosocial factors affect both psychological as well as physical functioning over time which can lead to either adaptive or maladaptive illness behaviors. Classes of adaptive illness behaviors include: active coping (in contrast to passivity, avoidance, or prolonged emotions) social support.

The social perspective includes the general aspects of human society that relate to social structures and social processes that have partial and holistic effects on individuals. The psychological perspective includes the individual-level processes and meanings that influence emotional states. Sometimes, these terms are combined as “psychosocial”. It combines the terms psychological and social, but also implies that the influence of social processes is sometimes mediated through psychological understanding.

This phenomenon is deeply present in every aspect of this larger society. Women’s education has a psycho-social dimension as well. But, it is from this aspect that women’s education is the most affected.

“All the great creations of the world are eternally good
Half of it is female, half of it is male.”

--Rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam has portrayed this extreme reality in his ‘Nari’ (Womens) Bengali poetry. In the past, while women’s education was respected, it was largely confined to the upper classes. Much good has been swept away by the currents of societal change. It is in that current that some good attitudes have been washed away. Again, much has remained stagnant. One of them is the progress of women’s education. It is true that India has turned from a poor country into a developing country, but even today women have not progressed as expected. The biggest reason behind this is the lack of educational opportunities. Women in this country have not yet entered the field of education at a hundred percent rate. It would be wrong to say that they could not; this patriarchal society did not allow them to come. There are various psycho-social reasons behind this. Through this research, researchers have tried to find those aspects.

Objectives Of The Study

The objectives of this paper are as follows -

- i. Try to discuss about the psycho-social problems of women’s education in Indian scenario.
- ii. To find out the probable solutions to overcome from the problems.

Significance Of The Study

This study highlights the fact that the society is still not aware enough about the education of women. Although there are various reasons for the problems of women education, the most important is its psycho-social aspect. And in this respect women's education has been, and still is, seriously wounded. The researchers have tried to highlight the psycho-social aspects of the problem of women education in Indian perspective in their study.

Methodology

In this study the researchers used a theoretical analysis and the data were collected from various secondary sources such as books, journals, magazines, web forums, etc.

Discussion:

Problems of Women's Education

Women's education has been suffering from various problems for ages and ages. And those problems are multifaceted. One of them is the psycho-social aspect. Women's education is most affected by this psycho-social reason. These aspects are highlighted in this discussion.

• Poverty:

Food comes first among basic human needs, education comes much later. Therefore, people should first focus on the needs of their stomach. Even though India has crossed 75 years of its independence, it is still not able to ensure food supply to all its citizens. Therefore, many, both male and female are unable to reach the arena of education. This is a significant obstacle to the progress of women's education.

• Unemployment:

Employment is inextricably linked with education. After education every person wants to join suitable work. But, there is also a lot of ignorance in the public mind about employment in India, along with a considerable lack of opportunities. As a result, the new or next generation often loses interest. And, even though there is little or no awareness about girls' education, there is a big objection in the society

about girls working in any outside organization. As a result, most girls are unwilling or unable to complete their education even if they want to.

• **Gender Discrimination:**

In Indian social system there is a sharp divide between men and women in most cases. This distinction is observed from birth to death. Society has not yet accepted the equal participation of men and women in its formation process. As a result, there are many obstacles in every aspect of their life journey. This is a barrier to women's education.

• **Child Marriage:**

Child marriage is the main problem of women education. At its core, women are still considered a burden by their parents. So, try to find peace by quickly lowering the burden of the neck.

• **Dowry System:**

Dowry system is one of the various social problems in India. These dowry systems become a barrier to women's education. Because of its prevalence, the girl's father pays more attention to her marriage and expenses than to her daughter's education.

• **Women Harassment:**

Even after 75 years of independence, women have to overcome many hurdles to lead a spontaneous life. If he goes beyond the traditional control of men, he has to be subjected to extreme sarcasm and eye-rolling. Climbing this mountain is not possible for all girls. As a result, women's education also faces problems

• **Sexual Harassment:**

Manifestations of men's intense desire for women are still often seen in newspapers, on TV, and on social media. This greedy gaze of men is observed in every sector of society. From family, educational institution to workplace or wider social environment, nothing is left out. How many women prematurely choose to commit suicide to get rid of this greedy gaze of men, how many women run away from education prematurely, how many women are forced to abandon work. This indicates the barrier to women's education.

• **Traditional Mindset:**

The younger ones are usually controlled by the elders of the society or family. Traditional attitudes of parents cannot easily accept any change. As a result, they often take harmful decisions against the younger generations. As a result, women's education is also hindered along with other harms.

• **Superstition:**

A darkness called superstition still covers a large section of society. Because of this, there are still many communities in India that are not in favor of women's education. They consider women's education as a sin.

• **Lack of Sufficient Institutions:**

Even after 75 years of India's independence, it has not been possible to build enough educational institutions. There are marginal areas in India, where the light of education has not yet reached. After independence, many educational committees or commissions were formed, but adequate educational institutions could not be built. As a result, a large section of women remain deprived of education.

• **Lack of Freedom:**

A society's discriminatory treatment of women dates back to the distant past and has not changed much. In almost every family, the freedom of women is still perceived as wearing down male authority. Whether women are mothers or daughters, students or workers, their freedom is shackled in every case.

• **Parental Attitude:**

The roots of society's discrimination against women lie in the behavior of every parent. How many worship, how many vows, thousands of attempts to have a son. How many fetuses still have to be aborted in the womb for the crime of being a woman. Again, the crime of being a woman even if conceived is that there is never an opportunity for education, sometimes there is no opportunity to express one's desire, sometimes there is discrimination in obtaining all the opportunities.

• **Lack of System Acceptance:**

The acceptance of women in many aspects of this society is still questionable. For example, some communal orthodoxy, some religious orthodoxy, and some mental orthodoxy have not accepted women in some cases. For example, women are still not thought of as skilled workers, they cannot be thought of as drivers, the same is true in the field of education. Men find it very difficult to accept women's participation in activities other than their lustful bed fellowship and household chores.

• **Social Unconsciousness among Women:**

The mentioned part of rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's 'Nari' (womens) poetry is still affecting the society. A large section of society does not think that women have as much to do in shaping society as men do. And most people do not think that to build a proper, orderly and well-structured society, all men and women should be educated in proper education.

• **Lack of Social Security:**

We have come a long way in science and technology, bringing almost everyone under Digital India, sending multiple satellites into space, many more. But, we have not yet ensured social security for women, have not been able to bring them to the light of education, have not been able to let them fly with their wings, have not been able to. Even now, women's harassment, rape, murder, rahazani, issuing of fatwas are often seen.

• **Women Trafficking**

Since ancient times, there has been an entrenched idea, where women are seen as a product instead of a human being, a tool for men's enjoyment. Sometimes an evil father or a trafficker is very active in this vicious cycle. To supply this demand, a large proportion of girl children or adolescents or young women are being trafficked into vicious circles. As a result, it is not possible for all those girls to come to the field of education, or they are getting stuck in the middle.

Probable Ways to Overcome from these Problems

If we can get out of this mentioned problem, the following steps can be followed,

- In eliminating or reducing poverty, unemployment, gender inequality, child marriage, polygamy, women harassment, sexual harassment, superstition, neglect of women, trafficking in women, lack of security of women, etc., from the local administration to the national and international levels, all take goodwill and appropriate policies should be formulated and implemented.
- In order to bring about a revolutionary change in the attitude of the guardians, to increase the social acceptance, to ensure the social security of the women, the infrastructural correction of the society should be done, formulation of various policies and laws and its strict implementation. Public education should be promoted and expanded to increase public awareness.
- Setting up adequate educational institutions, creating appropriate curriculum and social equality in education should be given importance.

Conclusion

In view of the above discussion, it is needless to say that the psycho-social aspect of the backwardness of women's education has had a profound influence. This expansion has spread from era to era. Nevertheless, it can be said that we have to come out of these problems by adopting various ways. This is why we have to come out of the problems, for the overall progress of the society, to move the society forward with the flow of time. But, day by day the change in these situation is noticed, hope is rising in the mind.

In this context, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru said, "Educating a man is educating an individual, while educating a woman is educating a family".

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A Study on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment : A New Insight into Sustainable Development Goals

Sania Sami & Prof. (Dr.) Soma Roychowdhury

Abstract

Women empowerment was first coined in 1985 at the UN's third world conference on women and over the last few decades, it has gained momentum. Gender Equality has occupied fifth place in the list of achievable sustainable development goals. Though India has prioritized gender equality and women empowerment however the current economic, social, and political domains evince the secondary status of women in Indian patriarchal society. Thus this research paper critically explored India's overall ranking across the world and cognize the vigilance to achieve SDG-5. This research is based on secondary data viz., authentic government reports, websites, books, and journals. The study revealed that India's ranking is comparatively lower than many other developing countries and there is an exigency of evaluating and redressing the plan and policies to achieve SDG-5. The study further suggests a few measures to ensure holistic women empowerment including both the economical and societal development of women.

Keywords : Women Empowerment; Gender Equality; Global Gender Gap; Education; Sustainable Development Goal.

Introduction :

Gender equality has been no longer limited to a fundamental right, but it has been configured into a prime foundation for peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable growth across the world and India is no exception. Gender equality is the most desired state of form that each country across the world is craving for decades. Today there is a multitude study about gender equality (Belingheri et al., 2021), women empowerment (Dufflo, 2012, Huis et al., 2017), glass ceiling (Williamson et al., 2019, Abendroth

et al., 2011) women entrepreneurship (Sami & Roychowdhury, 2022), but unfortunately, the current statistics revealed that approximately 56% of women have reported being a victim of physical or sexual abuse in the hands of their intimate partner (Abrahams et al., 2022). It was further found from the UN report that victim women are more vulnerable to depression, post-traumatic stress, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 Goals was adopted in September at UN Sustainable Development Summit. Sustainable Development Goals have been built on gender equality and women empowerment. The profound importance of women's empowerment in sustainable development can be cognizant from the fact that out of all 17 SDGs, the UN has placed "Gender Equality" in the 5th position of achievable SDGs. Today Women's empowerment has also been recognized as a precondition to achieving the other 16 SDGs. The fifth goal of SDGs is in congruence with the Global Gender Gap which quantifies the disparity across men and women over primary pillars of development viz., health, education, economy, and politics.

India is a diverse country with more than 100 languages and over 700 tribes and constitutes the essence of almost every minor and major religion across the world, notwithstanding it still crawling to achieve the state of gender equality. Indian society has been a thriving hub of gender discrimination and Indians have witnessed patriarchal society and their discriminatory perspectives across males and females for a prolonged period. Pertaining to this background, this paper assessed India's overall performance with regard to SDG 5, and further study also highlights the major areas that India needs to deal with to achieve SDG 5 by 2030.

The study has been organized in the following way- Section 2 includes an extensive literature review on sustainable development goals and the global gender index. Section 3 provides the research objectives along with the methodology of the study. Section 4 analyzes various international and national reports regarding gender equality and women's empowerment followed by Section 5 which furnishes generous suggestions to overcome the hurdles in gender equality.

Literature Review

Gender Equality is a substantial and critical issue for Indian society with 48% of India's population being women. In one of the UN reports it was stated that Gendered inequalities are the most pervasive of all the inequalities prevailing across the world and notwithstanding there exist substantial interlinkages between goal 5 and the other 16 SDGs (Peake & Nyasimi, 2015). The term women empowerment refers to women's access to power and control over their own lives and career choices (Huis et al., 2020). Gender equality has been included in SDG owing to the fact that one-third of the world's women population has been the victim of physical, domestic, or sexual violence in their lives, and the UN in pursuit of uprooting all orders of violence and discrimination at odds with women empowerment and gender equality (BriantCarant, 2016). Mintrom & True (2022) in their research have emphasized that during the quarantine period in face of Covid 19 pandemic, the violence against women have been increased in multiple folds and India stands no aloof. Though the Indian constitution endowed women with equal rights similar to men, ensuring women's empowerment. Notwithstanding discrimination against women in India remain unshakeable and has been lingering hopes for gender equality. Past studies reflected that low female participation in the labor force (25.51%) is one of the primary reasons for India to rank lower in the Global Gender Gap (Government of India, 2022). Global Gender Gap is used to serve as an orbit to route progress on corresponding gaps between women and men in various aspects viz., health, education, economy, and politics. These yardstick assists the different stakeholders of each country to set their priorities straight in the context of gender. In the research from World Economic Forum (2022), it was found that India rank 135th out of 146 countries however India fared comparatively differently on all four dimensions. In the political dimension, India ranks 48th out of 146 which is the highest of all the dimensions whereas in the educational dimension India ranks 107th out of 146 countries. Considering the economic dimension India ranks 143 and in the health, dimension ranked last i.e. 146. This ranking reflects the greater disparity across gender in India.

Among all the 17 Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs) assigned by the UN, SDG 5, stands for gender equality, and establishing the

same in India has been found to be an onerous situation. In research from NITI Aayog (2021) it was found that except for four states viz., Chandigarh, Sikkim, Kerala, Andaman and Nicobar Islands all other states fall under the worst performing states in gender equality while these four were in the performing states category.

From the literature review, it was found that there are many reports viz., Global Gender Gap report and SDG report which reflect gender inequality but there is no such study in context to India that in-depth provides the insight to persuade the general comparison between Global Gender Gap and SDG report across the years to undermine the real progress of SDG 5. Thus, this study takes a generous initiative to compare the report and identify the major areas of disparity across gender that India as a country need to work on to overcome the gender inequality challenge.

Research Methodology

This study includes a quantitative approach and mainly graphical representation was used to analyze the data. The rationale behind including graphical representation is to provide enriching insight into the various reports included in this study and further to compare the results of the different reports. Secondary data was used in this study and data were collected from authentic national and international institutions such as NITI Aayog and United Nation. The study includes only SDG 5 out of all 17 SDGs and there are nine indicators of SDG 5 viz., (i) Sex Ratio at Birth; (ii) Wage Gap (Male/Female); (iii) Domestic Violence; (iv) Women in Leadership; (v) Ratio of Female Labour Force Participation Rate; and (vi) Family Planning (vii) Crime Against Women, (viii) Political Participation and (ix) Operational land Holding by Women. In Global Gender Gap there are four pillars i.e., health, education, economy, and politics. The results of the various reports have been analyzed through graphical representation in this study which has been discussed in the next section.

Results and Discussions

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) has been designed by the World Economic Forum to measure the gender gap across health, education,

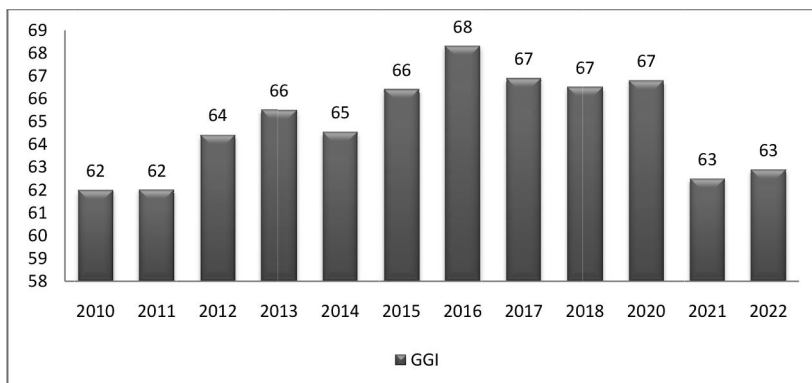
and economic and political empowerment. These four pillars are interrelated with each other to assess gender equality. Table 1 represents India's rank in Global Gender Gap Index across the years.

Table 1. *India's rank in Global Gender Gap*

Year	Rank	Countries
2010	112	134
2011	113	135
2012	105	135
2013	101	136
2015	108	146
2016	87	144
2017	108	145
2018	108	149
2020	112	153
2021	140	156
2022	135	146

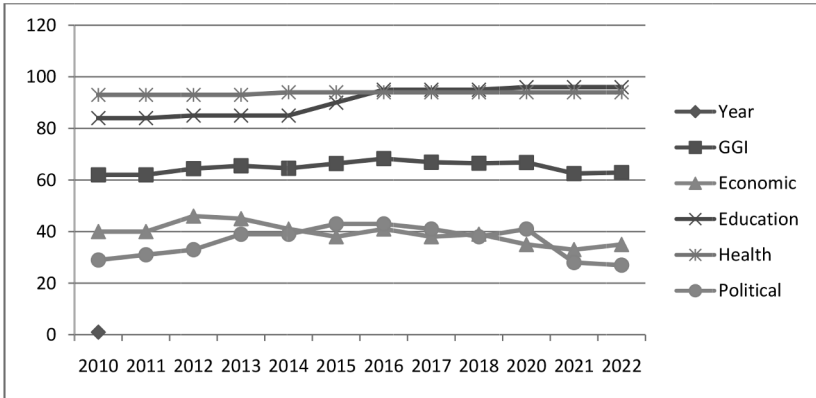
From the above table, it was found that India's ranking improved from 2010 (112) to 2016 (87). However, its ranking falls sharply from 87 in 2016 to 135 in 2022. Figure 1 represents a graphical representation of the GGGI scores of India across the years. The illustration exhibits that India scored highest on GGGI in 2016 but its ranking falls considerably from 68 in 2016 to 63 in 2022.

Figure 1. *India's Score on Global Gender Gap Index*



The reason behind this sharp fall in ranking can be explained in Figure 2. of GGGI's four pillars- economic, education, health, and political improvement.

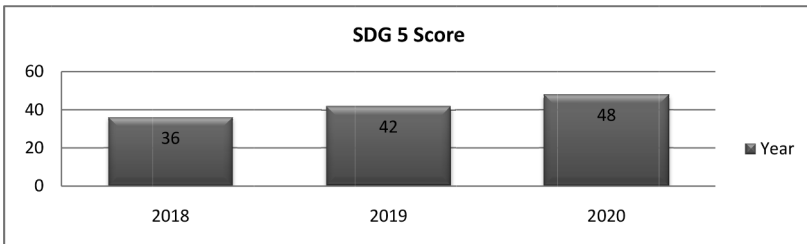
Figure 2. *India's Score on pillars of GGGI-economic, education, health and political*



Considering Figure 2, it can be ascertained that though India's performance on the economic pillar was not progressing however it has improved its performance in all the other pillars viz., political aspect, education, and also in the health aspect. If we see the line graph it can be ascertained that India's GGGI scored reduced after 2016 owing to a consistent fall in economic and political aspects irrespective of India's constantly improved performance in education and health aspects.

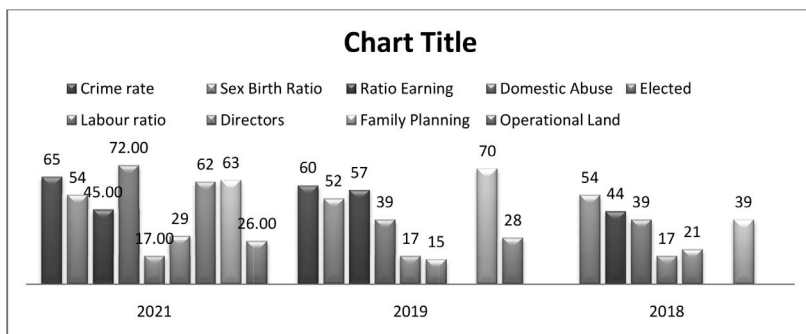
Now considering SDG 5 it was found that India has been amongst the worst performers countries in achieving the "Gender Equality" goal of sustainable development. The Figure 2. It was found that India's performance has increased from 36 in 2018 to 48 in 2020, this slow rate of increase will not facilitate India in achieving the desired SDG 5.

Figure 3. *India's Sustainable Development Goals 5*



Along the above Figure 3.cannot furnish an accurate picture of SDG 5. Thus a clear representation of different indicators of SDG 5 must also be included in the study to ensure a holistic approach to the same.

Figure 4. Bar Graph Representation of Indicators of SDG 5



In 2018 there were only six indicators to access SDG and additionally, two and three indicators were added in 2019 and 2021 respectively to access SDG 5. From the above figure, it was found that women’s participation in politics remained constant and the sex ratio at birth from 2018 to 2021. The ratio of female to male Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (15-59 years) first increased from 44 in 2018 to 57 in 2019, however it again fall to 45 in 2021. This may also be due to the pandemic covid 19 which adversely hit the world in 2019 and India was not excluded from its impact. From all the indicators it was only the domestic abuse indicator that India performed progressively in SDG 5. It scored a leap from 39 in 2018 to 72 in 2021. Further India is also well in other SDG 5 indicators family planning, crime rate, and women in managerial positions. However, these indicators’ performance was not satisfactory enough to meet the achievements of SDG 5.

Conclusions

The study evaluated two reports on gender inequalities viz., Global Gender Gap Index and Sustainable Development Goals. From the study, it was found that gender inequalities have arisen owing to gaps in economic participation and opportunities, educational attainment, health services, and political empowerment. Overall gender inequality has declined to some extent due to reduced gender gaps in political

empowerment and economic attainment. India needs to make progress in all nine indicators to achieve SDG. There is some limitation to the study firstly study does not study the relation between SDG and GGI. A future study must be undertaken to state if there exists any correlation between SDG and GGI.

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Quenching the Thirst for Education: A Study on Government Initiatives to Women Education

Saheli Chatterjee

Abstract

Acquisition of knowledge is one of the pre-requisites of the holistic development of a nation. Unveiling the burkas of illiteracy and patriarchal dominance, Apala Lopamudra have led forward Mrs. Sabitribai Phule, Maria Montessori, Anne Sullivan, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein, Roshni Mukherjee and many more. The government with its legislative measures, policy execution and judicial activism has also extended an aiding arm.

To propel the growth of the nation, Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (Article 10) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (Article 2, 13) have eradicated all the impediments to women education. UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination In Education, 1960 (Article 1, 3, 4) and ASEAN Human Rights Declaration 2011 (Article 31) have threw open the windows to welcome the brightness of knowledge.

Apart from this, to unleash the warrior within a woman, the Constitution of India has strengthened the educational framework through provisions like Article 28, 29, 30 and 45. Moreover, the 86th Constitutional Amendment stood like a lighthouse that guided the ships of legislations in various social cataclysm. Laws like Right of Children To Free And Compulsory Education Act 2009 have saved several girl child from being denied to education.

The socio-economic disadvantages had tied our wings for several years, but the internationally appreciated Kanyashree Prakalpa has ignited the suppressed desire to education and mandated, "Let sky be the limit". Miles of rustic trail is not a hurdle today. The wheels of Sabuj-Sathi diminished the distance as a boon for women education.

Sarva Siksha Aviyaan, Sikshasree, SVMCM scholarship, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna, Working Women Hostel, STEP scheme are few more notable policies which ensured that financial deprivation be no barrier in pursuing higher education.

Through all these mechanisms, today's India is witnessing a social revolution. Women are becoming the belonging of a vibrant humanity-soaking the sunshine of education, knowledge and wisdom.

Keywords : international initiatives, constitutional perspective, national policies, drawbacks

Introduction :

“No struggle can ever succeed without women participation side by side with men. There are two persons in the world. One is the sword, one is the pen. There is a third power, stronger than both – that of women.”

–Malala Yousafzai

Hence to strengthen the women the utmost requirement is knowledge. This acquisition of knowledge is the pre-requisites of the holistic development of the nation. Unveiling the burkas of illiteracy and patriarchal dominance, Apala Lopamudra have led forward Mrs. Sabitribai Phule, Maria Montessori, Anne Sullivan, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossein, Roshni Mukherjee and many more. This article throws some light on the various governmental initiatives stepping on which today's women are overcoming all the odds and emerging supreme.

Women Education : A glance from the vedic to modern era reveals that the women have played a vital role in the reconstruction of the country. Today's women are taking leading part in politics. They are not only flying jets but also playing a significant role in the democratic set up of our nation. To influence this progress it is truly essential to make sure that every girl of school going age may access the educational facilities. Hence to develop the educational framework, providing school facilities, opening new schools, condensed course for adult women, providing learning materials etc are the holy initiatives of the present time.

In spite of certain outstanding examples of individual achievement of Indian women it can never be denied that a definite community of women still constitute a large body of under-privileged citizens. The hidden reasons for such a scenario are as follows:-

1. Lack of social consciousness
2. Scarcity of lady teachers
3. Problem of transport
4. Financial difficulties
5. Problem of co-education
6. Lack of proper physical facilities
7. Lack of enthusiasm.

Various World Policies: To propel the growth of the nation, not only certain national policies but various international conventions have played a proactive role. , Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,1979 (Article10) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights1966 (Article2,13) have extended an aiding arm to eradicate all the impediments in the path of women education. Apart from these two, UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination In Education,1960(Article1,3,4) and ASEAN Human Rights Declaration2011(Article31) have threw open the windows to welcome the brightness of knowledge. Signatory countries to all these conventions are compelled not only to follow the guidelines provided by these conventions but they are also bound to frame certain legislations which will be suitable as well as appropriate to eradicate the vice of illiteracy and to promote the various provisions of the international documents.

Constitutional Provisions Promoting Education: To unleash the warrior within a woman, the mother law of our nation , the Constitution of India has formulated various legal provisions. Prohibiting gender discrimination, promoting equality in spheres of life and protecting the dignity of women are the major concern undertaken by the Constitution. Provisions like Article 14,15,16, 28, 29, 30, 45 are truly noteworthy in this regard. Besides , the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act is

a milestone to promote education at the every single corner of our country. This Amendment has given rise to the incorporation of the famous Article 21A and 51A.

Legal Framework Igniting Education: No doubt there exists countless legislation in our country but amongst those the one which is capable enough to conquer the throne is the Right To Children To Free And Compulsory Education Act 2009. This particular legal framework was drawn with the purpose to secure the basic education for all. This Act has saved many a girls from being denied to education. This has made it compulsory to promote the primary education to the children of the age group from 6 to 14. Their parents are strictly bound to send their kids to the schools. Moreover the government is now entitled to ensure free and compulsory education to the children of the above mentioned age group.

Indian Policies and Schemes: The socio-economic disadvantages had tied our wings for several years, but the internationally appreciated Kanyashree Prakalpa has ignited the suppressed desire to education and mandated, “Let sky be the limit”. It has financially aided so many backward girls who could not afford her educational expenses. Just to ensure that women can receive elementary education, this policy has worked as a blessing for all of us. Indirectly its not only girls who are receiving the benefits of this scheme but indeed the family at large as they are being excused from the financial burden of pursuing education.

Miles of rustic trail is not a hurdle today. The wheels of Sabuj-Sathi diminished the distance as a boon for women education. Sarva Siksha Aviyaan, Sikshasree, SVMCM scholarship, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhhi Yojna, Working Women Hostel, STEP scheme are few more notable policies which ensured that financial deprivation be no barrier in pursuing higher education.

1. **Sarbha Shiksha Abhiyaan:** Our former Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Bajpayee was the pioneer of the policy termed as Sarbha Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA). This is an Indian Government programme aimed at the universalization of elementary education in a time bound manner. It aims to educate all the children between the age 6 to 14 by 2010. However, the time limit has

been pushed forward indefinitely. This policy was launched in the year 2001 and in the present financial year 2021-2022 the budget is Rs.7622 crore. It's a response for the quality basic education all over the country. "School Chalen Hum" poem was written by Mehboob to promote the Sarbha Shiksha Abhiyaan.

2. **Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat:** Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat is a nation wide sub-programme of Sarbha Shiksha Abhiyaan . Children who failed to read in early education lag behind in other subjects. The programme is designed to improve comprehensive early reading, writing and early mathematics programme for children in classes I and II. Under this programme Rs.762 crore was approved to the states. The scheme will not only provide print-rich environment, timely distribution of books but will also include new teacher mentoring and upraisal system. With the passage of time certain changes have been incorporated in this programme. This has noted that equity means not only equal opportunity but also creation of condition in which the disadvantaged section of the society , children of SC,ST, Muslim minority, landless agricultural workers and children with special need can avail the benefits.
3. **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** Another campaign launched by the Government of India is Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme. It has mainly targets in the clusters of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Delhi. This was a joint initiative of MoWCD, MoHFW and MoE. On 22nd Jan 2015 this was launched by our present Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. The child sex ratio in India was going down at an alarming rate. During the 2014 International Day of The Girl Child, the Prime Minister asked the public to help end sexism against girls in India. It targets to address the issue of declining child sex ratio image and is a national initiative. On 26th Aug 2016 Olympics 2016 Bronze medalist Shakshi Malik was made the brand ambassador for Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme.
4. **Kanyashree Prakalpa:** To reduce dropout rates and prevent early marriage the most important scheme available there is the

kanyashree prakalpa . it is an initiative taken by the Govt of West Bengal to improve the life and the status of the girls by helping the economically backward families with cash so that families do not arrange the marriage of their girl child before 18 years because of economic problem. The purpose of this initiative is to uplift these girls who are from poor families and thus cannot pursue higher studies due to tough economic conditions. It has been given international recognition by the United Nation Department of International Development and the UNICEF. This programme has two components: Annual Scholarship of Rs.1000.00 and one time grant of Rs.25000.00. This scheme was launched on 8th March 2013 by the present CM Mamata Banerjee. Till date the total number of application under this scheme is 17387145.

5. **Sukanya Samridhhi Yojna:** On 22nd Jan 2015 the sukanya samridhhi yojna was launched with the aim to build a fund for the future education of the girl child in India. Narendra Modi introduced this scheme currently provides an interest rate of 7.6%. this account can be opened in any India Post office or at any branch of authorized commercial bank. The Sukanya Samridhhi Account Rules 2016 was rescinded on 12th Dec 2019 and the new Sukanya Samridhhi account scheme 2019 was introduced. The provisions of this scheme is as follows: only a girl child can have the benefits of this scheme. The maximum age of this child should be 10years . however a grace period of one year is also granted.
6. **Shikshashree:** The solemn purpose of this Shikshashree scheme is to provide financial assistance to the SC students reading in class V to VIII to improve their participation in pre-matric stages and minimize the incidence of dropouts especially in case of girl child . It is applicable to the day-scholars of west Bengal reading in any government or government aided and all government recognized schools of west Bengal. In order to do away with these predicaments inherent in the scheme and to provide quality assistance to Sc students of class V to VIII in a smooth, transparent and efficient way, a new scheme of providing

assistance to the targeted group of scholars is formulated in the name of Shikshashree.

- 7. Swami Vivekananda Merit Cum Means Scholarship:** With the view to assist the meritorious students belonging to economically backward families in the state of west Bengal to pursue higher education, the govt of west Bengal introduced this scheme of giving scholarship at different levels of higher education. This scheme has been thoroughly revamped in the year 2016 to cover more number of students as well as to enhance the scholarship amount significantly. This scheme benefits students studying in regular mode of class XI and XII and under graduate level. This scholarship will be sanctioned to deserving students on merit cum means criteria. The upper ceiling for family income has been fixed at Rs. 2500000 per annum. The candidates opting for this scholarship and found eligible will not be allowed to enjoy any other governmental scholarship or stipend for the same course, stage of study. However one time grant or assistance or free or partially free studentship allowed by the host institutions will not debar the students from availing the benefits of the scheme.
- 8. Student Credit Card:** Under the visionary leadership of our Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee the Higher Education Department has introduced the student credit card for the students of west Bengal to enable them to pursue education without any financial constraint. This scheme is designed to pursue secondary, higher secondary, madrasah, undergraduate and post graduate studies including professional degrees from institutions in or outside India. A student can obtain a maximum loan of Rs. 10lakh @ 4% per annum simple interest. 1% interest concession will be provided to the borrower if the interest is fully paid within the study period. The upper age limit for the interested students has been fixed to be 40 years at the time of applying for the loan. The repayment period shall be next 15 years for loan availed under this credit card.
- 9. Support To Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme:** The development of women and

children department which is regulated under the Govt of India has introduced the STEP Scheme. This scheme intends in skill development to ensure employment opportunities to women and enable them to become self employed enterprenuer. Under this scheme the grants are provided to institutions and organizations (including NGOs) to impart training programmes. The objectives of this scheme are as follows:- to provide training in skill development that provides employment to women, to enable women to become self employed through quality training, the scheme seeks to provide these benefits to women who are aged 16 and above. Under this scheme the maximum financial assistance of 90% of the project cost will be granted by the Govt. of India and the remaining 10% will have to be provided by the implementing agency. Apart from all these above mentioned schemes, policies and programmes there are certain governmental initiatives which has casteda new ray of hope onto the lives of women in India. Working Women Hostel, National Comomission for Women, Nai Roshni, Mahila Adhikarita Yojna , all these are a part and parcel in enlightening the future of women in our country.

Various Drawbacks: Any initiative or scheme cannot stand there without certain drawbacks. Its obvious that the govt has undertaken various schemes to help the women but unfortunately those are also not flawless. There certainly exists some loopholes which are yet to be cured. The following are some of those:

1. Lack of enthusiasm of officials in charge
2. Lack of awareness
3. Improper infrastructure
4. Complexity of procedure
5. Inefficient support system
6. Political grievance
7. Time consuming process

8. Unsustainable assistance
9. Development of immorality.

Though ,in spite of having all these drawbacks it'll be unjust to state that the policies are all completely futile as no doubt people are reaping the fruits of these policies even today.

Concluding observation: Educating the girl child is one of the best investments her family, community and country can make. We know that a good quality education can be life changing. Helping women to develop in their full potentials and putting them on a path of success is a must. We also know that educating a girl in particular can kick-start a virtuous circle of development. Over the last 25 years, there has been large gain in girls education. But still today we have not reached our desired goal and therefore the govt with all its initiatives is struggling to ensure that girls master the fundamental skills such as basic literacy, numeracy, and science concepts . Quality learning is an important ingredient in the virtuous circle of development that comes from girls' education.

Therefore to conclude we must note that through all these mechanisms, today's India is witnessing a social revolution. Women are becoming the belonging of a vibrant humanity-soaking the sunshine of education, knowledge and wisdom.

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A Study for Gender Discrimination in 21st Century of West Bengal (India)

Rimi Mondal

Abstract

In the 21st century Genders Discrimination is still a huge issue. Where males are considered Superior to female, West Bengal fights with gender discrimination problems beyond only equal economic growth and improvement to educational resource Opportunities. The purpose of this study are to find out genders Discrimination in education, marriage, work place and Literary, century from the 21st Centaury most of the women in West Bengal are separated from the patriarchal family. Disdain a high growth rate and immense government measures to Inspire gender discrimination, the genders gap still exists of West Bengal.

Keywords : Gender discrimination, West Bengal, education, workplace, 21st century, development.

Introduction :

“Educate one man, you education One person, but educate a woman and you educate a whole civilization.” –Mahatma Gandhi.

The 21 century is particularly notable for women because they established their achievement. Most of the garden discrimination is seen in the rural areas of west Bengal. Till now male protests are worshiped in our society where women have no rights, all the mantras recited during the puja are patriarchal mantras. Even in the 21st century, many women are giving their lives for doing.

Objectives :

The main purpose of this study is to find out the women’s position in 21st century to find out this position we need to

- Find out all types of discrimination
- Find out causes of discrimination of West Bengal
- At the end, to give some valuable Suggestions for gender discrimination

Research Methodology :

This paper is mainly qualitative nature and the Secondary Sources use those are magazine, Journal Research article and government Documents are primary sources.

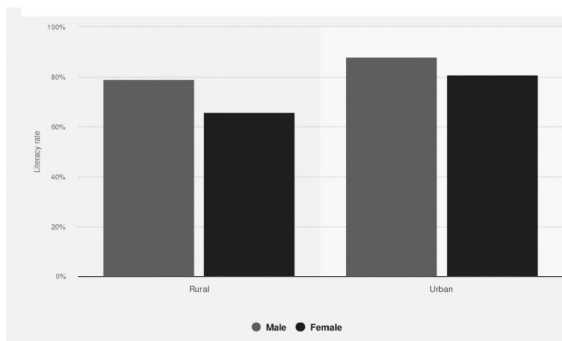
Discussion :

Gender discrimination refers to when a women is not equal to a man that is, from different Sides Discrimination can be seen in various aspect of Social, economic, political, cultural. That is a big problem in the society.

Types of gender Discrimination

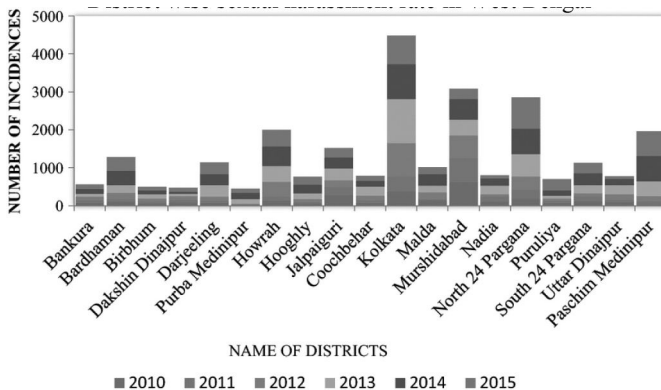
a) **Educational Discrimination :** Educating women means educating a whole nation. According to the 2011 Survey the male education rate is 84.8% whereas female education rate is 74.54%. Male education rate in rural areas of West Bengal is 79% and female education rate 66%. On the other hand the make education rate in urban areas is 88% and female education rate 81%.

Gender wise education rate of rural and urban areas in West Bengal



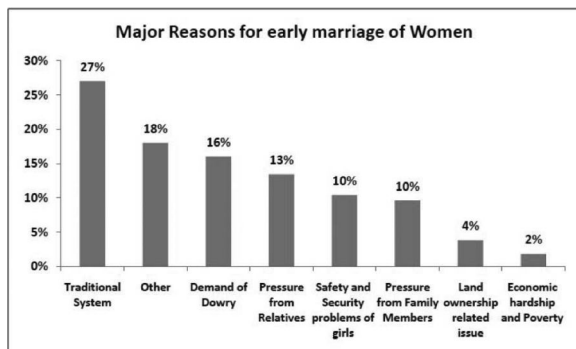
- b) **Work place discrimination :** In the present 21st century men are preferred over women in various jobs. Men are given more power in terms of responsibility; Men get more opportunity to goal and work than women. Same work ability when both women and men come given but men get higher Salary in case of women.
- c) **Sexual Harassment :** 70% of women in West Bengal face domestic violence each year, especially in the rural belt still face acts of domestic violence at the hands of their spouses. According to an estimate about 70% of women in West Bengal face such acts every year. 90% of rape cases are committed by acquaintances al home. More than 500000 women still die because they are female fetuses from conception.

District wise sexual harassment rate in West Bengal



- d) **Parentage Discrimination :** Even though we to reached the moon, girls are not allowed to go out of the house after six in the evening Men’s decisions are still accepted as decision making in male-dominated patriarchal Society. The daughter is not given priority where the name plate of the house contains the name of the father on the Son. 1 in 3 women in West Bengal is likely to have been subjected to intimate partner violence.
- e) **Marital Discrimination :** Child marriage is still taking place in rural areas of West Bengal and especially among the Muslim community. Child marriage has been prevalent in West Bengal and the whole

of India Since ancient times. Women are forced in to marriage at a much younger age than men. In Muslim rural areas of West Bengal, many women under the age of 14 are Still Sacrificed for marriage. 54.9 percent of girls are married before the age of 21 in West Bengal.



- f) **Socio and political Discrimination** : The girls of the Scheduled Tribe households still have to cook in their fields to make. A loving, they are still deprived of higher education. Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribe girls are still looked down upon. In Muslim Society, women are still prohibited from entering mosque. Women are not given priority to be equal to men in politics. Women are also victims of domestic violence. In our society the mother is tortured for giving birth to a daughter.
- g) **Economic Discrimination** : Very few women in West Bengal are given freedom to go out and work. Between one Son and one daughter in a family, the Son is given more priority in studying. Many parents prefer boys better than girls. Great strides are being made in many countries where both man and women have equal rights.
- h) **Health Discrimination** : Women receive lowers quality medical care than men. The sons of the house are fed good healthy food and the daughters are fed the leftover food. Discrimination related to the health of girls Start from the time they are born. The mother is not responsible for the child, whether it is a son or a daughter.

Suggestion :

1. The Kanyashree project which now become the Vishwasree project through which many women are now getting access to education and as a result, they are reaching a higher level of education.
2. The government is taking various facilities for empowerment of women.
3. The government has announced that every women can use her own Surname after her marriage
4. Recently a bill has been passed raising the age of marriage for girls from 18 to 21 years.

Major findings:

- 1) Parental illiteracy is one of the factors through which gender discriminations seen.
- 2) In the patriarchal Society, women are still not given any decision making Opportunities.
- 3) If it is seen in the field of higher education, it will be seen that women are far behind compared to men because Only she is a women, She is prevented from getting higher education and her education is disrupted.
4. To remove this gap in genders of West Bengal proper educational opportunities should be provide for women especially in the buns al areas at village level.

Conclusion:

“Women kind is not a reproductive machine”. It is said that the contribution of women is undeniable from the ancient times to the Buddha period and the Muslim period as well. If there is a difference between men and women, the development of the nation is never possible. Elimination of gender discrimination is possible through the adoption of various government approaches and policies.

“Girls can be gems too if you take good Care of them.”

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The Essentiality of Education in Women Empowerment

Nilufa Yasmin

Abstract

Women education in India have a major priority for both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the improvement of a country. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam said “Empowering Women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured.” Education is the only path through which women become empowered and are able to face the challenges of their life. It is the key factor for women empowerment and their prosperity as it enables them to respond to the changes and break through the barriers of superstition, prejudices, unfair beliefs and other evils of society. It also enables them to change their subordinate position in present society. An educated woman can play a vital role in the society for socio-economic development as well as in the reconstruction of our country. In spite of the fact that the Indian government has taken some measures like ‘Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan’ whose main aim is to promote primary education particularly to girl children from poor rural areas there are still many obstacles in women education. Hence, this paper discusses the role and essentiality of education in women empowerment and how women deal with challenges in society. Here we will emphasize on quality and holistic education for women and their gradual progress and improvement in the nation

Keywords : Women, Essentiality, Education, Empowerment, Inequality

Introduction :

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. There is no hope for that family or country where there is no estimation of women and where they

live in sadness.” Education is considered as the basic right and is a milestone for reducing gender inequality as it enables people to become independent. Education also creates a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. Women, who undergo discrimination and face inequalities in various spheres of society like education, employment, inheritance, politics etc., have a particular need for this. This is because education leads to empowerment.

As the consequence of the growing tendency of underestimating women such as to make them occupy a subordinate position in society and to deprive them of their basic rights, the need for empowering women was felt. The society has severely and forcefully imposed the various traditional norms and rituals on women. Education is regarded as a powerful tool of women empowerment as it enables them to face the challenges, to believe in their own capabilities, allows them to reach their full potential, improve their social and political participation. India can reach its prosperity if women contribute to the best of her capacity and ability which is only possible when she is educated and empowered.

1.1 Background of the study:

Education is the social infrastructure which leads to the newfound growth pattern of India. It strengthens the innate ability of an individual by way of acquiring knowledge and experience. Education is the path to empowerment. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process that enables them to think, take actions and control work in an autonomous way. Women empowerment brings gender equality to women and provides them with equal opportunities and freedom. Education empowers women by making them economically independent, scientific, open-minded and self-reliant.

2. Objectives of the study:

- ❖ To study the essentiality of education on empowerment of women.
- ❖ To discuss the progress and improvement of women through education.
- ❖ To study the challenges faced by women in present society.

2.1 Methodology:

The present study is based on the collection of data from secondary sources. Secondary data are obtained from various published records, books, newspapers, magazines, journals and government.

2.3 Conceptual Framework:

Education is the milestone of women empowerment for creating a social environment in which one can make decisions for social transformation and can control over destiny and circumstances of life. Through education women can become informed citizens, parents and family members. Although a large women folk are still illiterate, backward and exploited due to the very slow improvement of women education in rural areas. Thus, women education is the most powerful way that can bring gender equality, change their position in society, and can reduce the discriminations that they face in various spheres of society. Education not only provide them theoretical knowledge but also through education women gain practical knowledge and experience that they apply in their apply through vocational training and skill development. Gender Gap index 2013 (GGI) measures the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories – economic participation & opportunity, educational attainment, health & survival and political empowerment (Sowjanya S.Shetty and Dr. V.B Hans). Educational rights for women have a powerful influence on their ability to improve their political and social participation, to control their environment and contribute to the economic development of the nation.

Thus women quest for equality with men in matters of education, employment, inheritance, politics etc. is a universal phenomenon. Although it is mentioned in the Indian Constitution that all children between 6-14 years of age have the right to get free and compulsory education which is till now unfulfilled. The reason for this is the slow progress of education among girls which is due to various barriers like family restriction, their socio-economic condition and parents' tendency to discriminate between girl and boy child.

Literacy and educational level are increasing for Indian women still there is gap between male and female literacy rate which can be seen in the following table:

Literacy rate of male and female from different states/union Territories: (2011 Census)

TABLE NO.1

States & Union Territories	Male Literacy Rate %	Female Literacy Rate%	Average Literacy Rate%
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	90.11	81.84	86.27
Andhra Pradesh	73.4	59.5	66.4
Arunachal Pradesh	73.69	59.57	66.95
Assam	90.1	81.2	85.9
Bihar	79.7	60.5	70.9
Chhattisgarh	85.4	68.7	77.3
Chandigarh	90.54	81.38	86.43
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	86.46	65.93	77.65
Daman & Diu	91.48	79.59	87.07
Delhi	93.7	82.4	88.7
Goa	92.81	81.84	87.4
Gujarat	89.5	74.8	82.4
Haryana	88	71.3	80.4
Himachal Pradesh	92.9	80.5	86.6
Jammu & Kashmir	85.7	68	77.3
Jharkhand	83	64.7	74.3
Karnataka	83.4	70.5	77.2
Kerala	97.4	95.2	96.2
Lakshadweep	96.11	88.25	92.28
Madhya Pradesh	81.2	65.5	73.7
Maharashtra	90.7	78.4	84.8
Manipur	86.49	73.17	79.85
Meghalaya	77.17	73.78	75.48

Mizoram	93.72	89.4	91.58
Nagaland	83.29	76.69	80.11
Odisha	84	70.3	77.3
Puducherry	92.12	81.22	86.55
Punjab	88.5	78.5	83.7
Rajasthan	80.8	57.6	69.7
Sikkim	87.29	76.43	82.2
Tamil Nadu	87.9	77.9	82.9
Telangana	80.5	65.1	72.8
Tripura	92.18	83.15	87.75
Uttarakhand	94.3	80.7	87.6
Uttar Pradesh	81.1	63.4	73
West Bengal	84.8	76.1	80.5
All-India	84.7	70.3	77.7

Source : Survey by National Statistical Office (NSO). *UTs & NE States based on 2011 census

As mentioned in Table 1, according to the census of 2011 in each and every state the male literacy is higher than that of female. Although in 2011 census there is a noticeable improvement in female literacy. The female literacy rate is very good in South Indian States than the other parts of India. Kerala ranked top in female literacy 95.2%, Mizoram is in the second place with a percentage of 89.4 and Lakshadweep in the third place 88.2%. In Rajasthan the female literacy rate is the least 57.6%.

India is the world's largest democratic country and it is the abode to billions of people. Women constitute half of the population and women education is the main way to the progress of India. "If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowerment means mother India empowered." - Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. If girls are not educated, family suffers too. Educated mother provide proper education to all their children without discriminating between girl or boy child. They will use their knowledge to improve the health of children and other family members. Education among women also reduces infant mortality rate.

Women education have become the top priority and necessity for Indian society.

3. Importance of Education in Women Empowerment:

The concept of Women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Women are a important section of our society. Thus, their empowerment is very crucial for the socio-economic and political progress of india. Empowering women is a global issue and has become the focus of considerable discussion and attention all over the world as a large number of women are still illiterate and backward. Lack of education is the root cause for women's exploitation and negligence. Education and literacy is the key to the empowerment of women. Education can be demonstrated as means of modification in behavior of women in every aspect such as attitude, outlook, mentality etc. So, we can't neglect the importance of education for women empowerment.

Women education can bring reduction in gender inequalities as well as through education women are changing their present status in society in comparison to the past where they were forced to marriage at a young age, proper education was not provided and they were considered as burden for the family. Whether women are studying science, history, literature etc. they are gaining knowledge and liberating their mind through education. It open up their mind to possibilities, people, opportunities and the various aspects of society that they did not thought of before. Education makes women economically sound and enables them to overcome obstacles. Its develops a sense of self worth which enables them to make decisions, have faith in their own capabilities and change their life. An educated women not only promote education to their girl child but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Educated women can also reduce infant mortality rate and growth of the population. Besides, if they are educated they can contribute to the economical and social development of the country. Thus, promoting education among women is very crucial in empowering them to accomplish their goal in par with men in different spheres of life and to provide them equity and dignity.

4. Obstacles in Women Education:

In Indian families especially in rural areas girl children are considered as burden for family. They are not allowed to go out from the house, play with their friends and discourage girl child to go to school. Instead they are forced to take the responsibility of the household work such as fetching water looking after the sibling, cleaning and cooking etc.

Apart from these there are several barriers in women education that are discussed below:

- **Gender Discrimination:** The Indian constitution does not discriminate between men and women but our society deprives women of their basic right and distinguishes them at different levels.
- **Violence:** In our society women are physically, emotionally and mentally tortured which are the main reason for the deterioration of women.
- **Child marriage:** In many families girls are forced to marriage at a very young age that results in dropouts from school.
- **Family restrictions:** Many illiterate guardians do not send their girl child to educational institutions as they don't think it's necessary for girls to get quality education.
- **Poverty:** In our society a very crucial reason for illiteracy is poverty. Many parents don't have proper economical background to provide their child with basic needs and specially education.

5. Constitutional Provisions, Special Laws and National Policies in support of Women Empowerment:

In our democratic and socialist nation women are an important human resource. The articles in Indian constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures to reduce discrimination which improve the socio-economic, cultural, educational, and political background of women. These are:

- ❖ Article 14: Equality rights and opportunities for men and women in the political economic and social sphere.

- ❖ Article 15(1): The state is not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, caste, race, sex and place of birth or any of them.
- ❖ Article 15(3): The state to make any special provision in favor of women and children.
- ❖ Article 16: Equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens.
- ❖ Article 39(d): Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- ❖ Article 42: The state to make provisions for ensuring first and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- ❖ Article 243D: Reservations of seats for women in every panchayat.
- ❖ The Marriage Act, 1955 – This prohibits polygamy, polyandry and child marriage and concedes equal right to women to divorce and to remarry.
- ❖ The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 – Which provides for women’s right to parental property.
- ❖ The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961-Which declares the taking of dowry an unlawful activity and thereby prevents the exploitation of women.
- ❖ The Special Marriage Act, 1954- Which provides right to women on par with men for inter cast marriage, love marriage.
- ❖ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971- It legalizes abortion conceding the right of women to go for abortion on the ground of physical and mental health.
- ❖ The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1983- it seeks to stop various types of crimes against women.

Suggestion:

- ❖ Abolish gender inequality in present society.
- ❖ Change the tendency of our society to underestimate women such as to make them occupy a secondary position in society.

- ❖ Awareness of girl child education is very crucial. Because an educated mother provide quality education to all her children which further leads to the progress of nation.
- ❖ Ensure the proper implementation of schemes provided by government for the empowerment of women.
- ❖ Inculcate in women self-confidence, believe in their own capabilities and self- reliance for their improvement.
- ❖ 50% of seats in all governments must be reserved for women.
- ❖ Removal of discrimination for women in education, employment, inheritance and politics.
- ❖ Encourage and ensure socio-economic participation of women in local and international forums.
- ❖ Child bearing at young ages should be prevented by preventing early marriage.
- ❖ Education is capable of making women scientific, and logical and enables them to change their position in society.

Conclusion:

Education is the main key for the empowerment of women in any country. Through education women from both rural and urban areas can reach their goals and make them empowered an self-reliant. There is a positive relationship between education and women empowerment. Various social challenges such as child labour, child marriage, superstition, partial attitudes of parents, illiteracy, female faticides etc. create obstacles in the way of women empowerment and in such a situation women empowerment has become a global issue. Empowerment of women aims to achieve self-confidence, self-reliant,aquire higher literacy rate, eaqual participation in economic and commercial sectors, better health condition of women and their children etc. Man alone can not eliminate the challenges of poverty, discrimination, unemployment and inequality. Equal and active participation of women is also necessary. Beside, government has launched ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ and also ‘Kanyashree prakalpo’ which aims to increase awareness about providing education to girl

child and making girls independent both socially and economically. Such schemes should be implemented nationwide to bring the desired changes. For true empowerment women like men need to be proactive in the process lifelong learning as well as men need to be cooperative towards them.

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Women and Education : Problems of Women's Education

Mrityunjoy Mazumder

Abstract

The education of girls and women is an integral part of national development, without proper education of women it is not possible to develop the nation. It must be remembered that there is still a big gap to be filled between the education of the boys and the girls, mothers play a pivotal role in family life in India, there is lack of coordination that exists between the home the school and the life outside has to be remedied and a close integration must be secured between the process of education and the social and economic life of the country , further the method of education has to be designed in such a way so that the value of education would win the loyalty of the peoples and the support of the parents. Despite of all the obstacles and many difficulties women education is advancing in India. Proper education of women will support economic growth, peace and prosperity of the nation. To protect the future generation we must prepare policies that help to enhance women education in India.

Keywords : Education, National, Coordination, Loyalty and Generations

Introduction :

The problems of women education in India is one which attracts everyone's attention, in our country due to conservative traditionalism mindset women education has been hampered a lot. It is known to us that during early Vedic period women were allowed to educate themselves, they could take part in politics and can take higher educations but in latter Vedic period everything had been changed. Then women were not allowed to educate themselves they could not take part in politics etc . after thousands of years when we are talking about artificial intelligence and 5G internet then also in certain parts of country women are not

allowed to go to the schools, girl child are treated as burden for the society. Still women are regarded as the bond slaves to men for their economic development; recognition of women status is neglected. Various commissions have suggested various solutions for solving the problems of the women education in our country but unfortunately the problems exist as a result the progress of women education in India is hampered. To educate the girls is to lead the way to happiness and prosperity. It is the best way to reduce inequalities.

Problems And Solutions

Still there a is big gap to be filled between the education of the boys and girls, at any cost we shall have to fill up this gap to enhance the overall education system of our country besides these there is lack of coordination that existed between the educational institution and guardians, coordination between the parents and the educational institution will help to enhance the education in true sense. In our country girls and women are facing discrimination in various ways, girls do not receive proper nutrition, they have no access to healthcare and there is huge gap in the education for girls. To solve these problems various educational institutions can be set in rural parts of our country so that poor and needy candidates can take education for their future. Poverty and Gender biasness are some of the main barriers in women education, governments and educated persons can take appropriate step to solve these issues. Gender based violence as well as proper sanitation facilities in educational institutions are also hampering the enhancement of education.

In India girls and women face discrimination both inside their home and outside in their communities, discrimination will have to be stopped at any cost if we want to enhance the entire education system of the country, the Non-Governmental Organizations, Governmental Organizations and various educational Institution can take appropriate steps to solve this problems.

Besides this poverty is one of the main challenges which affect girl child education, girls are forced to stay at home or engage in daily wage labour to contribute to the income of the family. However government has introduced various types of scholarships and stipend for the girl child, so that they can educate themselves, but unfortunately these are not enough we shall have to think more. Vocational training can help the girl child in true sense, the girl child must be trained in such a way so that during the continuation of their education they can earn their livelihood. Sometimes girls are not allowed to go to the schools after marriage, eventually these young girls become mother at an early age which has adverse effects on their health and to the child, and this can be stopped only through awareness camps.

In India 80 percent of schools are in the villages; most of them are not equipped with proper amenities; there are no proper class rooms, toilets and lack of proper trained teachers as a result women education is lacking behind. Teaching Learning facilities and infrastructure must be enhanced. Due to fear of harassment and violence against girls sometimes parents prefer to not to send their girls to school. Police authorities can take appropriate steps to solve this issue.

Women are very skillful in household activities they can handle any situation at their home, but in rural schools there is no such kind of skill based subjects which bring them interestingly in the school to enhance their education. Proper research work can solve these problems; universities can take appropriate steps to find the solutions to these types problems through proper research work.

Lack of female teachers for education of girl child is hampering the enhancement of women education in our country. Women can share their problems and issues related to study and others freely to female teachers during the school hours, but many schools do not have enough number of female teachers, school authorities can take appropriate steps to overcome these problems very easily.

Conclusions

Enhancement of women education in our country is very important. Without proper enhancement of women education it will not be possible to develop our country. People from every sector will have to come forward for the enhancement of women education. Universities will have to take appropriate steps so that research work is done in true sense to solve the education related problems in our country. Parental association should be formed to encourage and to take care of girl's education, schemes related to women education must be implemented by the state and the central governments. Curriculum must be prepared in such a way so that the women education is enhanced in our country.

Initiatives of our state government can be appreciated schemes like Student Credit Card, Kanyashree and Swami Vivekananda Scholarships have helped lot of girls to complete their education, various educational institutions have been set up in various parts of the state to enhance the women education in the state of West Bengal. In this regard we can name Kanyashree University and Diamond Harbour Women's University. 'Beti Bachao Beti Parao' is also a nice step by the Central Government to enhance women education. Both the State and the Central Government will have to keep co-ordination between them to enhance the education of girls in the country.

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Understanding the Status of Women's Education in North East India

Dipak Sah

Abstract

Education is an instrument by this we can change the world towards betterment. In today's world, advancement of society can't be possible without active participation of the women in politics and Civic Engagement comes from education. The status of women's education is different in reality in each region, in some parts of India where women's are considered as irrational compare to men, due to various reasons like gender differences, rituals, lack of education and awareness. However, today in most of the parts of India women are outshining to men in the field of Education and enjoying equal rights as man. The idea of women's education in North East is too surprising in itself, because North East share its 5,484 KM of land border with its neighboring countries, despite the border and geographical issues northeast still secure the highest literacy rate in India. The regions which are selected for the study were Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. The study is completely based on secondary data which is collected from different sources like books, research articles, and different government websites. The study comes up with an interesting finding and bring awareness about the women's education of North-east Communities in India.

Keywords : North-East, Irrational, Women, feminists, Participation

Background

India that is Bharat, shall be the union of states and in this union the Northeast Region is one of the foremost regions of India. Northeast Region is consisting of eight states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Northeast Region is itself a Mini India because the region is known for its Ethnic, Religious and Cultural diversity.

Northeast (NE) India is bounded by Five countries viz. China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar or Burma, the region is geographically and economically isolated from the main land (North) India. The entire NE India is connected with rest of India viz. only 20-22KM of land around the City of Siliguri, West Bengal, which is Known as Siliguri Corridor or the Chicken Neck.

Introduction

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can change the world.” —Nelson Mandela, First president of South Africa.

Women's education will play a significant role towards the development of any Nation, the future of the country depends on the women's as they are the first teacher of their child. During British rule in India, Indian social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy talks about the women's education and points out that participation of men and women both are needed towards India's social and economic development, the equal participation is only possible through women's education.

This paper aims to show the status of Women's education in Northeast India.

The literacy rate of North East India is far better than main land India, Despite ignorance of Main land India, Northeastern region is shining like a gold just because of High literacy rate.

Objective

To Study about the barriers in women's education in NE India.

To study the major female education schemes provided by States Government's in NE India.

To Study the Current Status of Literacy rate via the last two Censuses in NE India.

Methodology Of The Study

The Study is based on secondary data Sources like Books, Research Article's, Government Websites and the sample of Census Statistics of the Year 2001 and 2011 (Census of India).

Major Barriers in Women's Education in Northeast India

- I. Migration and Citizenship Crisis in North East India.
- II. Property and lack of awareness about women's education.
- III. North East India is geographically and culturally isolated from the mainstream India.
- IV. Traditional mindset and Gender based violence.
- V. Insurgency in this region.

Steps to Improve Women's Education in North East India.

- I. To Educate Women in aspects of their Lives so they can make themselves Independent.
- II. By Developing the Infrastructure.
- III. By Spread awareness in the society about importance of women's education.
- IV. By curbing Insurgent's activities in North East India.

Government Initiative As Schemes For Women's Education in North East.

Governments of Northeast region has taken certain initiatives to promote women's education by providing scholarship (financial support) to the girl students of this region.

I. Assam – Rs 100-A-Day Incentive For School-Going Girl Students

Government of assam has launched “Rs 100-A-Day Incentive For School-Going Girl Students” under this scheme every school going girl child will get RS 100 per day for attending her government school classes. India has first time come to witness about Rs 100-A-Day Incentive For School-Going Girl Students initiative to promote education of the girl child.

II. Arunachal Pradesh – Vidya Scheme for Female Students.

Government of Arunachal Pradesh has taken an initiative to empower girls through ‘Vidya Scheme’, Under CM Vidya Scheme RS.10000 government will be fixed deposited in the girl students bank account

that from class vi to xii, and government will provide free Sanitary Napkins to every girl student of every government school of Arunachal Pradesh.

III. Mizoram – National scheme of incentives to girls for secondary Education.

“National scheme of incentives to girls for secondary Education” launched by Government of India. The scheme aims to promote the enrolment of SC and ST community's girl child in secondary schools and ensure their engagement with school up to the 18 years of age.

IV. Manipur – Rani Gaidinliu Nupi Singi Scheme.

The government of Manipur launched “Rani Gaidinliu Nupi Singi Scheme”, which will financially support to the girl students coming from lower income family group studying in class XI in Manipur. Under this scheme girl students will get RS 25,000 over a period of two years to complete higher secondary education.

V. Nagaland –Nagaland Stipend for Girls of Secondary Students.

“Nagaland Stipend for Girls of Secondary Students” is a State-run Scheme especially for girl students of class IX and X studying at Government High and Higher Secondary Schools for those coming from lower income family group, scheme encourage the girl students of the economically weaker family towards education.

VI. Sikkim - Nation Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education.

“National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education” was sponsored by the Central government, to give incentive to girl students enrolled in class IX. The scheme is mainly for the girls those who are coming from SC/ST communities and it aims to increase engagement between students and schools or colleges.

VII. Tripura - Institution of Scholarships and stipend for education of Girls at Degree stage.

The government of Tripura have only one single scheme for girl child students viz. ‘Institution of Scholarships and stipend for education of

Girls at Degree stage'. Under this scheme girl students will get RS.50 Per month.

The Status Of Women's Education in North East India.

The northeast India is one of the most culturally diverse regions in India as well as in the world, women's plays an important role in tribal society as they play in other societies, similarly in tribals the important shave society and they follow patriarchal system of the family, the patriarchy made sharp distinction between men and women in regards to their duty, roles, position and status in family and society. Tribal women suffer the most as they forced to marriage and perform domestic tasks at very early age. Women's status in every society is changing day by day and generation to generation, the old customary laws, traditional practices and belief are re-defined for a better change in the society. It is possible due to Modern western education and the impact of globalization. There is no one a single body, community or group can say 'NO' to globalization. Globalization is beyond the geographical or territorial border it reduces distances towards betterment of the world. It challenges every barrier including old customary laws, traditional practices and inequalities like sexual discrimination, Cast & Class discrimination and gender biasness, in globalization the good ideas and rituals can be transmitted from one culture to another.

Right to Education under article 21(A) Constitution of India talks about Free and compulsory education for all children's irrespective of their caste, class, sex, gender or birth of place between the age of 06 to 14 years. As result of the eighty-sixth amendment (2002) in the constitution of India, it shows increasing women's literacy rate in northeast region as well as whole India.

Northeast India has greater female literacy rate in comparison to other states of India, as per the 2011 Census of India Mizoram was the highest female literacy rate with 89.3% in India. As per shown in table 1.

Table – A :The Status of State wise percentage of female literacy rate in Northeast India as per the census of 2001 and 2011.

SL. NO.	Name of the States	2001	2011
01	Arunachal Pradesh	43.5	57.7
02	Assam	54.6	66.3
03	Manipur	60.5	70.3
04	Meghalaya	59.6	72.9
05	Mizoram	86.8	89.3
06	Nagaland	61.5	76.1
07	Sikkim	60.4	75.6
08	Tripura	64.9	82.7
	All India	53.7	64.6

Source : *Census of India 2001 and 2011.*

Table A. Shows the status of women's literacy rate of northeast region through 2001 and 2011 census of India, it's a comparative analysis of the status of women's literary rate of northeast India between 2001 and 2011 census. Table is emphasizing the improvement in female literacy rate in all states of northeast region. As we have discussed earlier about Mizoram and its high female literacy rate with 86.8 percent in 2001 and 89.3 percent in 2011, and the Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest literacy rate with 43.5 percent in 2001 and 57.7 percent in 2011 as per the census of India. In 2001, Northeastern states like Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura are registered more than 60 percent female literacy rate except two NE states Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. In 2011 census only Assam joined the group of 60 percent literacy rate states such as Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura (except Arunachal Pradesh).

Conclusion

Women's in northeast India has facing more challenges then other women's from mainland India, peoples from northeast, the term "Northeast Region" will make them different from India within India,

North East people's have to face different kind of discrimination compared to others.

Education is the only answer to every question like human development, justice in society or empowerment of women. To improve women's education and political participation of women in North East, the government policies and schemes are becoming very helpful to the peoples of this region. By this the status of Women's education is increasing day by day as per the census of India (2001 & 2011).

The study aims to understand the status of Women's education in North East India, this study will hold a significant awareness about the Northeast India and the status of Women's education in North East India.

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Women and M (Other): Education and Empowerment Women and Empowerment

Rajat Suvra Mandal

Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray theorised femininity pretty differently. Simone de Beauvoir reckons feminine to be an absolute other to patriarchy; and Luce Irigaray concedes that feminine is not the ‘other’ in the sense that it is a part of closed patriarchal economy. It is the fantasy of the other, but very much a creation of the patriarchal self. According to Simone de Beauvoir, language/culture is completely patriarchal; and it is so completely patriarchal that there is no space for women, and there is no space for women’s language in that patriarchal signifying economy. Therefore, women are the absolute other or foreign to a masculinist discourse that is entirely predicated upon patriarchal ideology. Luce Irigaray, on the other hand, theorises that women are very much part of that patriarchal signifying economy as well, but women who are part of that patriarchal discourse are not ‘real’ women. They are women as fantasised by men. One argument is common in both Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray: there is no representation of ‘real’ women in patriarchal signifying economy/language/culture. Judith Butler plays poststructuralist linguistic game over here. Butler considers that, according to Luce Irigaray, woman is, of course, still a man encore. Women, in patriarchal ideology, are represented not as women at all; women are represented as what men would like women to be. Therefore, women are still ‘men’; women are men encore. In the representation that we see around us, Luce Irigaray reckons, women are not women at all; since women are hardly represented by other women, women are represented by men. Is that true representation when women are represented by wo(men)? Even when women do talk about women, women still end up using language that is basically patriarchal; just because women talk about women, that talk does not necessarily become feminist. Even when a woman talks, it does not guarantee what she says is not automatically patriarchal because she still functions within patriarchal structure out

of which she appears to have not made any attempt at getting out or indeed negotiate with that patriarchal infrastructure. She seems to have accepted patriarchal structure into which she has been thrust. Women who are represented in movies, dance, fiction, theatre are not, according to Luce Irigaray, really women at all; they are simply patriarchal creation of women. Julia Kristeva, in her theorisation of Semiotic, argues that Semiotic is a feminist counter-discourse to Lacanian Symbolic. Lacanian Symbolic, in poststructuralist psychoanalysis, is language/culture, as it were. If Lacanian Symbolic is by default patriarchal, Julia Kristeva theorises that Semiotic is the challenge and answer to Symbolic. Semiotic is pre-cultural, pre-discursive. Julia Kristeva concedes that the maternal body exists 'outside' of culture. The maternal body exists beyond culture; the maternal body exists before culture. Culture is patriarchal. Does the maternal body exist beyond patriarchy then? But patriarchy loves motherhood. In fact, patriarchy dotes and adores motherhood. Motherhood is constantly celebrated everywhere. Motherhood is not only celebrated, but motherhood is made compulsory for women. So women are constantly told by patriarchy to bask in the glory of motherhood. This valorisation of motherhood, this celebration of motherhood that patriarchy does with such gusto, with such enthusiasm is not feminist at all. Why does patriarchy celebrate motherhood so much? Patriarchy celebrates motherhood for the same reason that we celebrate the machine that makes us coffee, for the same reason that we celebrate the machine that toasts our bread, for the same reason that we celebrate the machine that cooks our rice and so on. Patriarchy celebrates motherhood because patriarchy regards mothers as machines out of which the next generation of patriarchal people will be born. Therefore, it is entirely in the interest of patriarchy that motherhood ought to be valorised. The conflation of womanhood with motherhood is implicated in and medicated on patriarchy. Patriarchy never allows the identity of woman unless/until she becomes mother. Patriarchy thumps motherhood on women with love and affection. The unequivocal celebration of motherhood plays right into the hands of asymptomatic patriarchy. When Julia Kristeva theorises the maternal body as pre-cultural/pre-discursive, we smell asymptomatic patriarchy. The maternal body is far from being pre-cultural. The maternal body is absolutely cultural and it is absolutely patriarchal. Julia Kristeva's

Semiotic exists in “Arab and Indian mystics”. So “Arab and Indian mystics” apparently speak the language of Julia Kristeva’s Semiotic. Ironically, Julia Kristeva indulges in a sort of Orientalism : the East is feminine and the West is masculine. This is “classic” patriarchal discourse; and this is discursively colonial as well. Julia Kristeva’s binary of Semiotic and Symbolic falls prey to colonialism which propagates that the West “civilises” the East like a man supposedly “civilises” woman. This is “classic” patriarchal and colonial language. Julia Kristeva, being a feminist, unconsciously plays into patriarchal discourse. She has apparently spoken the language of both patriarchy and colonialism. Therefore, Julia Kristeva falls prey to Stockholm Syndrome.

Either there is going to be the completely patriarchal closed economy of language in which women simply do not exist; or there is going to be the patriarchal language in which women exist, but only as ‘fantasies’ of men. Poststructuralist feminism becomes absolutely critical here. We need not forsake the language that patriarchy has given us; since that language is not by default patriarchal. We have made that language patriarchal. Our lives are gendered through language. It is this ‘gendering’ through language which is persistent and pernicious. We have to watch what we say because what we say are actually acts. These speech-acts can validate other identities. But these speech-acts can also violently foreclose other identities. We, therefore, can use the very same language - speech-act theory - to celebrate multiple identities. We unconsciously gender language. In the Preamble to the Constitution of India, there is a word “fraternity”. This word “fraternity” does not automatically mean everybody at all. “Fraternal” means “brotherly”. Brothers are male. This word “fraternity”, therefore, means a group of men. The word “fraternity” was taken from the French Revolutionary discourse : liberty, equality and fraternity. French Revolution might have begun with lofty ideals; but French Revolution became comprehensively patriarchal somewhere down the line. French Revolution is not exactly the “heaven” of liberty that it is thought to be. This the way patriarchy subverts any project of equality; and the presence of the word “fraternity” happens to be an example of such subversion. “The Brotherhood Of Man” (1974) is a discography of the albums of British pop group. Brotherhood does

not include sisterhood. “Brother” is not gender neutral at all. “Man” is not gender neutral either. Patriarchy sugarcoats “Man” as gender-neutral noun. Unfortunately, we rather happily use pronoun like “He” when we are unsure about the gender of the person in question. We are marinated in patriarchy. Jordan Bernt Peterson, professor emeritus of psychology and YouTube personality believes in biological sex and presence of gendered pronouns. It is patriarchal in the sense of being transphobic. Unfortunately, we still labour under the bizarre illusion that sex is biological and gender is social. The ‘second-wave’ feminism is responsible for sex-is-biological-and-gender-is-social binary. Sex is not biological; sex is social too. Sex is retroactively created so that gender can be put on it. Therefore, sex is very much a patriarchal foundation; and that foundation is created on the basis of the genitalia that we are born with; so that on the basis of the genitalia we can then attribute gender. Therefore, sex is not biological; sex is social/cultural/patriarchal. There are some feminists whom Jordan Bernt Peterson does not like do ironically agree with him. These “feminists” are Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERF) who, unfortunately have gone back to thinking that sex is indeed biological and there are “real” women. Then there must be “real” men as well. Therefore, these TERFs basically disregard Simone de Beauvoir who theorises : “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” If taken to its logical conclusion, anyone can, therefore, become woman. In order to become a woman, one does not need to have vagina. One can be born with a penis, and one holds every right to claim the identity of woman for one’s own self. Judith Butler has deconstructed Simone de Beauvoir along these poststructuralist feminist lines.

In an interview on Britain’s Channel 4 News, Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie said: “When people talk about, ‘Are trans women “women?”’ My feeling is trans women are trans women.” Does her conversation with BBC Radio 4 Woman’s Hour broadcaster Jenni Murray imply that trans women aren’t ‘real women’? The Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists concede that once one is born with a vagina, one is a woman, no matter what gendered identity one claims for one’s own self. The Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists refuse the identity of a woman once (s)he is born with penis. (S)he must

and should, according to the Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists, remain a “man” because (s)he is born, if not cursed, with penis! The Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists refuse the identity of a man once (s)he is born with vagina. (S)he must and should, according to the Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists, remain a “woman” because (s)he is born, if not cursed, with vagina! These “feminists”, albeit unconsciously, behave exactly in the same way that patriarchal people tend to behave. Ironically, there is no difference between these “feminists” and patriarchal people at all. Unfortunately, we have come to a point where some “feminists” are patriarchal. These “feminists” are patriarchal in their use of language because they genuinely believe that “real” women and “real” men exist. “Feminists” like Sheila Jeffreys, Germaine Greer, J. K. Rowling have started sounding astonishingly patriarchal while believing that they are “feminists”. They have started sounding excruciatingly painfully patriarchal through their language by refusing trans persons to use the pronouns that trans persons wish to use. These “feminists” attribute patriarchal identities on trans persons; and this kind of dumping of identity on others is overwhelmingly patriarchal indeed.

There is no relationship between straight-acting, masculine-presenting and being gay. Similarly, there is no relationship between being effeminate, feminine and being gay. But that is the way in which language is produced which we associate gay men with effeminacy. So patriarchal people unhesitatingly use words to “feminise” gay men; there is this inexplicable tendency to “feminise” gay men to describe them. There is another tendency to “masculinise” whenever patriarchal people try to describe lesbians. Of course, there will be gay men who could be “feminine” in their gender presentation; similarly, there will be lesbians who could be “masculine” in their gender presentation. But then, there are many heterosexual men who are “feminine” in their gender presentation and there are many heterosexual women who “masculine” in their gender presentation. But patriarchy constantly tries to link gender presentation with sexuality; and we do that through language. So patriarchy convinces us that gay men are not “real” men. Deep down, patriarchal people believe in their head that gay men are not “real” men simply because “real” men are heterosexual. It makes

us believe that gay men are “unreal” men! This is how patriarchy circulates words, this is how patriarchy circulates expressions. These “words” and “expressions” are unconsciously patriarchal; since “words” and “expressions” consolidate gender through adjectives, pronouns and verbs. Adjectives are not in themselves genders; but adjectives become genders. Therefore, in a bizarre way, in an utterly inexplicable way, “bravery” and “courage” are associated with men and “cowardice” is associated with women. There is no logical explanation as to why this should actually happen. But it does! We need to be on our guard while using pronouns; just because someone has facial hair does not automatically make that person “He”; just because someone has breasts does not necessarily make that person “She”. We should politely ask the person in question what is the pronoun that that person wishes to be referred by. The adjectives did not start off being gendered; but they have become gendered. There are some adjectives that have always already been gendered : “manly”, “womanly” and so on. These adjectives “manly”, “womanly” are inexplicably ridiculous in the sense that there is nothing called “manly”; there is nothing called “womanly”. Adjectives like “manly” and “womanly” are patriarchal fiction.

Motherhood is one of the nuanced traps of patriarchy. Women are interpellated into heteropatriarchy by the ‘glorious’ myth of motherhood. Sisyphus was condemned by the Greek Gods to endlessly push a boulder up a mountain. When he reached the top, the boulder would roll back down again under its own weight. It begins Sisyphus’ endless struggle with a ‘meaningless’ and ‘thankless’ ennui. Mothers are engaged in a similarly endless round of tasks in terms of ‘thanklessness’. Women end up becoming reified in kitchen and the migrant labours hypostatized in the ‘glamour’ of transnational corporate ‘developmental’ myth of the nation state. Even the working women are looking forward to re-joining their office once this Covid-19 lockdown relents; since the working women are sick and tired of ‘intimate terrorism’ of domestic abuse meted out by ‘frustrated’ husbands/sons/fathers. Home is no longer ‘safer’ than workplace during lockdown. Ironically, workplace/office becomes a ‘respite’ from domestic violence. This lockdown has busted the patriarchal myth of ‘domestic happiness’ of monogamous heterosexuality. Men are getting away with ‘Work-From-Home’ easily;

but working women are sandwiched between unpaid care work and 'Work-From-Home' throughout lockdown. This 'double-shift' for working women is another patriarchal version of exploitation. Mothers and migrant labours are all 'docile bodies' under constant surveillance of ideological state apparatuses like family and nation state. Women and labours are mere 'bodies' to be 'disciplined' into the discursive practices of 'dissemiNation'. Patriarchy is self-mutating drug resistant coronavirus which uses family, nation state, data imperialism and cyber capitalism to 'normalize' the digital hierarchy. There are 'happy' netizens who work-from-home and watch Netflix; but there are migrant citizens who walk miles and miles to return 'home' which never welcome the disowned lives of returning diaspora.

The recent ongoing global outbreak of Pandemic has been the most critical juncture of the humankind of this millennium where we keep babbling #We Are All In This Together, but the truth is somewhat diversely far reaching where some are in yacht/cruise while others continue to hold onto even a boat! Again one of the bitter truths has been unfolded that the discrimination based on gender, class, caste, colour, race, region, religion, ethnicity and language are way too much deep-rooted among people in an over-zealous manner and humanity has lost its significance completely. This prolonged Covid-19 lockdown has further busted the patriarchal myth of 'domestic happiness'. As the contemporary monogamous patriarchal world sits 'pretty' during the Covid-19 lockdown, the domestic violence has been silently ramping up. As the Work-From-Home culture has been popularized as an alternative way of keeping the progression of the nations alive, men are getting away with this work culture easily during lockdown; but working women are sandwiched between the unpaid care work and 'Work-From-Home' throughout this entire phase. This workload of 'double-shift' for working women deserves to be considered an act of violence! The men probably cannot imagine attending Zoom meetings or E-conferences while keeping a track of the number of whistles as the curry gets cooked in the kitchen. Seems impossible, right? Well, not for the super women. Can you try writing King Lear while your own little Cordelias, Regans, and Gonerils are pulling at your shirt and complaining loudly that they

are 'bored'! Wives and mothers exasperated with pundits who point out that people like Isaac Newton and Shakespeare did their best work during a seventeenth-century plague in England. Neither of them had care responsibilities.

As discussed before, the domestic locale has never been place of respite for women due to the gender fanatics and the pandemic has deliberately worsened the situation like every other facet of human life. The Covid-19 crisis has significantly 'set women back' through the vulnerabilities including job losses because of the nationwide financial crisis as well as due to the incapability of maintaining a balance between the work culture and personal life and thus resulting to a 'shadow pandemic' or a silenced history of violence. The job losses have been accelerated to such an extent where the frustrated husbands, sons and fathers have meted out the frustration through 'intimate terrorism'. The current situation has reflected Kate Millet's comment of "Sexual Politics". It demonstrates the relative position of male and female in patriarchal society he is a master, she is a slave. The house wives who face the domestic politics years after years, whose state of minds, thoughts and experiences have already been imprisoned long before the pandemic came into existence, have also been mentally suffering in the pandemic even more, since the irresponsibilities had doubled overnight. From ensuring that all family members are well-fed for at least three times a day, to also doing the dishes three times a day, her schedule remains busier than ever. The day of an ordinary house wife only ends post-dinner, when she rearranges the leftovers and keeps them stored for the next day. Simone de Beauvoir changed the world by describing 'care work' in a much less sophisticated, yet impactful, way. She wrote, "Few tasks are more like the torture of Sisyphus than housework, with its endless repetition: the clean becomes soiled, the soiled is made clean, over and over, day after day. The housewife wears herself out marking time: she makes nothing, simply perpetuates the present ... Eating, sleeping, cleaning – the years no longer rise up towards heaven, they lie spread out ahead, gray and identical. The battle against dust and dirt is never won". Sometimes, in the upper middle class society, the responsibility of the household is primarily managerial. The towering male figure of the family pays someone to get most of the house chores done while she supervises the

entire procedure. But now, with the declaration of social distancing to foil the transmission of the infection, they are now expected alone to juggle their responsibilities of household or family chores flawlessly.

Are Men Learning? So, while it's justified to say that the unsuspected emergence of the novel Corona virus has left women across the globe helplessly exhausted mentally and physically, it somewhere becomes important to acknowledge that COVID may have (emphasis added) encouraged a little responsibility on behalf of the men who also occupy these households as the chief executives. Generally, the father figures are not seen to wake up early so that he can be done with dusting or vacuuming on time. However, as someone who often looks at the ordinary women of the society and wonders what written on the fate, since women are not free to refuse wifeliness or pregnancy, the writer feels genuinely hopeful if the equation between the gender binaries slowly start getting back to a system where respect and dignity for men and women in society will be equal, the concern for their welfare, the all-round development of the two genders will be equal, where the humanness of a woman can be traced, where, both 'Covid-19' and 'Patriarchy' can be vaccinated. Education can redeem women, be it Beauvoir's other or Irigaray's encore. Education subverts patriarchy through inclusivity of women - their identity, body politics and agency. Education of women happens to be the only antidote that can potentially vaccinate the coronavirus called patriarchy.

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Women Empowerment in 21st Century in India

Binoy Roy & Tapasi Howlader

Abstract

The present study deals with women empowerment in 21st century. The objective of this study is To overview how Indian society is changing by Women Empowerment in the 21st century, To find out how Education has helped Women Empowerment, To know the forms of Empowerment of Women, To analyze Women Rights, Legal Protection of Women in Indian Constitution, To know the Government Schemes and Programmes for Women Empowerment. The study is a qualitative approach and here collected data from different secondary sources like books, magazines, journals, various government organizations, website etc. This study shows that women empowerment refers to increasing and improving the education, social, economic and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women and to make them confident enough to claim their rights. Overall, this study shows that by women empowerment Indian society is developed and changing in the 21st century.

Keywords : Women Empowerment, Women Rights, Legal Strength

Background

In the twenty-first century, the globe is eagerly developing and embracing the role that women play in advancing global society and the economy. Strengthening women's participation in decision-making, which is the most crucial factor in socioeconomic progress, requires their empowerment. Due to its male-dominated society, India is a developing nation with very poor economic conditions. Women's empowerment also entails creating a society—a sort of political environment—where women can live free from oppression, exploitation, anxiety, discrimination, and the general sense of persecution that comes with being a woman in a system that has historically been ruled by men. Nearly half of the world's population is made up of women, yet India

has a lopsided sex ratio where female population is significantly lower than male population. They are not always placed on an equal footing with males in terms of social prestige. Despite this, women in western nations enjoy the same status and rights as males in all spheres of life. However, discrimination and limitations based on gender continue to exist in India. She was sometimes seen as a Goddess and other times as only a slave, which is a paradoxical condition.

The process of women's empowerment in India is greatly influenced by a number of factors, including geographic location, educational attainment (urban vs. rural), social standing (caste and class), and age. Although there are several national, state, and local policies and programmes on women's empowerment in many fields, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence in politics, right to work, right to property, etc.

Review of related literature:

Sindhu. L, (2022) investigating on Women's Empowerment in India in the Twenty-First Century: Some Problems and Challenges Goal of the Study Knowing the importance of women's empowerment to assess the variables affecting women's empowerment and to identify the difficulties/barriers to women's empowerment. This essay utilised secondary sources and was primarily descriptive and analytical in character. As a result, it can be seen that women's education in Indian society throughout the Vedic era was of high quality. This study also demonstrates that women's empowerment refers to enhancing and strengthening the social, economic, political, and legal power of women in order to guarantee their equality and provide them the self-assurance to assert their rights.

Mandal. B, (2018) conducted a study on A study on women empowerment in 21st century The aims of this study are to find out women education in pre-colonial, colonial and modern India, the forms of empowerment of women, the violence against women, women rights, legal protection of women in Indian constitution, the role of NGOs in women empowerment, the Government schemes and programmes for women empowerment. As a result it is observed that the historical background of women education in Indian society in Vedic era women

education was good. This study also shows that women empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women and to make them confident enough to claim their rights.

Panda. D, (2017) investigating on Women's Empowerment in India: A Reasonable Assessment of the Situation. He has discovered that while women's empowerment may not be essential for our country, it is essential for the long-term growth of a country. So let's start empowering women right away for our future security. It is necessary to alter Indian society's mentality toward women. The man ought to believe that equity and equality are becoming more prevalent in the world. Therefore, empowering women will result in prosperity for the next generation.

Latha. B. R, (2022) conducted a study on women empowerment in India with special reference to 21st century. The purpose of this study is to learn more about women's education in pre-colonial, colonial, and modern India, different forms of women's empowerment, violence against women, women's rights, and legal protection for women in the Indian constitution. It also aims to learn about NGOs' roles in women's empowerment, government programmes and schemes, the role of education in women's empowerment, and how women's empowerment is changing Indian society in the twenty-first century. As a result, it can be seen that women's education in Indian society throughout the Vedic era had a strong historical foundation. This study also demonstrates that women's empowerment refers to strengthening and enhancing the social, economic, political, and legal capacities of women in order to ensure their equality and provide them the self-assurance to assert their rights.

Need and significance of the study:

First of all it is very necessary to empower women by the efforts of men, government, lows and women too. The need of women empowerment arose because of the gender discrimination and male domination in the Indian society (Roy 2017). To have the bright future in family, society and country empowerment of women is essential (Kumari 2020). Very few studies have been made on women empowerment in India. A few

of research has been made on women empowerment in 21st century. Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. So undertake “A Study on Women Empowerment in 21st Century in India.”

Objectives of the study:

The following are the specific objectives of the study

1. To overview how Indian society is changing by Women Empowerment in the 21st century.
2. To find out how Education has helped Women Empowerment.
3. To know the forms of Empowerment of Women.
4. To assess how the Indian Constitution protects women’s rights
5. To know the Government Policy for Women Empowerment

Methodology of the study:

This study is qualitative in nature. The researchers in this study gathered information from a variety of secondary sources, including websites, books, periodicals, journals, and various government agencies.

Objective 1: To overview how Indian society is changing by Women Empowerment in the 21st century.

Both a generic and specific interpretation of the phrase “women empowerment” is employed. In a broad sense, it refers to empowering women by providing them with all the freedoms and opportunities. Women’s empowerment specifically refers to elevating women’s status within the social power system. Women’s empowerment is the process of giving women the power they need to recognise their rights and carry out their obligations to others and to themselves most successfully. All gender-based prejudice is eliminated when women are empowered in all organisations and societal structures. Women’s empowerment refers to their ability to engage equally in a society’s political, social, and economic systems. Women should think about their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they work toward achieving their goals through self-development, which has become a crucial component of our development as a result of three key advantages:

entrepreneurship, economic growth, and social stability. The status of women in India has seen numerous significant transformations throughout the last few millennia. The fact that women are actively engaging in elections and the democratic process is highly noteworthy and raises their standing. Many women enthusiastically supported the nationalism movement, took part in it, and won prestigious positions and posts in the government and public life of independent India. Women's education has not only helped them to understand political issues, but they are also gradually taking an active role in politics. Some people join political parties, go to party gatherings and conventions, and carry out political initiatives. Some women are rising to positions of political influence, and they are playing a significant role in influencing public opinion in favour of improving the status of women in society.

2. To find out how Education has helped Women Empowerment.

The importance of education in improving women's conditions is notable. The most crucial instrument for empowering women in society is thought to be education. It contributes significantly to the development of economic, social, and cultural factors in addition to personality development in individuals. The UNESCO has made efforts to ensure that all people, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or any other distinction in social or economic status, have equal access to education. Education raises women's awareness. The women work to improve their situation as a result. Society and culture change as a result of education. Its effects are also felt by women. In the economic, political, and social spheres, education enables both men and women to assert their rights and realise their potential. Traditional and cultural beliefs place barriers in the way of girls' educational opportunities. The world's cultural, social, political, and technological advancements have had a revolutionary impact on women's education and social lives. Women have been motivated to leave the four walls of the home as a result of more knowledge and education. Women now have a wide range of work options thanks to industrialization and technical advancement in many areas of the national economy. Indian women now work for a living in factories, offices, schools, and colleges. Today, women hold important positions in the fields of investing, purchasing, business ownership, science, law, and medicine. The ability of women to make

decisions and exercise their freedom of choice and action is enhanced by their economic independence.

3. To know the forms of Empowerment of Women.

Empowering women entails giving them more authority and control over their own life. Empowering women and enhancing their political, social, economic, and health conditions is crucial in and of itself. Furthermore, it is crucial for achieving sustainable development. Women's empowerment, if explained beyond the two self-explanatory words, refers to the complete liberation of women from the socioeconomic chains of dependence and privations. To equalise the value of both genders in this society, women's empowerment must advance quickly. Every woman must be informed of her own rights in order to truly achieve empowerment. There are different types of women empowerment. These are given below –

Educational empowerment : Education is regarded as one of the most crucial ways to equip women with the information, abilities, and self-assurance needed to fully participate in the development process. Women's empowerment, prosperity, progress, and welfare all heavily depend on education. The overall development of India is greatly impacted by the education of women. The emancipation and empowerment of women can be greatly aided by education. Education is considered as a milestone for women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their lives.

Social empowerment Promoting social justice It is a process to alter how different groups of people, cultures, and social activities interact with one another. The term “social empowerment” refers to the supportive factor that improves women's social ties and positions within social structures. Social discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender is addressed by social empowerment.

Economic empowerment : Women's access to economic resources and opportunities, such as employment, financial services, real estate and other productive assets, skill development, and market intelligence, is increased by economic empowerment. Sustainable development is a requirement for the economic empowerment of women.

Health empowerment- Another crucial area is women's health and safety. Providing for women's health and safety is the first step toward empowering them. Women's health issues are crucial to the welfare of a nation and play a significant role in determining how empowered women are in that nation. The health of women in India is something that the Indian government is conscious of. Women's health, which is regarded as falling under the purview of the National Population Policy 2000, is barely mentioned in the National Health Policy 2002.

Psychological empowerment- On the other side, the psychological component would cover the growth of emotions that women can use to their advantage. This entails the development of the belief in their ability to succeed in change initiatives.

4. To assess how the Indian Constitution protects women's rights

Constitutional rights and legal rights are the two types of rights that women in India have access to. The rights guaranteed by the constitution are those that are outlined in its many clauses. On the other hand, legal rights are those that are stipulated in the various laws (acts) passed by the parliament and state legislatures.

Constitutional Rights to Women:

The rights and safeguards enshrined in the constitution for women in India are listed below:

1. Article 15(1) The state shall not discriminate against any citizen of Indian on the ground of sex.
2. Article 16(2) No citizen shall be discrimination against or be ineligible for any employment or office under the state on the ground of sex.
3. Article 23(1) Traffic in human beings and forced labour are prohibited.
4. Article 39(a) The state to secure for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
5. Article 42 The state shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

6. Article 51-A(e) It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.
7. Article 243-D(3) One third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every panchayat shall be reserved for women.

5. To know the Government Policy for Women Empowerment

Government policy has been promoting women's self development and empowering women in the various field of the society. The schemes or programmes which have been implemented by the Indian Government are as follows:

- **Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)-(2007)** to help adolescent girls achieve better nutritional, health, and developmental status; to raise awareness of health, hygiene, nutrition, and family care; to connect them with opportunities for learning life skills and returning to school; to give them a better understanding of their social environment; and to encourage them to take action in order to contribute to society.
- **MahilaSamridha Yojana (MSY)-** the objective of providing economic security to the rural women and to encourage, the saving habit among them, the MahilaSamridhiYojna was started on 2 October 1993.
- **National Commission for Women-**The NCW's goal is to speak up for Indian women's rights and to give them a platform for their problems and difficulties. Dowry, politics, religion, equitable representation for women in the workforce, and the exploitation of women for labour have all been topics of their campaigns. They also talked about how the police mistrea.
- **KanyashriProkalpa (West Bengal)-** Kanyashree Prakalpa (KP), a novel Conditional Cash Transfer programme launched by the West Bengal government in 2012, targets adolescent girls between the ages of 13 and 19 and provides a two-tier scholarship of Rs 500 per year for continuing education (K1) and a one-time payment of Rs 25,000 upon reaching the age of 18, provided the girl remains unmarried AND continues her education through that age (K2). This program's dual goals are to encourage female secondary education and prevent girl marriages before the legal marriage age of 18.

- **National Credit Fund for Women (NCFW)**- An initiative of the Indian government known as RashtriyaMahilaKosh (RMK), commonly referred to as the National Credit Fund for Women (NCFW), aims to meet the credit needs of the underprivileged and assetless women working in the informal sector. Micro Financing Institutions (MFIs), an independent organisation established under the Ministry of Women and Child Development's auspices, offer microcredit for a variety of purposes, including the creation of microbusinesses.
- **BetiBachao, BetiPadhao** (transl. Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter) is a campaign launched by the Government of India. It mainly targets the clusters in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Bihar and Delhi.

Findings of the study

The following are findings of the study

1. According to Objective 1, women's empowerment has changed the role of Indian women in the 21st century. The ability to empower women can affect a variety of societal and national issues.
2. According to Objective 2, education is one of the most effective ways to provide women the knowledge, skills, and self-assurance they need to fully participate in the development process. According to this study, educated women are more likely to reach high levels of empowerment.
3. According to Objective 3, there are numerous ways to empower women. According to this study, women are able to play an equal role in society with males when they are active in social, economic, and political decision-making. If women are encouraged to participate in all social, political, and economic aspects of development, the nation should be able to experience sustainable growth.
4. According to Objective 4, the several legislators and laws the government has passed at the federal and state levels to promote women's empowerment in our nation. In its preamble, fundamental rights, and obligations, the Indian constitution makes a strong call for equality and the rights of women. It also has specific provisions for affirmative action.

5. According to Objective 5, demonstrates the government's efforts to promote social and economic independence for girls through a number of programs. The government recently introduced the BetiBachao, BetiPadhao program, which aims to give girls financial and social independence.

Conclusions:

As a result, we can observe that 21st century societies recognise the empowerment of women for global development, as well as women's active role as agents of change and their participation in and control over their own development. In the twenty-first century, education for women is crucial for their empowerment. Education is a crucial tool for empowering women and girls to take part in decisions that will impact their lives and help them rise in society. Women who are empowered become independent decision-makers. A country can prosper socially, politically, and economically by empowering its women. Therefore, a rural woman needs to be empowered from all angles if she is to flourish. For this, women should be given additional opportunities and advantages.

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Women Empowerment in the Vedic Literature

Bandana Das

Abstract

Women empowerment is hot talk discussed everywhere but not achieved fully. Oppression of women and violence against women still exist in this patriarchal society. Women status was equal to men during Vedic period but deteriorated during post Vedic period. Women were denied of education, property rights, feminization of poverty and health especially maternity health. Women empowerment will take place if gender gap in education is reduced, poverty is tackled, and feminization of poverty is removed. There are international and national organization working on it but goal is not achieved completely.

Women were respected and valued in the Vedic society not merely as mothers for bringing a new generation, but also as individuals with great potential to perceive the truth and contribute richly to human society. We should have to take the path of Vedic advices to improve our society regarding women

Keywords : Women Empowerment, Education, Society, Patriarchal Society, Vedic Period and Feminization of Poverty.

Introduction

The Vedas containing the earliest recorded human thoughts that form the very foundation of ancient society. The women of the Vedic society were given high respect. They were the members of the family. Two wheels of a cart man and woman as perceived in Taitriya Samhita implies that both man and woman resemble two bulls yoked in a chariot. The Samhita further asserts that women are stepping stones of their families^[1]. In Vedic accounts, the legend has it that from the right side of the body of Brahma (the Creator) emerged a man from his left side a woman. Thus message conveyed by the Vedas through this

symbolic account is that there exists parity between man and woman in this world that humankind should be careful of it in all their dealings. In an episode in Brihadharma Purana, Maharshi Jabali asks Maharshi Vyasa, in all the three worlds what elements are the supreme ones? To which Maharshi Vyasa replies— That there is, no place of pilgrimage as great as the Gangage, no sustainers of the world as great as Lord Vishnu, no one as venerable as lord Shiva, and there is no greater guru than one's own mother.

Apart from the above, in the Manava Dharma- Sutra it is mentioned that the importance of motherhood is ten lakh times more than that of a teacher (upadaya, one who imparts formal education), a lakh times more than that of the preceptor (acharya), and thousand times more than that a father^[2].

The objectives of the research paper

1. To find out the women status reflected in the Vedic literature and
2. To highlight the relevance of these thoughts in present time.

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Rig-Veda, the earliest of all the Vedas is full of hymns with the natural phenomena. In the Rig-Veda, the status of women is described with great respect. The Rig-Veda describes the picture of Usha (the goddess of Dawn) and Aditi the mother of many Gods like Mitra, Varun, Rudra and Aryaman. The goddess Usha begins the new day by removing the darkness and waking up the earthly beings. Whereas Rati, the Night is the sister of Usha, due to which all the creatures take rest after the day's labour i.e. Usha and Rati are daughters of Heaven. In the Rig-Vedic age family was an important institution. In the family daughter was called Duhitri. It seems that society gives importance to the male child but the references in the Rig- Veda prefer that female children were also honoured^[3]. A father in the Vedic time did not want to distinguish between his son and daughter. He treated them equally^[4].

“न जामये तान्वो रिक्थमारेक्ककार गर्भं सनितुनिर्धानम् ।
यदी मातरो जनयन्त वह्निमन्यः कर्ता सुकृतोरन्य ऋन्धन्” ॥

(Rig v. 3.31.2)

The women were given perfect education so that they could be able to conduct her social and personal life with full grandeur. There are instance like Gosha, Apala, Lopamudra, Saci and Vishvavara who composed hymns and got an important intellectual status.

In the Vedic age marriage was regarded as a sacred task. In this regard, daughters were given chance to select their husbands. But the girls who were unmarried could also stay in her father's house. There is no mention of child marriage in the Rig-Vedic age as the girls were matured at the time of her marriage. After marriage the brides were seen as bringing fortune to their groom's house. There were assigned a position of great honour. It is mentioned^[5] that matured girls attended various festivals and public gathering for meeting with their prospective husbands and their mothers also used to allow them for the same. Nursing and taming children was one of the important duties followed by Vedic women^[6].

“कुमारं माता युवतिः समुब्धं गुहा बिभर्ति न ददाति पित्रे।
अनीकमस्य न मिनज्जनासः पुरः पश्यन्ति निहितमरतौ” ॥

(Rig. V. 5.2.1)

In a RigVedic hymn it informs that women should perform the sacrifices, weave clothes, water in the plants and to fulfil the desires of the members of her family^[7].

There is a Vedic saying, where women are worshiped, there the Gods dwell or where the women are happy, there will be prosperity. A women therefore must be honored and adorned by her father, brother, husband and brother-in-laws, for their own welfare. But, where the women are not honoured no sacred rite yields rewards. Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes, but where they are not in grief, they prosper forever.

Furthermore, it is found in the Vedas that when a women is invited into the family through marriage, she enters, ‘as a river enters the sea’ and ‘to rule there along with her husband’, as a queen, over the other members of the family. This kind of quality is rarely found noticed in other religious scriptures. Added to it, a woman who is devoted to God is more highly regarded than a man who has no such devotion, as found in the Rigveda: “many a woman is more firm and better than the

man who turns away from Gods and offers not.” Due to this tradition, India’s history includes many women who have risen to great heights in spirituality, government, writing, education, science or even as warriors on the battlefield.

In the matter of dharma, in the days of Vedic culture, women stood as a decisive force in spirituality and the foundation of moral development. There were also women Vedic seers who revealed the vedic knowledge to others. For example, the 126th hymn of the first book of the Rigveda was revealed by a Hindu women whose name was Romasha, the 179th hymn of the same book was by Loopamudra, another inspired Hindu women. There are a dozen names of women revealers of the Vedic wisdom, such as Viswavara, Gargi, Maitreyee, Apala, Ghosa and Aditi, who instructed India, one of the might God. Every one of them lived the ideal life of spirituality, being untouched by the things of the World. They were called as Brahmavadinis, the speakers and revealers of Brahman.

As time rolled on, some changing features appeared in the history. In the age of the Smritis, some sort of changes in the position and status of women was found. As a result of this change the status of women, specially in the social sphere, but not in the religious domain, got degraded to a certain extent.

The Smritis are the scriptures describing and prescribing the injunctions for the betterment of human life and society. They seem to be more particular in regulating the social order. The liberty enjoyed by the women in the Vedic age, specially in some social affairs was tainted with some blemishes which seemed to break discipline in a changed society after several centuries. Manu, in his Manu- Samhita has certainly given an easy scope to the critics for explaining that women are ever dependent throughout her life.

“पिता रक्षति कोमारे भर्ता रक्षति योवने।

रक्षन्ति स्थविरे पुत्रा न स्त्री स्वातन्त्र्यमहति”।। (मनुस्मृति ९.३)

The import of this verse indicates that such dependence is not wholly an imposition, it is rather based on the consideration of physical and temperamental aspects of women. It is also not that the mind of a woman

doesn't hear a liking for dependence. It is more or less psychological sphere of Indian women. Hence, the same sloka is also accepted by Narada, Vasistha and Kapila in their own words.

It is however, to be admitted that the birth of a girl, as a rule, is not the occasion for rejoicing. It is found even in the Vedic literature. However, they enjoyed all the rights like their necessary samskaras and education like that of boys. In many places of the smritis, the woman is no doubt highly honoured and given high status. It is mentioned in the Vyasa- samhita that - (13/18) an acaryya is superior to ten Upadhayas, one father is superior to one, hundred and one mother is superior to one thousand fathers. Regarding the rights of women, Atri in his Atri-Samhita holds the view that there is not best guru like one's mother-

“नास्ति मातुः परो गुरुः” ।

In Vedic hymns Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Indra, Agni etc. Gods are worshiped, and at the same time Goddesses like Saraswati, Laxmi and Mahashakti receive equally high privilege and status.

2. RELIGIOUS STATUS AND RESPECT

In Vedic period women were advised to perform some duties according to her ability. She had some religious rights under which she could perform the sacrifices^[8]. She was given important place in the sacrifice^[9]. We find Gargi and Maitreyi distinguishing themselves in Brahavidya the highest knowledge. We find Visvavara taking place of a rtvik in a sacrifice^[10].

“समिद्धो अग्निर्दिवि
शोचिरश्रेत्रप्रत्यङ् उषसमुर्विया वि भाति।
एति प्राची विश्ववारा नमोभिर्देवाँ
ईळाना हविषा घृताची” ।।

(Rig. V. 5.28.1)

3. EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Education was not only for male students in the Vedic age, they had given importance on women education too. As the first step to their

education, they were given the holy thread. It was thought that only such girls were able to perform the hard works who are 'upanitas' [11].

“देवा एतस्यामवदन्त पूर्वे सप्तऋषयस्तपसे
ये निषेदुः। भीमा जाया
ब्राह्मणस्योपनीता दुर्धा दधाति परमे व्योमन्” ॥

(Rig.v.10.109.4)

The women had the military education as the boys in those days. We find Vispala^[12] and Mudgalani going to the battle fields^[13]. That was possible for the military education which they got in their earlier life. In Rig-Veda it is mentioned that the educated women were invited to attend the sabha^[14]. To make herself eligible for the membership of the sabha a woman was to be educated. The women of the Vedic heritage got such education through which they could control the household problems in their life. In Vedic India the female students were requested to mingle with the learned women whenever they had to go because knowledgeable ladies were found everywhere^[15]. These show that education was considered essential for women in the Vedic culture.

4. POLITICAL STATUS

In Vedic society women were the contributor in the political sphere also. She is the prominent element of the society as it is reflected in the Atharvaveda^[16].

“स्योना भवश्चशुरेभ्यः स्योना पत्ये
गृहेभ्यः। स्योनास्यै सर्वस्यै विशे
स्योनापुष्टायैषां भव” ॥

(A.V.14.2.27)

The popular assemblies to which women flocked and in which they spoke undeterred, were the Sabha^[17], Vidatha. An Atharvavedic passage informs that when a newly married girl was sent to her husband's house, she was blessed to be a member of the Vidatha^[18].

“भगस्वेतोनयतु हस्तगृह्याश्विना त्वा प्र
वहतां रथेन। गृहानाच्छ
गृहपत्नीयथासो वशिनी त्वं विदथमा
वदासि”।।

(A.V. 14.1.20)

In that time women were appointed as messenger forms. As Duti Sarama had been appointed to carry the messages to the Panis. She was successful in her duty^[19]. The ladies of the Vedic age were going to the battle field to help their husbands in political aspects. As for instance Vispala lost her one leg in the war which was cured by the Asvins by adding an iron leg^[20]. Moreover, some sacrifices are related with the social and political life, such as Rajasuya, Vajapeya, Asvamedha, Purusamedha and Sarvamedha. In the Asvamedha sacrifice God Savita occupies an important place. God Savita is called in the sacrifice and a seat is offered. The evidences denote that in Vedic time political responsibilities of women was not only introduced but continued in full vigour.

5. CONCLUSION

“Women enjoyed far greater freedom in the Vedic period than in later India. She had more to say in the choice of her mate than the forms of marriage might suggest. She appeared freely at feasts and dances, and joined with men in religious sacrifice. She could study, and like Gargi, engage in philosophical disputation. If she was left a widow there was no restrictions upon her remarriage^[21]”. In the light of above discussion, a truly empowered woman in Vedic era is highly privileged and attain higher status in the Vedic Society as she used to possess following virtues -

- a) Bravery a virtue woman should possess
- b) Expertise in all affairs in life such as cultivation, warrior
- c) Earning fame and dignity in all walks of life
- d) Earning knowledge

- e) Economic prosperity and affluence
- f) Intelligence and relentless knowledge seeking attitude
- g) Woman possesses an illuminating mind that provides wealth, food and prosperity and
- h) A woman is not only a protector of her family but also a protector of society and even she can join army to protect her motherland.

Vedic woman was supposed to be an important factor of the nation. They could do everything for the sake of society and the nation. To be a respectful woman, she has to be educated. Without proper education, she could not be a wise lady as expected. In the later Vedic period status of woman was started deteriorating. Rights which they had earlier were not enjoying in that period. Restrictions were put on social, economic, religious sphere. In medieval period, women lost their right of education. For which they were humiliated in the society. But after that society become changed by grace of revolutionary. They showed honour for the women by giving them the opportunity for compulsory education through these steps women become enlightened with vigorous growth as before. But the complete women are not able free from the bandage of society even today. There is much that modern society can learn from the Vedic culture. In this era, women empowerment is a much talked issue and in this ongoing discourse of women empowerment throughout the world, virtues of Aryan womenfolk in Vedic Era should receive prime attention. Marginalised and vulnerable women of modern age can improve their status in the society by imbibing virtues and attributes of women in Vedic Age to a large extent.

“यत्रनार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रम्यन्ते तत्र देवताः।

यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः” ॥ (मनु, ३.५५)

A famous sloka taken from Manusmiti which means where women are honoured, divinity blossoms there, and where women dishonoured, all actions no matter how noble remain unfruitful. Sri Aurobindo thus rightly says “It may be noted too that in law and theory at least women in ancient India, contrary to the sentiments of other ancient peoples, were not denied civic rights, although in practice this equality was rendered all but nugatory for all but a few by their social subordination to the

male and their domestic preoccupation; instances have yet survived in the existing records of women figuring not only as queens and administrators and even in the battlefield, a common enough incidence in Indian history, but as elected representatives on civic bodies [22]”.

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Women Empowerment : An Approach Towards Gender Equality

Nishat Yasmin

Abstract

In the today's world, millions of women live, work and struggle to survive for their family and social future. Empowerment of women is essential to achieve socio-economic and political development. Women are exploited and discriminated against in all spheres of life, and therefore they need to be empowered in all aspects of their lives. Here presented in brief are four major approaches to empowerment: 1) Integrated development; 2) Economic empowerment; 3) Consciousness-raising; and 4) Research/Training/Resource support. The primary objective of this paper is to study various empowerment approaches. in addition, it is to assess empowerment as an approach different from different development strategies adopted to change the subordinate status of women. For the enhancement of women's workforce, the findings will suggest specific strategies for organisations working in this field.

Keywords : Women, Gender, Empowerment, Approach, Strategy.

1.0 Introduction

Women's empowerment emerged from critiques and debates generated by women's movements around the world, particularly among Third World Feminists. Its origins can be traced to Latin American 'popular education' developed in the 1970s in combination with feminism. feminist popular educators evolved their own distinct approach which challenged gender subordination and social construction of gender. Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building and challenging patriarchal values and forces which marginalize women and make them subordinate. It leads to greater decision-making power and control. It is a process that enables women to gain access to and control of material as well as information resources. However, empowerment

for women begins in the household with equality, autonomy and respect. empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation in the decision-making (power and control) and transformative action. The most important feature of the term empowerment is that it contains the word power. It implies control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology. Power has to be acquired and once acquired, has to be exercised, sustained and preserved. The inequality and vulnerability of women in all sectors-economic, social, political, education, health care and nutrition, legal is evident. Gender inequality is universal. The concept of empowerment has been delineated into a few approaches: development, Economic empowerment, Consciousness-raising and Research training |resources support approach. To achieve empowerment, each course emphasizes a different approach.

Integrated Development Empowerment Approach:

This approach considers women's development integral to the betterment of family and Equality thereby, community. Therefore, it focuses on alleviating poverty, meeting basic survival Increasing women's self-esteem, reducing gender discrimination, and meeting their needs. An important component of empowerment in this approach is to strengthen women's economic status by raising their status in family and in community. For e.g.; literary classes or health programmes.

Economic Empowerment Approach:

In this approach the main focus is to improve women's control over material resources. Women are organised into groups e.g.; savings and credits, skill training activities.

Consciousness Raising Approach:

In this approach the main focus is around the various factors which causes subordination of women so, it is necessary to aware them of those factors in order to materialize empowerment. The women are organised into groups to solve their concern issues. For e.g.; education is an instrument to bring change by making them aware and conscious of their rights.

Research Training /Resources Support Approach:

Several dimensions have been focussed in this approach. Research on women's issues by emphasizing participatory action-research and gender-sensitive methodology. Training, Creation of learning material, audio-visual for poor and illiterate women. Up-to-date their knowledge and information by Publishing journals and magazines related to concern issues and changes in government perspectives on policies and agencies.

1.1. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Women of India are disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by the government. Gender gap exists regarding access to education and employment. Household decision making power and freedom of movement of women vary considerably with age, education and employment status(P.Nayak & B. Mahanta, 2012). education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom for development(S. Shetty& V.Hans, 2015). Female literacy is very important in our civil society as it strengthens the status of women and reduce the gender inequality and boost the development of the country(R. Patra&B.K.Mondal,2019). Women development and economic development are closely related(Dufo& Esther,2012).

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Empowerment refers to a range of activities from individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilization that challenge basic power relations. For individuals and groups where class, caste, ethnicity, and gender determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment begins when they not only recognize the systemic forces Empowerment of Women: that oppress them, but act to change existing power relations.

Challenge subordination and subjugation; and transform the structures, systems and institutions which have supported inequality such as the family, caste and class system, religion, top-down development models, etc. it enables women to gain equal access to and control over material, human, intellectual resources.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The topic of the present study is entitled to find out “WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: AN APPROACH TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY”

1.4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- a. conceptual and textual analysis of empowerment as an approach
- b. reviewing of previously conducted studies related to women empowerment and gender inequality.
- c. to analyse empowerment as an approach, different from other development strategies adopted to change the subordinate status of women.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. to what extent empowerment as an approach propose to achieve gender inequality?
2. how is empowerment as an approach, different from other development strategies adopted to change the subordinate status of women?

1.6. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

WOMEN: EMPOWERMENT: It describes a process wherein the powerless or disempowered gain a greater share of the control of resources and decision-making. Since women are accepted as being the most disempowered, even among the oppressed classes, the term ‘women empowerment’ has come to be associated with women’s struggle for social justice and equality.

GENDER: The socially and culturally constructed identity of men and women.

Structure: Interrelated sets of social relationship.

1.7. SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable women or group of women to realize their full identity and power in

all spheres of life (Surekha Rao and Rajamanamma, 1999). It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, and greater autonomy in decision-making to enable them to have a greater ability to plan their lives or to have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free from shocks imposed on them by custom, belief, and practice. The scope of the present study is a conceptual and contextual analysis of empowerment as an approach to gender equality by reviewing previously conducted studies. to analyse empowerment as an approach, different from other development strategies adopted to change the subordinate status of women. The findings will throw some light on the people opinion regarding empowerment as an approach to gender inequality different from other development strategies adopted to change the subordinate status of women Kamarhati block in North –24-Parganas district of west-Bengal.

The present study is delimited to only 60 participants of Kamarhati block.

2.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

This study employed a mixed method of research; qualitative and quantitative. A self-developed instrument was used consecutively to identify the opinion of women towards empowerment an approach to gender inequality different from other developmental strategies adopted to change the subordinate status of women. Purposive sample of 60 women from Kamarhati block in 24-parganas district of west-Bengal was chosen. The data have been collected from 60 middle aged married women (table 1) who are mostly educated (table 2) and involved in income earning activities (table 3) using a structured interview schedule including questions pertinent to women empowerment. The data was analysed using content analysis method.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by their age

Age distribution	Frequency	Percentage
20-24	09	15%
25-29	06	10%
30-34	12	20%

35-39	14	23.33%
40-44	10	16.66%
45+	09	15%
Total	60	100%

Table 2: Respondents educational qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	11	18.33%
CLASS 1-5	13	21.66%
CLASS 6-10	16	26.66%
CLASS 11-12	12	20%
CLASS 13+	08	13.33%
Total	60	100

Table 3: Distribution of profession

Profession	Frequency	Percentage
Service holder	12	20%
House wife	14	23.33%
Teacher	05	8.33%
Small business	16	26.66%
Physician	01	1.66%
Lawyer	02	3.33%
Maid servant	10	16.66%
Total	60	100

Table 4: Distribution of monthly income

Monthly income	Frequency	Percentage
0	10	16.66%
1-2000	09	15%
2001-4000	11	18.33%
4001-6000	06	10%

6001-8000	09	15%
8001-10000	12	20%
10000+	03	5%
total	60	100

Table 5: Respondents opinion regarding the causes for not involving in income generating activities

causes	Frequency	Percentage
Business in household activities	05	8.33%
Lack of employment opportunity	15	25%
Women should not go out for work	10	16.66%
Husbands' disagreement	25	41.66%
Lack of family members support	05	8.33%
Total	60	100
Maid servant	10	16.66%
Total	60	100

Table 6: Respondents control over income and expenditure

Opinion of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	50%
No	21	35%
Often	09	15%
Total	60	100

Table 7: whether they get more importance from their family/ husband as an income earner

Opinion of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Increase	25	41.66%
unchanged	35	58.33%
total	60	100
Total	60	100

Table 8: whether they can participate in any program without the consent of their husband

Opinion of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	25%
No	40	66.6%
Often	05	8.33%
Total	60	100

Table 9: Barriers to the women empowerment

Opinion of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of female education	15	25%
Male dominated attitude	26	43.33%
Female economic dependency	08	13.33%
Unequal distribution of resources	06	10%
Female insecurity	05	8.33%
Total	60	100

Table 10: Respondents suggestions to empower the women

Opinion of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	25%
No	40	66.6%
Often	05	8.33%
Total	60	100

Table 11: Response regarding empowerment as an approach, different from other development strategies adopted to change the subordinate status of women.

Opinion of the respondents	frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	80%
No	12	20%
total	60	100
Total	60	100

3.0. The Results, Analysis and Findings

On the basis of the responses the researcher found that women can rarely participate in decision making , male is empowered to take all decisions. in table 5 shows (42%)report that they are not welcomed in spite of earning for the family because of husband disagreement. they are not free to use their income for themself instead spent all in family maintenance. On the contrary if the family is educated women opinion is given importance whether she is earning or not. So, income alone cannot change the women position. They need to be aware of their rights and privileges. Development workers do so but it does not bring significant change. About 68.8% respondent cannot got to work outside without their spouse consent(table 8). About 48.33% (table 10)found male dominance attitude is the main obstacle to empower women(table 9). About 80%(table 11) respondent regard empowerment as an approach different from other development strategies adopted to change the subordinate status of women.

4.0. STRATEGIES OF EMPOWERMENT:

The most important aspect of any empowerment strategy is that it is designed to challenge the patriarchal ideology of subordination and ‘it enables poor women to gain access to and control over material and information resources. Following are the strategies given below-

- I) intensive preparatory training of women to equip them with the skills to mobilize and raise their consciousness.
- II) They should be encouraged to set aside time and space for themselves. Develop a positive self-image, recognize their strengths, and break away from sexist misconception.
- III) Help them to claim access to latest information and knowledge, and understand the structures of power which govern their lives.
- IV) women should be provided numerous services such as, healthcare, child care, agricultural
- V) development programmes, water supply, fuel, etc.,
- VI) economic development schemes, such as, credit, vocational training, marketing
- VII) support, skill upgradation, etc.,
- VIII) educational inputs including conscientization, adult literacy, non-formal education for girls, etc.,
- IX) Training of change -agents at the organisational level, community level.
- X) Providing support inputs like training, material analysis to NGOs working with women Material that is specially developed to help poor women becomes extremely useful to the empowerment process ‘in the field.

CONCLUSION:

The issue of gender inequality has been addressed on a regular basis across nations and efforts are being made to improve the socioeconomic status of women. However, most policies and programs tend to view empowerment in the economic sense, ignoring other variables, such

as health, education, literacy, in favour of economic self-reliance. The development policies Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan yojana, lakshmir bhandar, Rupashree focussed upon notions of welfare, poverty alleviation, etc. and did not challenge the less visible but powerful structure of subordination and inequality. Meeting 'practical' needs of these women, like food, water, health, child-care, fuel, education, must be met, but they cannot be an end in themselves. Mobilizing women to fulfil their long-term 'strategic' needs, like removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination, freedom of choice, etc., is essential.

'Empowerment' calls for radical changes to the law, property rights, and other institutions that perpetuate and reinforce male dominance in order to transform structures of subordination. The notion of development does not directly address the unequal structures or relations between men and women. It is now realized that development cannot be used as a gender-neutral idea, as it has differential impact on men and women. This is precisely where the notion of empowerment stands in contrast since it implicitly implies change . Change in the attitude of the male which is the main obstacle in women empowerment.

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Women Empowerment through Art and Craft (Patachitra) : A Case Study on the Woman Patua of Naya Village

Sangeeta Koley

Abstract

Patachitra is a famous folk art in West Bengal. The painting printed on the cloth is called Patachitra. Those who perform this art form are called Patua. They use “Chitrakar “ as their surname. Patua uses natural colours for painting. Although Patachitra is practiced in various places in West Bengal, Naya, a village in the Medinipur district is the heart of Patachitra. In this article, I will try to discuss how the empowerment of women has happened through patachitra in Naya. Earlier only men were associated with this art form. Nowadays women are also involved in this art form. The improvement of Patua women in Naya village since 2000 is particularly noticeable. Government initiatives and Women’s efforts are taking an important role in Women’s empowerment in this village. Since 2000, women have started to participate more in various fairs and exhibitions. They started to visit abroad with patachitra for a workshop. Women patua like Swarna Chitrakar, Manimala Chitrakar, Rani Chitrakar, Mamani Chitrakar, and Sushuma Chitrakar have won several state prizes. With government help, these women have formed various self-help groups among themselves. The government is giving them loans and various allowances for their empowerment. All these women have built houses with their earnings, and are educating their children and running their families. At present they have left men behind. These women have set an example of women’s empowerment.

Keywords : Patachitra, Women, storytellers, Empowerment.

1.0 Introduction

Patachitra is one of the most important and famous folk art of Bengal. This is an ancient folk-art form. The word pat comes from the Sanskrit word ‘Patta’ which means a piece of cloth¹. In Bengali Patachitra means

the painting is drawn on a piece of cloth or word or paper and those who make this are called “Patua” or “Chitrakar”. The words ‘Patua’ or ‘Chitrakar’ became their surname. The “Patua” used to go from village to village and describe their pictures by singing. In return, they received food, cloth and money. Patachitra is two types: one is scroll painting and another is square painting. The subject of these paintings is taken from mythological characters and Mangal Kabbya. The colours used in this painting are collected from nature like turmeric for yellow colour, pomegranate for red etc. They are Muslim by religion but they practice both Hindu and Muslim customs and rituals². Patachitra can be found in different districts of West Bengal like Medinipur, 24 Pargana, Birbhum, Purulia, etc. but Naya, a village in the Medinipur district is the heart of Patachitra. Many people have chosen Patachitra as their occupation but in many cases, the Patachitra have failed to meet their needs. As a result, many have filled their profession despite this, many artists overcome hundreds of obstacles and are trying to keep this art form.

Objective of the study:

1. Highlighting the contribution and hidden talent of women in Patachitra.
2. To focus how women have been empowered through art and craft.
3. Highlighting the contribution of government and non-government organization in women empowerment.

Literature Review:

1. **Ratnabali Chatterjee**, in “From the Karkhana to the Studio: A study in the changing social roles of patrons and artists in Bengal”, in her book she discussed the origination, feature and transformations of the PataChitra and Patua communities after the British arrival in India. I have collected multiple points from this book. She focused on Mughal paintings and Kalighat paintings. But I have not gotten much more information about women from this.

2. **Subrata Manna**, “Patachitra, Pata Sangeet o LokoSanskriti Vigyan”, has discussed Pata Chitra, Patua community and the music. Nothing was discussed about women. I have not gotten any new information from this book.
3. **David J. McCutchion & Suhrid K. Bhowmik**, “Patua and Patua Art in Bengal”, in this book, one can find a lot of information about the origin of Patachitra, its features, changes and the present condition of the Patua community. However, Women remain undiscussed.

Methodology:

For my study data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected by field survey using semi structured questionnaires and supplemented by personal interview. For verification of the evidence I have depended much upon personal observations and interviews. Secondary data and information were collected from library books, journals, e-books, museums and websites etc.

Findings and discussion:

A predominance of women artists can be observed in Naya village. More than 50 women artists are associated with Patachitra in this village. It was a new concept for women to be recognized as artists. If we discuss the history of the Patua community, we can find that only male artists were associated with this folk art. Women were always restricted to the house. Women ran the family and took care of the children. But in the early days, some women used to make clay dolls and then her husband would take them and sell them in the market. Before the year 1980, the condition of the Patuas was much worse. Patachitra was gradually disappearing. The discovery of TV and radio as a new medium of entertainment, as a result, people’s interest in pata has decreased somewhat. The change came in the 1980s after various government and non-governmental organizations came forward

to train the Patuas. They organize various workshops. As a result, they realized that both men and women should come forward equally to keep Patachitra alive. Another event motivated women. Gauri Chitrakar, a woman patua of Daspur, won the President's Award for her patachitra. The award inspired the women patua of Naya. At this time the women split up into two groups. The Patuas follow Islam and paintings are prohibited in Islam, that's why some women are reluctant to paint Patachitra. And they felt that their male family members would not take it well. And there was a group of women whose husbands or male family members encouraged them to involve Patachitra. Since then, they started going to fairs with their husband and performing from village to village. The late prominent artist Dukhyashyam Chitrakar is a women's mentor of women of Naya village. He inspired women to be involved in the art form.

The women of Naya village had mastered patachitra in a very short period. Without the help of men, they learned how to make narrative songs, and to make colours for patachitra. At first, they did not go to the fair to sell the patachitra. Through an agent, they used to sell their patachitra. Because they were afraid to go out as women. Then they started going to different fairs in West Bengal with her husband or other men in their house. Nowadays it is noticed that these women sell patachitra at various fairs without the help of men. Rupsona Chitrakar said she attends three-four fairs in a year. Many other such women attend three or four fairs a year in different districts in West Bengal. They are now self-reliant. As a result, their recognition as patua increases a lot. As a result, many Patua women have travelled abroad to participate in exhibitions or workshops. A famous female patua named Swarna Chitrakar has travelled abroad many times. She has travelled many times to London, Sweden, Paris, Germany, America etc. Mamani Chitrakar said she travelled abroad four times. Rupsona Chitrakar travelled to Sweden, Joba Chitrakar

travelled to France, Sweden, Japan etc. These women did not travel with their husbands or another man when they went abroad. Women receive more invitations to travel abroad than men. Then Women started participating in various competitions and they took first place. Swarna Chitrakar won the first position in a district-level competition in the year 1994. Besides, Manimala Chitrakar, Mamni Chitrakar, Sushma Chitrakar, Rani Chitrakar and other women have won various awards and prizes at district and state levels.

The government has taken various steps for the empowerment of these women. A monthly allowance of 1000 rupees has been arranged for them by the government. The government has organized various fairs every year. They are provided with travel expenses and a daily allowance for participating in various fairs. For the development of the artist community, the government has made an organization named Rural Craft Hub³. Patua women have formed self-help groups among themselves. This self-help group is a government scheme where they are given low-interest loans. Women Patua artists have created such self-help groups for example Naya Patachitra Mahila Samiti Self Help Group, Naya Pata Maya Self-help Groups, Naya Swapno Pata Self Help Group, Naya Tamanna Self Help Group etc⁴. Most of the women in Patua are illiterate so various literacy schemes were taken up for them by the government. Besides, a non-governmental organization named Bangla Natok Dot com has made a significant contribution to the empowerment of women.

Some empowered women at Naya:

Swarna Chitrakar: A famous woman artist of Naya village is Swarna Chitrakar, born in 1974 in Naya. She was not lucky enough to go to school, she was uneducated. He grew up in poverty. She got married to Shambhu Chitrakar at the age of 14. She learned Pata from her father in childhood. In 1994 she participated in a

state-level competition and won the first prize. Swarna Chitrakar has travelled to various countries such as London, Paris, Italy, Germany etc. She has become an icon of women's empowerment in Naya⁵.

Joba Chitrakar: Another distinguished woman patua of Naya village is Joba Chitrakar. She is now 46 years old. After her marriage, she started learning the art of Patachitra from the legendary Patua Dukhushyam Chitrakar. Joba has participated in exhibitions and events across India for example Mumbai, Delhi, Gujarat, Ahmedabad, Chennai etc. She has visited France twice where she has also participated in a workshop. Besides, she has travelled to Japan, Italy, Sweden and other countries. Her two daughters Sonia Chitrakar and Mousumi Chitrakar have also established themselves as accomplished artists and bearing the tradition with high enthusiasm⁶.

Mamani Chitrakar: Mamani Chitrakar is one of the most extraordinary artists of Naya. She is the daughter of renowned patua Swarna chitrakar. She learned to paint at home from her mother. She has showcased her art in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and also in Italy and Bahrain. She participated in a cultural exchange program with Smithsonian Centre for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, visited Smithsonian Folklife Festival 2018 in Washington, D.C. and performed at cultural institutions like the Freer Sackler gallery⁷.

Conclusion:

All these women do not use "Parda". Widow marriage is not prevalent among them. Although polygamy is prevalent in some cases. Patua women are Islam by religion but follow Hindu customs to some extent. Women contribute substantially to the family. As they do the housework as well as look after the children and also paint the patachitra. Their days are full of busyness. The day begins and ends with Patachitra. Women are

not dependent on men. Montu Chitrakar said that Patua women are very independent, they earn their own money, have their bank accounts, and deposit money there. When the fair, “PotMaya” is held in Naya villages, women set up separate stalls for themselves. Women can sing Pata Sangeet better than men. Visitors prefer to listen to women singing. Women have left behind men in these fields.

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- An interview dated 06.07.2022 of Mamani Chitrakar, a resident of Village-- Naya, P.O- Pingla, Dist- Paschim Medinipur



Women's Awareness on Seeking the Right to Information Act (RTI) - A Case Study among Postgraduate Students in Coimbatore

S. Nithyanantham & Dr. P.E.Thomas

Abstract

Empowerment entails transforming from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power. In this process, women should be empowered in the social, economical, educational and political front. Education helps them to make their own decisions, starting from their own career planning, goal setting, handling finance, taking part in important family decisions. The right to information has been recognized as a fundamental right, which upholds the inherent dignity of all human beings. The right to information forms the crucial underpinning of participatory democracy, it is essential to ensure accountability and good governance. The amount of information is a function of one's freedom of choice in selecting a Message (Shannon & Weaver 1975). However, access to information is only valuable if the intended beneficiary has the ability to use it. When it comes to women's empowerment in the last few decades, the Right to Information Act (RTI) appears to have contributed, owing to a dismal 9% of women using it as opposed to 91% of men, women have effectively and courageously used the RTI Act.

Based on the Empirical research and qualitative analysis, this study aims to explore the conceptual relationships between select variables that influence access to information as a constitutional right for citizens.

Keywords : Right to Information, Information seeking, use of Information, Awareness

1.0 Introduction

Throughout history, information has played an important role in supporting economic, social, and political development. It is the primary

role of information to empower citizens to make informed decisions. Despite the Right to Information Act's enactment in 2005, people are still unaware of its benefits. The government should take the initiative to educate and communicate acts to people.

Access to information by itself is of limited value unless the intended beneficiary can use it in a way that maximizes its value to the public good. It is the use of information that delivers the benefits, rather than access to it, that counts. Information is not only vital for technological, scientific, and economic progress, as erroneously seen by some people; it is also a medium of social transformation and communication. Therefore, to get people to participate fully in government programs and community development, they must have good access to information.

In response to the application, the Ministry said as many as 15,986 applications (1,507 by women and 14,479 by men) were filed in 2021 (till November 12), 20,792 (1,968 by women and 18,824 by men) in 2020 and 20,762 (1,612 women and 19,150 men) in 2019. The data shows that there is a need for creating larger awareness among females about their right to know.

Social empowerment means greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision-making, or greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives. The Right to Information (RTI) Act empowers people to acquire more social influence, which finds expression in accessing official information and uses the same for social transformation. In this study, we explore women's awareness of the Right to Information Act of 2005 in Coimbatore, A Case study among postgraduate students.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the level of awareness about the Right to Information Act (RTI) among women's students.
- To study the differences among Urban, Semi-Urban, and Rural college students regarding the awareness of the RTI Act.
- To study how the educational qualifications and awareness of the RTI Act among women's students are associated.

- To examine how workshops, seminars, and curriculum are associated with the level of awareness.

Review of Literature

Communication is perceived generally as a social issue, as interaction through messages constitutes the practice of social relationships (Fiske, 1992). Communication plays a basic role in life and every group, community or culture can be defined as part of communication (Cherry, 1987).

The use of ICT plays a pivotal role in expanding access to and use of information (Narayan 2002). According to Taylor (2008), information needs personal and unconscious conditions. Utor and Utor (2007) argue that information is vital to people in rural areas because it not only helps to understand and appreciate government programs but also encourages close connections.

Wilson (2000), information needs are determined by a variety of elements such as the availability of information sources; the uses to which the information will be put. Other factors include the user's socio-political, economic, legal, and regulatory systems, as well as the results of information usage. Igwe (2012) describes information-seeking behavior as an individual way and manner of gathering and obtaining information for personal use, knowledge updating, and development.

Women's information needs should be prioritized as they are the foundation of any civilization (Olorunda, 2004). Family circumstances have led rural women to seek information on health, agriculture, employment, domestic violence, and basic family needs (Mooko, 2005). Women's personal, religious, social, family, occupational or medical information needs are an important factor in determining their quality of life, professional or social functioning at home, and overall functioning in the world (Olorunda, 2004).

The most common difficulties in finding assist relate to legal, education, social welfare, health care, and employment. Marcella and Baxter (1999) reported that citizens use the information provided by government services to make decisions about how best to manage their personal and financial affairs.

Micro-credit, especially to poor women entrepreneurs is a notion that mixes ethics and economics and is a socially conscious program (Mittal, 1990), Bandura (1998), emphasizes the internal aspect of empowerment saying that an internal sense of self-efficacy is central to empowerment. Empowerment refers broadly to the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one's life (Ramesh, 2002).

The impact of individual capabilities and assets is mediated by community norms and ideologies. Freire's (1996) concepts of critical thinking and critical reflections as part of conscientization are key concepts in challenging and changing cultural contexts. According to (Mason, 2005), the Impact of Individual Capabilities and Assets is mediated by Community Norms and Ideologies. SushilRai (2016) pointed out the importance of print media regarding the RTI communications coverage. To create awareness, cultivating the rural population and motivating them for energetic participation is important.

The Right to Information (RTI) can be used in two ways: one, by people who demand solutions to problems by discovering and analyzing correct information; and two, by raising awareness among the common public about the power of RTI. Nair (2006) has pointed out the necessity of finding, evaluating, and using accurate and relevant information in today's constant deluge of misinformation. Chakraborty (2010) examined the role of higher education in realizing the potential of RTI, in India and found that it played an essential role in disseminating the basics of the right to information rights (RTI) to poor and vulnerable groups through schools, colleges, and universities.

Research Methodology

To study the Women's Awareness of seeking the Right to Information Act (RTI) - A case study among postgraduate students in Coimbatore. As a fundamental strength, qualitative studies allow scholars to access many parts of the empirical field and acquire distinct varieties of records in numerous ways (Gummesson, 1991). A Two-day workshop on the Right to Information Act 2005, was conducted for 30 postgraduate students and interviewed 30 postgraduate students from various streams.

Results and Discussion

Observation of what happens in a natural setting represents a key empirical method in qualitative research, both in general and social science (Patton, 1990; Gummesson, 1991). A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose attributes are examined to gain information about the entire population (Webster 1985). 79% of students are graduated from journalism are aware of the Right to Information Act. Only 48% of the students filed RTI after the workshop was completed.

Inaccessibility : The availability of information resources makes it easy for the information users to access it and utilize it efficiently if no information resource to satisfy their needs to make the information resources useful.

The most of the respondents (58%) are from rural areas and the remaining 30% of the respondents are from semi-urban areas. Below (12%) of the respondents are from urban areas. The majority of the respondents (33%) have RTI Act awareness. The remaining 67% of the respondents do not have awareness of the RTI Act. (14%) of the respondents have their source of information as curriculum, (11%) as awareness Teachers, and (8%) as Newspapers and Television.

Case I : Ram (name changed) obtained details about the number of roads that were laid in 2022 after the water pipeline was laid in Thanneer Pandhal, Coimbatore city.

Case II : Kumar (name changed) obtained details about the road safety budget allocated to the district, the amount spent, and the list of works on which it was spent. **Case III:** Suman (name change) obtained details about the amount of fine collected due to a traffic violation.

Conclusion

Every citizen has a right to know how the Government they elected is functioning. The Right to Information empowers every citizen to seek any information from the Government, inspect any public documents and seek certified photocopies thereof. Awareness of RTI act among college students is not aware of the Right to Information Act (RTI), due to a lack of interest. One of the important efforts of teachers and educational

institutions is to organise an awareness programme of the Right to Information Act (RTI), among college students. Hence, our educational system must provide an opportunity to include the Right to Information (RTI) Act in a curriculum for all undergraduate courses in colleges.

The law gives strength to the woman seeking justice and conveys to her that in a democracy she has the right to be heard and creates hope for a better future for her.

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Women's Empowerment: NEP 2020 and Changing Roadmaps

Dr. Tulika Chakraborty

Abstract

“Women are the builder and moulder of a nation’s destiny. Though delicate and soft as lily, she has a heart, far stronger and bolder than of man... she is supreme inspiration of man’s onward march”

--- Rabindranath Tagore

Woman has always been as crucial as man in the history of humanity. In fact, women’s status, employment, and work in society are indicators of a country’s overall progress. A country’s social, economic, and political progress will be stalled unless women participate in national activities. There was a time when it was thought that educating girls was unnecessary. We’ve finally realised that girls’ education is critical. Girls are becoming more aware in the modern era. They attempt to compete with men in all aspects of life. Many people are opposed to girls’ education. As a result, they argue that the money spent on girls’ education is a waste of money. This is an incorrect viewpoint, because girl education can result in a passive resolution in society. Girls’ education benefits society’s disadvantaged groups. Because girls are the backbone of society, the mother of the race, and the protectors of future generations. The West Bengal government has taken steps to encourage girls’ education. “Kanyashree” Prakolpa (KP) was established in 2012 to improve the lives and status of girls by providing financial assistance to economically disadvantaged families so that their daughters are not married before the age of 18. It is also acknowledged by UNICEF. Also, the Government of India has taken numerous initiatives to promote girls’ education in our country, including the “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme,” which was launched in 2015 with the noble goal of educating girls. In 2015, the ‘Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana’ scheme was launched to cover the costs of a girl child’s higher education and marriage” (Ministry of Women and Child Development Report, 2015). Educating women is

the most effective way to empower women. Women's empowerment is a constitutional mandate, a fundamental human right, and a driving force in national development, regardless of caste, religious affiliation or gender. "Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute a power". Women's empowerment is the process of granting women the same rights, powers, opportunities, and responsibilities as men in order for them to reach their full potential, think freely, and act freely. Women's empowerment is essentially the process of improving women's social, economic, and political status, which women can live free of the oppression, exploitation, and discrimination that comes with being a woman in a traditionally masculine society. Despite the fact that women make up half of the population and are active agents of social change, they continue to be oppressed, with fewer rights and lower social status. Women's empowerment is required due to widespread discrimination and exploitation, and education can be a powerful tool for achieving it.

Keywords : Woman Empowerment, NEP-2020, UNICEF, UNIFEM.

Methodology

This is a conceptual paper and the study focuses on extensive study of secondary data collected from various books, national and international journals and publication from various websites. It is focused on various aspects of women empowerment.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To understand the meaning of "Empowerment" & "Woman Empowerment".
- To assess the present scenario of women empowerment in India.
- To understand the constitutional provisions and Government efforts for women empowerment.
- Woman Empowerment initiatives in the NEP 2020.
- To discuss the importance of education for achieving women empowerment.
- To identify the barriers of women empowerment.

- To discuss some suggestions for overcoming barriers of women empowerment through education.
- Meaning of “Empowerment” & “Woman Empowerment”

According to **World Bank (2017)** “Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.” Empowerment is the process of increasing an individual’s or a group’s authority and responsibility to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

Swami Vivekananda rightly said that, “There is no hope for the wellbeing of the world unless the condition of women is improved”. Education has the potential to achieve this goal by empowering women.

UNIFEM (1976) defines “Women’s empowerment, entails gaining knowledge and understanding of gender relations, expanding a feeling of self-worth, acquiring the capability to make choices, and learning how to change these relationships”.

- **Women’s empowerment consists of five components:**

1. Women’s sense of self-worth;
2. Their right to have and make choices;
3. Their right to access opportunities and resources;
4. Their right to have power over their own lives, both inside and outside at home; and
5. Their ability to influence the direction of social change in order to create both nationally and internationally social and economic order.

- **The three dimensions of Women Empowerment are-**

- i) **Personal empowerment** - The term ‘empowerment’ simply means ‘becoming powerful’. Personal empowerment entails taking control of our lives and not allowing others to do so for us. Personal empowerment refers to two distinct psychological aspects of one’s individual beliefs and actions. All women have strengths and weaknesses, as well as a variety of services that

they use on a daily basis, but far too often they are unaware of, or undervalue, their true capabilities.

- ii) **Relational Empowerment** – Woman empowerment has centered on women's relationships with others, such as their partner, family, or social networks. Assessing women's negotiating power within the household; the extent to which they have a say over household spending their freedom of flexibility to appointment places such as grocery stores or relatives outside the village.
- iii) **Societal Empowerment** - Women's societal empowerment has previously been assessed using indices that map gender disparities in human development across nations, such as the Gender Development Index, or specific mechanisms, such as the percentage of parliaments seats held by women.

● **Present scenario of Women Empowerment in India**

Since 68 years of independence, education can be utilized as powerful tool to help women understand the enshrined in the constitution directives and legislative provisions for reducing women's exploitation and neglect, closing the gender gap in literacy levels, raising awareness about existing social problems, and constantly battling for the fulfilment of basic amenities and community welfare. Education enables women to assert their rights on an equal footing with men and to contribute to national development. Women's empowerment is a development tool that benefits not only women but also entire families and, as a result, a nation. Education is critical to empowering women's participation in democratic decision-making, dynamic societal transformation, and shaping the destiny of better future. "Education is a watershed moment in women's empowerment because it allows them to respond to challenges, confront their traditional roles, and change their lives." Present scenarios of Women Empowerment in India are as follows-

- a. According to the UNDP's 2013 Human Development Indicators report, women make up 48% of the global population, of which 29% are in the labour force and 26% have access to credit.
- b. The percentage of IPC crimes committed against women has increased over the last five years, rising from 9.25 percent in 2009 to

11.2% in 2013. Every 10 minutes, a woman is raped.

- c. Women held only 10% of the seats in the World Parliament and 6% of the seats in the National Cabinet.
- d. India is ranked 135th in the world for providing free and compulsory education to children aged 6 to 14 years (Right to Education, 2010).
- e. In Indian society, preference is still continuing for a son over the birth of a girl.

● **Constitutional provisions and Government efforts for Women Empowerment**

Constitutional Provisions

The Indian constitution includes provisions for women's empowerment. Here are a few examples:

1. Equality before the law for all people (Article-14)
2. Prohibition of discrimination based on religion, race, caste, gender, or place of birth (Article 15 (1)).
3. The State shall make special provisions in favour of women and children (Article 15). (3)
4. Equality of opportunity for employment in any State office (Article 16)
5. Equal right to adequate means of subsistence for men and women (Article 39) (a).
6. Equality of pay for equal work for men and women (Article 39) (d).
7. Maternity Leave (Article 42).
8. Women's Dignity Promotion (Article 51A).
9. Reservation of at least one-third of total seats in direct election to local bodies for women (Articles 343(d) & 343 (T)).

Government Efforts:

The government has taken steps to empower women by enacting laws and implementing various schemes run by various departments and ministries.

- ✦ The National Commission of Women (1990)
 - ✦ The reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women has been provided by the 73th and 74th Amendments (1993)
 - ✦ The Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), (1985)
 - ✦ The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) (2010)
 - ✦ The National Resource Centre for Women acts (1992)
 - ✦ The National Literacy Mission (1988)
 - ✦ The Functional Literacy for Audit Women (1975-76)
- ❑ **Government Schemes:** The Government of India has implemented various schemes to improve women's welfare and security. Some of these are listed below-
- ✦ Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), 1992-93
 - ✦ Mahila Samridhi yojana (MSY), 1993
 - ✦ Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY), 1995
 - ✦ Swa Shakti Group (1988)
 - ✦ Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), 1986-87
 - ✦ National Mission for Empowerment of Women (2010)
 - ✦ Integrated Child Development Services' (ICDS), 1975
 - ✦ Rajib Gandhi Scheme for Employment of Adolescence Girls' (RGSEAG), 2010
 - ✦ Women's Development Corporation Scheme' (WDCS), 1991
 - ✦ Working Women's Forum (1978)
 - ✦ Indira Priyadarshini Yojana (1989)
 - ✦ Beti bachao, beti padhao (2015)
 - ✦ Pragati (2015)
 - ✦ Udaan (2016)

● **NEP 2020 initiatives of Woman Empowerment**

Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Minister of Education, has stated that the National Education Policy (NEP) -2020 has the potential to empower women in society. He went on to say that women's enrollment in IITs and NITs has increased. Some NEP 2020 initiatives are listed below:

- ✦ The NEP-2020 mandated that gender equality in education be approached as a cross-cutting priority, with the collaboration of states and local community organisations.
- ✦ The Government of India will establish a “Gender Inclusion Fund” to provide quality and equitable education to all girls.
- ✦ NEP-2020 will emphasise the number of women in positions of leadership in the institution, such as principals, teachers, wardens, physical educators, and other staff.
- ✦ Alternative pathways for female teacher recruitment will be introduced without compromising merit and qualification, both educational and professional, in order to reduce the gender imbalance among teachers (particularly in some rural areas).
- ✦ NEP 2020 will focus on the safety and security of female students both on and off campus.
- ✦ NEP-2020 will identify social norms and gender stereotypes that prevent girls from pursuing an education and contribute to high dropout rates.
- ✦ The policy will focus on the educational advancement of underprivileged socioeconomic and sociocultural groups, as well as the facilitation of supplemental scholarships and fellowships.
- ✦ The education system will be gender-neutral, technologically oriented, and more geared toward long-term employment.
- ✦ It also suggested vocational training on the school campus to familiarise students with first-hand workplace experience.

● **Importance of education for achieving Women Empowerment**

Despite constitutional guarantees, legislative provisions, judicial mandates, and administrative efforts, women's empowerment in India

remains limited in some areas. Simply enacting laws and developing plans for women's empowerment are ineffective. As a result, education is required. According to the National Curriculum Framework for Women "Education of women is an important aspect of improving health, nutrition, and education in the family, as well as empowering them to participate in decision making,". The National Policy on Education (1986) emphasised the importance of education for women in order for them to participate effectively in economic and social activities. "Education will be utilized as an agent of fundamental change in the position of women," stated the NPE in 1986. The National Educational System will play a proactive role in women's empowerment.

The **National Policy for Women's Empowerment (1990)** emphasised education for the following reasons:

1. Creating an environment that allows women to realise their full potential,
2. Providing women with equal access to all human rights and fundamental freedoms as men,
3. Women's participation in decision-making in all areas of life,
4. Equality of access to health care, education, guidance, employment, remuneration, and social security.
5. Complete abolition of all types of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

According to the National Policy for Women's Empowerment (2001) "equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured, and special measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, and create a gender sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls, and improve the quality of education to accommodate life-long knowledge acquisition as well as the development of technical or vocational skills in women.".

As a result, the following steps should be taken:

- ✦ Different types of educational institutions should be established in the state that are exclusively for women.

- ✦ Traditional evil norms and practises, such as child marriage, child labour, the dowry system, child prostitution, polygamy, and female feticides, should be strictly prohibited through legislation and public education.
- ✦ The government should provide a package of educational funding, such as “Kanyashri” for women, as well as concessions such as free books, uniforms, mid-day meals, scholarships, cycles, and so on, in order to enroll more girls and reduce dropout rates, particularly among students from low-income families.
- ✦ It would aid in the development of entrepreneurship skills and job opportunities in women.
- ✦ Mobile libraries, distance education through the media, and non-formal schools should be provided in rural areas for women’s lifelong education and empowerment.
- ✦ Technical and vocational education, particularly for rural women, such as tailoring and weaving, mushroom cultivation, apiculture, fruit pulping, and so on, should be provided to improve their vocational effectiveness so that they can be self-appointed and self-supportive. The government will have to provide financial assistance and teach them how to start businesses to earn money.
- ✦ The efforts of the government and non-governmental organisations will be coordinated in the deployment of schemes and programmes for women’s empowerment. Women should have better access to health care, sanitation, and medication. The judiciary should handle paedophilia cases with extreme caution and transparency.

● **Barriers of Women Empowerment**

The main impediments to women’s empowerment in India can be summarised as follows:

1. Discrimination on the basis of gender.
2. An insufficient educational programme.
3. Female infanticide

4. Violence against women.
5. The systems of dowry and child marriage.
6. There are budget constraints.
7. Women's subordination.
8. Poor health care and safety.
9. Workplace inequality, particularly workplace harassment.
10. Inequality in household chore distribution

It is also noted that gender inequality is linked to social and economic structures, traditional attitudes toward women, economic insecurity and male negligence, and a lack of sincere efforts on the part of all parties involved.

● **Suggestions for overcoming barriers of Women Empowerment through education**

Girls' education is an essential component of national development. We can help girls get the education they deserve by donating to the following organisations :

- **Educating Boys on Gender Equality:** Gender equality benefits everyone, including boys and girls, women and men. Plan involves boys in gender equality solutions to help change social norms in entire communities.
- **Equal Access to Education:** The strategy supports community initiatives that foster positive attitudes toward equal educational opportunities and raise awareness about the significance of equal education access for both boys and girls. The plan also promotes the creation of gender-sensitive learning environments in order to ensure that boys and girls have equal access to education.
- **Challenging Gender Roles:** Increasing awareness at the community and family levels will foster positive attitudes toward girls' education. It is also critical to engage parents in an open dialogue about commonly held gender stereotypes.

- **Preventing Violence in Schools:** The Plan collaborates with communities to make sure that their schools are free of violence and provide a safe environment for learning for girls. Working with schools to create peer networks, role models, and mentors, trains female teachers, and provides social support to help establish a secure learning environment for girls.
- **Scholarships for Girls:** Scholarships assist girls with tuition, school uniforms, school supplies, and safe transportation.
- **No Fixed Schooling Hours:** Fixed schooling hours are inconvenient for rural girls because they are required to do domestic work at home or in farms and fields during these hours. This is one of the reasons why girls have lower rates of educational participation.

Conclusion

Women play a critical role in propelling a nation forward and guiding it toward development. They are crucial possessions of a vibrant humanity requisite for national advancement, so if we want to see a promising future for women in our country, education must be a priority. Relocating from a weakened position to exercise power is what empowerment entails. Women's education is the most powerful tool for changing society's position. To encourage women's education at all levels and to reduce gender bias in knowledge and education, the state established schools, colleges, and universities exclusively for women. Education promotes involvement in government, panchayats, and public affairs in order to eliminate gender discrimination. To summarise the current situation, education is the core component of women's empowerment, which can be achieved through the Government and NGO's heartfelt and collaborative efforts, as well as the elimination of traditional attitudes, norms, and practices through proper guidance and education.

NEP would transform the education sector in the country as it focuses on making education accessible, equitable and inclusive. The vision laid in the New Education Policy is to build the education system into high-spiritedness on acquiring key 21st century skills. The policy has many positive features but the same can only be achieved by strictly making

it happen. Mere consideration for the layout will not work efficiently instead of actions.

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নিম্নবর্ণ ও নারী - সর্বর্ণ ভারি !

(ঔপনিবেশিক ভাবাদর্শ, পুরুষতান্ত্রিকতা,
নারীসংস্কার ও শিক্ষানীতি)

আশুতোষ বালা

১৮১৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দ পর্যন্ত ইংরেজ ইস্ট ইণ্ডিয়া কোম্পানি ভারতীয় ছেলে-মেয়েদের শিক্ষার কোন দায় গ্রহণ করেনি। কলকাতা, মাদ্রাজ ও বোম্বাই- এই তিন প্রেসিডেন্সি'তে ইঙ্গ-ভারতীয় ও ইউরোপীয় সন্তানদের শিক্ষার জন্য যে সকল দাতব্য বিদ্যালয়গুলি ছিল, কোম্পানি নানাভাবে এগুলিকে সমর্থন করত।^১

কারণ, কোম্পানি আশা করেছিল যে, এই বিদ্যালয়গুলির মাধ্যমে খ্রিষ্ট-ধর্ম ও আদর্শের শিক্ষা ভারতে ছড়িয়ে পড়বে। ফলে, এদেশে উপনিবেশবাদের 'আত্মীকরণ পরিকল্পনা' বাস্তবায়িত হবে এবং ভারতীয়দের বিদ্রোহ প্রশমিত হবে।^২

১৮১৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে লর্ড ময়রা ঘোষণা করেন যে, ভারতীয়দের শিক্ষাদান হল আমাদের নৈতিক কর্তব্য।^৩ কিন্তু সে ঘোষণা কোম্পানির সরকার রাখতে পারেনি। অন্যদিকে, খ্রিষ্টীয় শিক্ষার প্রভাব তখনও তেমন পড়েনি। গবেষক নুরুল্লাহ, নায়েক প্রমুখ দেখিয়েছেন যে, ধর্মান্তকরণের ভয়ে মানুষ এই শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করতে চায়নি।^৪

ফলে, অষ্টাদশ-উনিশ শতকে এদেশে প্রাচীন ও মধ্যযুগীয় শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা প্রচলিত ছিল। হিন্দুদের শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা পরিচালিত হত 'টোল'ও 'পাঠশালা' গুলিতে। আর, মুসলিম শিক্ষা পরিচালিত হত 'মক্তব' ও 'মাদ্রাসা'গুলিতে। হিন্দু টোলগুলি ছিল মূলত বৈদিক- সংস্কৃত শিক্ষার অন্যতম কেন্দ্র। এই শিক্ষার পরিবেশ, পাঠ্যক্রম, গুরু-শিষ্য সম্পর্কপ্রভৃতিকে তখনও'শেষ বিশুদ্ধ'বা 'পবিত্র'বলে ভাবা হত।^৫

আর মুসলিম মক্তব-মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষার পাঠ্যক্রম ছিল-কোরান, আরবি ও ফার্সি শিক্ষা। হিন্দু ও মুসলিম-এই দুই ধরনের শিক্ষায় ধর্মীয় দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির প্রাধান্য ছিল এবং এতে যথাক্রমে হিন্দু ব্রাহ্মণ্যবাদ ও মুসলিম মৌলবীবাদের আধিপত্যের কারণে ধর্ম, শাস্ত্রীয় শিক্ষা ও সংস্কৃতির প্রাধান্য ছিল। প্রাচীন কাল থেকে এইসব শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে নিম্নবর্ণের মানুষের শিক্ষা লাভের কোন সুযোগ ছিল না। নারীরাও এই সকল দেশীয় শিক্ষা থেকে বঞ্চিত ছিল।^৬

গবেষক বেইতের (K.D. Beiter) লিখেছেন যে, Education had thus far been Preliminary available to the Upper social classes and public education was perceived.^৭

উনিশ শতকের প্রায় মধ্যভাগে লর্ড বেণ্টিনের আমলে দেশীয় শিক্ষা বিষয়ক সমীক্ষা করেন (১৮৩৫-৩৮ খ্রি.) উইলিয়াম অ্যাডাম। এই সমীক্ষায় তিনি এদেশের উচ্চবর্ণ পুরুষতন্ত্রের প্রাধান্য, সুবিধা ও অধিকারগুলিকে প্রত্যক্ষ করেন এবং শিক্ষা সহ সকল অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত নারী ও

নিম্নবর্ণের অধপতিত অবস্থা ও অবস্থানকে তিনি ‘সমগোত্রীয়’ মনে করেন। সমীক্ষার তৃতীয় প্রতিবেদনে তিনি উল্লেখ করেন যে, উচ্চবর্ণের পুরুষদের সমগ্র অংশই প্রায় স্বাক্ষর, আর কিছু ব্যতিক্রম ছাড়া সব বর্ণের মেয়েরা ও নিম্নবর্ণের সমস্ত জাতিই ছিল নিরক্ষর।^৮

সমাজতাত্ত্বিক জন ওয়েবস্টার লিখেছেন, যুগে যুগে ভারতীয় সমাজে উচ্চকোটি পুরুষতন্ত্র ও রক্ষণশীলতা দ্বারা নিম্নবর্ণের সাধারণ মানুষ নির্যাতিত, নিপীড়িতও অধিকারহীন হয়ে পড়ে। এদের শিক্ষা লাভের সুযোগ ছিল না। নারীরাও এর ব্যতিক্রম ছিল না। নারী ও নিম্ন সমাজের প্রতি উচ্চবর্ণের পুরুষতন্ত্রের তুচ্ছ-তাচ্ছিল্য, অবহেলা ও নির্যাতন অহরহ চলতে থাকে। উভয় ছিল অধিকারহীন, চির অবহেলিত-নিষ্পেষিত। নিম্ন-সমাজেরমতো তাই ভারতীয় নারীদেরও একই ‘দলিত’ অবস্থান দেখা যায়। এমনিতে ভারতীয় সভ্যতায় কোন কালেও নারী অসাধারণ নয়! এদের নিম্ন ও সাধারণ সমাজের অন্তর্ভুক্ততাবা হয়!^৯

সেই প্রাচীন কাল থেকে বৈদিক আচার- আচরণ থেকে নিম্নবর্ণ (শূদ্র) ও নারীদের দূরে রাখা হয়। তাদের সামাজিক মূল স্রোতে কোনদিন স্থান দেওয়া হয় নি। এর মূলত দুটি কারণ বলা যায়। যথা- (i) ভারতীয় ব্রাহ্মণ্যবাদী আদর্শ ও (ii) উচ্চবর্ণ পুরুষতন্ত্রের প্রভাবশালী ঐতিহ্য। এই দুইয়ের সম্মিলিত প্রকোপে নিম্নবর্ণ ও নারী, অশুদ্ধ, অপরিচ্ছন্ন ও অস্পৃশ্য হয়ে ওঠে। ভারতীয় সমাজে যে ধারণাগুলির বিকাশ ঘটে খ্রিস্টীয় তৃতীয় থেকে ষষ্ঠ শতকের মধ্যে।^{১০}

ঔপনিবেশিক যুগে ভারতে এ-অবস্থার কোন পরিবর্তন আসেনি। কারণ, ঔপনিবেশিক শাসন পুরুষতাত্ত্বিক একনায়কতন্ত্র, সামাজিক ক্রমোচ্চতা ও জাতিগত তাচ্ছিল্যের রক্ষণশীল মূল্যবোধের আদর্শে বিশ্বাসী ছিল। বর্ণভেদ ও লিঙ্গভেদ এই আদর্শে বরাবর ছিল।^{১১} গবেষক ওয়েরজবিকা দেখিয়েছেন, অন্যান্যইউরোপীয় জাতিগুলির ন্যায় ব্রিটিশ ভাবাদর্শ তাদের সমাজকে ‘পুরুষতাত্ত্বিক’ ও দেশকে ‘পিতৃভূমি’রূপে কল্পনা করত।^{১২}

অষ্টাদশ শতকের মধ্যভাগ থেকে ভারতে এই দুই দেশি- বিদেশি ভাবাদর্শ পরস্পর মিলে যায়। যদিও ব্রিটিশরা দেশীয় পুরুষতন্ত্রের ন্যায় ততটা কঠিন শুদ্ধ/অশুদ্ধতার তত্ত্বে বিশ্বাসী ছিল না। তবুও তারা এদেশে আফ্রিকার মতো নিজেদের কর্তৃত্ব ও বিশুদ্ধতা বজায় রাখতে বৃহত্তর সমাজকে শাসন ও নিয়ন্ত্রণের চেষ্টা করে।^{১৩}

লুই দুমো’ অবশ্য মনে করেন যে, ভারতে সামাজিক মর্যাদাগত স্থান নির্ণয়ের বিষয়টি মূলত ধর্মীয়। এই রকম সাংস্কৃতিক বাতাবরণে শুদ্ধতা / অশুদ্ধতার মাপকাঠিতে সামাজিক ক্রমোচ্চতা নির্ভর করত।^{১৪} তাই ব্রিটিশ শাসনও এদেশে চিরায়ত সামাজিক ক্রমোচ্চতা, বর্ণ-জাতি বৈষম্য ও লিঙ্গভেদকে টিকিয়ে রাখতে ছেয়েছিল। এক্ষেত্রে তাঁরা এদেশে পুরুষতাত্ত্বিক শাসন, প্রাধান্য ও শ্রেষ্ঠত্বের লক্ষ্যে বর্ণ বিভাগকে একটি ‘মৌলিক ছাঁচ’ (fundamental term-plate)^{১৫} রূপে ধরে নেয় এবং পিতৃতাত্ত্বিক আদর্শের শেকল দিয়ে এতকাল যেমন দেশীয় নারী ও নিম্নবর্ণ সমাজকে বেঁধে ফেলা হয়, ব্রিটিশরাও তেমন ভারতীয়দের নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন করে।^{১৬}

এক্ষেত্রে ব্রিটিশদের প্রতি ভারতীয়দের ‘মোহপুষ্টির’ কথা বলা যায়। পানিকর লিখেছেন যে, এই মতাদর্শগত প্রভাবের ফলে সৃষ্টি হয় মোহ। এদেশে শিক্ষা সংক্রান্ত উদ্যোগের প্রধান উদ্দেশ্যই ছিল

ঔপনিবেশিক শাসনের পক্ষে এক মোহ সৃষ্টি করা, যাতে এ দেশীয় সমাজে ঔপনিবেশিক নিয়ন্ত্রণ বজায় রাখা যায়।^{১৭} এও প্রচার করা হয় যে, ঐতিহ্যময় অতীত কাল থেকেই ভারতীয়দের সঙ্গে ইংরেজদের আত্মীয়তার বন্ধন রয়েছে। ভালোবাসার নামে এইভাবে নীতিগত দিক দিয়ে ভারতীয়দের ঔপনিবেশিক শাসনের সঙ্গে যুক্ত করার চেষ্টা করা হয়।^{১৮}

এমন কোন মোহ, ভালোবাসা বা অতীত আত্মীয়তার বন্ধন এদেশে উচ্চবর্ণের প্রতি নিম্ন ও সাধারণ সমাজের কোন কালে ছিল না। কারণ, উচ্চস্তর দ্বারা তারা প্রতি নিয়ত নির্যাতিত, অবহেলিত ও অধিকারহীন হয়ে ওঠে। প্রাচীন যুগ থেকে যেমন শূদ্র ও নারীদের বৈদিক আচার-আচরণ থেকে দূরে রাখা হয়, তেমন তাদের ‘জ্ঞানালোক’^{১৯} থেকে দূরে ও ‘অজ্ঞ-অন্ধকার-জড়’ জগতে নিমজ্জিত রাখা হয়। সাধারণ সমাজ হিসেবে নিম্নবর্ণ ও উচ্চ-নিচ সর্বর্ণের নারীদের দেশীয় শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে দূরে রাখা হয়।^{২০}

ইরাবতী কার্ভে লিখেছেন যে, বৃহত্তর সমাজের অংশ রূপে পুরুষের পাশাপাশি নারীদেরও একটি ‘জাতি’ হিসেবে ধরে পরাধীনতার ‘জাতি শৃঙ্খলে’ (the larger groups as “caste-clusters) বেঁধে ফেলা হয়।^{২১} এই শৃঙ্খলে নিম্নতর জাতির মতো সব বর্ণের নারীদের অমর্যাদা ও অবহেলার চোখে দেখা হয়। ঘরে-বাইরে নিম্নতরদের মতো নারীদের থেকে দৈহিক ও সামাজিক ব্যবধান বজায় রাখা হত।^{২২} শুধু তাই নয়, এই পিতৃতান্ত্রিক রক্ষণশীলতার প্রাধান্য, নিয়ন্ত্রণ ও আচার-বিধি দ্বারা নারী-পুরুষ সকলের জীবন নির্ধারিত হত।^{২৩}

এইভাবে ঔপনিবেশিক ভারতে একই রকম সামাজিক অবস্থান এবং নির্দিষ্ট আচরণগত স্থান অনুযায়ী ‘নারী ও নিম্নবর্ণ’ সমার্থক তথা সমগোত্রীয় হয়ে ওঠে। উভয়ে সমাজের নিম্নতর স্থানে অধপতিত হয় ! যাকে পৃথিবীর সভ্যতা গুলির উচ্চতর ক্রমে ভারতের নিম্নস্থানের নির্দেশক বলে মনে হয়।^{২৪}

এদিক থেকে নিম্নবর্ণ ও সব বর্ণের নারীদের বৃহত্তর ‘দলিত’ অভিধায় আখ্যায়িত করা যায়। উভয়ে হিন্দু ব্রাহ্মণ্যবাদী আদর্শ, পুরুষতান্ত্রিক রক্ষণশীলতা-অনুশাসন ও প্রভাবশালী ঐতিহ্য দ্বারা যুগে যুগে নিপীড়িত-দলিত ও নিষ্পেষিত হয়। Oppressed, Depressed, Backward প্রভৃতি শব্দগুলি দ্বারা যাদের একই আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থান বোঝা যায়। যে অবস্থানে নিম্নবর্ণ ও নারীদের সমপর্যায়ভুক্ত করা যায়। এই অবস্থান মূলত দুটি বিষয় তুলে ধরে - (i) সামাজিক নিপীড়ন, যা থেকে নিম্নবর্ণ ও নারী কেউ রেহাই পায়নি। (ii) সামাজিক স্তরবিন্যাসের ফলে অধিকারহীন, অবহেলিত, অনগ্রসর ও নিম্নতর অবস্থান।^{২৫}

এ অবস্থায়, ঔপনিবেশিক শাসনপর্বে জাতিভেদ প্রথাকে নতুন জ্ঞান, নীতি ও প্রতিষ্ঠানের আলোকে পুনরায় বিচার ও ব্যাখ্যা করা হয়।^{২৬} যাতে মনে হয়, ঔপনিবেশিক ভাবাদর্শ সংস্কারমুক্ত ও আধুনিক, উন্নত সভ্যতা-সংস্কৃতির আলোয় আলোকিত।^{২৭}

তবু তা ছিল পুরুষতান্ত্রিক আদর্শ। এদেশের জাত-ভাইদের তাই না চটিয়ে প্রথম থেকে ব্রিটিশরা এদেশের সমাজে ‘অনহস্তক্ষেপ’ নীতি গ্রহণ করে, যাকে তত্ত্বগতভাবে জাতিভেদ মুক্ত বলা যায়।^{২৮}

কিন্তু বাস্তবে তারা এদেশে জাতি-বর্ণভেদ, লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য সব কিছু জিইয়ে রাখতে চেয়েছিল। ভারতীয় সমাজের ক্রটি ও পশ্চাদমুখিতার জন্য যেমন ভারতীয় পিতৃতন্ত্রকে দায়ী করা যায়, তেমন ব্রিটিশ ভাবাদর্শও কম নয়। ফলত, 'মরতে মরণ' সানাইওয়ালার মতো নিম্নবর্ণ ও নারী অধিকারহীন, অজ্ঞ ও 'জড় বর্ণে' পরিণত হয়।^{১৯} সামাজিকভাবে অনেক ক্ষেত্রে এদের সাথে প্রতিবন্ধীদের মতো আচরণ করা হয়।^{২০}

এ যুগে তখনও 'সামন্ততান্ত্রিক জাতি-সমাজ' সংগঠনে সম্পদ, মর্যাদা ও ক্ষমতার মধ্যে ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্ক ছিল। এই পরিস্থিতিতে পেশার প্রকৃতি, অধিকার ও ক্ষমতার কেন্দ্র থেকে দূরত্ব প্রভৃতির দ্বারা আচরণগত মর্যাদা নির্ণীত হত।^{২১} যার কিছুই নিম্নবর্ণ ও নারীদের ছিল না। এদের তাই 'সমগোত্রীয়' ভাবা যায়। এক্ষেত্রে উচ্চবর্ণ নারীদের একটু 'জাত-ঘরের' গরিমা থাকলেও তাদের নিম্নবর্ণের মতোই অশুদ্ধ(পোপী) ধরা হত।^{২২} যদিও ভারতীয় নারীদের মর্যাদাগত ব্যাপক তারতম্য দেখা যায় বলে রোমলা থাপার দাবি করেন।^{২৩}

উনিশ শতকে দেশীয় উচ্চকোটির মতো ঔপনিবেশিক সরকার নারী সংস্কার ও সমস্যার বিষয়গুলি গার্হস্থ্য জীবনের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ রাখতে চেয়েছিল, যা 'দুই পুরুষতন্ত্র' ও রাষ্ট্রের পক্ষে নিরাপদ ভাবা হত। দেশীয় ও প্রচলিত রীতি-নীতি-আইন ও পিতৃতান্ত্রিক অধিকারগুলোকে ঔপনিবেশিক সরকার পবিত্র ও আইনসিদ্ধ করে তোলে,^{২৪} যাতে নারী স্বাধীনতা আরো সংকুচিত হয়। কারণ, এটি ছিল পুরুষতন্ত্রের পক্ষে 'বিপজ্জনক'।^{২৫}

এখানে ঔপনিবেশিক ভাবাদর্শের সাথে ভারতীয় উচ্চকোটি পুরুষতন্ত্র, রক্ষণশীলগণ, সমাজ সংস্কারক এমনকি জাতীয়তাবাদীদের মতের মিল দেখা যায়।^{২৬} উভয়ে পিতৃতান্ত্রিক নজরদারিকে ন্যায়সঙ্গত বলে ধরে নেয়।^{২৭}

এখানে অনেকে ব্রিটিশদের 'ভারতীয় উত্তরাধিকার' রূপে দাবি করেন। এখানে বলা হয়, ভারতে ইংরেজরা নতুন কোন নীতি ও শাসনের প্রবর্তক নয়; উত্তরাধিকারী হিসেবে তাঁরা কেবল একটি জরাজীর্ণ শাসনব্যবস্থা পুন প্রচলন করেন।^{২৮}

উনিশ শতকে মূলত এই ধারণা থেকেই শুরু হয় তথাকথিত 'সংস্কার পর্ব'।^{২৯} যে সংস্কারে বিদ্যাশাগরের মতো ব্যক্তিগত উদ্যোগ ব্যতীত নারী শিক্ষা ও প্রগতির নিদর্শন পাওয়া যায় না। যদিও এই শতকের শেষ দিকে নিম্নবর্ণ-দলিতদের শিক্ষার অধিকার নিশ্চিত করতে ঔপনিবেশিক সরকার পদক্ষেপ নেয়। এক্ষেত্রে নিম্নবর্ণের ছাত্রদের শ্রেণি কক্ষে বসতে দেওয়া হয়, বর্ণ হিন্দু ছাত্রদের থেকে দূরে।^{৩০}

অর্থাৎ উনিশ শতকে রেনেসাঁ যুগে ভারতে ঔপনিবেশিক শিক্ষা নীতি সেই পুরুষতন্ত্র বা ছাত্র শিক্ষার ওপর জোর দেয়। ঔপনিবেশিক আইনে বলা হয়, শিক্ষা সকলের জন্যে নয়; ধনী, শিক্ষিত ও কাজের মানুষদের জন্য শিক্ষা; যাদের একটি শিক্ষাগত পরম্পরা আছে, শেখার আগ্রহ আছে, তেমন আছে উপায় ও যথেষ্ট অবসর।^{৩১}

এক্ষেত্রে নিশ্চিত ধরে নেওয়া হয় যে, পুরুষ বা পুত্র-সন্তানদের শিক্ষা ও কাজের অধিকার হল অগ্রাধিকার। যা অনুগত সরকারি কর্মচারী সৃষ্টির লক্ষ্যে ভাবা হয়।^{৩২}

আর নারী (ছাত্রী) শিক্ষা হল অর্থহীন-নিঃসফলা, এরা কাজের মানুষ নয়! গবেষক ডাগমার এঙ্গেলস লিখেছেন যে, ব্রিটিশ ও ভারতীয় সমাজ ভাবনায় নারীদের পরিবারের মধ্যেই ভালো মানায়। কাজেরমানুষ, দক্ষকর্মী, শিল্পক্ষেত্রে নয়।^{৪০}

অপরদিকে, নিম্নবর্ণ বা সাধারণ সমাজের মানুষ ছিলেন ঐতিহ্যকাল থেকে এদেশে 'দীনতমতম প্রজা'।^{৪১} এরা ছিলেন সর্বহারা। নারীর ওপর যেমন ছিল পিতৃতান্ত্রিক অনুশাসনের জুলুম, তেমন এদের ওপর ছিল রাষ্ট্র ও ভূ-স্বামীর একত্রে কর আদায় ও পরাধীনতার জুলুম।^{৪২}

এই কলে 'নারী মরে ঘরে' আর 'দীন মরে মাঠে'। উভয়েরই দৈন্যদশা। পরাধীনতার শৃঙ্খলে 'নারী ও নিম্নবর্ণের' এই একই অবস্থা ও অবস্থান ব্রিটিশ-ভারতেও ছিল স্পষ্ট। নিম্নবর্ণ ও নারী সমাজ যেমন কোনোদিন গুরুত্ব পায়নি, তেমন ঔপনিবেশিকগণ অবহেলিত এই সমাজকে গুরুত্ব দেয়নি। বরং তাঁরা মনে করত 'এদেশে সংস্কার যেমন অর্থহীন, তেমন বিপজ্জনক'।^{৪৩} এই সারবস্ত্র এদেশে কর্তৃত্ববাদী ঔপনিবেশিক শাসনকে যুক্তি সঙ্গত করে তোলে।^{৪৪}

অথচ, সামাজিক দিক থেকে এ সমাজ ছিল পরিবর্তনশীল, উর্দ্ধাভিমুখী ও উদ্যোগী।^{৪৫} এ কারণে সব বাধা-নিষেধ ছিন্ন করে এই উনিশ শতক থেকে নারী ও নিম্নবর্ণের শিক্ষা-সাংস্কৃতিক জাগরণ শুরু হয় এবং আদর্শ নারীর ধারণাকেও সার্বজনীন করা হয়।^{৪৬} প্রগতির প্রধান নির্দেশকরূপে নারী মর্যাদা ধরা হয়।^{৪৭}

এক্ষেত্রে নারীর ব্যক্তিগত উদ্যোগ ও সক্রিয় ভূমিকা যেমন দেখা যায়, তেমন নিম্ন সমাজে 'পতিত পবন ফুলে'দের আবির্ভাব ও তাঁদের মানবিক সংস্কারবলির সার্থক প্রয়াস দেখা যায়; যাকে আবার বারবার অস্বীকার করা হয়। শত নির্যাতন-নিপীড়ন ও পরাধীনতায় এই সমাজের গতি আপন ধারায় প্রবহমান- উদীয়মান। কারণ, বৃহত্তর এ সমাজের প্রকৃতি হল-সাধারণ অথচ অসাধারণ'।

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ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমার : নারীশিক্ষা ও নারীনির্মাণে

ফিরোজ খান

‘প্রাইমার’ অর্থাৎ শিশুর প্রথম পাঠ্য বই - শিশুর অক্ষর-বর্ণ ও সংখ্যা শিক্ষার আদি পুস্তক। আপাতভাবে সহজসরল ও সাদামাটা মনে হলেও এই বই শিশুর মনোরাজ্যের মতোই অত সহজসরল ও সাদাসিধে নয়। বরং এই বইয়ের খোপে খোপে থেকে যায় ভবিষ্যৎ নাগরিক নির্মাণের নানাবিধ প্রকৌশল (Technique)। প্রাইমার রচয়িতা সুকৌশলে তাঁর শিশু পাঠকের মনে প্রবেশ করিয়ে দেন ধর্ম অর্থ ও আরাম জ্ঞান। সেইসঙ্গে লেখকের কাঙ্ক্ষিত সমাজ ও রাষ্ট্র নির্মাণের আয়ুধ হিসেবে এই প্রাইমার শিশুকে দিতে থাকে রাষ্ট্রের অনুকূল তালিম। উনিশ শতকে রচিত মদনমোহন তর্কালংকারের শিশুপাঠ্য পুস্তক ‘শিশুশিক্ষা’ ও বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়ের ‘বর্ণপরিচয়’ এ আছে ঔপনিবেশিক প্রভুর গোলাম বানানো গোপাল রাখালদের আখ্যান। উনিশ শতকের ঐ যুগ পরিবেশেই নারী শিক্ষার বাজার উষ্ণ থালকেও বেশিরভাগ প্রাইমার তা এড়িয়ে গেছে। অবশ্য পরবর্তীকালে প্রাইমারে স্ত্রী শিক্ষার কথা বিশেষ গুরুত্বের সঙ্গে আলোচিত ও সংযোজিত হয়েছে। উনিশ শতকেই বিদ্যাসাগর মদনমোহনদের প্রভাবে প্রভাবিত হয়েই মুসলমান বালক-বালিকাদের শিক্ষার জন্য রচিত হয়েছিল বেশ কিছু ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমার। এর মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য ছিল মীর মশাররফ হোসেনের ‘মুসলমানের বাঙ্গালা শিক্ষা’। এই প্রাইমারটিতে মুসলিম বালকের পাশাপাশি বালিকাদেরও শিক্ষার কথা আছে। তবে মূলধারার শিক্ষার বাইরে স্ত্রী শিক্ষার অন্য এক অপরিচিত ভূবন নির্মিত হয় ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারে। উনিশ শতকের বাংলা প্রাইমারে স্ত্রী শিক্ষা ও স্ত্রী নির্মাণের সেই বিকল্প ভূবনটি আজো একুশ শতকের বাংলা প্রাইমারে লক্ষণীয়। মুসলিম নারীর এই ভিন্ন পরিসর সৃষ্টি নিশ্চয় তাঁদের কিছুটা হলেও সমাজ-বিচ্ছিন্ন ও সময়-বিচ্ছিন্ন করে রাখে। স্ত্রী শিক্ষার এই পৃথক ভূবন নিয়ে অনেক প্রশ্ন ও তর্ক থাকাও স্বাভাবিক। বর্তমান নিবন্ধে আমরা নির্বাচিত কয়েকটি ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারে স্ত্রী শিক্ষা ও স্ত্রী নির্মাণের কৌশলটিকে বাববার চেষ্টা করবো, প্রসঙ্গত সেখানে মুসলিম নারীর অবস্থান ও তাদের স্বাতন্ত্র্য অনুসন্ধান করবো।

২. প্রাইমার সম্পর্কিত প্রাইমারি কথা :

ইংরাজি ‘প্রাইমার’ শব্দটি এসেছে মূল ল্যাটিন শব্দ ‘primaries’ থেকে। সাধারণ অর্থে এই প্রাইমার শিশুর প্রাথমিক বা প্রথম পাঠ্যপুস্তক হিসেবে পরিচিত। অনেকেই মনে করেন ‘প্রাইমার’ এর মধ্যে দিয়ে শিশুর ভাষা শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করা হয়। তবে প্রাইমার শুধুমাত্র বর্ণ, অক্ষর ও ভাষা শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রেই সীমাবদ্ধ থাকে না; অক্ষর, বর্ণ ও ভাষাশিক্ষার পাশাপাশি পরবর্তীকালে এই প্রাইমারগুলি সংখ্যা, বার, মাসের নামসহ নিত্য প্রয়োজনীয় হিসেবের জ্ঞানও পাঠককে দান করেছে। ফলে শিশুশিক্ষার প্রথম ধাপে প্রাইমারের প্রয়োজনীয়তা বিপুল পরিমাণে বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছিল।

উনিশ শতকে ঔপনিবেশিক শাসন ব্যবস্থা জাঁকিয়ে বসবার পরে পরেই ঔপনিবেশিক শাসক ও নব্য শিক্ষিত বাঙালি ভদ্রলোকের কাছে ‘শিশু’ হয়ে ওঠে এক বিশেষ আবাদি জমি। সপ্তদশ - অষ্টাদশ

শতকে ইয়োরোপে ‘এনলাইটেনমেন্ট’ এর সময়কালে ইরাসমাস, রুশো, জন লক প্রমুখের কাছে ‘শিশু’ যেমন ছিল ‘টাবুলা রাসা’ বা ‘শূন্যপট’” অর্থাৎ যে ‘শূন্যপট’-এ যেমন খুশি আঁক কাটা যায় এবং তার অন্তরে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী প্রভাব ফেলা যায় সোজাকথায় শিশুচিন্তে শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে তাঁর মনোজগতের দখল নেওয়া যায়, তেমনই উনিশ শতকেই ঔপনিবেশিক শাসকসহ নব্য শিক্ষিত বাঙালি ভদ্রলোক বুঝেছিলেন শিশুচিন্তের আবাদি জমি দখল করতে পারলে তা শাসকের পক্ষেই কাজ করবে। এই জন্যই তো উনিশ শতকের সূচনালগ্ন থেকে বাংলা ভাষায় বিদেশীরা প্রাইমার রচনা শুরু করেন।

প্রাইমার রচনার ক্ষেত্রে ঔপনিবেশিক শাসকের স্পষ্টতই দ্বিমুখী উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। প্রথমত, এদেশের মাটি বা ভূমি দখল দ্বিতীয়ত, এদেশের শিশুমনের অনাবাদী রাজ্য কায়েম। মদনমোহন তর্কালংকার যখন তাঁর বিখ্যাত প্রাইমার ‘শিশুশিক্ষা’র সূচনায় তৎকালীন ভারতবর্ষের ‘শিক্ষাসমাজাধিপতি মহাশয় মহামহিম মান্যবর শ্রীযুক্ত জে. ই. ডি. বীটন’কে স্মরণ করে উপনিবেশের অনুসারী ও অনুকূল শিক্ষাকে চালিত করবার প্রচেষ্টা গ্রহণ করেন এবং ঠারেঠোরে তাঁর প্রাইমারে লিখে ফেলেন

‘লুন খাই গুণ গাই / বারো মাস তার দাস’ তখন আমাদের বুঝতে বাকি থাকে না যে, মদনমোহনের উদ্দিষ্ট ‘লুন’ দাতা কে এবং তাঁর গ্রহীতা কে? অথবা সেই দাতা ও গ্রহীতার অভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পর্কের স্বরূপটি কেমন। আসলে পিতৃসুলভ শাসন ও দাসত্ব কায়েমের ব্যাপারে প্রাইমারের বিকল্প আর কিছু আছে বলে আমাদের মনে হয় না।

বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয় তাঁর সুবিখ্যাত প্রাইমার ‘বর্ণপরিচয়’ এ গোপাল ও রাখালের যে বিপরীত যুগ্মপদ বা ‘Binary opposite’ নির্মাণ করেছেন সেখানে আদর্শ বালকের নানাবিধ ‘গুণ’ নিয়ে হাজির গোপাল। সে সুবোধ, নম্র, ভদ্র, পিতামাতার বাধ্য, প্রতাহ বিদ্যালয়ে যাওয়া এক অনুগত বালক। আর অন্যদিকে রাখাল একেবারে গোপালের বিপরীত। একজন নিয়ম-তন্ত্র এবং ব্যবস্থার একেবারে অনুকূল আর একজন নিয়ম-তন্ত্র-ব্যবস্থা এবং প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিরোধী এক বিভীষিকা। সাম্রাজ্যিকামী শাসকের কাছে গোপালের সর্বদা নিরাপদ এলাকা -- ‘সেফ জোন’ কিন্তু রাখালরা ‘বিপদ সংকেত’। এই কারণে শাসকের নির্মিত নতুন সাম্রাজ্যে গোপালদের গ্রহণযোগ্যতা অধিক তাঁরা আদর্শ নাগরিক আর অন্যদিকে রাখালদের জন্য বরাদ্দ নির্বাসন ‘জেলখানা’। বিদ্যাসাগরের এই শিশু তৈরির মডেল যে সেযুগে ঔপনিবেশিক শাসকের পক্ষে পরোক্ষ লাভজনক হয়েছিল তাঁর বড়ো প্রমাণ হল শাসক বিরোধী কার্যকলাপে শিক্ষিত মধ্যবিত্ত ও উচ্চবিত্ত শ্রেণির অংশগ্রহণে অনীহা।

উপরের এই দুটি নমুনা থেকে অন্তত স্পষ্ট বোঝা যাচ্ছে যে, প্রাইমার বা শিশুপাঠ্য পুস্তক শিক্ষাকে হাতিয়ার করে অতি সহজেই নির্মাণ করতে পারে শাসকের অনুকূল সংস্কৃতি, পরিবেশ, জনরুচি এবং সমাজ জীবন। ফলে প্রাইমার তখন আর কেবলমাত্র ‘বাচ্চাদের বই’ থাকে না, শৈশবের প্রাইমার বড়োদের মননে চিন্তনে প্রাত্যহিক জীবনে নানাভাবে প্রকাশিত হতে থাকে। প্রাইমারের এই অপরূপ মহিমাকে কাজে লাগিয়েছে আধুনিক যুগের শিক্ষিত সমাজ। আকারে অবয়বে ক্ষুদ্র এই বইয়ের হাত ধরেই নির্মিত হয়ে চলেছে নানাবিধ আদর্শ। নিচে কয়েকটি নমুনা সহযোগে আমরা ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারে নারী শিক্ষা ও নারীর আদর্শ নির্মাণের প্রকল্পটি বিচার বিশ্লেষণ করবার চেষ্টা করবো।

৩. কেন ইসলামি প্রাইমার?

বিদ্যাসাগরের বহুজনপ্রিয়, উনিশ ও বিশ শতকের সর্বাগ্রগণ্য বাংলা প্রাইমার ‘বর্ণপরিচয়’ (১৮৫৫) এ কি কোনো মুসলমান শিশুর কথা আছে? গোপাল রাখালদের মতো কি কোনো মুসলমান বালক অথবা বালিকা সেখানে স্থান পেয়েছে? কিংবা ধরুন রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের বহু পরিকল্পিত ও আদর্শ শিশুপাঠ্য গ্রন্থ ‘সহজপাঠ’ (১৯৩০) সেখানেও কি কোনো প্রতিনিধিত্বমূলক মুসলমান চরিত্র খুঁজে পাওয়া যায়? সহজ উত্তর - না, পাওয়া যায় না। কেন ছিল না তার যথার্থ কারণ অনুসন্ধান করবেন সমাজতাত্ত্বিক এবং ঐতিহাসিকরা। কিন্তু আমাদের মনে একটা প্রশ্ন থেকেই যায় সেখানে কি মুসলমান শিশু থাকা উচিত ছিল না? অনেকেই মনে করেন ধর্মের ভিত্তিতে পৃথক প্রাইমার প্রয়োজন নয়। তাই বিদ্যাসাগর রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁদের প্রাইমারগুলিতে এরকম ভেদাভেদ করেননি। কিন্তু প্রাইমার রচনার ক্ষেত্রে পৃথক বা স্বতন্ত্র একটি ধর্মের চরিত্রদেরকেই বা কেন বেছে নেওয়া হবে? এটি কি একপ্রকার একদেশদর্শিতা নয়?

বিদ্যাসাগর যে সময়ে তাঁর সুবিখ্যাত প্রাইমারটি লিখেছেন এবং বাজারে ব্যাপক হারে বিক্রি করেছেন তখন মুসলমান সমাজ ততখানি শিক্ষার আঙিনায় আসতে পারেনি। তাঁদের সংখ্যাও বাংলায় হিন্দুর থেকে কম। কিন্তু আর কিছুদিন পর থেকেই তো হিন্দুর অনুপাতে মুসলমানের সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি পেতে শুরু করেছিল। হিন্দু যখন ‘Dyeing Race’ হিসেবে গ্রাহ্য ঠিক তখন নবজাগৃত মুসলমান শিশুদের জন্য সেকালের হিন্দু প্রাইমার রচয়িতারা ভাবলেন কোথায়? মুসলমান শাসন পতনের পর এবং ইংরেজ শাসনের সূচনা পর্ব থেকেই মুসলমানরা এদেশের সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ হয়ে উঠছেন তাহলে তাঁদেরকে ভুলে থাকছেন কেন সেকালের বিদ্বজনেরা? ১৯৩০ সালে ‘সহজপাঠ’ এর প্রকাশকালে আদমসুমারির হিসাব অনুযায়ী মুসলমানই সংখ্যাগুরু। ঠিক সেইরকম একটি সময়ে ‘সহজপাঠ’ এর প্রথম ও দ্বিতীয় দুটি ভাগ যেটে মাত্র দুটি মুসলমান চরিত্র পাওয়া যায়। প্রথম ভাগের প্রথম পাঠের দ্বিতীয় কবিতায় আছে ‘জয়নাল ধরে হাল’ আর দ্বিতীয় ভাগের সপ্তম পাঠের কবিতাংশে আছে রোজ সকাল হলে / যাই শহরের দিকে চলে/ তমিজ মিঞার গোরুরগাড়ি চড়ে’। আরেকটি জায়গায় রয়েছে ‘বর্ষাতি পরে চলেছেন আদালি তুর্কি মিঞা’। ব্যাস এই কয়েকটি জায়গায়। আধুনিক ভারতবর্ষে সেকালের ও মানবকল্যাণকামী আদর্শের প্রতিভূ রবীন্দ্রনাথের কলমে আর কোনো আদর্শ মুসলমান কেন এলো না? অথবা মুসলমান শিশুকে অনুপ্রেরণা জোগাবে এমন কোনো আদর্শের অভাব হল কেন?

‘মূলধারার লেখকদের এই উপেক্ষা, অনীহা ও অবহেলা থেকেই জন্ম নিল হিন্দুর বিরোধী প্রাইমারের ধারণা। উনিশ শতকে বিদ্যাসাগর, মদনমোহন তর্কালংকারদের কাউন্টার করে বিস্তার মুসলমান প্রাইমার রচিত হয়েছে সেই একই ধারা অব্যাহত থেকেছে বিশ শতক পর্যন্ত। আবার একুশ শতকে ইসলামী প্রাইমার তার সুবিধামতো চরিত্র বদল করেছে। ফলে ইসলাম ধর্ম ও সংস্কৃতির আদর্শ নির্মাণের অনুকূলে রচিত এই ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমার আমাদের আসলে এক ‘অপর’ (other) জগত দর্শনে সাহায্য করবে। নারী শিক্ষা ও নারীর আদর্শ নির্মাণে এই সমস্ত প্রাইমার মূলধারার সাহিত্যের থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়েও এক স্বতন্ত্র এবং শক্তিশালী বয়ান নির্মাণে কতদূর সফল হয়েছে তা অনুভব করা যাবে এই প্রাইমারগুলির পাতায় পাতায়।

৪. ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমার : যতটুকু নারী উনিশ শতকের বাংলা সাহিত্যে অবরোধবাসিনী নারী আবহমানকালের শৃঙ্খল মোচন করে ক্রমে ক্রমে মুক্তির স্বপ্ন দেখছিল - মধুসূদনের 'বীরাঙ্গনা'য় তা স্পষ্ট। আলোকপ্রাপ্তির এই যুগ পরিবেশে হিন্দু নারী আত্মবিকাশ ও আত্মপ্রসারণের ক্ষেত্রে হিসেবে বেছে নিচ্ছিল পত্রপত্রিকাকে যেখানে তাঁরাও পুরুষদের পাশাপাশি সাহিত্য রচনায় সামিল হচ্ছিলেন। নাটক নভেল থেকে শুরু করে বটতলা সাহিত্য সমস্ত কিছুকেই এক বিশেষ বর্গের হিন্দু রমণী অধিগত করতে সক্ষম হচ্ছিলেন। আবার প্রগতিশীল ও রক্ষণশীল উভয় শ্রেণির হিন্দু লেখকদের হাতে এই সময়েই সৎ নারীর আদর্শ নির্মিত হচ্ছিল। কিন্তু লক্ষ করবার বিষয় এই সময়ে মুসলিম নারীর কথা বাংলা সাহিত্যে তুলনামূলকভাবে কম উপস্থাপিত হয়েছে। উপেক্ষিতা এই মুসলিম অন্তঃপুর যেটুকু সাহিত্যে উঠে আসে তা খুবই সীমিত - বিশেষত রাজঅন্তঃপুর; মোঘল হারেম। কিন্তু এই বিরলতার মধ্যেও যেটুকু লক্ষ করা গেল সেটুকুও লজ্জা ও ঘৃণা ব্যাতীত আর কিছু নয় উদ্ধৃতিসহ নিতান্ত পরিতাপ ও ক্ষোভের বিষয়, কতিপয় বঙ্গ সাহিত্যিক বা ঔপন্যাসিক মুসলমান রমণীর চরিত্র চিত্রণে যেরূপ সংকীর্ণতা ও একদেশদর্শিতার পরিচয় দিয়াছেন, তাহা ভাবিলে লজ্জায় ও ঘৃণায় ভ্রিয়মান হইতে হয়। তিনি [বন্ধিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়] দয়া করিয়া তাঁহার উপন্যাসে যে সকল মুসলমান রমণীকে স্থান দান করিয়া তাহাদিগকে অমর করিয়াছেন, আমাদিগের দূরদৃষ্ট নিবন্ধন তাহার একটিকেও আমরা আমাদের কুলরমণী রূপে বরণ করিয়া লইতে পারি না। তাঁহার অমর লেখনী-প্রসূত বা উদ্ভট কল্পনা-বিজস্কৃত প্রত্যেক মুসলমান রমণীই বাঙ্গালার আবহাওয়ার গুণে এমনই কিছুতকিমাকার ধারণ করিয়াছে যে, তাহাদিগকে চিনিয়া বাহির করা অতীব দুসাধ্য।

'আল-এসলাম' পত্রিকার বৈশাখ ১৩২২ বঙ্গাব্দের প্রথম ভাগ প্রথম সংখ্যায় প্রকাশিত এই প্রবন্ধে প্রাবন্ধিক আবদুল মালেক চৌধুরীর কণ্ঠে বাংলা সাহিত্যে মুসলমান রমণীর অবস্থান সম্পর্কে যেমন আক্ষেপ ধ্বনিত হয়েছে তেমনই বলা হয়েছে যে, উপন্যাসে দৃশ্যমান মুসলমান রমণীদের সঙ্গে মুসলমান সমাজের বাস্তবিক কোনো সামঞ্জস্য নেই। এর থেকে সহজেই অনুমান করা চলে যে, উনিশ শতকের বাংলা সাহিত্যে মুসলমান নারীর যে আদর্শ নির্মিত হয়েছে তা মুসলমান সমাজের পরিপন্থী।

মুসলমান নারীচরিত্র মাধুরী কোথায় লুক্কায়িত আছে, তাহা হিন্দু বন্ধিমবাবু বুঝিবেন কিরূপে? তিনি যাহা লিখিয়াছেন, তাহা নিজের সীমাবদ্ধ ভূয়োদর্শনকে খেয়ালের রঙ্গে রাঙ্গাইয়া "যবন"-বিদেহ-বিষে অভিযুক্ত করিয়াই লিখিয়াছেন, সুতরাং তাঁহার অঙ্কিত চিত্রে মুসলমান সমাজের আদর্শ চরিত্র অনুসন্ধান করা পশুশ্রম মাত্র।"^{১৬}

মুসলমান সমাজের আদর্শ চরিত্র নির্মাণে হিন্দু লেখককুলের এই ব্যর্থতা বহুক্ষেত্রেই পরিদৃশ্যমান। সমাজতত্ত্ববিদরা মনে করেন এর পেছনে লেখকের সমাজ ও সাংস্কৃতিক ব্যবধান প্রত্যক্ষভাবে দায়ী। বন্ধিমের উপন্যাসেই কেবলমাত্র মুসলমান নারী কলঙ্কিত হয়নি, শিশুপাঠ্য পুস্তকের মধ্যেও মুসলমান শিশুর অনুকূল ও আদর্শস্থানীয় কোনো চরিত্র ছিল না বলে ইসলামি বিদৎসমাজের দাবি। কারণ উনিশ শতকের শেষার্ধ্বে তাঁদের রচনায় হিন্দু জাতীয়তাবাদের যে ভাব দেখা দিয়েছিল তা কোনোভাবেই অনুমোদন করতে পারেননি মুসলমানেরা। সেই সাহিত্য সম্পর্কে আপত্তিগুলি নির্দেশ করেছেন আনিসুজ্জামান মহাশয় :

এক, মুসলমানের নিত্যব্যবহার্য আরবি, ফারসি ও হিন্দুস্থানি শব্দ আধুনিক সাহিত্যের ভাষায় স্থান পায়নি; দুই, এই সাহিত্যে মুসলিম জীবনের কোনো পরিচয় নেই; তিন তার চেয়েও শোচনীয় ব্যাপার এই যে, ইতিহাসাশ্রিত যেসব কাব্য-নাটক-উপন্যাসে মুসলমান চরিত্র স্থান পেয়েছে, সেসব রচনায় মুসলমানের শ্রদ্ধেয় বহু ঐতিহাসিক চরিত্র কলঙ্কিত হয়েছে।

বিদ্যাসাগর যে ‘বর্ণপরিচয়’ রচনা করেছিলেন মুসলমান সমাজে তা ছিল গুরুত্বশূন্য এবং পরিতাপের কারণ। কেননা

“আমাদের (পড়ুন মুসলমানদের) শিশুগণকে প্রথমেই রাম শ্যাম গোপালের গল্প পড়িতে হয়। সে পড়ে গোপাল বড়ো ভালো ছেলে। কাসেম বা আবদুল্লা কেমন ছেলে সে তাহা পড়িতে পায় না। এখান হইতেই তাহার সর্বনাশের বীজ^৪ বপিত হয়। তারপর সে পাঠ্যপুস্তকে রামলক্ষ্মণের কথা, কৃষ্ণার্জুনের কথা, সীতাসাবিত্রীর কথা, বিদ্যাসাগরের কথা, কৃষ্ণকান্তের কথা ইত্যাদি হিন্দু মহাজনদিগের আখ্যান পড়িতে থাকে। স্বভাবতই তাহার ধারণা জন্মিয়া যায় যে, আমরা মুসলমান ছোটো জাতি, আমাদের মধ্যে বড়ো লোক নাই। হিন্দু বালকগণ ঐ সকল পুস্তক পড়িয়া মনে করে আমাদের অপেক্ষা বড়ো কেহ নয়। মুসলমানরা নিতান্ত ছোটো জাতি। তাহাদের মধ্যে ভালো লোক জন্মিতে পারে না।^৫

‘আল-এসলাম’ পত্রিকায় একথা লিখছেন ভাষাবিদ মুহম্মদ শহিদুল্লাহ। অর্থাৎ আমরা বুঝতে পারছি সবার নিচে সবার পিছে ও সবহারা মুসলমানকে এবার ঘুরে দাঁড়াতে হলে গড়ে তুলতে হবে বিকল্প বয়ান প্রয়োজন বিকল্প প্রাইমার থেকে বিকল্প পাঠ্যপুস্তক। রাম, শ্যাম, গোপালের সমান্তরালে কাসেম ও আবদুল্লাদের আখ্যান হয়ে উঠলো জরুরি।

১৩২৩ বঙ্গাব্দে বাংলার প্রখ্যাত ভাষাতত্ত্ববিদ মুহম্মদ শহিদুল্লাহ ‘আল-এসলাম’ পত্রিকায় আক্ষেপভরে লিখেছিলেন -

“মজ্জবে ও মুসলমান বালি-কা বিদ্যালয়েও আমাদের শিশুগণকে হিন্দুর লিখিত পুস্তক পড়িতে হয়, তদপেক্ষা আর কি কলঙ্কের কথা আছে? আমরা কি এতই মুর্থ যে তাহাদের জন্য পুস্তক রচনা করিতে পারি না? মূল পাঠ্য ইতিহাসে হিন্দু রাজাদেরসম্বন্ধে অগৌরবজনক কথা প্রায় ঢাকিয়া ফেলা হয়। আর মুসলমানদিগের বেলায় ঢাকঢোল বাজাইয়া প্রকাশ করা হয়। গুণের কথা বর একটা উল্লিখিত হয় না। ফল দাঁড়ায় এই, ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস পড়িয়া ছাত্ররা বুঝিল, মুসলমান নিতান্তই অপদার্থ অবিশ্বাসী এবং নির্ধর জাতি। পৃথিবীর মধ্যে তাহাদের লোপ হওয়াই প্রয়োজন।”^৬

মোহম্মদ ফকিরউদ্দিন সরকার ১৩১৬ বঙ্গাব্দে ‘বাসনা’ পত্রিকার দ্বিতীয় ভাগ, দ্বিতীয় সংখ্যায় আরো স্পষ্টভাবে পাঠ্য পুস্তকে সাম্প্রদায়িক বিভাজনের সমস্যার কথা তুলে ধরলেন। লিখলেন-

“প্রথম বর্ণ পরিচয় কাল হইতেই আমাদের বালকগণ রামের গল্প, শ্যামের কথা, হরির কাহিনি, কৃষ্ণের চরিত্র ইত্যাদি পড়িতে থাকে। যদু-মধু, শিব-ব্রহ্মা, রাম-হরি ইত্যাদি নামের পাঠ আরম্ভ করিতে হয়। কাজেই আমাদের সরলমতি কোমলপ্রকৃতি শিশুগণ বিদ্যালয় পঠিত হিন্দুগণের

উল্লিখিত বিষয়গুলির প্রতি দৃঢ় বিশ্বাসী হয় এবং আমাদের জাতীয় পবিত্র শাস্ত্র ও ইতিহাস উপাদান ধর্মকর্মাদির বিষয় অপরিজ্ঞাত হইয়া থাকে”

অতএব মুসলমানের পাঠ্যপুস্তক প্রণয়নের প্রাথমিকশর্ত ও প্রয়োজনীয়তাগুলি হল -

১. মুসলমানের অতীত গৌরব ও ঐতিহ্যকে পৃথিবী এবং মানবের মন থেকে লোপ পাওয়া থেকে রক্ষা করা।
২. ইসলাম ধর্মের গৌরব ও গুণের কথাপ্র কাশ করা
৩. মুসলমানের ‘জাতীয় পবিত্র শাস্ত্র ও ইতিহাস উপাদান ধর্মকর্মাদির বিষয়’ সম্পর্কে অবগত করা।

উনিশ শতকে বাঙালি হিন্দুর হাতে রচিত বাংলা প্রাইমার সমূহ সম্পূর্ণভাবে মুসলমান চরিত্র বিবর্জিত। তারই প্রত্যুত্তরে মুসলমান সমাজে যে সমস্ত ইসলামি প্রাইমার রচিত হল সেখানে গোপাল-রাখাল-যাদব-মাধবদেবের আগ্রাসী অবস্থানের বিরুদ্ধে সেখ-পাঠান বালক যথা রহিম-করিম প্রমুখদের আগমন। শুধুমাত্র তাইই নয়, ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারের একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অভিনবত্ব এখানে যে, বিদ্যাসাগরের ‘বর্ণপরিচয়’ সকল স্তরের মানুষের কাছে পৌঁছে গেলেও সেখানে কোনো আদর্শ স্ত্রী চরিত্র নেই। কিন্তু ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারের প্রথম প্রতিনিধিস্থানীয় লেখক মীর মশাররফ হোসেন তাঁর ‘মুসলমানের বাঙ্গলা শিক্ষা’ বইতে বালকের পাশাপাশি বালিকারও শিক্ষার কথা বলে তাঁর প্রাইমারের সম্ভাব্য পাঠককে চিহ্নিত করছেন। তবে তাঁর সেই প্রাইমার জুড়ে কোনো আদর্শ বালিকার নমুনা আমরা পাইনি। আমাদের আলোচ্য বিশ শতকের শেষ দশক ও একুশ শতকের প্রথম দুটি দশকে যে সমস্ত ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমার রচিত হয়েছে সেখানেও আদর্শ বালিকা তথা স্ত্রী চরিত্র বলতে সেরকম কেউ নেই। দু’একটি প্রাইমারে বালক ও বালিকা দুই বর্গের শিশুকে বোঝাতে ‘আমরা’ ব্যবহৃত হলেও পরক্ষণেই সেখানে পুরুষের কণ্ঠই প্রাধান্য পাচ্ছে। আবার অনেকক্ষেত্রে ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারে স্ত্রীর ভাষ্য বলতে যা পাওয়া যাচ্ছে তা হল নবীর স্ত্রী কিংবা নবীর কোনো সাহাবীর স্ত্রীর আদর্শ চরিত্রকথা। এখন প্রশ্ন হল আধুনিক যুগে দাঁড়িয়েও এই সমস্ত প্রাইমারগুলি তবে কি আধুনিক নারীর ভাষ্য রচনায় ব্যর্থ হচ্ছে? অথবা নারীর আদর্শ বলতে ইসলামি সমাজ ও সংস্কৃতি যা বোঝে তা কি কেবলমাত্র সেই দেড় হাজার বছরের পুরনো স্ত্রী-চরিতেই সংরক্ষিত? এই প্রশ্নটিকে সামনে রেখে অনেকেই মনে করেন যে ইসলামি প্রাইমার সেভাবে হয়তো স্ত্রীর আদর্শ নির্মাণে পারঙ্গমতা দেখাতে পারেনি। কিন্তু আমরা আমাদের এই গবেষণায় নির্বাচিত কয়েকটি প্রাইমারে স্ত্রীর ভাষ্য নির্মাণের চেষ্টা করবো। সেক্ষেত্রে আমাদের প্রতিপাদ্য -

নারী-পুরুষ সহাবস্থান : দ্বন্দ্ব ও সমন্বয়

- লিঙ্গভিত্তিক পক্ষপাতিত্ব
- নারীর আধুনিকতা ও পিছুটান
- নারী শিক্ষা ও নারী অধিকার
- সং নারীর আদর্শ নির্মাণ

৫. ইসলামে নারী শিক্ষা :

ইসলামি শিক্ষাতাত্ত্বিকরা মনে করেন যে, অন্যান্য ধর্মাবলম্বীদের মধ্যে শিক্ষা ও জ্ঞান অর্জনের সুযোগ ও ক্ষেত্রগুলি এক এক বিশেষ বর্ণের মানুষদের জন্য কৃষ্ণিগত থাকলেও ইসলামে তা হয়নি। বরং সকলেই শিক্ষার সমান অধিকার পেয়েছেন ইসলামে। তাঁদের মতে “মহানবী (সো) শিক্ষা অর্জন করাকে প্রত্যেক নরনারী নির্বিশেষে সকলের জন্য ফরয বা অবশ্য কর্তব্য হিসেবে ঘোষণা করেছেন।”^{১৯} শুধু তাই নয়, শিক্ষাকে উৎসাহিত করার লক্ষ্যে বিদ্বানের কলমের কালিকে শহিদের রক্তের চেয়েও মূল্যবান মনে করা হয়েছে।^{২০}

এখানে লক্ষ করবার বিষয় পুরুষের পাশাপাশি নারীর শিক্ষার কথাকেও স্বীকৃতি দেওয়া হয়েছে। শুধুমাত্র তাইই নয় মনে করা হয় সমস্ত বিশ্ব যখন অশিক্ষা, কুশিক্ষা ও কুসংস্কার আর অজ্ঞতার অন্ধকারে নিমজ্জমান ছিল তখন মহানবী নারীর মৌলিক অধিকার রক্ষার্থে নারী শিক্ষার কথা বলেছেন। নারীকে আত্মিক ও নৈতিক গুণাবলীর চূড়ায় প্রতিষ্ঠিত করার লক্ষ্য হিসেবেই দৈহিক সত্তার বিকাশের পাশাপাশি তার বিবেক এবং বুদ্ধিবৃত্তিকে উৎকর্ষের উপর মহানবী বিশেষ গুরুত্ব প্রদান করেছেন। ১১ কেউ কেউ মনে করেছেন মহম্মদ অনুভব একটি সফল, পূর্ণাঙ্গ ও স্থায়ী সমাজ কাঠামোর জন্য নারী পুরুষ সকলের সমান অংশগ্রহণ প্রয়োজন। তাই তিনি নারী শিক্ষার প্রতি গুরুত্ব আরোপ করেছিলেন - মহানবী (সো.) পুরুষদের যেভাবে তা'লীম দিতেন মহিলাদেরও অনুরূপভাবে তা'লীম দিতেন। ঈদের মাঠে দেখা যেত তিনি পুরুষদের সামনে ভাষণ শেষ করে নারীদের সমাবেশে চলে যেতেন এবং সেখানে বক্তব্য রাখতেন।^{২১}

জানা যায় যে, নারীদের সুশিক্ষিত করে তোলাবার জন্য তিনি অভিভাবকদের উৎসাহিত করতেন এবং এই বিষয়ে বলেছেন - যে ব্যক্তি তিনটি কন্যা সন্তান ও বোনকে লালন পালন করে। তাদেরকে আদব কায়দা শিক্ষা দান করে, তাঁদের সাথে স্নেহপূর্ণ ব্যবহার করে, এমনকি তারা আর তার মুখাপেক্ষী থাকে না, তার জন্য আল্লাহ জাহ্নাত অবধারিত করে দেন।^{২২}

এখানে কন্যা সন্তানের গুরুত্বের কথা এবং সমান্তরালভাবে তাদের শিক্ষার কথাকে বলা হচ্ছে। এরই পাশাপাশি বলা হচ্ছে যে, শুধুমাত্র গৃহস্থ স্ত্রীদেরকে নয়; ঘরের 'বাদী-দাসীদের'কেও শিক্ষার আলোকে আনবার প্রচেষ্টা বলবৎ ছিল। সেকালে 'আসমাউর রিজাল' শীর্ষক জীবনী সংকলন-গ্রন্থের কথা জানা যায় যেখানে প্রায় এক হাজার সাহাবিদের মধ্যে দেড়শত বিদুষী নারীর জীবনী সংকলিত হয়েছিল। এর থেকেও কেউ কেউ অনুমান করেছেন যে, তৎকালীন নারীশিক্ষার উপর বিশেষ গুরুত্ব ছিল বলেই নারীর অধিকার স্বীকৃত হয়েছে। তবে নারীশিক্ষার প্রতি উপযুক্ত দৃষ্টি পড়েছিল উমাইয়া যুগে, যেখানে নারীদের জ্যোতির্বিদ্যা শিক্ষা আরব ইতিহাসের জ্ঞানচর্চার কথা জানা যায়। মোহাম্মদ ইসমাইল মিয়া তাঁর একটি প্রবন্ধে লিখেছেন - “ইসলামী সমাজের মহিলারা দীন সম্পর্কে জরুরী জ্ঞান লাভ করুন এর এই ছিল রাসূলে করীম (সো) বাসনা। কেবল নীতিগত জ্ঞান শিক্ষা দেওয়াই তাঁর লক্ষ্য ছিল না; সেইসঙ্গে বিভিন্ন কারিগরী শিক্ষা দেয়াও এর অন্তর্ভুক্ত ছিল অনিবার্যভাবে।”^{২৩}

উপরোক্ত কথাগুলি ইসলামের গৌরবোজ্জ্বল ইতিহাস নির্মাণে বিশেষভাবে সহায়ক বটে তবে এই শিক্ষার আলোটুকু যে সমাজের সবস্তরের মানুষ পেয়েছেন সে বিষয়ে নিশ্চিত করে কিছু বলসা সম্ভব নয়। কেননা সমাজের অবতলের মানুষদের কথা এই ইতিহাসের মধ্যে সের্বকম ভাবে জায়গা করে

নিতে পারেনি। কাজে কাজেই ইসলামি শিক্ষায় নারীর অধিকার স্বীকৃত থাকলেও তা যে সর্বজনীন ছিল না তা আমরা জোর দিয়েই বলতে পারি। তবে একথা ঠিক যে আনুগত্য, পতিপরায়ণতা, ধর্মভীরুতা ইত্যাদি বিশেষ দোষ ও গুণের সমাহারে সেকালের নারী নির্মিত হয়েছে।

৬. প্রাইমারে নারী ভাষ্য : বিরলতায় দুর্লক্ষ

আমরা জানি সাহিত্যের অঙ্গন বিশেষভাবে পুরুষ শাসিত ও পুরুষাধিপত্যে ভরপুর। উনিশ শতকে রচিত বাংলা প্রাইমারের আঙিনাতেও তাই নারীর উপস্থিতি বিরলতায় দুর্লক্ষ। মদনমোহন তর্কালঙ্কার তাঁর বিখ্যাত প্রাইমার ‘শিশুশিক্ষা’য় তাও বা যে ‘সামা’ ও ‘বামা’কে সৃজন করেছিলেন বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয় কৃষ্ণে তাঁদের লিঙ্গান্তর ঘটিয়ে ‘রাম’ ও ‘শ্যাম’ - এ রূপান্তর করেছিলেন। ১৭ অবশ্য উনিশ শতকের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে প্রকাশিত ইসলামি প্রাইমারগুলিতে নারীর উপস্থিতি কতটা ছিল তা নিশ্চিত করে বলা যায় না। কিন্তু ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারের প্রথম প্রতিনিধিস্থানীয় লেখক মীর মশাররফ হোসেন তাঁর ‘মুসলমানের বাঙ্গালা শিক্ষা’ বইতে বালকের পাশাপাশি বালিকারও শিক্ষার কথা ব’লে তাঁর প্রাইমারের সম্ভাব্য পাঠককে চিহ্নিত করছেন। তবে সেখানে কোনো আদর্শ স্ত্রীচরিত্র অনুপস্থিত।

আমাদের আলোচ্য বিশ শতকের শেষ দুটি দশক ও একুশ শতকের প্রথম দুটি দশকের মধ্যে রচিত প্রাইমারগুলিতে অবশ্য নারী চরিত্র ও স্ত্রীর ভাষ্য নির্মাণে বেশ কিছুটা সক্রিয়তা দেখিয়েছেন এযুগের ইসলামি প্রাইমার লেখকরা। আমরা নির্বাচিত কিছু প্রাইমারের মধ্যে থেকে এই স্ত্রী ভাষ্যের স্বরূপ বোঝবার চেষ্টা করবো।

ক. সালাফী বর্ণ পরিচয় (প্রথম ভাগ) : অধ্যাপক মাওলানা হাফেয শাইখ আইনুল বারী আলিয়াভী রচিত এই প্রাইমারটি প্রথম প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল ১৯৮৭ সালের জানুয়ারি মাসে। ২০১৯ এ প্রাইমারটির ত্রয়োদশ প্রকাশ ‘পরিমার্জিত নূতন সংস্করণ’ হিসেবে। ৩২ পৃষ্ঠার এই সালাফী বর্ণ পরিচয় (প্রথম ভাগ)) এ মোট চারটি জায়গা ছাড়া আর কোথাও নারী বা স্ত্রীর কোনো অনুষঙ্গ আসেনি। সেই জায়গা চারটি হল - ১. সুফিয়ার নুপুরটি রূপার গহনা। ২. ভোর হল দোর খোল। খোকা খুকু ওঠোরে। (নজরটান প্রাবন্ধিকের) ৩. হযরত ফাতেমা যাঁতা চালাতেন । ৪. আয় ছেলেরা আয় মেয়েরা / পড়বি কে রে আয়, / সালাফী ঢঙে বের হয়েছে/ বর্ণ পরিচয়।^{১৮} **নজরটান প্রাবন্ধিকের**

এই চার জায়গা ছাড়া আর কোথাও কোনো স্ত্রী / নারীর বয়ান নেই। যদিওবা ই চার জায়গাতেই নারীর ভূমিকা সমান নয়। ৪ নং উদাহরণে আমরা লক্ষ্য করবো ছেলের পাশাপাশি মেয়েদের পড়ার স্বপ্ন উন্মেষ দেওয়া হলেও ৩ নং উদাহরণে ‘ফাতেমা’র যাঁতা চালানোর আদর্শকেও সামনে আনা হয়েছে। অবশ্যই এর মধ্যে দিয়ে নবীকন্যার কঠোর জীবন যাপন ও সহনশীলতার তালিম দেওয়া হচ্ছে বালিকাদের মগজে।

খ. সালাফী বর্ণ পরিচয় (দ্বিতীয় ভাগ) :

‘সালাফী বর্ণ পরিচয়’ এর প্রথম ভাগের শেষ হয়েছিল দু’জনকেই পড়ালেখার আহ্বান জানিয়ে। কিন্তু এর দ্বিতীয় ভাগের প্রারম্ভেই বানান শিক্ষার তালিম দিতে গিয়ে ‘মেয়ে’দেরকে বিদায় দেওয়া হয়েছে। ‘র-ফলা যোগে শব্দ ও বাক্য গঠনে’র শেষ পঙ্ক্তি -

খ/১. “ছাত্রদের একমাত্র ব্রত পড়াশোনা।” (পৃ. ৪) ছাত্রী নেই এখানে আর।

এরপর সমগ্র প্রাইমারটিতে যেভাবে পরোক্ষে নারীর কথা বিশেষ বিশেষ ক্ষেত্রে বালিকাদের কথা এসেছে সেগুলি খানিকটা এঁরকম -

খ/২. হযরত ফাতেমা সতী ও সাধবী নারী। (পৃ. ৫)

খ/৩. মাতৃস্নেহের তুলনা হয় না। (পৃ. ৬)

খ/৪. একজন পাপী নারী একজন তৃষগর্ত কুকুরের তৃষগ নিবারণ করে স্বর্গের সুসংবাদ পান। (পৃ. ৭.)

খ/৫. নবীজীর দুন্ধামাতার নাম হালিমা। (পৃ. ৮)

খ/৬. লজ্জা নারীর সজ্জা। (এই পৃষ্ঠাতেই অন্য একটি বাক্যে আছে ‘মেধাবী ছাত্ররাই বৃত্তি পায়’) (পৃ. ১০)

খ/৭. কচিকাঁচা ছেলে মেয়ে আমরা হে নাথ / তোমার সকাশে প্রভু তুলিয়াছি হাত। (পৃ. ১৭)

খ/৮. দেখ আমিনা মায়ের কোলে / দোলে শিশু ইসলাম দোলে। (পৃ. ১৮)

খ/৯. বেগম রোকেয়া তীক্ষ্ণ বুদ্ধি মহিলা ছিলেন। তাঁর বুদ্ধির তীক্ষ্ণতারই ফলে বাঙালী মুসলিম নারীদের শিক্ষাদীক্ষার পথ প্রশস্ত হয়। নারীদের উৎকর্ষ সাধনে তাঁর আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষা ছিল খবই উচ্চ। (পৃ. ১৯)

উপরের নয়টি উদাহরণে প্রত্যক্ষভাবে কোথাও কোনো নারীর ভাষ্য নেই। পরোক্ষে বিভিন্ন প্রকার নারীকে চিহ্নিত করা হয়েছে বিশেষত তাঁদের গুণ ও কর্মের ভিত্তিতে। যেমন

হজরত ফাতেমা = সতী সাধবী নারীর আদর্শ

অতুলনীয় মায়ের আদর্শ = স্নেহপরায়ণতা

পাপী নারীর মুক্তির আদর্শ = পরোপকার / ক্ষুধার্তকে অন্নদান, তৃষগর্তকে জল

প্রকৃত নারীর আদর্শ = লজ্জাশীলতা

শ্রেষ্ঠ মায়ের আদর্শ = মা আমিনা (নবী মহম্মদের মা)

শিক্ষিতা ও বুদ্ধিমতী প্রগতিশীল মহীয়সী নারীর আদর্শ = রোকেয়া

আমরা খুব সহজেই অনুমান করতে পারছি প্রাইমারটি এখানে আর শব্দ বর্ণ বাক্য শিখন অনুশীলনেই সীমাবদ্ধ নেই। লেখক তাঁর নিজস্ব দর্শন অনুযায়ী শিক্ষার্থীকে ধর্ম, কর্ম ও আচার ব্যবহারের তালিম দিয়ে যাচ্ছেন সুকৌশলে।

‘সাল্লাফী বর্ণ পরিচয়’ এর দ্বিতীয় ভাগের একটি চমৎকার গল্পে আমরা আরেকটি বালিকার আখ্যান আমরা পেয়ে যায় যে গোয়ালিনীর কন্যা হওয়া সত্ত্বেও সততার গুণে রাজরাণীতে গোত্রান্তরিত হয়।

এক বৃদ্ধা গোয়ালিনী বৃদ্ধা তাঁর কন্যাকে নিয়ে থাকতেন। একদা সেই বৃদ্ধা তাঁর কন্যাকে পরামর্শ দিয়েছিলেন অধিক লাভ করবার জন্য দুধে ‘পানি’ মেশাতে। কিন্তু মেয়েটি তাঁর সততার উপর ভর

করে বলেছিলেন - “তা কি হয় মা? কারণ আল্লাহ ও তাঁর রাসুলের মানা কোনো কিছুতে ভেজাল দিও না” গোপনে এই কথা শুনেছিলেন রাজ্য টহলরত দ্বিতীয় খলিফা হজরত ওমর ফারুক। অতঃপর ধার্মিক খলিফা মেয়েটির সততায় মুগ্ধ হলেন এবং নিজের পুত্র আসেমের সঙ্গে তার বিবাহ দিলেন। ‘এভাবে গোয়ালিনীর মেয়ে তার আল্লাহ - ভীতির বদৌলতে রাজরাণীতে পরিণত হল ‘উপরের আখ্যানটি রচিত হয়েছে ‘সুরা তালাক’ এর ২-৩ নং আয়াতের নীতিবাক্য ব্যবহৃত হয়েছে। সেখানে বলা হয়েছে - “যে ব্যক্তি আল্লাহকে ভয় করে তিনি (সবরকম বামেলা থেকে) তার বেরোবার পথ তৈরি করে দেন এবং এমনভাবে রুখী দেন যে, সে ভাবতেও পারে না।”

‘সালানী বর্ণ পরিচয়’ (দ্বিতীয় ভাগ) এর শেষ গল্পটি ‘হক বিচারের মর্যাদা’ - নারীর অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা ও বিচার প্রাপ্তির শ্রেষ্ঠ নিদর্শন। এই গল্পটিতে রচনাকার নারীকে যেভাবে উপস্থাপন করেছেন তা সত্যিই ব্যতিক্রমী। গল্পের মূল প্রতিপাদ্য বাংলার শাসক সুলতান গিয়াসুদ্দিনের ন্যায়পরায়ণতা ও কাজির বিচারের সততা হলেও এখানে আমরা একটি অদৃশ্য নারী শক্তির কথা পাই।

সুলতান গিয়াসুদ্দিন একদা তীর চালনা অভ্যাস করছিলেন। হঠাৎ তাঁর হাত ফস্কে একটি তীর একটি ছেলের গায়ে গিয়ে বিধল। ছেলেটির বাবা ছিল না; সে ছিল বিধবা মায়ের একমাত্র সন্তান। ছেলেটির বিধবা মা কাজীর নিকট সুলতানের বিরুদ্ধে নালিশ জানালো। কাজি সাহেব দ্বিধাশ্রিত হলেও শেষ পর্যন্ত সং বিচারের স্বার্থে সুলতানের নামে সমন জারি করলেন। কাজি সাহেব তাঁর সামনে বিধবার অভিযোগ শোনালেন এবং সুলতান তা নিজকণ্ঠে স্বীকার করলেন। ‘অতঃপর সুলতান গিয়াসুদ্দিন বহু টাকা পয়সা দিয়ে বিধবার সাথে আপোষে রফা করে ফেললেন।’ বিধবা তাঁর অভিযোগ তুলে নিলেন আমাকে খুশি করেছেন তাই তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে আমার কোনো অভিযোগ নেই।”^{১০}

অধিকার বুঝে নেওয়ার প্রখর দাবিতে যে বিধবাকে এই গল্পে পাওয়া গেল তিনি সত্যিই সাহসিকতায়, বীরত্বে ভারতীয় পুরাণের জনার সঙ্গে তুলনীয় হতে পারেন। প্রিয় পুত্র প্রবীরের মৃত্যুতে শোক-সন্তপ্ত জনা ক্রোধান্বিতে জ্বলে উঠেছিলেন। সন্তানের মৃত্যুর প্রতিবিধান চেয়ে তাই স্বামী নীলধ্বজকে হাজারো কথায় জাগাতে চেয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু এই গল্পের মা ‘বিধবা’। তাই অধিকার বুঝে নেবার দায়িত্ব ও বিচার চাইবার দায়িত্ব তাঁর একার ঘারেই বর্তায়। তিনি নিজে তাই নির্দিষ্টায় শক্তিমাম সুলতানের বিরুদ্ধেই আঙুল তুলেছেন।

প্রাইমার রচয়িতা নিজের অলক্ষ্যেই নারীর এই যে অবয়বটি এখানে নির্মাণ করেছেন সেখানে তাঁর বৈধব্যের কোনো অসহায়তা বা ভীর্ণতা আমাদের চোখে পড়ে না। তিনি পর্দা কিংবা হিজাবের আড়ালে অবগুপ্ততা কিনা তাও আমরা বুঝতে পারি না। কিন্তু তিনি যে অবরোধবাসিনী নন, তিনি যে মুক্তিকামী, বিচারকামী এবং প্রতিবাদী সন্তার তর্জনী উঁচিয়ে পুরুষের সামনে আরেকজন পুরুষেরই কৃতকর্মের জন্য বিচার প্রত্যাশী - এই ছবিটি আমাদের মনে আজন্ম লালিত মুসলিম নারীর ছকটিকে ভেঙে ফেলে। নারীর আদর্শকে বহুবিধ প্রাচীন সংস্কারে বেঁধে ফেললেও এই ছবিটিই নারী আদর্শের আধুনিক স্বরূপটিকে মুক্তির পথে নিয়ে যায়। এখানেই প্রত্যাঘাতটা সার্থক হয়ে ওঠে।

গ. কচিকাঁচা (১) :

সময়ের দাবিটুকু বুঝে নিতে আমরা একেবারে সাম্প্রতিককালের একটি প্রাইমারকে বেছে নিতে পারি। মশিয়ার রহমান মোল্লা রচিত ‘কচিকাঁচা’ (১) প্রথম প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল ১৯৯৯ সালে কিন্তু

এই প্রাইমারটির দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণ প্রকাশিত হয়েছে ২০২১ সালে। নতুন সংস্করণে শিশুপাঠ্য পুস্তকটিকে সম্পূর্ণ নতুন বিষয় ভাবনা ও আঙ্গিকে গড়ে তোলা হয়েছে।

ছড়া ও ছবিতে ভরপুর এই বইটিও প্রথানুসারে শুরুই হয়েছে বর্ণ পরিচয়ের মাধ্যমে। যার ‘অ’ বর্ণে শিশুকে শেখানো হচ্ছে - ‘অহী এলো হেরার গুহায়’ এবং ‘আ’ বর্ণের প্রতিপাদ্য - ‘আল্লাহ দিল হুকুম ধরায়। ক - “কোরান হল খোদার বাণী” খ - “খোদা সবার মালিক জানি।”^{২১} শুরু থেকেই আল্লাহ-খোদা ও কোরান এর মাহাত্ম্য সম্পর্কে জ্ঞান দানের ফাঁকেফাঁকরে এই বইও নারীর আদর্শ নির্মাণের কথা শুনিয়ে যায় তার ‘টার্গেট রিডার’ বা অভিপ্রেত পাঠককে। যেমন ‘প’ বর্ণের নির্মিত বাক্য হল - ‘পর্দা ঢাকে নারীর সতর।’^{২২} ‘সতর’ শব্দের অর্থ হল লজ্জা। অর্থাৎ ইসলামে পর্দাপ্রথার যে অনিবার্য অনুশাসনের কথা বলা হয়েছে শিশু পাঠককে গোঁড়াতেই সে সম্পর্কে সচেতন করে দেওয়া হল।

এ- কার যোগে শব্দ শিক্ষা ও বাক্য গঠন শিক্ষাকালে এই বইতে লেখা হয়েছে ...

“কেতাব পড়ো। সেজদা করো। ফেৎনা হঠাও। ইজতেমাতে হেদায়েত নাও। বেলাল একজন সাহাবী। মেয়েদের হেজাব ফরজ।... সবার আগে ঈমান আনে হজরত খাদেজা।”^{২৩}

লক্ষ করবার বিষয় এখানে শুরুতেই শিশু পাঠককে বই পড়ার নির্দেশ দেওয়া হচ্ছে তবে তার পাশাপাশি এই শিক্ষা দেওয়া হচ্ছে যে, হিজাব মেয়েদের ক্ষেত্রে ‘ফরজ’ অর্থাৎ আবশ্যিক। আমরা অনুমান করতেই পারি যে, এই প্রাইমারের ‘টার্গেট রিডার’ নিশ্চয় মুসলমান সমাজের কন্যা শিশুরাও -যাঁদের আগাম তালিম দেওয়া হচ্ছে ইসলামি পর্দাপ্রথা এবং ব্যবহারিক জীবনবিধান সম্পর্কে। এরই পাশাপাশি লক্ষণীয় শেষ বাক্যটি, যেখানে ঈমান আনয়নের ব্যাপারে ‘হযরত খাদিজা’র অবদান স্বীকৃত। এর মধ্যে দিয়ে খাদিজার মতো আদর্শ নারী হয়ে ওঠবার প্রেরণাও কি নেই? আছে বৈকি। আসলে ইসলামি প্রাইমার গোঁড়াতেই তার ধর্মীয় জ্ঞান ও সামাজিক আচার সম্পর্কে পাঠককে সচেতন করে দিতে চায় যাতে করে শৈশবের শিক্ষা ভবিষ্যৎ সমাজের ইমারত গড়ে নিতে পারে সহজে।

‘কচিকাঁচা (১)’ রচিত হয়েছে অনেকটা বিদ্যাসাগরের ‘বর্ণপরিচয়’ এর চণ্ডে। তাই এখানে ‘আমাদের পড়া’ দশম পাঠ এ আছে:

রফিক খুব সুবোধ বালক। সে রোজ সকালে ঘুম থেকে উঠে। ফজরের নামাজ শেষে কিছু সময় মসজিদে বসে। ইমাম সাহেবের কাছে আরবি পড়া শেখে। বাড়ি ফিরে ভাই বোনদের সাথে পড়তে বসে। সে ভাই বোনদের সাথে মারামারি করে না। ... পড়া শেষ হলে মায়ের সাথে কাজ করে। সে সদা পিতামাতার কথা শোনে। ... সে রোজ বেলা দশটার সময় অপর বালকদের সাথে পড়তে যায়। ...কোনোদিন পড়া কামাই করে টিফিনের ছুটি হলে নিজের জায়গায় বসে পুরানো পড়াগুলো দেখতে থাকে। ... মাগরিবের আযান হলে নামাজ সেরে তাদাতাড়ি পড়তে বসে। রাতে সব পড়া সারা হয়ে গেলে, সে ঘুমাতে যায়। পরিবারের কেউ না।... পীড়িত হলে তার সেবা করে।... সকলে রফিককে অতিশয় ভালোবাসে।^{২৪}

এই পাঠের পাশাপাশি আমরা যদি বিদ্যাসাগরের ‘বর্ণপরিচয়’ রেখে তুলনামূলক পাঠ নিই তাহলে যা পাবো তা নিম্নরূপ...

ঘোষালদের একটি ছেলে আছে। তার নাম গোপাল। ...গোপাল যা পায় তাই খায়। ...। তার বাপ মা যখন যা বলেন তাই করে কখন তাঁদের কথা অন্যথা করে না। ভাই ভগিনী গুলিকে অতিশয় ভালোবাসে। কখন তাদের সহিত ঝগড়া করে না ও তাদের গায়ে হাত তোলে না। গোপাল যখন পড়িতে যায় পথে খেলা করে না এবং মিছামিছি দেরি করে না। আপনার জায়গায় বসিয়া বই খুলিয়া পড়িতে থাকে। বাড়ি আসিয়া পাঠশালায় যে নূতন পাঠ পড়িয়া আইসে সেই পাঠ অভ্যাস করিতে বসে। পাঠ অভ্যাস হইলে আহার করিয়া শয়ন করে। গোপালকে যে দেখে সেই ভালোবাসে। সকল বালকেরই গোপালের মতো হওয়া আবশ্যক।^{২৬}

মোহম্মদ ফকিরউদ্দিন সরকার ১৩১৬ বঙ্গাব্দে ‘বাসনা’ পত্রিকার দ্বিতীয় ভাগ, দ্বিতীয় সংখ্যায় এবং ১৩২৩ বঙ্গাব্দে বাংলার প্রখ্যাত ভাষাতত্ত্ববিদ মুহম্মদ শহিদুল্লাহ ‘আল-এসলাম’ পত্রিকায় শিশুপাঠ্য পুস্তকে মুসলমান বালকের অনুস্পস্থিতি জানিয়ে যে আক্ষেপ প্রকাশ করেছিলেন সেই আক্ষেপ পূরণের জন্যই বোধহয় গোপালের নব সংস্করণ রফিকের প্রত্যাবর্তন। তবে গোপালের সঙ্গে সরাসরি কোনো ধর্মীয় কৃত্যালী যুক্ত ছিল না; কেননা গোপালের স্রষ্টা বিদ্যাসাগর ঈশ্বর সম্পর্কে নিজেই অজ্ঞেয়বাদীই ভাবতেন কিন্তু রফিকের একটি পাকাপোক্ত ধর্মীয় পরিচয় আছে - সে মুসলমান। তাই তার সকালের ‘পড়া’টিই শুরু হয় নামাজ এবং আরবি দিয়ে। তারপরেও সে প্রচুর ‘পড়ে’। ‘কচিকাঁচা (১)’র দশম পাঠে যে অনুপাতে ‘পড়া’ ক্রিয়ার কথা উল্লিখিত হয়েছে সেই অনুপাতে বিদ্যাসাগরের ‘বর্গপরিচয়’ এ ‘পড়া’ ক্রিয়ার সংখ্যা কম। তবে কি আধুনিক ইসলামি সমাজ ব্যবস্থা নতুনভাবে ‘পড়া’কে নির্মাণ করতে চাইছে? শিক্ষাকে আয়ুধ করে এগিয়ে যেতে চাইছে শিক্ষিত মধ্যবিত্ত গড়ার লক্ষ্যে? যে সমাজে স্থায়ী মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণি নেই^{২৭} সেখানে শিক্ষাকে অবলম্বন করে এই প্রচেষ্টা নিশ্চয় বাঙালি মুসলমানকে নতুনভাবে নির্মাণ করবে।

বিদ্যাসাগরের ‘বর্গপরিচয়’

এর ‘গোপাল’র অনুসরণে ‘রফিক’দের আগমন প্রত্যাশিতই ছিল। কিন্তু বিদ্যাসাগর যা করতে পারেননি, সাম্প্রতিককালের ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারে তার ব্যতিক্রমী ছাপ পড়েছে সুপরিচালিত ভাবেই। যুগের প্রয়োজনীয়তা মেনে তাই এই সময়ের প্রাইমারগুলিতে এসেছে নারীর শিক্ষার কথা এবং তার নানা অনুসঙ্গ। ‘কচিকাঁচা -১’ এ ‘আমাদের পড়া’ দশম পাঠে আছে সেই আশ্চর্যজনক ভাষ্য। এই পাঠে হাসান নামে এক গৃহস্থের দুঃখ দারিদ্রের কথা বর্ণিত হয়েছে সমকালীন প্রেক্ষিতে সেখানে আমরা দেখি আত্মপান ঝড় ও কোভিড সমকালীন অর্থনৈতিক দুরবস্থা ও কর্মহীনতার ছবি। এরই মধ্যে একটি মেয়ে আমিনার বইখাতার অভাবের কথা ...

হুগলী নদীতে বান ডেকেছে। মাঠে ধান হাবুড়ু। মাথায় হাত। তার দুঃখের অবধি নেই। বড়ছেলে নজরুলের তিনদিন অসুখ। এক্ষুনি ঔষধ কেনা দরকার। ছোটোমেয়ে আমিনার বইখাতা নেই। হাসানের হাতে এক পয়সাও নেই। বাজারে অনেক দেনা। কাজের খোঁজে সে দৌড়ঝাঁপ করে। কাল থেকে আবার লকডাউন।^{২৮}

হাসানের এই দুর্ভোগ মুক্তি সম্ভব হয় সিরাজ হাজী প্রদত্ত যাকাতের অর্থ দ্বারা

সেই টাকা পেয়ে হাসান হাটে গেল। ভোলা কবিরাজের দোকান থেকে ঔষধ কিনলো। আমিনাকে কিনে দিল বইখাতা ও একজোড়া সালোয়ার কামিজ। তাই আমিনা খুব খুশি।^{২৯} (নজরটান লেখকের)

উপরের বয়ানটিতে অতিসাম্প্রতিককালের দরিদ্র মানুষের জীবন যাপনের কথাকে চমৎকার ভাবেই ফুটিয়ে তুলেছে ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারটি। কিন্তু লক্ষণীয় এখানে আর সবকিছুকে অতিক্রম করে আমিনার লেখাপড়ার পরিসরটি বড়ো হয়ে দেখা দিয়েছে। আমরা জানি মুসলমান সমাজ চিরকাল শিক্ষার অভাবে অর্থনৈতিক ও সামাজিকভাবে পিছিয়ে পড়েছে - একথা সত্য ও প্রমাণিত। সেই পিছিয়ে পড়া সমাজে স্ত্রীশিক্ষা ছিল আকাশকুসুম স্বপ্ন। কিন্তু আজকের ইসলামি সমাজ সেই দৈনন্দিন থেকে যে উত্তরণের জন্য আশ্রয় চেষ্টা চালাচ্ছে তার নমুনা পাওয়া যায় উপরের পাঠে আমিনার পড়ালেখার প্রসঙ্গে। তাই যাকাতের অর্থ সাহায্য গ্রহণ করেও সেই অর্থ হাসান ব্যয় করেছে কন্যার শিক্ষার জন্য। স্ত্রী শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে আদর্শ নারীর নতুন রূপ নির্মাণে আজকের দিনের প্রাইমার কি তবে নতুন দিশা দেখাতে চলেছে? ইসলামি বাংলা প্রাইমারে নারীর ভাষ্য ও নারীর ভূবন নির্মাণের প্রচেষ্টাকে তাই কেবলমাত্র ধর্মীয় দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে দেখলেই চলবে না, বরং সমপ্রাণতার সঙ্গে বিচার ও মূল্যায়ন করতে পারলে আমরা তার মধ্যে এক অচেনা অদেখা অজানা জগতের সন্ধান পাবো নিরন্তর সক্রিয়।

তথ্যসূত্র ও উল্লেখপঞ্জি

১. সরকার, পবিত্র, ভাষাদেশকাল, মিত্র ও ঘোষ, কলকাতা, জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১৪১৯, পৃ. ১০৭ □ ১০৮
২. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, শিবাজী, শিশুসাহিত্যের ছোটমেয়েরা, গাঙচিল, কলকাতা, পৌষ ১৪২৪, পৃ. ৬৪
৩. তর্কালংকার, মদনমোহন, শিশুশিক্ষা, আশিস খাস্তগীর (সম্পাদ.), পশ্চিমবঙ্গ বাংলা আকাদেমি, কলকাতা, জানুয়ারি ২০০৯
৪. সিংহ, রাজেশ্বর (সংকলিত ও সম্পাদিত), আপন হতে বাহিরে, চৌধুরী, আবদুল মালেক, বঙ্গসাহিত্যে মুসলমান নারীর স্থান, যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় প্রকাশনা, মে ২০২০, কলকাতা, পৃ. ৯৭-৯৮
৫. আনিসুজ্জামান, “বাঙালি মুসলমান লেখকদের ভাবজগৎ”, স্বরূপের সন্ধান, দে'জ প্রথম সংস্করণ ১৪১৬, কলকাতা, পৃ. ৭৪ ৬. ইসলাম, মুস্তাফানূরউল, সাময়িকপত্রজীবন ওজনমত, বাংলাএকাডেমী, ঢাকা, ১৯৭৭, পৃ. ২৪-২৫।
৬. ইসলাম, মুস্তাফা নূরউল, সাময়িকপত্র জীবন ও জনমত, বাংলা একাডেমী, ঢাকা, ১৯৭৭, পৃ. ২৫-২৬।
৭. শহিদুল্লাহ, মুহম্মদ, ‘আমাদের সাহিত্যিক দরিদ্রতা’ আল-এসলাম, ২য় বর্ষ, ২ সংখ্যা, জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৩২৩; দত্ত, মিলন, মুসলিম জাহান, কারিগর, কলকাতা, জানুয়ারি ২০১৭, গ্রন্থে উদ্ধৃত, পৃ. ১০১
৮. সরকার, মোহম্মদ ফকিরউদ্দিন, বাসনা, দ্বিতীয় ভাগ, দ্বিতীয় সংখ্যা, ১৩১৬, দত্ত, মিলন পূর্বোক্ত গ্রন্থে উদ্ধৃত, পৃ. ১০১-১০২ ৯. সুনান, ইবন মাজাহ, আল হাদিস, কিতাবুল ইন্ম, আশরাফিয়া বুক ডিপো, দেওবন্দ, প্রথম সংস্করণ ১৯৮৫, পৃ. ২০ ১০. ঐ, ঐ, ঐ।

৯. সুনান, ইবন সাজাহ, আল হাদিস, কিতাবুল ইলম, আশরাফিয়া বুক ডিপো দে ও বন্দ, ১৯৮৫ পৃ. ২০।
১০. ঐঐ
১১. Muhammad, Kutub, Islam and Women, Adhunik Prokashni, Dhaka, 1988, P. 22
১২. অল্লীল শব্দের অর্থ বিদ্যা শিক্ষা
১৩. ইসলামি শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা : সংক্ষিপ্ত ইতিহাস, ইসলামিক এডুকেশন সোসাইটি, ঢাকা দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণ, আগস্ট ২০০২, পৃ. ১৬
১৪. ঐ, ঐ, ঐ পৃ. ১৭
১৫. ইসলামি শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা : সংক্ষিপ্ত ইতিহাস, ইসলামিক এডুকেশন সোসাইটি, ঢাকা দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণ, আগস্ট ২০০২, পৃ. ১৭
১৬. মিয়া, মোঃ ইসমাইল, ‘মহানবী হযরত মুহাম্মদ (সো) : শিক্ষা বিস্তার’, শিক্ষাদর্শন ও ইসলাম, ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন, ঢাকা, ২০০৪, পৃ. ২৩০
১৭. বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, শিবাজী, দেখুন, ‘অবিশ্বাস্য এক সংবাদ’, আবার শিশুশিক্ষা, অনুষ্টিপ, কলকাতা, ২০১০, পৃ. ৪৭-৫৪ ১৮. দেখুন, অধ্যাপক মাওলানা হাফেয শাইখ আইনুল বারী আলিয়াভী, সালাফী বর্ণ পরিচয় (প্রথম ভাগ), সুফিয়া প্রকাশনী, কলকাতা, মে ২০১৯
১৮. দেখুন, অধ্যাপক মাওলানা হাফেয শাইখ আইনুল বারী আলিয়াভী, সালাফী বর্ণ পরিচয় (দ্বিতীয় ভাগ), সুফিয়া প্রকাশনী, কলকাতা, নভেম্বর ২০১৯ পৃ. ২৩
১৯. দেখুন, অধ্যাপক মাওলানা হাফেয শাইখ আইনুল বারী আলিয়াভী, ‘হক বিচারের মর্যাদা’, সালাফী বর্ণ পরিচয় (দ্বিতীয় ভাগ), সুফিয়া প্রকাশনী, কলকাতা, নভেম্বর ২০১৯ পৃ. ৩১-৩২-১৩
২০. দেখুন আইনুল বারী, ঐঐ পৃঃ ৩১-৩২।
২১. মোল্লা, মশিয়ার রহমান, কচিকাঁচা (১), পুস্তক ভারতী, হাওড়া, পৃ. ৩
২২. ঐ, ঐ, ঐ, পৃ. ১০
২৩. ঐ, ঐ, ঐ, পৃ. ২৩
২৪. ঐ, ঐ, ঐ, পৃ. ৩৮
২৫. খান্দির, আশিস, (সম্পা.) বাংলা প্রাইমার সংগ্রহ (১৮১৬-১৮৫৫), দেখুন, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর, বর্ণপরিচয়, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ বাংলা আকাদেমি, ২০০৬, কলকাতা, পৃ. ৩
২৬. দত্ত, মিলন, মুসলিম জাহান, দেখুন. ‘মুসলমানরা যখন রাজনীতির ‘ভেটব্যাক্স’, কারিগর, জানুয়ারি ২০১৭, কলকাতা, পৃ. ৮৯



নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের অধিকার: প্রাচীন ভারতের প্রেক্ষিতে

ড. সোমনাথ কর

সারসংক্ষেপ : পৃথিবীর প্রাণ সৃষ্টির অনুকূল প্রাকৃতিক পরিবেশে অন্যান্য প্রাণীর মতোই মানুষও সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল। আদিম মানুষ অরণ্যক জীবনে লক্ষ্য করেছিল যে, তার মতই আর একটি মানুষ সৃষ্টি করতে পারে একমাত্র নারী। ফলে পৃথিবীর প্রায় সব মানবগোষ্ঠীই প্রারম্ভিক অবস্থায় নারীতান্ত্রিক। সভ্যতার যা কিছু মহান সৃষ্টি সব কিছুতেই রয়েছে নারীর অধিকার। কিন্তু বিবর্তনের ধারায় সভ্যতার অগ্রগতির সাথে সাথে পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজ ব্যবস্থা গড়ে উঠেছে। আর এই পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজব্যবস্থার অনিবার্য পরিণতি স্বরূপ তাদের অবস্থান ক্রমশ নিম্নমুখী হয়েছে। প্রাচীন থেকে আধুনিকে নারীকে যে শুধু জন্মপরবর্তী অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করা হয় তা নয় এমন কি তাকে জন্মের পূর্বেও জীবনের অধিকার টুকুও পেতে দেওয়া হয় না, কন্যাজ্ঞ হত্যার পরিসংখ্যানেই তার ছবি স্পষ্ট। নারীর প্রতি এই অবজ্ঞা, শোষণ, অবিচারের ধারা প্রাচীনকাল থেকেই যে চলে আসছে তার প্রমাণ স্বয়ং মনুস্মৃতি। 'নন্দী স্বতন্ত্রম্ অর্হতি' অর্থাৎ নারীর স্বাধীনতা লাভের কোনও অধিকার নেই। কৌষিতকী ব্রাহ্মণে বলা হয়েছে, মন্ত্র উচ্চারণ করার সময় কোষের অংশ ধীরে উচ্চারণ করতে হবে, যাতে স্ত্রীর মন উন্নত না হয়। স্ত্রী মানসিকভাবে উন্নত হোক তা পুরুষ কখনো চায়নি। নারী স্বভাবতঃই পাপিষ্ঠা, নরকের দ্বার ও পুরুষের অধঃপতনের কারণস্বরূপ - এসব উল্লেখের মধ্য দিয়েই প্রাচীন সমাজে নারীর প্রতি দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী স্পষ্টতই প্রতিফলিত হয়। তাই প্রাচীন ভারতের প্রেক্ষাপটে নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের অধিকারের ছবিটি স্পষ্ট করাই এই নিবন্ধের মূল উদ্দেশ্য।

মূল শব্দ: (১) নৈতিকতা (২) বৈষম্য (৩) সম্পত্তি (৪) শুষ্ক (৫) নারী

মূল আলোচনা : পৃথিবীর বয়স হল অনেক। মানুষের তৈরী সভ্যতারও বয়স কম হল না। অন্য দেশের সভ্যতার কথা তো ছেড়েই দিই, আমাদের ভারতবর্ষের সভ্যতার কত হাজার বছর বয়স, তাও ঠিক করে বলা শক্ত। কেননা, পুরাণ, মহাভারত পড়লে দেখি যে, তাতে অনেক সময় অনেকে বলেছেন, পুরাকালে এই রাজার সময়ে এই প্রথার উদ্ভব হয়, এই মুনি এই কথা বলেন, এই ঋষি এই বলেছিলেন ইত্যাদি ইত্যাদি। তাতে মনে হয় আমাদের এই ভারতবর্ষের সভ্যতাও যেন অজানা কাল থেকে চলে আসছে।

এইসব শাস্ত্র, অনুশাসন ও বহুযুগের সমাজের ধর্মের ইতিহাস ভারতবর্ষের মানুষের শ্রুতি, স্মৃতি ও পুঁথিতে ছিল। অর্থাৎ মানুষ কানে শুনে মনে রেখেছিল, পুঁথিতে লিখে রেখেছিল। এই অনুশাসন ও নীতি যুগে যুগে বদলেছে এবং সমাজ ও চলার পথে নতুন নতুন মত ও আচার ব্যবহারকে সাখী করে নিয়েছে। এখনো সেই ভাবেই তার গতিধারা চলছে, কখনো গ্রহন কখনো বর্জন করে। কিন্তু আমরা ভালো করে একটু ভাবলেই দেখতে পাব যে তার মূল কাঠামোটা প্রায় ঠিকই আছে। অর্থাৎ খুঁটিয়ে দেখলে জগতের অন্য অনেক সভ্যতার মতোই এই সভ্যতা এবং সমাজ যদিও গড়ে উঠেছে

পুরুষ এবং নারী উভয়কে নিয়েই, কিন্তু তাতে পুরুষই শাসক, অনুশাসক, নীতিকার, সমাজপতি, পরিবারের গোত্রের প্রভু যা যা বলা যায়, যে সংজ্ঞা দেওয়া যায় তার সবই।

আজও নানা শাস্ত্র-সংহিতাকারের বহু বিধি নিষেধের ধারার সঙ্গে মনুসংহিতার প্রসিদ্ধ বিধান-পিতা কৌমার্যে, ভর্তা যৌবনে এবং পুত্র বার্ষিক্যে রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ করবেন, ব্যবস্থা শেষে ‘ন স্ত্রী স্বাতন্ত্র্যমর্হতি’ এই শ্লোকটি নারীর যে-কোনও অধিকারের দাবির বিপক্ষে প্রামাণ্য বলে গন্য করা হয়ে থাকে। অর্থাৎ সেই সকাল থেকে আজও মেয়েরা ‘মানুষ’ নয় মেয়েমানুষ, সোজা কথায় পুরুষদের সম্পত্তি, দায় এবং ভার। ঘটবিাটির মতো যাকে দান করা, ত্যাগ করা যায়, বহন করতে হয়। মানুষ মনে করে তাদের কোনো মৌলিক অধিকার দেওয়া হয়নি, হয়তো দাবিও মেনে নেওয়া হয়নি। আশ্চর্য লাগে এই যে, ব্যক্তিগত এবং সমষ্টিগতভাবেও এই সব বিধিনিষেধ মেয়েরা চিরদিন মেনে এসেছেন এবং এখনো মেনে চলেছেন। কাজেই ‘মানুষের অধিকার’ বলতে যদি বোঝায় ‘কয়েকটি বিষয়ে সব মানুষের সমান অধিকার’ তাহলে এটা ঠিক যে, সমাজে এই ধরনের বৈষম্যই মানুষকে মানুষ থেকে ভিন্ন করে রেখেছে। যার ফলে নারীরা তাদের মানবাধিকার থেকে প্রতি পদে পদে বঞ্চিত হচ্ছেন। যা নৈতিক দিক থেকে কোন কালেই গ্রহণীয় হতে পারে না।

কিন্তু এই বৈষম্য নারীজাতির কেবল আজকের সমস্যা নয়, অতি প্রাচীন কাল থেকেই অর্থাৎ সেই বৈদিক যুগ থেকে চলে আসছে এই লিঙ্গ-বৈষম্যের মতো ঘটনা। আমরা জানি, বৈদিক নারীরা পশম পাকাতো, পশুপালন করত, জল আনতো কিন্তু কেবলমাত্র খোরপোষ বাদে তারা এই সব কাজের জন্য কিছু উপার্জন করত কিনা তা জানতে পারা যায় না। তবে এটুকু নিঃসন্দেহে বলা যায় যে, নারীরা গৃহকর্ম করত, রান্নাঘর ও শিশুপালন তাদেরই আয়ত্তে ছিল, যে কাজগুলির কোন অর্থনৈতিক মূল্যের হিসেব দেখা হত না। কোনও বেতনও এক্ষেত্রে ছিল না। অর্থাৎ গৃহকর্মে নারীর অবদান কখনও অর্থের নিরিখে পরিমাপ করা হয়নি, তাদের খাদ্য, বস্ত্র, আশ্রয় ও জীবনের অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় বস্তুর জন্য পুরুষের উপরে অর্থনৈতিকভাবে নির্ভরশীল বলেই মনে করা হতো। অর্থাৎ পরিবারের কাছে, সমাজের কাছে এমনকি তার নিজের কাছেও এমন অনুভূতি হতো যে, সে ভার্য্যা বা ভরণীয়, অর্থাৎ যাকে ভরণ করতে হয় এবং সেই কারণেই ভরণ পোষণের জন্য স্বামী ও শ্বশুরবাড়ির লোকদের কাছে সে অধীন। এককথায় গৃহবধু বা বিধবারা পুরুষ ও তার পরিবারে সম্পূর্ণ নিয়ন্ত্রণে থাকতো। কারণ গৃহে শ্রম যতই গুরুতর হোক না কেন, উৎপাদনমূলক বলে তা গন্য হতো না কখনো। এই পুরুষ সমাজ দীর্ঘ শতাব্দী ধরে ধীরে ধীরে নারীর পায়ের তলা থেকে তার আত্ম-সম্মানের শেষ অবলম্বনটুকু সরিয়ে নিয়েছে, তাকে শিক্ষা থেকে বঞ্চিত করে এবং গৃহে তাকে এমন এক নিশ্চৈতন ভূমিকা দিয়েছে, যাতে তার সাধারণ বৃদ্ধি সীমাবদ্ধ হয়ে যায়। এবং পুরুষ সমাজ ঘোষণা করতে পারে যে, নারীর অর্থের কোন প্রয়োজন নেই, এবং অর্থ পেলেও তার উপর নির্ভর করা যায় না। এখন যে রকম, তখনও ঠিক সে রকমই ছিল। ব্রাহ্মণ সাহিত্যে স্পষ্টভাবে পুত্রকে বর এবং কন্যা সন্তানকে অভিশাপ বলে অভিহিত করা হয়। তাই স্নেহশীল বাবা-মায়েরা বাদে পরিবারের অন্য সকলেরা মেয়েকে খুব কম করে বললেও, উৎপাত বলে মনে করত। বিয়ে দেওয়ার আগে পর্যন্ত যার উপস্থিতি পরিবারে কোন রকমে সহ্য করা হতো। সেই সময়ে কুমারীদের যে কেনাবেচা চলত তার প্রমাণ আমরা পাই সংহিতায়, যেখানে বলা হয়েছে যে, “যে কুমারীকে বিক্রি বা কেনা হয়েছে, তাকে কখনো স্ত্রী রূপে গ্রহণ করা যায় না।”^{১২}

নারীর সামাজিক মান মর্যাদা অর্থমূল্যে মাপার হৃদিশ আমরা মনুসংহিতায় দেখতে পেয়েছি। সেখানে বলা হয়েছে যে, কুমারী হিসাবে যে স্ত্রী কেনা হয়েছে, তার গর্ভস্থ পুত্র সন্তান তার পিতার কোনরকম শ্রাদ্ধ-কর্ম বা অনুষ্ঠানাদি সম্পন্ন করতে পারবে না। অর্থাৎ পিতার পারলৌকিক সমস্ত কাজকর্ম থেকে তাকে বঞ্চিত করা হতো। বিবাহের কারণে কুমারীর সতীত্ব যথেষ্টভাবে কলুষিত করা যাবে না। কেউ যদি তা করে তবে তাকে ২২৫ পণ দণ্ড দিতে হয়।^১ এছাড়াও কোনো মেয়ের যদি কোন প্রকার দোষ থাকতো এবং সেগুলি লুকিয়ে কোন পিতা যদি তার বিয়ে দিতেন এবং প্রকারান্তরে বরের কাছে তা যদি ধরা পড়তো, তবে সেই পিতাকে ৯৬ পণ দণ্ড তার বরকে দিতে হতো।^২

যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য ধর্মসূত্রেও আমরা দেখি যে, সেখানে বলা হয়েছে, দাসীকে ধর্ষণ করলে পুরুষের ১০ পণ দণ্ড হবে।^৩ সে যদি কোনো ভিখারীকে ধর্ষণ করে তাহলে তাকে ২৪ পণ দণ্ড দিতে হবে।^৪ কিন্তু প্রাণ হল মালিক যদি তার দাসীকে ধর্ষণ করে তাহলে সে কি করে তাকে দণ্ড দিতে বাধ্য করবে? কে তাকে বিশ্বাস করবে? আর কে-ই বা তার দিক নেবে? ফলে বোঝাই যাচ্ছে যে, সে সময়ে নারীর অতি নিকৃষ্ট পরিস্থিতির কারণে সে পুরুষের লালসার কাছে অত্যন্ত অসহায় ছিল এবং সেই পুরুষেরা বিভিন্ন সামাজিক স্বীকৃতি নিয়ে বিনা শাস্তিতে এই আচরণ করত।

প্রাচীন কালে মেয়েদের উত্তরাধিকার বিষয়েও বৈষম্য লক্ষণীয় ছিল। তৈত্তিরীয় সংহিতায় নারীদের পারিবারিক সম্পত্তি থেকে বঞ্চিত করার কথা জানতে পারি। সেখানে বলা হয়েছে যে, সাধারণভাবে নারীরা পারিবারিক সম্পত্তির ভাগ পেতে অনধিকারী।^৫ গৌতম বলেছেন, অবিবাহিতা কন্যারা যদি জীবনে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত না হয় তবে তারা মায়ের মৃত স্বামীর সম্পত্তির উত্তরাধিকারী হবে।^৬ প্রাচীন গ্রন্থ ‘শতপথ ব্রাহ্মণ’-এ বলা হয়েছে, পত্নীর সম্পত্তির উপরে কোন অধিকার নেই। এমন কি নিজের শরীরের উপরেও নয়।^৭ শতপথ ব্রাহ্মণেই এর আনুষ্ঠানিক ব্যাখ্যা দিয়ে বলা হয়েছে, ‘যজ্ঞে হবিকে পেটানো হয় লাঠি দিয়ে, তেমনি স্বামী ও স্ত্রীকে পেটাবে, যাতে তার নিজের শরীর বা সম্পত্তির উপরে কোনো অধিকার না থাকে।’^৮ উত্তরাধিকার সূত্রে প্রাপ্ত সম্পত্তি নিয়ে বঞ্চনার কথা আমরা মনুসংহিতাতেও দেখতে পাই। সেখানে মনু নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন যে, ‘ভাইয়েরা পৃথক পৃথক ভাবে তাদের অবিবাহিতা ভগ্নীকে তাদের পৈতৃক সম্পত্তির যে ভাগ তার এক চতুর্থাংশ করে দেবে। তা না করলে তাদের সর্বনাশ হবে।’^৯ পৈতৃক সম্পত্তির ভাগ ভাইয়েরা অর্থাৎ পুত্র সন্তানদের ক্ষেত্রে অর্ধেক প্রাপ্তির নির্দেশ থাকলেও কন্যাসন্তানদের ক্ষেত্রে এক-চতুর্থাংশ করে নৈতিকভাবে নারীদের প্রতি বৈষম্য দেখানো হল না কি?

সেযুগে নারী ও পুরুষের মধ্যে বৈষম্যের এক চরম নিদর্শন আমরা দেখতে পাই পণব্যবস্থা ও স্ত্রীধন বিষয়টির মধ্য দিয়ে। মনুসংহিতায় দেখতে পাই যে, আটপ্রকার বিবাহের মধ্যে কেবলমাত্র আসুর বিবাহেই বরের পিতাকে কন্যার পিতার কাছে পণ দিতে হত না। এছাড়া, প্রায় সকল প্রকার বিবাহেই কন্যার পিতাকে বরের কাছে ধন, অলঙ্কার, উপহার সামগ্রী ও একজোড়া বলদ পণ হিসাবে দিতে হতো।^{১০} মনু বলেছেন যে, ‘জ্ঞানী পিতা কখনই কন্যাশুল্ক নেবেন না, কারণ লোভ বশতঃ কন্যাশুল্ক নিলে সে তার সন্তানকে বিক্রি করছে। পণ গ্রহণ করা, তা বহুমূল্যেই হোক বা অল্পমূল্যেই হোক উভয়ই কন্যা বিক্রয়ের সমান।’^{১১} যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য-র মত অনুযায়ীও বরের কাছ থেকে কন্যার পিতার পণ নেওয়াটাকে সমাজ কোনভাবেই পছন্দ করে না। অথচ লক্ষণীয় যে, কন্যাশুল্কের বিরুদ্ধে মতামত থাকলেও বরপণের ক্ষেত্রে কিন্তু এধরনের কোন বক্তব্যের উল্লেখ নেই। এক্ষেত্রে বর বিক্রির কথা

কোথাও পরিলক্ষিত হয় না। ফলে এই পণপ্রথার বিষয়টি নারীর সামাজিক অবনমনের দিকটিকেই ইঙ্গিত করে। এক্ষেত্রে পণের ব্যাখ্যা করা হয়েছে বধূর ভরণপোষণের মূল্য হিসাবে। কিন্তু এই বক্তব্যটি ভীষণভাবে অনৈতিক ও অযৌক্তিক এবং অপমানকরও বটে। কারণ বিবাহের পর বধু সংসারের যাবতীয় কাজকর্ম তথা সন্তান উৎপাদনের মতো কর্মের মধ্য দিয়ে পারিবারিক প্রগতির সহায়ক হয়। তথাপি সেক্ষেত্রে ‘ভরণপোষণ’-এর মতো শব্দটি নারীর কাছে যথেষ্ট অপমানকর।

নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের অধিকারে আরো এক চিত্র ফুটে ওঠে সে সময়কার সমাজে নারী ও পুরুষের দ্বিমুখি বিচার-ব্যবস্থার মধ্যে দিয়েও। যাঙ্গবক্ষ্য ধর্মসূত্রে আমরা দেখতে পাই যে, স্ত্রী যদি অসতী হয়, তাহলে তাকে তার সব অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করতে হবে এবং তাকে কষ্টে থাকতে বাধ্য করতে হবে এক গ্রাস মাত্র অন্ন দিয়ে। তাকে সব সময় তিরস্কার করতে হবে, মাটিতে শুতে হবে, কিন্তু তার স্বামীর বাড়িতেই থাকতে হবে যাতে সে তার পাপকর্ম থেকে বিরত হয়।^{১৪} অর্থাৎ অসতী স্ত্রীকে দৈনন্দিন আহারটুকু দিয়ে ঘরে বন্দী করে রাখতে হবে। যাঙ্গবক্ষ্য ধর্মসূত্রেও বলা হয়েছে, ব্যাভিচারিণী নারীকে তার অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চিত করতে হবে, ময়লা কাপড় পড়তে দিতে হবে, নামমাত্র খেতে দিতে হবে, যদি সে পরপুরুষের দ্বারা গর্ভবতী হয় তবে তাকে তাড়িয়ে দিতে হবে।^{১৫} ধর্মসূত্রে বশিষ্ঠের বক্তব্যের মধ্যে দিয়েও আমরা দেখতে পাই যে, উচ্চতার তিন বর্ণের স্ত্রীরা শুদের সঙ্গে ব্যভিচার করলে তাকে তাড়িয়ে দিতে হবে এবং স্ত্রী যদি গুরু বা স্বামীকে হত্যার চেষ্টা করে সেক্ষেত্রেও তাকে তাড়িয়ে দেওয়ার বিধান রয়েছে। গৌতমের ধর্মসূত্রের ২৪নং শ্লোক-এ দেখা যায় যে, যদি উচ্চতার তিনবর্ণের স্ত্রীরা নিম্নবর্ণের পুরুষের সঙ্গে ব্যভিচার করে তবে সেক্ষেত্রে তাকে কুকুর দিয়ে খাওয়ানোর বিধানও রয়েছে।

পরিশেষে, প্রবন্ধটি শেষ করব যে কথাটি বলে তা হল, প্রাচীনকালে স্ত্রী স্বামীর সম্পত্তি হিসাবেই ব্যবহৃত হতো, -এর প্রমাণ আমরা পাই মহাভারতে, যেখানে দ্রৌপদীকে সর্বসমক্ষে অপমান করতে সভায় টেনে নিয়ে যাওয়ার সময় দ্রৌপদী দুঃশাসনের কাছে জানতে চেয়েছিল, রাজা যুধিষ্ঠির জুয়ায় তাকে বাজি রেখে হেরে যাওয়ার আগে কি সে নিজেকে বাজি রেখেছিল? প্রশ্নটি খুবই তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ। কেননা জুয়ার সমস্ত সম্পত্তি বাজি রাখার সাথে সাথে নিজের স্ত্রীকে এ একইরকমভাবে বাজি রাখাটা এটাই প্রমাণ করে যে, দ্রৌপদী তার স্বামীর সম্পত্তি। এছাড়াও নারী যে পণ্য হিসাবে ব্যবহৃত হত, মাধবীর কাহিনি থেকে তার সবচেয়ে বড় প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায়। গালব যখন গুরুদক্ষিণা সংগ্রহ করতে পেরে রাজা যযাতির কাছে যাত্রা করিলেন, তখন যযাতি শূন্য রাজকোষের অজুহাত দিলেন। কিন্তু তিনি গালবকে একটি অন্য সুযোগ দিলেন, রাজার সুন্দরী তরুণী কুমারী কন্যাকে ধার নিয়ে একবছর রাজাদের কাছে ভাড়া দেওয়া যাবে, যতদিন না সেই রাজাদের একটি করে পুত্র হয় এবং তাঁরা কৃতজ্ঞাবশত গালবকে কিছু অর্থ দেন। গালব মাধবীকে পরপর তিন রাজার কাছে ভাড়া দিলেন এক এক বছর করে, যতদিন না তাঁর গুরুদক্ষিণার খরচ উঠল। যযাতি, গালব বা এ তিন রাজারা, কেউই এই ব্যবস্থাকে নোংরা বা ঘৃণা মনে করলেন না এবং গুরুও দক্ষিণা গ্রহণ করলেন সানন্দেই। একমাত্র মাধবীই এই সমস্ত ব্যাপারের প্রতি গভীরভাবে ঘৃণা প্রকাশ করলেন এবং পরে বিবাহ করতে অস্বীকারও করলেন অর্থাৎ তাঁকে যে একটি অর্থকারী পণ্য হিসাবে ব্যবহার করা হয়েছে- এই বোধে তাঁর অন্তরাঙ্গা মর্মান্বিত হয়েছিল এবং পরে তিনি তপস্যার দিকে পা বাড়িয়েছিলেন।^{১৬}

প্রাচীন ভারতের নারী নিগ্রহের এই ভাবধারাটি কিন্তু আজও আমরা বহন করে চলেছি। সেই প্রাচীন

কাল থেকে আজ পর্যন্ত নারী পুরুষের ভোগ্যপণ্যের অতিরিক্ত কিছু নয়, তারা সত্যি সত্যি নিদারুণভাবে অবহেলিত ও লাঞ্ছিত, এরা পরিবারের পরিচারিকা ছাড়া যেন আর কিছু নয়। রান্নাঘর থেকে আঁতুর ঘর আর আঁতুর ঘর থেকে রান্নাঘর-এর মধ্যে বিচরণ করতে করতেই যে তাদের গোটা জীবনটা ফুরিয়ে গেল। খাঁচায় বদ্ধ পাখির মতো ডানার ছটফটানিতে কেবল এক অসহনীয় মর্মবেদনাই অনুভূত হয়। আর এই অনুভবকেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর 'মুক্তি' কবিতায় ফুটিয়ে তুললেন -

‘আমি কেবল জানি-

রাঁধার পরে খাওয়া আবার খাওয়ার পরে রাঁধা
বাইশ বছর এক চাকাতেই বাঁধা’।

তথ্যসূত্র:

- পিতা রক্ষতি কৌমারে, ভর্তা রক্ষতি যৌবনে, রক্ষতি স্থবিরে পুত্রা ন স্ত্রী স্বাতন্ত্র্যমর্হতি, মনুসংহিতা ৯/৩, পৃ: ২৪৯।
- সংহিতা ৫/৫ পৃ: ৩৮০।
- পরেণ তু দশাহস্য ন দদ্যাম্মাপি দাপয়েৎ। আদদানোদ দম্বেচব রাবানা দগ্ধ্যঃ শতানি ঘট, মনুসংহিতা ৮/২২৪ পৃ: ২২৪।
- যস্ত দৌষবতীং কন্যামনাখ্যায় প্রয়চ্ছতি। তস্য কুর্য্যাম্নপো দুগুং স্বয়ং যন্নবতিং পণান, মনুসংহিতা - ৮/২২৪, পৃ: ২২৪।
- যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য ধর্মসূত্র- ২, ২২/২৯৪।
- যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য ধর্মসূত্র- ২, ২২/২৯৪।
- নিরিদ্ভিয়া অদায়দা স্ত্রিয়ো ইতিশ্চ মতাঃ। তৈত্তিরীয় সংহিতা-৫/৫/৮/২।
- গৌতম ২৯/১১।
- শতপথ ব্রাহ্মণ- ৪/৪/২/১৩।
- শতপথ ব্রাহ্মণ- ৪/৪/২/১৩।
- শ্বেভ্যোহংশোভ্যস্ত কন্যাভ্যঃ প্রদদ্যুভ্রাতারঃ পৃথক। স্বাৎ স্বাদংশাচ্চতুভাগং পতিতাঃ স্যুরদিৎসবঃ। মনুসংহিতা- ৯/১১৮, পৃ: ২৬২।
- মনুসংহিতা- ৩/১৯।
- মনুসংহিতা- ৩/৫১।
- যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য ধর্মসূত্র- ১/৭০।
- যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য ধর্মসূত্র-১/৭০, ৭২।
- মহাভারত সারানুবাদ, রাজশেখর বসু, উদ্যোগপর্ব, পৃ: ৩০৮-৩১১।

গ্রন্থপঞ্জী:

- যাজ্ঞবল্ক্য সংহিতা, দ্য ধরমসূত্র, হিন্দু রিলিজিয়ন্ কোড্‌স, ভল্যুম-১, মহেদ্রনাথ দত্ত, কসমো পাবলিকেশনস, নিউ দিল্লী, পূর্ণমুদ্রন- ১৯৭৯।
- মনুসংহিতা, শ্রীযুক্ত পঞ্চানন তর্করত্ন সম্পাদিত, সংস্কৃত পুস্ক ভাণ্ডার।
- উপনিষদ গ্রন্থাবলী, উদ্বোধন, ১৩৪৯ সাল।
- স্বামী সন্তীরানন্দ সম্পাদিত, উপনিষদ গ্রন্থাবলী, তৃতীয়ভাগ, বৃহদারণ্যকোপনিষৎ, উদ্বোধন কার্যালয়, কলকাতা, ১৩৫৪ (বাংলা)।
- চিরন্তন নারী জিজ্ঞাসা, জ্যোতির্স্ময়ী দেবী, অনন্য প্রকাশন, ১৯৮৮।
- মহাভারত সারানুবাদ, রাজশেখর বসু, দেবলয় লাইব্রেরী, তৃতীয় প্রকাশ, ১৪১৮।



শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন ও নারী শিক্ষার সমস্যা

দুর্বা দে

সারসংক্ষেপ:

নানা সমস্যায় আমাদের শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা আক্রান্ত। শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠান আছে, সুন্দর ভবন আছে কিন্তু ভালো শিক্ষক নেই। যদি থাকেও, তারা সংখ্যায় নগণ্য। শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থাপনা, পরীক্ষার ধরন, কারিকুলাম, যোগ্যতা ও পছন্দ অনুযায়ী ভর্তি ইত্যাদি ক্ষেত্রে নানাবিধ সমস্যা বিদ্যমান। এসব সমস্যা নারী-পুরুষ উভয়ের ক্ষেত্রেই সমভাবে প্রযোজ্য। তবে কিছু সমস্যা আছে, যা শুধু নারীর ক্ষেত্রেই প্রাসঙ্গিক নারীশিক্ষার পক্ষে বাধা অনেক। মূল বাধা প্রাথমিক পর্যায়েই বলে আমি মনে করি। আমাদের সময়ে স্কুলে আমরা ভালো শিক্ষক পেয়েছি। স্কুলের মাঠে খেলাধুলা করেছি, বাগান করেছি। এসবের মাধ্যমে জীবনের অনেক কিছু শিখেছি। কিন্তু এখন শিক্ষার্থীদের এমন সুযোগ কোথায়! খেলাধুলার জায়গা নেই, ভালো শিক্ষক নেই। শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠানে নারীর নিরাপত্তা নেই। পথে বেরোলে মেয়েদের নিরাপত্তার নিশ্চয়তা নেই। আর বিশেষ করে শহরের বস্তিবাসী এবং গ্রামগুলোর দরিদ্র পরিবারের শিশুরা পুষ্টিসম্মত খাবার পায় না; পেটে ক্ষুধা নিয়ে স্কুলে গেলে ওই শিশুরা ক্লাসরুমে কী শিখবে মেধাবী হয়ে ওঠার জন্য পর্যাপ্ত পুষ্টি তো প্রয়োজন। এর সবই সব শিশু, বিশেষ করে মেয়েশিশুর শিক্ষার পথে বড় বাধা।

পুষ্টিকর খাবারের অভাব এবং অপুষ্টি নারীশিক্ষার পক্ষে আরেকটি বড় বাধা। খাবার জোগানের ক্ষেত্রে যাতে ছেলে-মেয়েতে বৈষম্য না করা হয়, সে বিষয়ে পরিবারকে সচেতন হতে হবে। উচ্চশিক্ষায় নারীর অংশগ্রহণ বেড়েছে, নারীরা অনেকে পেশাজীবীও হচ্ছেন, তবে তা প্রয়োজনের তুলনায় যথেষ্ট নয়। অনেক অভিভাবক এখনো কেবল মেয়ের 'ভালো বিয়ে' দিতে তাকে উচ্চশিক্ষিত করে তোলা দরকার বলে মনে করেন; এই মানসিকতারও পরিবর্তন দরকার। কেবল বিয়ের কথা না ভেবে মেয়েকে সমাজে স্বাধীনচেতা মানুষ হিসেবে, স্বাবলম্বী হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠা করে তোলার জন্য উচ্চশিক্ষিত করে তোলার কথা অভিভাবকদের গুরুত্বসহকারে ভাবতে হবে।

গত কয়েক দশকে স্কুল-কলেজ-বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে মেয়েদের ভর্তির হার বেড়েছে, তবে তাদের বারে পড়া এখনো ঠেকানো যাচ্ছে না। অর্থনৈতিক সংকট, সামাজিক সমস্যা, নিরাপত্তাহীনতা, বিভিন্ন কুসংস্কার নারী শিক্ষার পথে বাধা হয়ে দাঁড়াচ্ছে।

আমাদের দেশে এখনো ছেলে মেয়ের মধ্যে বৈষম্য করা হয় এই মানসিকতার পরিবর্তন দরকার। তাই নারীশিক্ষা এমনকি গোটা শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার উন্নয়নের জন্য আগে মনোযোগ দিতে হবে। ভালো স্কুল, ভালো শিক্ষক, মানসম্মত শিক্ষা যেমন চাই, তেমনি দারিদ্র্য পরিস্থিতিরও পরিবর্তন দরকার। পাশাপাশি সমাজে নারীর নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করতে হবে।

(Main-Theme)

“Empowering Women through Education”

শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন

সুস্থ শিক্ষিত সমাজের জন্যে নারীর শিক্ষা ও নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন ওতপ্রোত ভাবে সম্পর্কযুক্ত। শিক্ষার উদ্দেশ্য হল, সমাজে অজ্ঞানতার অন্ধকার দূর করে জ্ঞানের প্রসার ঘটানো। এই অজ্ঞানতা দূর স্বরূপ পরিপূর্ণ সমাজ ব্যবস্থায় নারী এবং পুরুষের ভেদাভেদ অবাঞ্ছনীয়। সমগ্র সমাজের উন্নতি তখনই সম্ভব যখন নারীও পুরুষের ন্যায় সকল ক্ষেত্রে সক্ষম ভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করবে এর জন্য প্রয়োজন সমগ্র নারী জাতির মধ্যে শিক্ষার প্রসার এবং নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন।

এর জন্যে দরকার নারী জাতির মধ্যে শিক্ষার প্রসার ঘটনা। স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ বলেছেন, জাতির উন্নতির জন্য জাতীয় জীবনের প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ প্রয়োজন। তাই নারী শিক্ষার জন্য বিদ্যালয়ের প্রেরণ করা অত্যন্ত আবশ্যিক। শিক্ষা হলো সমস্ত রকম উন্নয়নমূলক প্রক্রিয়ার অন্যতম কেননা যথার্থ শিক্ষা ছাড়া নারীর সামাজিক ক্ষেত্রে উন্নতি সম্ভব নয় এই সামাজিক অবস্থা গত বিকাশে সহায়তা করবে নারী শিক্ষা।

একজন শিক্ষিত মাই পারে, একজন সন্তানকে মানুষের মতো মানুষ করে তুলতে সমাজের কাছে।
উদাহরণ হিসেবে বলা যায়-

“মায়ের শিক্ষা আগে হলে,
শিশু শেখে মায়ের কোলে।

শুধু সন্তান লালন পালন বা সন্তানকে মানুষ করার জন্য নারীর শিক্ষা নয়। নারী শিক্ষার উদ্দেশ্য হবে শিক্ষিত হয়ে স্বমহিমায় নিজের পায়ে নিজেই দাঁড়ানো। নিজের দায়িত্ব নিজের কাঁধে নেওয়া এবং সাথে সাথে পরিবারের দায়িত্বও নেওয়ার, সমাজের দায়িত্ব নেওয়া। এর ফলে এগিয়ে সমাজ। নারী ও পুরুষ উভয়েই সমাজের সম্পদ তাই দক্ষতার মাধ্যমে এই মূল্যবোধকে যথাযথ পরিচালনা করে পুরুষের পাশাপাশি নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের দিকটিও সমাজ কে লক্ষ্য রাখতে হবে। মাধ্যমটি হবে অবশ্যই শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে। শিক্ষা ছাড়া কোন কিছুই সম্ভব নয়। শিক্ষা আত্মরক্ষার পরিপূর্ণ বিকাশে সহায়তা করে। শিক্ষা অজ্ঞানতার অন্ধকার দূর করতে সাহায্য করে।

নারীর সামাজিক ক্ষেত্রে নারী এগিয়ে দিতে গেলে শিক্ষার যে প্রয়োজন সমাজকে সচেতন হতে হবে। প্রয়োজনে বালিকা বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে হবে। এবং অভিভাবকদের দায়িত্ব পূত্র সন্তান এবং কন্যা সন্তানকে এক চোখে দেখা। পুত্র সন্তানের পাশাপাশি কন্যা সন্তানকেও শিক্ষার আলোয় আলোকিত করা সে কি করতে চাই, কিভাবে সে জীবনে এগোতে যায় সেই দিকটা লক্ষ্য রাখার দায়িত্ব অভিভাবকদের। ক্ষমতায়নে শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে নারীর সম্মান বাড়াতে সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধি, সাক্ষরতা এবং প্রশিক্ষণের ব্যবস্থা অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয়ে আছে। শিক্ষার মাধ্যম নারী ক্ষমতায়ন একটি সমাজের উন্নতির জন্য প্রয়োজনীয়, কারণ এটি উন্নয়নের জন্য উপলব্ধ মানবসম্পদের গুণমান এবং পরিমাণ উভয়ত বাড়িয়ে তোলে। ক্ষমতায়ন হিউম্যান রাইটস্ অ্যাণ্ড ডেভলপমেন্টকে সম্বোধন করার সময় অন্যতম প্রধান পদ্ধতিগত উদ্বেগ।

দেশের বহনক্ষম উন্নয়ন নিশ্চিত করতে আমাদের সমাজের জন্য নারী ক্ষমতায়ন প্রাথমিক প্রয়োজন। অনেক বিশ্বনেতা এবং পণ্ডিতদের যুক্তি ছিল নারীর শিক্ষা এবং নারী ক্ষমতায়ন না হওয়া পর্যন্ত বহনক্ষম উন্নয়ন অসম্ভব। বহনক্ষম উন্নয়ন পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ, সামাজিক তথা অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন গ্রহণ করে, এবং নারী ক্ষমতায়ন না হওয়া মহিলারা পুরুষের ব্যতিরেকে উন্নয়নের প্রক্রিয়ায় সমান গুরুত্ব বোধ করে না। এটি বহুলাভাবে বিশ্বাস করা হয় যে, নারী তথা পুরুষ উভয়ের সম্পূর্ণ অংশগ্রহণ উন্নতির জন্য গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। কেবল পুরুষদের অংশগ্রহণের স্বীকৃতিতে বহনক্ষম উন্নয়নের পক্ষে উপকারী হবে না। নারী এবং উন্নতির প্রসঙ্গে, ক্ষমতায়নের ক্ষেত্রে নিশ্চয়ই নারীদের বেশি পছন্দ করতে হবে। শিক্ষা এবং ক্ষমতায়ন না থাকলে দেশে ন্যায়বিচার হতে পারে না এবং সামাজিক পরিবর্তন ঘটে না। আবার, পণ্ডিতগণ সম্মত যে, নারী ক্ষমতায়ন উন্নতির জন্য একটি বিশাল ভূমিকা পালন করে এবং এটি উন্নতির অন্যতম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অবদান। উন্নয়নে নারীদের সমানভাবে অন্তর্ভুক্ত না করলে নারীরা দেশের উন্নয়নে সুবিধা করতে বা অবদান রাখতে পারবে না। তাই আমাদের সমাজের জন্য নারী ক্ষমতায়ন প্রাথমিক প্রয়োজন।

বর্তমানে ব্যাপক ভাবে নারী শিক্ষার প্রসার ঘটেছে, সরকারি ভাবে বিভিন্ন সুযোগ সুবিধার পেয়ে অনেকে উচ্চ শিক্ষার স্তরে পৌঁছে গেছে। এবং ঘরে ঘরে থেকে উঠে আসুক এই বার্তা এটা সমগ্র সমাজের উন্নতি।

Sub-Themes

Problem of women's education

নারী শিক্ষার সমস্যা

“ বিশ্বে যা কিছু মহান সৃষ্টি চির কল্যাণকর,
অর্ধেকটার করিয়াছে নারী অর্ধেকটার নয়। ”

বিদ্রোহী কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এ কথা বলে গেলেও পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজ এখনো পুরোপুরি মানতেতে পারেনি- সমাজের নারী ক্ষমতার প্রসার। এর জন্য আজও পিছিয়ে রয়েছে আমাদের সমাজ।

বর্তমান যুগে দাড়িয়ে শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে নারী পুরুষের সমান অধিকারের কথা বললেও তার প্রয়োগ উল্লেখযোগ্য হবে হয়নি।

1. এখনো অধিকাংশ অভিভাবক কোন না অপেক্ষা পুত্রের উপর যত্নশীল হন। কন্যার অপেক্ষায় পুত্রের শিক্ষার উপর বেশি গুরুত্ব দিয়ে থাকেন। নারী শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে এ মানসিকতা সবচেয়ে বড় সমস্যা।
2. অনেকের ধারণা মেয়েরা অংক বিজ্ঞানে দুর্বল মেয়েদের মাথায় ঢুকিয়ে দেয়া হয় যে এই বিষয়টা তাদের পক্ষে সম্ভব না তাই অনেক সময় ইচ্ছে থাকলেও বৃত্তি ও কারিগরি শিক্ষা থেকে ভয়ে তারা পিছিয়ে আসে। মেয়েরা বঞ্চিত হয়। শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে একটা সমস্যা।

৩. উচ্চশিক্ষার প্রয়োজনে সব জায়গায় এখনো পর্যাপ্ত পরিমাণে কলেজ গড়ে ওঠেনি। এমন অনেক প্রত্যন্ত গ্রাম আছে যেখানে কলেজ নেই কলেজ দূরের কথা স্কুল অনেক দূরে শিক্ষা থেকে এখানকার মানুষগুলো বঞ্চিত।
৪. পর্যাপ্ত পাঠাগারের অভাব নারী শিক্ষা অগ্রসারে বাদ হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। অনেক পরিবার আছে যেখানে আর্থিক অভাবে বই কিনতে পারেনা আর্থিক অনটন নারী শিক্ষা সমস্যার মধ্যেই অন্তর্গত।
৫. প্রত্যন্ত গ্রাম অঞ্চলে এক একটি পরিবার দেখা যায় সেখানে শিক্ষার প্রাথমিক সরঞ্জাম দূরে থাক খাবারও জোটে না ঠিক করে। ছোট ছোট মেয়েরা মায়ের সঙ্গে মাঠে যায় চাষের কাজে। দুমুঠো অন্যের জন্য। আসলে ওদের টাকা নেই ওটা ওরা খেতে পায় না ওরা পড়বে কি? শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে এটা সমস্যা আমাদের সভ্য সমাজের দৃষ্টি দেওয়া দরকার।
৬. ডিজিটাল যুগে দাড়িয়ে আমরা অনেকে ভাবতেও পারি না এখনো অনেক গ্রাম অঞ্চল আছে যেখানে আধুনিকতার ছোঁয়া পৌঁছায়নি। ঠিকমতো বসতবাড়ি এমনকি বিদ্যুৎ পৌঁছায়নি। এখানে শুধু নারীরা নয় সেই অঞ্চলের সমগ্র সমাজ শিক্ষা থেকে বঞ্চিত। কেউ শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে একটা বিরাট সমস্যা সমগ্র মানবজাতির জন্য। তাই পঞ্চায়েতস্তর থেকে রাজ্যস্তর তথা শিক্ষিত সমাজ যদি এগিয়ে আসে তবে শিক্ষার অগ্রগতি ঘটবে।
৭. আমাদের এই সমাজে এখনো পুরুষের তুলনায় নারীর মর্যাদা কম তাই নারী শিক্ষা হচ্ছে। কিছু মানুষ মনে করেন কন্যা সন্তান জন্ম থেকেই বিয়ের জন্য বলি প্রদত্ত। মেয়েদের পড়াশোনার দরকার নেই ঘরের কাজকর্মই বাড়ির লোকে দেখাশোনায তাদের একমাত্র দায়িত্ব তাদের শিক্ষার প্রয়োজন নেই এটা সমস্যাই বলা চলে। নিরাপত্তাহীনতার নারী শিক্ষা সমস্যার অন্যতম কারণ এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে প্রতিবন্ধকতা সৃষ্টি করে।
৮. গ্রাম কিংবা শহর এখনো এমন দেখা যায় মেয়েরা টিউশন থেকে বাড়ি ফিরতে একটু সন্ধ্যা হলে পাড়ার মানুষ খারাপ চোখে দেখে এক ধরনের সামাজিক সমস্যা এই ধরনের সমস্যার ভুক্তভোগী হতে হয় অনেক মেয়েকে। এইজন্যে অনেক অভিভাবক মেয়েদের সন্ধ্যা বেলায় টিউশন পড়াতে পাঠান না। এই মানসিকতার বদলের প্রয়োজন।
৯. একটু ভিতর দিকে গ্রামগুলোকে দেখা যাবে পর্যাপ্ত গৃহ শিক্ষক এর অভাব। মেয়েদের টিউশন পড়তে বাইরে যেতে হয়। ফলে খরচ বেশি হয়, আর্থিক অনটন সৃষ্টি হয় পরিবারে।
১০. অনেকের ধারণা মেয়েরা বেশি শিক্ষিত হলে সংসার করতে পারে না এ কারণে অনেক পরিবারের কন্যা সন্তানদের শিক্ষিত করে তোলে না এভাবে সমাজে বিভোর পরিমাণে নারীরা শিক্ষা থেকে বঞ্চিত।
১১. সামাজিক অবস্থাগত বিকাশের সহায়তা করে নারী শিক্ষা, স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ বলেছিলেন ‘জাতীয় উন্নতির জন্য জাতীয় জীবনের প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ প্রয়োজন। তাই নারী শিক্ষার জন্য বিদ্যালয়ে প্রেরণ করা অত্যন্ত আবশ্যিক।’

১২. শিক্ষা হলো সমস্ত রকম উন্নত মূলক প্রক্রিয়ার অন্যতম। কেননা যথার্থ শিক্ষা ছাড়া কখনোই নারী সামাজিক ক্ষেত্রে অন্যকে সম্ভব নয়। শিক্ষার মাধ্যমেই আত্মরক্ষা পূর্ণ বিকাশ হয়। এমন অনেক গ্রামাঞ্চল আছে যেখানে বালিকা বিদ্যালয় দূরত্ব অঞ্চল থেকে বহুদূরে গ্রামের দিকে বিদ্যালয়ের, ছাত্রী নিবাস নেই বললেই চলে যা মেয়েদের জন্য খুবই অসুবিধাজনক।
১৩. এখনো এমন কুসংস্কার বর্তমান যেখানে এমন পরিবার আছে যেখানে মেয়েদের পড়াশোনা করাটা পাপ হিসেবে বিবেচিত হয় মেয়ে মানুষের আবার শিক্ষা কি? এরকম কুসংস্কারের আজ বহন করছে অনেক পরিবার মানসিক সমস্যা গুলো দূর করা প্রয়োজন।
১৪. এমনও দেখা যায় একটি বাবা মা সন্তানের আশায় পরপর অনেকগুলি কন্যা সন্তান জন্ম দিয়ে ফেলেছেন ফলে পরিবারের আর্থিক সমস্যা নেমে এসেছে এতগুলো সন্তানের খাওয়ানো পরানোর অর্থ জোগাড় করতে পারছেন না তাদের বিদ্যালয়ে পাঠানোর ক্ষমতা তাদের নেই না শিক্ষা থেকে কন্যা গুলো বঞ্চিত হয়। কন্যাদায় থেকে মুক্তি পাওয়ার জন্য এমনও দেখা যায় খুব অল্প বয়সে বিয়ে দিয়ে দেয়। এটা নারী শিক্ষা সমস্যায় অন্যতম কারণ। কথা আছে 'মায়ের শিক্ষা আগে হলে শিশু শেখে মায়ের কোলে।' - সমাজে এখনো বড় অংশে মায়েরা অ-শিক্ষিত। তাদের স্বাক্ষর জ্ঞানও নেই ফলে মেয়েদের যে শিক্ষা প্রয়োজন এই মানসিকতাটা ও তাদের মধ্যে দেখা যায় না। তারা নিজেদের কন্যা সন্তানের শিক্ষার প্রয়োজন বলে গ্রাহ্য করে না।
১৫. নারী শিক্ষার ব্যাপ্তি না ঘটলে সমগ্র নারী জাতি তথা সমাজের উন্নয়ন সম্ভবপর নয়। বর্তমান বিশ্বে ব্যবস্থায় যে রবটি উঠেছে তা হল -জাতীয় উন্নয়ন তখনই সম্ভব হবে যখন নারীও পুরুষের নাই সকল ক্ষেত্রে সক্ষম ভাবে অংশগ্রহণ করবে। লিঙ্গ অসাম্য দূর করার জন্য বর্তমানে বিভিন্ন পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা দরকার। শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে নারী জীবন ধারণের প্রয়োজনীয় দক্ষতা গুলো সহজেই অর্জন করতে পারবে।

নারী শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে যে বিষয়গুলি নারী অর্জন করে তা হল-

প্রথমত, প্রাত্যহিক জীবনযাপন ও সমস্যাসমাধানের উপযোগী জ্ঞান ও দক্ষতা অর্জন।

দ্বিতীয়ত, বিশ্লেষণাত্মক ও নির্ণায়ক এবং সিদ্ধান্তগ্রহণ ক্ষমতার বিকাশ।

তৃতীয়ত, চিন্তন ও উদ্ভাবনী ক্ষমতার বিকাশ যা প্রকৃত জীবন পরিস্থিতির মোকাবিলায় প্রয়োজন।

চতুর্থত, দক্ষ নেতৃত্বদানকারী ক্ষমতার বিকাশ।

পঞ্চমত, আত্মবিকাশ।

বর্তমান পরিবর্তনশীল পৃথিবীর নতুন ধরনের চাহিদাগুলির প্রতি সাড়া দেওয়া, প্রতিবন্ধিতার মোকাবিলা করা এবং বিভিন্ন সুযোগগুলির প্রতি যথাযথ প্রতিক্রিয়া করার ক্ষেত্রে নারীশিক্ষা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে এবং এভাবেই তারা নারী ক্ষমতায়নের পথে অগ্রসর হয়। 1994 খ্রিস্টাব্দে আন্তর্জাতিক সম্মেলনে উল্লেখ করা হয় যে শিক্ষা জীবন বিকাশের প্রয়োজনীয় জ্ঞান, দক্ষতা ও আন্তবিকাশের দ্বারা নারী ক্ষমতায়নের পথকে প্রশস্ত করে। 1992-এর জাতীয় শিক্ষানীতিতে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে, "The National Educa tional system will play a positive interventionalist

role in empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through re-de signed curricula, textbooks. The training and orientation of teachers decision makers and administrators and the active involvement of educational institutions.” The National Policy of Empowerment of Women (2001)-এ বলা হয়েছে শিক্ষা নারী উন্নয়ন, বিকাশ ও ক্ষমতায়নে সহায়তা করে।

বহু প্রাচীন যুগ থেকেই নারীর অবস্থা বিভিন্ন পরিবর্তনের মধ্য দিয়ে গেছে। প্রাচীন যুগ থেকে বর্তমান কাল পর্যন্ত আমরা লক্ষ্য করলে দেখব নারীদের যেমন কঠিন অবস্থা মধ্যে দিয়ে সময় অতিবাহিত করতে হয়েছে, তেমনি বেশ কয়েকজন সমাজ সংস্কারকদের নারীদের মর্যাদা ফিরে পাবার যে প্রচেষ্টা তা আমাদের স্মরণযোগ্য। তাদের হাত ধরে আমরা এগিয়ে এসেছি আজকের সময়ে। ভারতীয় সংবিধানে বর্ণিত নারীর অধিকারের অন্তর্ভুক্ত মূল বিষয় হলো- সাম্য, মর্যাদা বৈষম্য থেকে স্বাধীনতা -এই লক্ষ্য সামনে রেখে সরকারি ভাবে নারীর উন্নয়ন শিক্ষার উদ্দেশ্যে বিভিন্ন দপ্তর খোলা হয়েছে। ২০১৩ সালে কিশোরী মহিলাদের উদ্দেশ্যে আমাদের রাজ্যের প্রধান সামাজিক সুরক্ষা প্রকল্প কন্যাশ্রী প্রকল্পে পথ চলা শুরু হয়। বর্তমান মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মাননীয় মমতা বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের হাত ধরে এই প্রকল্পের মূল উদ্দেশ্য বাল্যবিবাহ রোধ ও নারী শিক্ষার বিস্তার এই প্রকল্পের মাধ্যমে মধ্যবিত্ত পিছিয়ে পড়া পরিবারগুলির মেয়েদের যেমন শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে আর্থিকভাবে সহায়তা পাচ্ছে, তেমনি বাল্যবিবাহ বহু অংশ কম হয়েছে। এর ফলে মেয়েরা উচ্চশিক্ষার আলো দেখতে পাচ্ছে। উচ্চশিক্ষায় শিক্ষিত হয়ে নিজের পায়ের দাঁড়ানোর স্বপ্ন এখন বাংলার প্রায় ঘরে ঘরে এর জন্য মাননীয় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মমতা বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় কে সমগ্র নারী জাতি তথা সমাজের পক্ষ থেকে শ্রদ্ধা জানাচ্ছি ওনার এই কঠোর প্রচেষ্টা এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া পশ্চিমবঙ্গের সমগ্র নারী জাতিকে সুন্দর ভবিষ্যতের দিকে।

তথ্য সূত্র

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Empowering Women Through Education

Swagata Sarkar

Abstract

“If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered”.

-Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Since ancient times, women have been held in a high position as the bearers and carriers of social progress. Over time, their participation in various fields of society has been encouraged and given importance. Initially, there were some social barriers to the participation of women, but efforts have been made to overcome them. It has been proved time and again over the ages that the participation of women is absolutely necessary in the proper running of a society. It has also been proven that a society can never prosper without women. Intellectuals and thinkers have also accepted the participation of women in the management of the society and to manage the society properly. Special attention should be paid to the education of women and their participation in education is a must. Various initiatives and government programs have been targeted so that women from all walks of life can participate. Various efforts are being made and even various schemes have been taken up for women to become self-sufficient. An attempt has been made to overcome the gender gap and highlight women as carriers of society's progress by giving them special reservation in the pages of the constitution. Above all, women have been elevated to a special status by focusing on the development of education and accepting them as the backbone of the society, and the efforts to achieve all-round development are still going on today.

Keywords : Women education, Women empowerment, Role of education in women empowerment, Constitutional provisions supporting women education, Govt. Initiatives, Challenges, Remedies.

Introduction

Empowerment of women is a necessity for the development of a society, because it improves both the quality and quantity of individual resources available for development. It is one of the major practical concerns when concentrate on human right and development. Women empowerment is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. Without the empowerment of women, it would be a fable to dream about the target of sustainable development. Women contribute almost half of the population and empowered women will strengthen the national economy. Education is one of the key aspects that enable the women to respond to the challenges, to confront the traditional role and change their lives. Education has also been considered as a key to unlock the golden door of freedom for the development. Education helps in reducing inequalities and function as a means of improving the status of women within the family and society. Empowering women provides an opportunity to acquire practical information and learning for their improved livelihoods. Our country can become a developed nation only if large women folk contribute the best of her ability and capacity which is possible when she is empowered and educated.

Women Education :

Women education refers to every form of education that aims to improving the knowledge and skill of women and girls. It includes general education at schools and colleges, vocational and technical education, professional education, health education etc. Providing for all facilities and opportunities for the learning of females. Female education is a catch-all term of complex set of issues and debates surrounding education (primary, secondary, territory and health education in particular) for girls and women. In some Western countries women have surpassed men at many levels of education.

“Education of a male benefits him largely; educating a girl is equivalent to educating her entire family.”

Women Empowerment:

Women empowerment means freedom of women from the ferocious hold of social, economical, political, social group and gender-based intolerance. It means yielding women freedom to make life abundance. Women empowerment is an important process in reaching gender equality, which means “privileges, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female”.

Role of education in women empowerment :

- 1] **Education Manumit :** Education manumit the thinking, mind, thoughts, imagination, power, principle in various field for easy to survive and achieve knowledge through education. Empowerment of women brings equal status to women, opportunity and freedom to develop her which also means equipping women to be. Education makes the women’s self sufficient in every aspect, she is not depends on her father, husband nor son neither brother.
- 2] **Education stay away from hurdles :** Education gives equal rights to women in socially, politically, culturally, gender, religiously manner. She will bring equal status with men and that is the reason to fostering both national and international integration.
- 3] **Education allows to take Decision :** As education opens ways to take decision according to their choice whether it is relates to life style, lifepartner, job, career, eating style, sexuality etc. Education teach to learn what is wrong and right. Education push to stay independently on own feet.
- 4] **Education Garner :** Education will garnishing women to defense against crime, social devil, sexual harassment, marital rape and mental stress of society etc.
- 5] **Educated women contributes to economy :** If women are qualified and helpful for family to earn money that means she able to develop the economy status of family and also for nation. Women can help, through their work; get rid of problems like India’s high maternal mortality rate, high rates

of gender violence and other crime against women child sex abuse, female feticide, implement family planning and other schemes etc.

- 6] Education enhances :** Education enhances the quality of women and makes some strategies to grow upward, to gear the entire education system to play positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. To widen women's access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels, breaking gender stereotypes.

Above six statement proof that education play very vital role for empowering women.

Constitutional Provisions supporting Women education :

- **Article 15(1)**, The state shall not discriminate against any citizen of India on the ground of sex.
- **Article 15(3)**, The state is empowered to make any special provision for women. In other words, This provision enables the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women.
- **Article 16(2)**, No citizen shall be discriminated against or be ineligible for any employment or office under the state on the ground of sex.
- **Article 23(1)**, Traffic in human beings and forced labour are prohibited.
- **Article 39(a)**, The state to secure for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
- **Article 39(d)**, The state to secure equal pay for equal work for both Indian men and women.
- **Article 39(e)**, The state is required to ensure that the health and strength of women workers are not abused and that they are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their strength.
- **Article 42**, The state shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

- **Article 51-A(e)**, It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.
- **Article 243-D(3)**, One-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women.
- **Article 243-D(4)**, One-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women.
- **Article 243-T(3)**, One-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall be reserved for women.
- **Article 243-T(4)**, The offices of chairpersons in the Municipalities shall be reserved for women in such manner as the State Legislature may provide.

Government Initiatives :

- ❖ **Mahila Samakhya Programme** : Mahila Samakhya (MS) is an ongoing scheme for women's empowerment that was initiated in 1989 to translate the goals of the National Policy on Education into a concrete programme for the education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly those from socially and economically marginalized groups. (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).
- ❖ **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV)** : This scheme was launched in July, 2004, To provide education to girls at primary level. It is primarily for the underprivileged and rural areas where literacy level for girls is very low. The schools that were set up have 100% reservation :75% for backward class and 25% for BPL (below Poverty line) girls. (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).
- ❖ **National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)** : This programme was launched in July, 2003. It was an incentive to reach out to the girls who the SSA was not able to reach through other schemes. The SSA called out to the "hardest to reach girls". This scheme Has covered 24 states in India. Under the NPEGEL, "model schools" have been set up to provide better opportunities to girls. (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).

- ❖ **National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE) :** NSIGSE was launched in May 2008 with the objective to establish an enabling environment to reduce the dropouts and to promote the enrolment of girl children belonging mainly to SC/ST communities in secondary schools. (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).
- ❖ **Indira Gandhi National scholarship scheme :** is provided for single girl child for pursue both higher and technical education. (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).
- ❖ **Swami Vivekananda Scholarship for Single Girl Child :** The dropout ratio at various levels of education for girls is much higher than that of boys. Keeping Swami Vivekananda ideas of women education and to promote girls education, UGC has introduced the Swami Vivekananda Scholarship for Single Girl Child for research in Social Sciences with an aim to compensate direct costs of higher education especially for such girls who happen to be the only girl child in their Family.(MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).
- ❖ **Saakshar Bharat :** The National Literacy Mission was recast with its new variant, Saakshar Bharat launched in 2009. It aims to accelerate adult education, especially for women's (in the age group of 15 years and above) who have no access to formal education, targeted female literacy as a critical instrument for women's empowerment. This has led to an increase in literacy, amongst women, from 53.67% (Census 2001) to 65.46% (Census 2011). It is also for the first time that of the total of 217.70 million literates added during the decade, women (110.07million) outnumbered men (107.63million) (source: Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India (XII th Five Year Plan).
- ❖ **Udaan :** The Scheme is dedicated to the development of girl child education, so as to promote the admission of girl students. The aim is to address the teaching gap between school education and engineering entrance examinations. It seeks to enhance the enrolment of girl students in prestigious technical education institutions through incentives & academic support (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).

- ❖ **Pragati** : Scholarships for Girl Child for Technical education. It aims at providing encouragement and support to girl child to pursue technical education (MHRD Annual Report, 2014-15).
- ❖ **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** : Launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in 2015, the scheme aims at encouraging women education in India.
- ❖ **Bill to Raise the Marriageable Age to 21**: Another significant step towards women's education in India is the Government's initiative to increase the marriageable age of women from 18 to 21. The bill stated "Women are often put in a disadvantageous position regarding higher education, vocational instruction, attainment of psychological maturity and skill-sets. The increase in the marriage age of women is also expected to lower maternal and infant mortality rates and improve nutrition and sex ratio."

From the above discussion, it is clear that Government of India has taken so many Initiatives for the improvement of girls' education. In spite of that the status of girls' education has not been increased in expectation level because these initiatives have not been reached to The grass root level. So, Government of India must have to take responsibility to implement these Schemes and provisions at grass root level.

Challenges : There are several challenges that are plaguing the issues of Women's right in India. Targeting these issues will directly Benefit the empowerment of women in India.

- **Education** : While the country has grown from leaps and bounds since independence where education is concerned. The gap between women and men is severe. While 82.14% of adult men are educated, only 65.46% of adult women are known to be literate in India. The gender bias is in education, specialized professional trainings which hit women very hard in employment and attaining top leadership in any field.
- **Poverty** : Poverty is considered the best threat to peace in the world, and eradication of poverty should be a national goal as important as the eradication of illiteracy. Due to this, women are exploited as domestic helps.

- **Health and Safety:** The health and safety concerns of women are paramount for the wellbeing of a country and is an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. However There are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned.
- **Professional Inequality :** This inequality is practiced in employment sand promotions. Women face countless handicaps in male customized and dominated environs in Government Offices and private enterprises.
- **Morality and Inequality :** Due to gender bias in health and nutrition there's unusually high mortality rate in women reducing their population further especially in Asia, Africa and China.
- **Household Inequality :** Household relations show gender bias in infinitesimally small but significant manners all across the world, more so, in India e.g. sharing burden of housework, Childcare and menial works by so called division of work.

Suggestions :

- ❖ The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grassroots of problem. Hence, education for women has got to be paid special attention.
- ❖ Awareness programmes need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.
- ❖ Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. They Should be given proper wages and work on par with men so that their status can be elevated in the society.
- ❖ Strict implementation of Programmes and Acts Should be there to curb the mal-practices prevalent in the society.
- ❖ Review of curriculum and educational materials to include gender education and human rights issues.
- ❖ Use of different forms of mass media to communicate social messages relating to women's equality and empowerment.

Conclusion :

The present scenario, it may be said that woman in the modern hi- tech society which is moving very fast under the shadow of population explosion, conflicts, chaos and corruption can mold the personality of the adolescent and youth in a proper direction and perspective, provided the woman are themselves in power. There is a positive relationship between education and woman empowerment. In another essential aspect is that, in these societies the issue of women empowerment has been facing certain serious challenges, which are the outcome of certain evil norms and attitude such as child labour, child marriage, illiteracy, superstition, partial attitude of the parents, female feticides etc. and in such a situation women empowerment is an urgent necessity. In order to promote women's empowerment, it is necessary to create an environment that will allow women to participate in educational programs and share the benefits. The educational and other strategies for women empowerment should be implemented in reality for empowering women in the world. The problems that are present in our society like poverty, unemployment and inequality cannot be eradicated by man alone but equal and active participation of women is mandatory. Without the education she will not be able to understand about their rights and its importance. Empowerment of women intend to motivated towards acquiring higher literacy level, better health care for women and their children, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in socio-economic and commercial sectors, awareness of their rights, improved standard of living and to achieve self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect among women. In 2019 the Government of India has launched Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme which aims at making girls independent both socially as well as economically. It also helps in create awareness and improving the competence of delivery of welfare services which only intended for women. Such schemes should be put into practice all over the country to get the desired changes. What be supposed to never gone is that women like men need to be proactive in the process of lifelong learning. That is the true empowerment from "women for development" the time has come to move focus to "women in development", with the cooperation of men through group engagement and management.

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Women Empowerment through Self Help Groups (S.H.G.) at Ward No. 18 in Nabadwip Municipality, Nadia, West Bengal

Lisha Saha

Abstract

In order to empower women, it is necessary that they feel worthy, are able to make their own choices, and have the ability to shape social change for themselves. But in our society women could not even take decisions for themselves and their families and their economic activity is low. To empower women first they have to earn so that they can be independent. This study aims to assess the role of Self-Help Groups to empower the women in Nabadwip municipality. There are 60 Self Help groups (S.H.G) at ward no.18 in Nabadwip Municipality and in this study, the researcher randomly chosen 30 women as interviewers from the SHGs. The primary data was collected through a face-to-face interview. The result shows that the women of Nabadwip started a business (like tailoring, grocery stores or any small business) by taking loans from the SHGs and earning money by themselves as most of them were studied till secondary level or uneducated. The study shows that the women of Nabadwip (ward no. 18) are still improving in the economy, they were being self-independent by taking little steps with the help of S.H.Gs.

Keywords : Self Help Groups, Loans, Women empowerment, Nabadwip Municipality.

Introduction

A woman is an important part of our society. If we want to develop our society then we have to empower women, because in our society most women are housewives and they can't take their own decisions. Also, their activity in the economy is very low. Women empowerment is

promoting women's self-worth, empowering them to make their own choices, and decisions and assisting in social change in a positive way. So, the first step in empowering women is to make them financially independent. For that, they have to do jobs or business. Most of the women in west Bengal are housewives and not that highly educated to do jobs and also have no money to invest in business, especially in rural areas. Also, banks don't give loans to women easily because women don't have any property to give the banks as mortgage/bond. So, there came a concept like Self-help groups (SHG), which is an organization only for women, where they invest the money as loans. At first, the groups were known as 'Swarna Jayanti Sohori Rojgar Yogna' but now the groups are known as 'Self-Help Groups'. A self-help group is a self-managed organization of 10-20 local women, based on a common interest for the socio-economic improvement of their members Making women self-independent and worthy persons in society. The organisations give the women training in such works as tailoring, handcrafts, basic computer knowledge, beautician etc, So, that they can start a new business and earn money.

In Nabadwip, there also have some Self-help groups (SHG). At ward no. 18, in Nabadwip municipality, there are 60 SHGs. Each group has 10 – 15 women. After 6/12 months of a group, the bank gives an amount (approx. 1,25,000) for business so that the members can start landing money and start a business. All women in the group have to give 20 rupees every month. The groups have a 2% interest on their savings. After when the interest becomes enough it is equally distributed between the group members. The SHGs give training to the members of the groups and also their family members (female members) can take the training. Tailoring and beautician course is the most given training in ward no. 18. Handcrafts, bag making, and basic computer courses were also included as training courses.

Objective :

The objective of the study is –

- To analyse the impact of Self-help groups (SHG) in empowering women economically and socially.

Study Area :

The study area of the research work is ward no. 18 in Nabadwip municipality. The Nabadwip exists by the western bank of the river Bhagirathi in the district of Nadia in the state of West Bengal. It is located between $23^{\circ}25'10''\text{N}$ to $23^{\circ}42'\text{N}$ latitude and $88^{\circ}22'12''\text{E}$ to $88^{\circ}37'\text{E}$ longitude with an approximate area of 98.01 km^2 .

Methodology :

- **Population and sampling :** The population of the study is all the women, who were involved with Self-help groups (SHG) of ward no. 18 in Nabadwip municipality. The sample of the study randomly chose 30 women from those SHGs.
- **Data collection :** Data were collected by taking face-to-face interviews using a questionnaire.
- **Process :** First the researcher makes a questionnaire and by using that takes a face-to-face interview with the councillor of ward no. 18 of Nabadwip to know about the SHGs. And makes another questionnaire for taking face-to-face interviews of randomly chosen women (SHG members).



Photo plate 1: Members of 'Akata' SHG



Photo plate 2: Interviewing the Councillor of 18 no. ward



Photo plate 3: Some group members of SHGs

SHGs of Nabadwip:

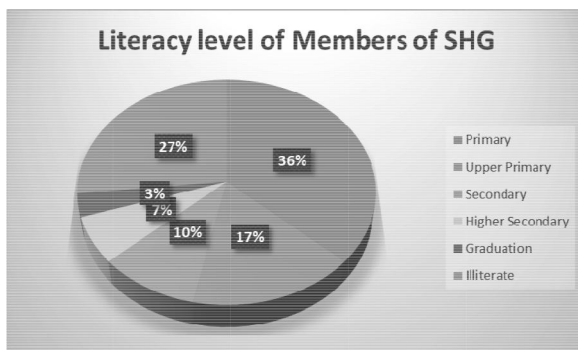
Self-help groups (SHG) is an organisation made for only women. SHGs invest in micro-finance (loans). This micro-finance plays an important role in women being financially independent. As per the govt. the rule there has to be 3 women who belong to a BPL family. Every group has a bank passbook, and the members have their personal group passbooks. In every group, there have to be three women, who were 'Savanetri', 'Sompadika' and 'Koshadhokka', who mainly maintains the group works. The role of the SHGs in women life of Nabadwip (ward no. 18)-

- **Loans:** Member makes small regular savings contributions over a few months until there is enough money in the group to begin lending. Loans were given only to the member of SHGs. So that they can start their work or business. But as per the interviews, sometimes they also take loans for medical treatment or surgery or any important issues. The loans they take, it has to repay in 10 instalments. But most of the time they use the loan for business.
- **Training :** Some training like tailoring, Beautician, bag making, basic computer course, jewellery making etc were given in this ward to the group member and also their family members (female). Tailoring training is mostly given in this ward of Nabadwip. Other training was given so that they can learn the work and start a business with the learned knowledge.
- SHGs enhance women's participation level in society.
- The group make them organized and make them understand banking, savings etc.

Findings:

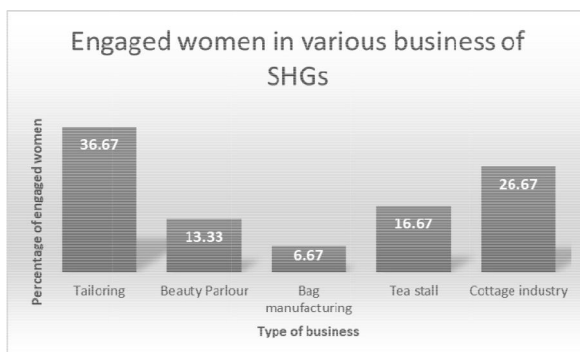
On the basis of the analysis of the study, the findings are given below –

- Most of the women were educated till the secondary level and some of them were illiterate.



Even if they were not that highly educated but still, they understand the importance of being financially independent.

- After joining SHG women are started their new business or investing in their family business.



Most of the women are engaged in the tailoring business because schools of the study area give orders to make school dresses for students to the SHG members.



Photo plate 4: Tant saree business

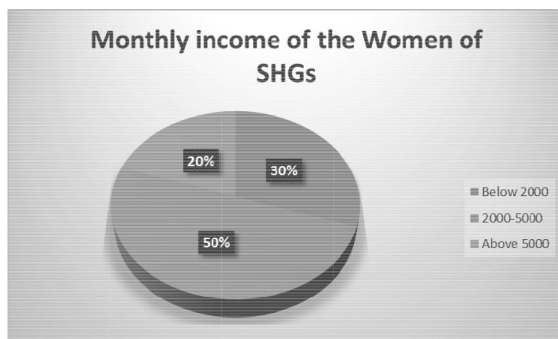


Photo plate 5: Tant making machine



Photo plate 6: Beauty parlour business

- Even Many group members are economically active after joining SHGs.



- The loans of SHG and the training make them confident, and independent. Many of them started their new business with the help of loans.

Demerits of SHGs:

There are some demerits of SHGs. Like :

1. Women of the groups who take loans sometimes don't give back the landed money easily.
2. Also, sometimes they face a loss in their new business so it became hard to pay back the landed money.
3. Some members don't give regular savings (20 rupees per month) money on time every month.

These demerits can affect the groups badly and in fact, the groups that can be closed permanently.

Conclusion :

To empower women there is an important role of the Self-help groups (SHG) in Nabadwip at ward no. 18. Even though they were not that educated but they realised the value of education. Even if they were not that highly educated but still, they understand the importance of being financially independent. After joining SHG they were active economically and also socially. Because they started a new business and earning. Also, they have to go bank, attend meetings, and deal with the customers for business, so we can say they also started to socialise. The members became more confident than before. All in all, we can

say, the women in the study area were improving day by day financially and socially.

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Commercial Ad films and Women Education

Deboleena Dutta

Abstract

Advertising and marketing play a powerful role in the process of gender socialization and women and girls' empowerment. The process of gender socialization means expected gender roles are learned from birth and intensified throughout childhood and adolescence with messages received from society, including from the marketing and advertising they see around them. Negative gender norms and stereotypes influence children's self-perception and contribute to shaping different pathways for their future. Addressing negative gender socialization is critical to achieving gender equality. Similarly, advertisements and marketing play an innate role in propagating equity and right to education with catchy taglines. In this paper I have selected three such television and social media advertisements to excavate how far media have managed to leave a deep impact on the sustaining back burners and stereotypes attached to educating girl child.

Keywords : gender parity, women education, mass media.

Main Paper

Women education is not something new but being practiced since the Vedic period. Women's education has been important in ancient India. Education enriches and enhances a man's life and strengthens his intellect and wisdom. For this reason, the education of women has been emphasized since the Vedic era. Women's education was at its highest in the Vedic era. Women were equal to men in knowledge and education. It was a thing, of the past for the girl to go to the educational institutes and gurukul to get knowledge. In the Vedic era, the girl practiced celibacy, studying various subjects. Women were proficient in philosophy and logic. They used to sing the shlokas of the Rigveda. We

have instances of pandit women like Ghosha, Lopamudra, Vishvavara, Appala, and Urvashi.

This condition of female education could not be maintained further. To talk about the present scenario of women education, India has failed her history of ancient time. Nowadays, when it comes to women education, our minds get hovered with multiple opinions, experiences as well as multiple arguments, but why is it so? Why is it that 'educating a girl' churns up so many opinions or arguments? Educating a girl is as natural as educating a boy, then why is this fuss? Why has educating a girl child always become an interrogative argument post Vedic period? If not all over the nation yet at some regions of the country, educating a girl child is interrogative. Where bearing a girl child is a matter of fuss, what more can we expect about their education. Women's status in education has declined with passing years. but fortunately, we have picked up the initiation to enhance the treatment of our women in last few years. We have seen this nation producing beauty with brains, from Prime Minister to business women, from astronauts to educated mothers. We have evolved from patriarchs preventing their daughters from pursuing their basic education to the fathers aiding their daughters fulfilling their dreams of higher education. In this evolution there has been many catalysts, many enlightening thoughts, sacrifices and reforming agendas. There have been countless organisations and preachers who have worked relentlessly in the progress of women education. In this paper of mine, I shall be discussing the influence of Indian television commercials and their efforts in propagating women education all over the nation.

To focus on the present-day scenario, television and marketing play quite a vital role in influence the mass. The consumers are driven by the contents of the advertisements. The ad films seamlessly manipulate the thought process of the consumers. Of course, they take in sometimes but they can also spring up better initiatives. For instance, promoting the conscience of women education definitely can bring positive development in the nation's women's education. Some brands are really good job in doing so. Various brands have somehow managed to portray the necessity of women education amongst people and various campaigns are run till date. These strategies have somehow brought a

healthy rise in women education in India. In this paper I shall discuss two such television ad films which have pertinently presented the significance and scopes of women education in India.

‘Ladki Haath Se Nikal Jaayegi’ conceived and scripted by FCB Interface. There is an age-old Indian phrase to warn parents against this. “Ladkihaath se nikaljaayegi” which literally means, “the girl will slip out of your hands.” It flipped the meaning of the phrase around, telling people that only when a girl slips out of your hands, will she succeed. This commercial ad film has been conceptualized keeping these insights in consideration. A semi-urban setting was chosen for the film to ensure relatability, given that these beliefs exist not just in rural India, but also in cities. It is through a conversation between a girl and her father that the prevalent mindset is challenged by providing a new perspective to ‘LadkiHaath Se Nikal Jaayegi’. It portrays a father riding his little daughter to school while an acquaintance of his comes forward and reminds the dad, how the girl can slip out of his hands if allowed much education. This statement “the girl will slip out of your hands” very obviously makes the little girl inquisitive and she asks her father its meaning. The beauty of the film lies in the father’s explanation of the statement. He describes all the possible exploring opportunities the girl can have only if she studies hard. He explains how education shall provide her with wings to soar high in the sky of achievements, and the little girl is convinced as a conclusion that ‘slipping out of the hands’ is the best thing. This film is a message to every parent of India, who still indulge this conservation against their daughter’s aspirations.

At many regions of our country for a longer stretch of time, most people have been keeping their girl child away from higher education or even preliminary education owing to the fear of ‘disobedience, towards the norms of society. They also keep justifying this discrimination under the pseudonym of gender roles. “Boys will be the bread earner hence they need education and we cannot afford to educate every child, so we choose the boy child over the girl child in case of education as well”. They further add to it, “why should we be educating a girl child when they are to end up being homemakers and education will hinder their trait of subjugation.” In India’s deeply patriarchal society, a woman is still expected to take care of the home, be the homemaker. They are

scared considering, if the girl receives higher education, she will get swayed by modern ideas and walk away from age-old traditions and practices. She might be emboldened to marry outside the caste, dress as she pleases, and even socialize with the opposite sex before marriage. In short, she could go 'astray'. The threat is that education will make her too independent, "the girl will slip out of your hands." This film addresses this notion of our society. The Chief Creative Officer, from FCB Interface, Robby Mathew, said, "This film is an ode to the unsung heroes, who reject our society's patriarchal mindset and encourage their daughters to fly. It is a celebration of a girl child's dreams and her father's determination to make it happen. It changes the meaning of this often-used phrase 'Ladki Hath Se Nikal Jaayegi' and instead uses it to make a case for putting her destiny back into her own hands". This film has been awarded with much accolades nationwide.

It is a common desire among parents to be protective of the daughter, all thanks to the Even working mothers felt the need to restrict their daughters' movements. Men often self-appointed themselves as protectors of women. Even today, there is an accepted belief that certain jobs are for women, and certain jobs aren't. The next film I am going to mention, addresses this 'gendering' of works and jobs. "Cheil India's Samsung 'We care for the girl child' CSR initiative, where a father fights against the patriarchal diction of confining girl child from opting for higher studies or going far for studies. The film is a dramatized representation of Rajasthan's Seema Nagar who despite facing bias from her relatives, managed to complete her education and now works at 'The Engineers', a Samsung Service Centre in Jaipur. Last year, Nagar was felicitated by the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Vasundhara Raje, for being a role model to several young Indian girls. This ad film which was released by Samsung's YouTube channel, has managed to garner over 14 million views over a span of three days. The ad film which is over three minutes long, is titled, 'We care for the girl child' and is a part of Samsung's CSR initiative. The initiative provides specialised classroom and on-the-job training at Samsung's Technical Schools and Service Centres respectively. The film that has been crafted and conceptualised by Cheil Worldwide, portrays the life of a girl who fights negative gender stereotyping to fulfil her dream of pursuing

higher studies at a Samsung Technical School. From the disappointment at the child's birth owing to her gender to accepting her like a 'beta', to finally standing up for his daughter's rights and acknowledging her as his 'pyaribeti', the ad captures several moments of the father-daughter relationship spanning across many years. During the ad film, Samsung products make a blink-and-you-miss-it appearance. The focus has been more on the message than the marketing. This film has been brought to life by the efforts of the Agency Cheil India, Chief Creative Officer, Sagar Mahabaleshwarkar. Executive Creative Director, Tarvinderjit Singh, Copywriter Tarvinderjit Singh, Director Shashank Chaturvedi and Production Company Good Morning Films. The ad was released on May 29th this year and currently has just over 80 million YouTube view.

There are already numerous brands and organisations working in propagating women education and women empowerment. "It's time to change the equation", "Educate the girl child", "Munni", Dainik Bhaskar, are just a few mentions amongst them. Not only the commercials but also the freelancer social media content creators as well as the stand-up poetry hubs are providing significant messages through their contents. One such mention is Ankita Shah's poetry on educating a girl, published on the platform of 'unErase poetry'. The poem addresses very scrupulously the adversities in the path of attaining the basic educational as well as survival rights of a girl child.

Research says if girls are educated, they will have lesser children,
 If girls are educated, they will boost our economy
 If girls are educated, they will not be married off when they're young
 Research says our lives as women are merely cause and effect
 Our curiosities could be translated into statistics
 Our desires are numbered and in controlled
 Our rights negotiated to see what good can they bring to the rest of the world
 Education is not a privilege or a prize, distributed to those who could give something back
 It is the only way we learn how to reason.

And if along the way women changed the world a little, thank them
But when the reports assess,
If it's worth the while the distance between the home and the school is shorter
The fees have been waived, the meals and computers are all in place
But the girls the girls are diminishing, disappearing
Ask them to recount, that the last time Arti went to school, a boy followed her back
The last time when Rhea went to the school, was a day they discovered love letters crumpled in her bag
The last time Pooja by the school was never
Policies for women are not immeasurable favours that we make to them
Which they must Sprint to grab
But if and when they decide to come and take the road let us make it easy for them
Empty schools, failed schemes, exist because we block education with barbed wires of caste and class and privilege and patriarchy
The roads that lead here are made of crooked concepts of what it means for women to be educated,
Of what it means for women to be honourable
Its bends advertise men with knives and acid and unrequited desire that act like sign boards telling them
“Go home”
So, the question is, not what happens if the women are educated,
But rather how will they be educated?
How will we bring the boundaries down?
How will we repair the roads that lead here?
How will we correct the damage that is already done?
It is all about a little initiative, those baby steps towards the fundamental rights, those challenging moves, those dreams, those little efforts can bring a lot of change in the scenario. Discrimination of women from womb to tomb is well known. There is continued inequality and

vulnerability against 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.

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Position of Women in Nineteenth Century through the Light of Rasasundari Devi's “Amar Jibon”(“My Life”)

Moumita Mandal

Abstract

Females are always treated as ‘inferior’ by the ‘superior’ males of the patriarchal society. Females are nothing but the “commodity”. They are violently subjugated by child marriage, child birth, marital rape, gender inequality. Females are crushed by the numerous burden of social norms created by virile eco of patriarchal society. Even today the critics utter the term “eco-feminism” i.e. the mother nature, but less of them can free themselves from the patriarchal mindset. But fracturing the “phallus” of male dominated society, the wo “men” can still rise. Sometimes they have claimed their rights through feminist movements, sometimes they have highlighted their sufferings through their writings, such as- Mary Wollstonecraft’s “A Vindication of the rights of Woman”, Simon de Beauvoir’s “The Second Sex”, Kate Millett’s “Sexual Politics”, Virginia Woolf’s “A Room of One’s Own” among others. The aim of this paper is to focus on the position of women during 19th century. “Amar Jibon”(1868 and 1897) is an autobiography in which Rasasundari Devi depicts agony on behalf of a large number of females at that era through her own life story. She plays a role of timid and silent model of sacrifice. But her endless desire to read “Chaitanya Bhagabat” makes her ‘jitakshara’(“jit” means win and “akshara” means word). This paper depicts gender fluidity, gender discrimination, orthodoxy, education and patriarchy, which will empower women in our society.

Keywords : Concept of Bharatbarsha, Gender Discrimination, Gender Fluidity, Education, Orthodoxy

Main Paper

“I appeal to you mind, leave the illusory path The greatest of the great God is the Ultimate truth, remember that knowledge will take you to the precious treasure.” —Rasasundari Devi

These are the words of Rasasundari Devi, who is considered as the first full scale autobiographer in the undivided Bengal. She was born in 1809 in the village of Potajia, in Pabna district; she has mentioned in her writing “I was born in the month of Chaitra in the (Bengali) year 1216 and now in 1303 I am 88 years of age.” Her father Padmalochan Rai died when she was an infant and raised by her widow mother and relatives. The first part of her autobiography “Amar Jibon”(“My Life”) was published in 1876 with sixteen compositions and second part was published in 1906 with fifteen compositions.

Concept of Bharatbarsha, Orthodoxy, Education

19th century is a time of the adaptation of ‘pardah pratha’, the development of ‘Sati’ and prohibition of widow marriage. The idea that women should be under constant tutelage became prevalent and were ordained by Manu, the supreme law-giver in Hindu civilization. Manu claimed that women had no right to independence and should be dependent on their father before marriage, their spouse after marriage, and their son after the death of their husband. The purdah system was prevalent in Muslim society and ‘Devdasi pratha’ was prevalent in nearly all Hindu temples. The 19th century witnessed a radical change in Bengali society, this was the Bengal Renaissance (late 18th - early 20th c) which raised questions against the existing norms and customs including the dowry system, practice of ‘Sati’, child marriage, practice of polygamy by Kulin Brahmins and so on. The great social reformers like, Raja Rammohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Vivkananda among others and organizations like Arya Samaj were so active for betterment of women at that time.

Rasasundari Devi made no overt attempts to contextualize historically and culturally rooted feminist issues. However, she anticipated the intellectual and political frameworks that Indian feminism would eventually adopt. As Dinesh Chandra Sen observed – “The account of this life can hardly be ignored as merely personal. It is a factual document of the life of an old Hindu woman. Anyone speaking of his or her life in a simple style is actually recording the social scene without being aware of it. The Book Amar Jiban is thus not merely the account of Rasundari but a story of all Hindu women of her time.”(About the

Book,8). Rasasundari Devi herself faced child marriage at her age of twelve. In third composition of part one of "Amar Jibon" she wrote – "I had heard that everybody gets married but I did not know what marriage was all about." "I began to worry about what would happen to me, where was my mother going to send me! These thoughts caused so much misery that I was thoroughly depressed."(p.33) She pleaded – "Don't give me over to them, Mother!"(p.34) but the patriarchal society of 19th century did not listen to her only because she was a girl; rather her own mother said – "Every girl has to go to her in-law's' house."(p.34). In society of 19th century women's position was so pathetic that to be a woman was nothing but a curse. Women were tamed like a caged pet. In fourth composition she wrote – "Unable to cry anymore I fell into deep sleep. I had no idea what happened after that or where I was taken. When I woke up the next morning I found myself on a boat with none of my relations near me... I thought of my mother and other members of the family, the affectionate neighbors, my playmates. Where were they now and where was I?... My heart felt as if it would break."(p.36). The helpless women had nothing to do except depending on the God, the Dayamadhav, at that period.

The 'Bhakti' movement was an important Hindu movement that aimed to promote religious reforms to all social classes by embracing the path of devotion to salvation. Beginning in the 15th century, it spread over east and north India, peaking during the 15th and 17th centuries. In Bengal 'Bhakti' movement was known as Baishnaba movement which was introduced by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The influence of Baishnabism was in 19th century society. In her work "Amar Jibon", Rasasundari Devi dedicated all the compositions to her Dayamadhav i.e. the Lord Krishna. For instance – "My lord and master Janardana, Sri Madhusudana,/ Hari, perisher of Peril/ You are the ocean of kindness, the friend of the/ poor, we cross the sea of life by your mercy/ From the womb till now I have been floating in/ the stream of your kindness/ You are with me at every step, on earth and/ in water, oh Ocean of mercy,/ To your glowing feet I submit myself..."

In 19th century, being a widow meant having to dress white 'than' and eat only vegetables. Little girl had to undertake ritual fasting without even a drop of water; even child widows were not exempt. These restrictions

also became obsolete as Rasasundari's times changed. "Amar Jibon" is a memoir of her life and the period when the Orthodox system of education was being replaced by a new liberal pedagogy. "Blesses, blessed be this kaliyug," she writes. A yuga series is a recurring epoch in Hindu mythology where universal events are repeated by infinity. The four yugas – Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kali – repeat in each cycle. Kaliyug is the last and most decadent of these ages. This is written by Rasasundari from a Vaishnavite perspective on time. As Sutanuka Ghosh Roy observed – "The orthodox Hindu Samaj- society found it extremely difficult to cope up with the times when women were learning to read and write. They rude: Now we are ruled by a female soverign... this is the age of Kali. In her consent towards women's education and rule, she exhibited her aversion as well as fear against societal notions. For rassundari Kaliyug brought in a new connotation – it heralded a new dawn for women."(p.77).

19th century of Bengal witnessed such an orthodox patriarchal society where people believed in superstition that wives would be widow if they write and read. When a woman was attempting to read, she was strictly prohibited. During 19th century British colonizers realized that they had two burdens for Bengali society, first was the 'white man's burden' to educate the uneducated natives and the second was 'man's burden' to emancipate uneducated native women. In this time 'Bamabodhini Patrika' reported about women's appearance in public sphere from their private and isolated space. Bengali weekly 'Somprakash' reported – "Ninety nine percent of the participants were women, and one percent men..." in various kinds of social activities. Though there was 'bhadrolok-bhadromohila' culture in Bengal, women had to suffer for gaining education. Rasasundari out of her deep agony and frustration wrote in sixth composition of "Amar Jibon" – "I was angry with myself for wanting to read books. Girls did not read."(p.51). But out of her endless desire to read "Chaitanya Bhagabat" she learned reading, stealing the sheets of scripture and hiding it down in 'khori' in the kitchen. Apart from that during her childhood she used to sit in the 'bahirmohol' and listen to the recitation of students – "The boys used to write the thirty - four letters of the alphabet on the floor and read them

loudly. Since I used to be there all the time I learned all the letters by myself. But nobody had any knowledge of this.”(p.24).

Gender Discrimination and Gender Fluidity

The first wave of feminist movement emerged around in late 19th century but it was not possible for an ‘uneducated’ woman to be aware of this. But it was her spontaneous power that she dared to write this autobiography and to show the hollowness of male dominated society. She depicted the gender discrimination as she showed off women were just like the ‘commodities’ – “Like other material things they are exchanged by the men, among the man, and to the men.” (Luce Irigaray, “When the Goods Get Together”). As Rasasundari observed – “Dressed in those material I used to work with the sari down to my breast and never talk to the servants ... Thus all I could see was my own feet, nothing else.”

The term wo “men” itself has gender discrimination because at that time identity of females must be through male figures. Females were treated as ‘inferior’ and males as ‘superior’. Even females were considered as the “decorated pot”(p.23) in assembly and “A special rule for the daughter-in-law was to work with the sari pulled down over the face and not talk to anyone”.(p.39). there was binary in case of work also. Women were bound to do only house hold works and give services and all comforts to men. As Rasasundari devi said - “My day used to begin very early – and there was no respite from housework till long past midnight. I could not rest, even for a moment”(p.40). Indians worship nature as mother , even now-a-days critics utter the term “ecofeminism” , but still they are not free from patriarchal binary. They dominate the mother figure.

Sigmund Freud defined phallogocentric theory according to which phallus of men hold the supreme position. Women sexuality is inferior because of the lack of the phallus; vagina is the taker and penis is the giver, so the males are superior and females are inferior. But our Rasasundari depicted “ a mother undergoes greater suffering than the father.” Thus she some how depicted the gender fluidity . both male and female are interdependent in this universe.

Conclusion

Rasasundari structured the 19th century in convincing manner through her own life story. Mary Wollstonecraft in her “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” rightly said that – “Educate women like men, says Rousseau, and the more they resemble our sex the less power will they have over us. This is the very point I am at. I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves.”

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Effect of Internship on Female Teacher Education in B.Ed. Programme

Dr. Sangita Roy

INTRODUCTION

A teacher is a life director of students who teaches a student how to stand on his/her own feet in the future and helps to be a good citizen. Thus, teaching is a very noble profession for shapes a nations future. Therefore, the teacher must get training before entering the teaching profession and this training makes the teacher stronger in their field. NCTE has given more importance to the B.Ed. teacher education programme in the new regulation and has extended 1year to 2 years. NCTE includes the B.Ed. internshipfor 16 weeks. Because during teaching internship, interns can practice their teaching in an actual school setting and also develop classroom management ability. In this study, investigator seeks to find out that the effect of internship on female teacher education especially in B.Ed. programme on teaching process and classroom management ability.

1.1 Operational Definition of Important Terms:

Internship:

Internship is defined as B.Ed. teaching internship programme. Teaching internship takes place in two different phases. First is in 2nd semester of B.Ed. syllabus for 4 weeks of preparation of internship. Second is in 3rd semester of B.Ed. syllabus for 16 weeks of teaching engagement.

B.Ed. Female Interns:

In this study B.Ed. female interns those who are undergoing two-year B.Ed. teacher education program in any B.Ed. teachers education institute approved by the NCTE.

Teacher Education (B.Ed. Programme):

In the present study the term Teacher Education used for B.Ed. Programme. B.Ed. is defined as 2years B.Ed. providing teacher

education to the students who will be eligible to teach at secondary school educational.

Teaching Process:

In this study teaching defined as a process, including planning, implementation, evaluation and revision. During internship, interns develop their teaching process through using learning design, teaching learning materials, different teaching methods etc.

Classroom Management:

Classroom management is defined as a process which B.Ed. interns use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive on lesson and academically productive during a class.

1.2 Significance of the study:

According to NCTE Regulation 2014, teaching internship included in B.Ed. syllabus for 2nd and 3rd semester. The significant of the teaching internship is to qualitative development of teaching process and also prepares student teachers for classroom management ability. So, in this study the investigator tries to find out that how effective teaching internship on B.Ed. female interns' teaching process and classroom management ability.

1.3 Objectives of the Study:

- To find out the effect of internship on B.Ed. female interns' teaching process stream wise.
- To find out the effect of internship on B.Ed. female interns' classroom management ability stream wise.

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study:

Ho1 There is no significant difference between Science and Language B.Ed. female interns in teaching process during teaching internship.

Ho2 There is no significant difference between Social Science and Language B.Ed. female interns in teaching process during teaching internship.

Ho3 There is no significant difference between Science and Social

Science B.Ed. female interns in teaching process during teaching internship.

Ho4 There is no significant difference between Science and Language B.Ed. female interns in classroom management ability during teaching internship.

Ho5 There is no significant difference between Social Science and Language B.Ed. female interns in classroom management ability during teaching internship.

Ho6 There is no significant difference between Science and Social Science B.Ed. female interns in classroom management ability during teaching internship.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Design of the Study:

In this present study investigator used Descriptive Survey method. The present research attempted study conditions of the teaching process and classroom management ability of B.Ed. female interns in teaching internship.

2.2 Population and Sample of the Study:

The study has proposed to be conducted in Kolkata, West Bengal. The population of the study is B.Ed. female students of the B.Ed. teacher education colleges, which are recognizes by NCTE.

From Kolkata 3 B.Ed. institutions are selected randomly. Out of 3 institutions 1 is govt., 1 is govt. aided and 1 is self-financed. From these3 institutions, 90 female internsare selected randomly streams wise (science, Language and Social Science).

Table A . Sample Description

Stream	Sample (B.Ed. Female interns)
Science	30
Social Science	30
Language	30
Total	90

Sample (B.Ed. Female interns)

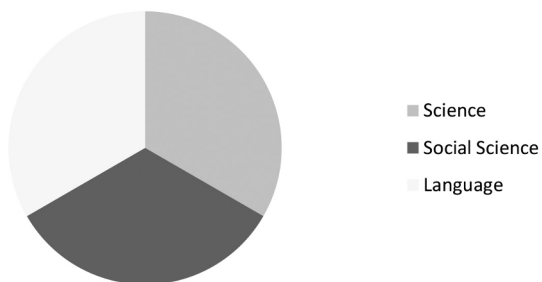


Figure i. Pie-chart of Sample B.Ed. Female Interns Stream Wise

2.3 Variables of the study:

Researcher worked with mainly two types of variables which are given below in the following tables.

Table B: Details of variables

Major Variables	Categorical Variables
Teaching Process Classroom Management	B.Ed. female interns stream wise (Science, Social Science, Language)

Table C: Independent & Dependent Variables

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
B.Ed. female interns stream wise (Science, Social Science, Language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Process • Classroom Management

2.4 TOOLS:

1. Teaching Process Scale (TPS) for B.Ed. female interns which constructed by the investigator.
2. Classroom Management Scale (CMS) for B.Ed. female interns which constructed by the investigator.

2.4.1 Teaching Process Scale (TPS):

The detailed descriptions of the tool are presented

Description :

Teaching Process Scale for B.Ed. female interns is constructed by the investigator. For constructing the items collect relevant information by reviewing of related literature, teacher education books, journals etc related to the teaching process.

Scale construction

The Scale initially is 34 items instrument designed to measure the characteristic for Teaching Process Scale. Initially 38 items are formed, which is evaluated by 3 experts. Finally, 34 items are selected. The scale has divided in to two parts, Positive and Negative.

Table D. Teaching Process Scale

Scale	Item no.	Total Number
Teaching Process Scale (TPS)	p-1,2,3,4,6,7,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,23,24, 25,26,27, 29,30,31,32,33 n- 5,9,22,28,34	34

(Here p- Positive items and n- Negative items)

Scoring

The mode of response to each item of the scale is in the form of five-point scale as strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree, indicating complete agreement or disagreement with the statement.

Reliability

Reliability determined by Cronbach alpha method. By Cronbach alpha method the reliability of the tool is found to be 0.923.

Validity

Content validity of the scale is measured by expert rating using the Interrater Model. The content validity is found to be 0.88.

2.4.2 Classroom Management Scale (CMS)

The detailed descriptions of the tool are presented

Description

Classroom Management Scale for B.Ed. female interns is constructed by the investigator. For constructing the items collect relevant information by reviewing of related literature, teacher education books, journals etc related to the classroom management.

Scale construction

The Scale initially is 14 items instrument designed to measure the characteristic for Teaching Process Scale. Initially 20 items are formed, which is evaluated by 3 experts. Finally, 14 items are selected. The scale has divided in to two parts, Positive and Negative.

Table E. Classroom Management Scale

Scale	Item no.	Total Number
Classroom Management Scale	p- 35,36,38,39,41,42,43,44,46 n- 37,40,45,47,48	14

(Here p- Positive items and n- Negative items)

Scoring

The mode of response to each item of the scale is in the form of five-point scale as strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree, indicating complete agreement or disagreement with the statement.

Reliability

Reliability determined by **Cronbach alpha method**. By Cronbach alpha method the reliability of the tool is found to be **0.85**.

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data have been analyzed in two parts-

- In the first part, descriptive analysis done by computing the Mean and SD's of all the score.
- In the second part, inferential statistics 't' test has been done.

Tabulated raw data in MS-Excel 2016 are analyzed by using MS-Excel 2016.

3.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Results:

Objective wise analyses have been done.

- **Objective 1-** To find out the effect of internship on B.Ed. female interns' teaching process stream wise.

Mean and SD's and 't' Test of Teaching Process have been done for B.Ed. female interns stream wise.

Table F. Mean, SD's and 't' Test of Teaching Process stream wise

SCALE	STREAM	NO. OF FEMALE INTERNS	MEAN	S.D.	'T' TEST	DF	SIG.
TEACHING PROCESS	Language	30	147.0667	11.45285	0.73138	58	NS
	Science	30	147.5	10.90318			
	Language	30	147.0667	11.45285	0.250093	58	NS
	Social science	30	145.6667	9.86227			
	Social science	30	145.6667	9.86227	0.153705	58	NS
	Science	30	147.5	10.90318			

Interpretations:

H₀1- For the result of testing **H₀1**, the **table F** showed that B.Ed. female interns of science mean score (147.5) in Teaching Process is more than the mean score of B.Ed. female interns of language (147.06). Forcomparing the mean score of science and language female interns in Teaching process, the calculated t(58) is 0.731. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, **H₀1** could not be rejected.

H₀2- For the result of testing **H₀2**, the table F showed that B.Ed. female interns of social science mean score (145.66) in Teaching Process is less than the mean score of B.Ed. female interns of language (147.06). Forcomparing the mean score of social science and language female interns in Teaching process, the calculated t(58) is 0.250. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, **H₀2** could not be rejected.

H₀₃- For the result of testing **H₀₃**, the table F showed that B.Ed. female interns of social science mean score (145.66) in Teaching Process is less than the mean score of B.Ed. female interns of Science (147.5). For comparing the mean score of social science and science female interns in Teaching process, the calculated $t(58)$ is 0.153. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, **H₀₃** could not be rejected.

• **Objective 2**- To find out the effect of internship on B.Ed. female interns' classroom management ability stream wise.

Mean and SD's and 't' Test of Classroom Management have been done for B.Ed. female interns stream wise.

Table G. Mean, SD's and 't' Test of Classroom Management stream wise

SCALE	STREAM	NO. OF FEMALE INTERNS	MEAN	S.D.	'T' TEST	DF	SIG.
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	Language	30	58.73333	4.926587	0.16739	58	NS
	Science	30	59.86667	5.070084			
	Language	30	58.73333	4.926587	0.087395	58	NS
	Social science	30	60.03333	3.337182			
	Social science	30	60.03333	3.337182	0.828968	58	NS
	Science	30	59.86667	5.070084			

Interpretations:

H₀₄- For the result of testing **H₀₄**, the table G showed that B.Ed. female interns of science mean score (59.866) in Classroom Management is less than the mean score of B.Ed. female interns of language (58.733). For comparing the mean score of social science and language female interns in Classroom Management, the calculated $t(58)$ is 0.167. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, **H₀₄** could not be rejected.

H₀₅- For the result of testing **H₀₅**, the table G showed that B.Ed. female interns of social science mean score (60.033) in Classroom Management is more than the mean score of B.Ed. interns of language

(58.733). For comparing the mean score of social science and language female interns in Classroom Management, the calculated $t(58)$ is 0.087. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, H_05 could not be rejected.

H_06 - For the result of testing **H_06** , the table G showed that B.Ed. female interns of social science mean score (60.033) in Classroom Management is more than the mean score of B.Ed. female interns of science (59.866). For comparing the mean score of social science and language female interns in Classroom Management, the calculated $t(58)$ is 0.828. So, 't' is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, **H_06** could not be rejected.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The major findings of the study on effect of internship on B.Ed. female interns' teaching process and classroom management have been presented below:

4.1 Findings on Teaching Process:

From the analysis of data on teaching process, the following findings have been revealed it presented in the subsequent diagram **Figure ii**.

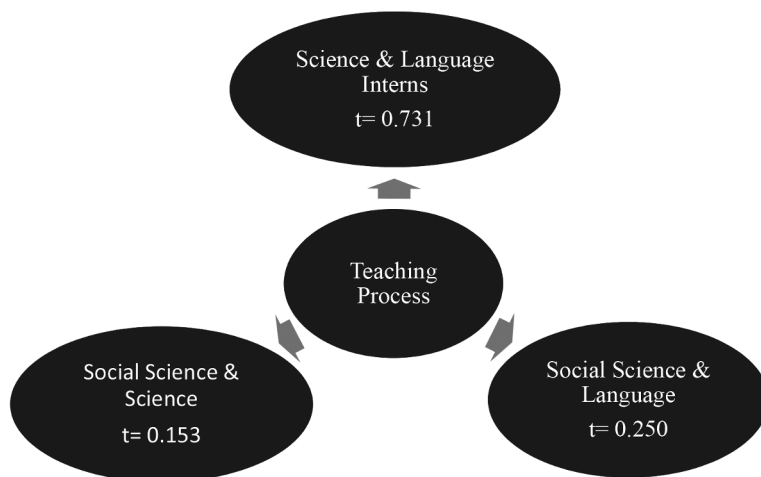


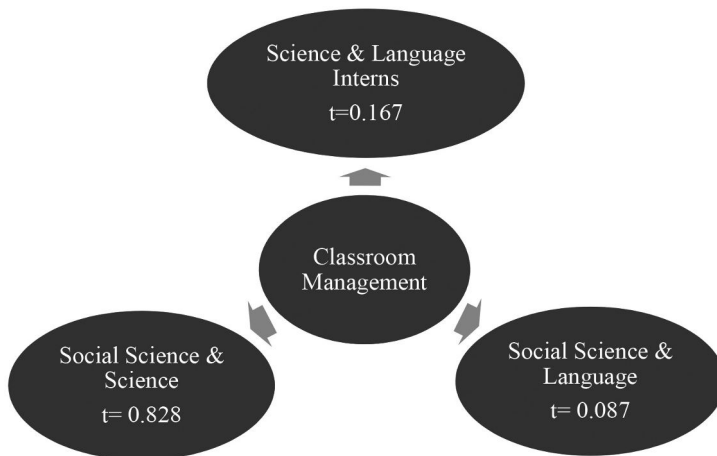
Fig. ii: Findings on comparison of mean score of Teaching Process as perceived by B.Ed. female interns

- On testing H_01 , there is no significant difference found between female interns of science and language in teaching process during internship.
- On testing H_02 , there is no significant difference found between female interns of social science and language in teaching process during internship.
- On testing H_03 , there is no significant difference found between female interns of science and social science in teaching process during internship.

So, there is not found any significant differences among the B.Ed. female interns with respect to their stream teaching process.

4. Findings on Classroom Management

From the analysis of data on classroom management, the following findings have been revealed it presented in the subsequent diagram **Figure iii**.



5. CONCLUSION:

Findings of the study showed that in B.Ed. internship, B.Ed. female interns can learn and develop their teaching quality and classroom management ability.

Present study explored the status of two major variables viz. teaching process and classroom management with respect of categorical variable (stream). So, result concluded that during B.Ed. internship female interns can develop classroom management ability with uses proper teaching methods and skills. They make students' motivation by teaching process with using different questions, teaching aids, different teaching skills and to keep continues by reinforcement. So, the study has been concluded that if female interns use proper learning design, teaching aids, questioning etc. class will be manage by own. In, internship through classroom teaching B.Ed. female interns actually realized what actual teaching profession is.

The study also suggested that further studies are required with a greater sample size and from a more scattered area considering these variables which might influence the teaching process and classroom management during teaching internship.

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Educational Status of Women in Vedic Period

Arpita Sinha

Abstract

The general position of women in ancient India was unique. They enjoyed high status and independence in the society. Women in ancient India had free access to education. They were expected to participate in Vedic sacrifices and utter mantras. Even some of the hymns of Rigveda were composed by poetesses. We get references of such learned ladies as Visvavara, Lopamudra, Apala, Urvasi, Ghosa, Sulabha, Lilabati, Maitreyi, Gargi and Others. These women not only composed hymns but they also learnt music and dancing. Many women scholars of the vedic period overcame many social constraints.

In Vedic period, they were as equal as man in education and had surpassed men in their scholarly fields also. The educational scenario of girls and women saw a change from Vedic (2000 B.C to 1000 B.C) to post Vedic (1000 B.C to 200 B.C) periods. The status of women was high in Indian society in the Vedic period. This paper has been written to know about the educational position of women in Vedic period along with their social status.

Keywords : Education, Vedic women, Vedic period, social-status of women on Vedic period.

Introduction :

During the Rig Vedic period, women were treated equally to their male counterparts in terms of status and position. In Vedic civilization, women were revered and valued not only as mothers who brought up new generation, but also as individuals with immense ability to see the truth and contribute greatly to human society. In the early vedic period, women received adequate education. Women were associated with property in the Epic and Puranas. Even Buddhism didn't help

women much. Manu ordered that women would be reliant on her father in childhood, her spouse in youth and her son in old age.

Access to education was easy for the women in ancient times. Through the massive women education in ancient India several women seers and thinkers originated in ancient time such as Gargi and Maitreyi. Women enjoyed the tremendous right to education and teaching. The women intellectuals in ancient India gathered eminence by participating in educational debates and discussions in the assemblies of erudite persons.

The Objectives of the Research Paper :

- (a) To find out the women educational status reflected in thevedic literature
- (b) To highlight the relevant of these thoughts in present time

Women Educational Status :

In Vedic period, educational system was very developed and the main subject taught was the Veda. The Veda or the six Vedangas were taught including the performance of sacrifice correct pronunciation, knowledge of prosody, etymology, grammar, jyotisha or the science of calendar. Women education in ancient India produced women with significant authority. Ancient India texts describe the influence of the women in the society. Mahabharata by Veda Vyasa sketch the persuasion Draupadi on the husbands to overthrow the Kauravas. Valmiki's Ramayana alsodepict the influence of Sita that resulted in the wiping away of Ravana.

Early Vedic family was of patriarchal type, but vedic women had some control over the entire household. The educational scenario of girls and women saw a change from Vedic (2000 B.C to 1000 B.C) to post-Vedic (1000 B.C to 200 B.C) periods. In vedic period, a good education was provided to girls for their better future life. Women enjoyed equal liberty and freedom in their pursuit of knowledge in ancient India similar to men.

Education was given to the women as it is directly related to the improvement of the society, economic prosperity, national solidarity, their social status and for good family relation. The Upanayana

(initiation ceremony) were organised for both the girls and boys. During the Aryan period, it can be rightly said that the education of women were not being neglected. There was never any kind of prejudices against women education and were a proper place in the society. The vedic period has witnessed many women scholars and they were well-versed in the sacred texts and Vedas. These women were masters in the various fields. They not only composed hymns but they also learnt music and dancing. The women who belonged to the lower strata or caste they had skilful and technical language like spinning, waving and needle work.

In the vedic period there were two groups of women Brahmavadinis and Sadyodvahas. Brahmavadinis were the lifelong students of philosophy and theology. Sadyodvahas used to prosecute their studies until they got married at the age of 15-16 years. Many educated women became teacher or Upadhyayinis. Women were encouraged to be proficient in philosophy, logic and vedic knowledge, were eligible for Upanayana and sang the shlokas of the Rig Veda, in addition to being proficient in fine arts. Women tended to especially study the Atharva Veda. There were many women poets and philosophers in vedic period. The vedic age has witnessed many capable and sagacious women like Apala, Ghosha and Visvavara, who used to compose matras and were said to be rose to the rank of rishis or Sages. Lopamudra one of the femal preachers of vedic period, is believed to have preached as many as 179 hymns of the first book of the Rig Veda along with Sage Agasthya many women scholars of the vedic period overcome many social constraints.

The women had a golden period in vedic period and she was having every right and respect without any written laws. Vedic women were given equal status in education and in the society along with the male once. Thus we can say that vedic age or period is one of the rich and developed periods mainly for the upliftment of the educational status of the girls and women.

The women had the military education as the boys in those days. We find Vispala and Mudgalani going to the battle fields. That was possible for the military education which they got in their earlier life. In Rig-Veda it is mentioned that the educated women were invited to atten the Sabha. To make herself eligible for the membership of the Sabha

awomen was to be educated. In the Vedic India the female students were requested to mingle with the learned women whenever they had to go because knowledgeable ladies were found everywhere. These show that education was considered essential for women in Vedic culture.

Conclusion :

This tradition continues in modern Indian society as well because Ramayana, Mahabharata and Manusmriti are the pillars of our culture who does not believe in the independent existence of women. Even today Indian women are showing their success in every sphere of our life, but their independent existence is still questioned because modern society is still not in favour of giving them freedom completely.

Women enjoyed for greater freedom in the vedic period then in later India . She could study and like Gargi, engage in philosophical disputation. If she was left a widow there was no restrictions upon her remarriage. Vedic women was supposed to be an important factor of the nation. To be a respectful woman, she has to be educated, without proper education she could not be a wise lady as expected. In medieval period, women lost their right of education. For which they were humiliated in the society. But after that society become changed by graceof revolutionary. They showed honour for the women by giving them the opportunity for compulsory education through these steps women becomeenlighted with vigorous growth as before. But the complete women are not able free from the bandage of society even today. There is much that modern society can learn from the vedic culture.

In the light of above discussion, a truly empowered women Vedic era is highly privileged and attain higher educational status in Vedic society. A woman is not only a protector of her family but also a protector of society and even she can join army to protect our motherland.

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Rights of Children of Sex Workers in India

Dr. Marisha Chakrabarti

Abstract

India has one billion plus population of which 400 million constitute children. For shaping the future of any nation it is very essential to provide an environment where healthy growth and development of the children is ensured. (Bajpai, A. 2003) Children are innocent by nature as Rousseau puts it “all things are as good as their creator made them, but everything degenerates in the hands of men.” Rousseau sought to protect and develop the pearl of goodness in children by shielding them from the deforming effects of societal institutions. Children at today’s time are most unsafe. The increasing number of cases reported in the newspaper every day of child abuse and rape has robbed the childhood of its innocence and made them vulnerable. Charles Dickens said in Great Expectation, “In their little worlds in which children have their existence, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt, as Injustice.” The primary need of every human being including child is justice. Everybody should have right to justice. This paper discusses the rights of the children as proposed by Government of India from time to time. It also throws light on the studies on children of sex workers, how are these children isolated from the mainstream societies and gets discriminated. Different child rights give us a clear picture about how these children should be treated and everybody should have equal rights in the society to live.

Keywords : Children, rights, sex worker.

Introduction :

Children need the support of law and government has a major role to play in this regard to ensure them justice. Apart from government voluntary organizations, people and media play an important role in advocating, creating awareness and sometimes making government pass rules and

regulation for safety of the children our nation. Recently in response to Delhi Women's Commission chief Swati Maliwal's hunger strike for 10 days demanding the Government pass an ordinance with stringent punishment for those convicted of raping minors, President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated an ordinance that includes stringent punishment including death penalty for those convicted of raping children below the age of 12. (The Telegraph, 23rd April, 2018). Government of India adopted number of laws and formulated numerous policies to ensure child protection so that there is improvement and development in the situation of the vulnerable population of the society. With this numerous policies government sought to protect the children from any perceived or real danger or risk to their life and childhood. Protecting the child means securing them and protecting them from any kind of harm and violence. While protection is right of every child there are some children who are vulnerable and Government recognizes these children as "children in difficult situation." Children of sex workers falls under this category and they need extra care and protection as they are more prone to abuse and exploitation.

A child means any person below the age of 18 years. 'Juvenile' or "child" means a person who has not completed 18 years of age as per the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000. Legal definition of a child refers to a minor who has not attained majority. Biological definition of a child stress on the fact that child is human being from birth to puberty (Oxford University Press, 2013). In United Kingdom a child is defined as a person who is under the age of majority, which is 18. They consider ' a qualifying child' is a person under the age of 16 or 19 who is in full time education and he should be a person who has not contracted a valid, void or annulled marriage. (Collins Dictionary of Law 2006) United Nation Convention on Rights of the Child 1989 defined in its Article 1 'a child as a person below the age of 18, unless and until the law of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger.' Indian census define person below age of 14 as 'child'. Most of the Indian Government programmes include the children below 14 years of age and a Girl child is a female under the age group of 15-19 years. (Bajpai, A. 2003)

UN Convention on Child Rights further states in its Article 2 that “whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn’t matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis. “

In ‘Educating Children Mother’s dream at **Sex Work’ Sinha and Dasgupta (2009)** propound that all most all the sex workers who participated in their survey declared their intentions of getting their children a good education. Their survey revealed that out of 600 mothers that they interviewed half of them had their children enrolled in an educational institution. But in spite of their wish of getting their children educated in real situation the survey depicted a sad picture. Out of 316 girls and 356 boys of sex workers between the ages 6-18 who goes to school, the survey found that 16.8% could not read and write and 48% of these functionally illiterate children were over 12 years old. Survey further goes on to find whether their exists any gender differences in educating these children and it was found that 15.7% boys and 18% girls were totally illiterate. Thus the researcher claimed that though the difference is less but it anticipated son preference among the sex workers. **Kaul and Shankar (2009)** in their research Early Childhood Care and Education carried under NUEPA stressed on importance of early childhood education programme. The paper emphasized on the progress made towards realizing EFA Goals approved in the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal. They focused on reaching the unreached population of the society for complete coverage of education at all the levels. The research documented the various aspects of EFA which laid special emphasis on early childhood care and education and other phases of education including universal elementary education. It further goes on to state that Indian Constitution make education free and compulsory for all the children up to the age of 14 and mentions that the recent effort to take education cess and raise the resources in this regard in commendable effort. **Prakash (2017)** emphasized on the concept of prostitution and its history. Arguments for and against legalization of prostitution are also discussed. The research revealed that the biggest

red light area is in Kolkata and Mumbai where most women from small town are trafficked and forced to work as prostitutes. They are forced to live in unhygienic condition and suffer from serious diseases like breast cancer, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Concept of sex tourism is growing at fast rate and India is also taking active part in it.

2.1.1 Some statistical data about children

India is second most popular with total population of 1.21 billion. Children below 14 years of age constitutes of 27.34% of the total population. (Indian Demographic Profile 2018).

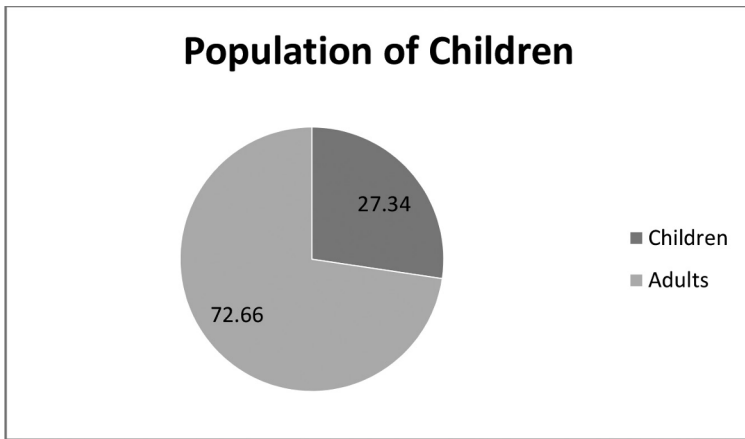


Figure 2.1: *Percentage wise comparison of Children and adult population*

Age wise population of Indian children according to Census data of 2011 reveals that of the total number of children 29% of children fall under the category of 0-5 years, 28% fall under 6-10 years, 27% fall under 11- 15 years, and 16% fall under 16-18 years.

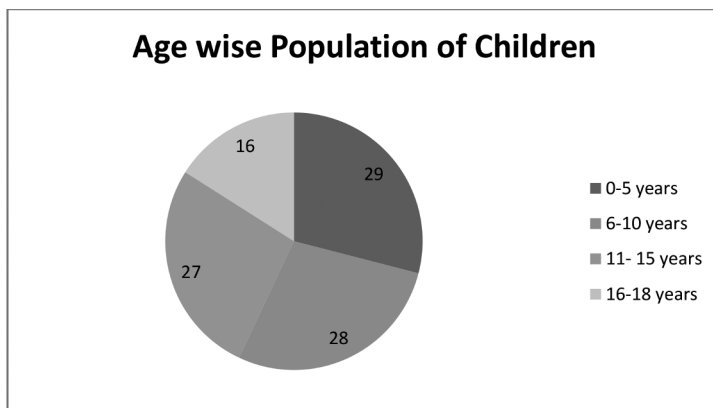


Figure 2.2 : *Age wise percentage of population of children*

*Data source Census Report of India 2011

Child Rights And Protection

Child Rights are human rights of special kind that is particularly concerned with the rights of protection and care of those who are below 18 years of age. United Nation Convention on Child Rights states in its Article 2 that “whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn’t matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.” Child rights implies the basic human rights of a person to get access to food, universal state paid education, health care etc., i.e. they are the basic needs of a person. Child rights also demand freedom of children from any kind of physical, mental and emotional abuse and also freedom from discrimination on the basis of child’s race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, colour or ethnicity. (Bandman,B. 1999).

Children are vulnerable in nature and due to that they are not given the autonomy or right to take or make decision of their own. Instead adults caregivers like parents, guardians and teachers are given authority to take decision on their behalf. Thus they are entitled to special treatment

in situations that are threatening or dangerous to them. (Landsdown, G. 2005)

A right is an agreement or contract established between right holders and right bearers. UNCRC consists of 54 articles and set out rules and regulation on how Governments of various countries should make them available to the children of their nations. It also confers the basic human rights for all the children that include Right to survival, Right to protection, Right to development and right to participation.

- Right to survival implies right to be born in fact in India it begins before birth. A person has the right to survive after he/she is 20 weeks in his/her mother's womb. Right to survival also includes living with dignity with minimum standards of food, clothing and shelter.
- Right to Development is closely related with the right to survival and life. Children have the right to all-round development like mental, physical and emotional. Education and learning will foster mental development. Proper nutrition, food, play and recreation will foster their physical development. Proper care and love and support by the closed ones will fulfill their emotional development.
- Right to Protection implies right of the child to get protection from any kind of abuse or exploitation from violence or neglect at home, school or elsewhere.
- Right to participation include they can express their opinion and be listened to regarding the matter concerning them. They have the right to participate in any of the activities and decision making that concerns them. (source:<http://www.childlineindia.org.in/rights.htm>)

Provision For Child Rights In India

The fundamental law of our Country i.e. Constitution of India came into effect in 26th January, 1950 which provides a protective umbrella for the rights of the children. These rights include Article 14 Right to Equality, Article 19(1) (a) freedom of speech and expression, Article 23 includes Right against exploitation, Article 29 Religious cultural and educational Rights and Article 32 includes right to Constitutional

Remedies. Owing to the children's physical and mental immaturity there are certain fundamental rights especially for the children. Article 15 of the Constitution prohibits discrimination of the citizens on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. But it also mentions that nothing in the Article will prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children. Thus special protection is provided for women and children by the Constitution of our country. (Maharukh A, 2000)

Ministry of Women and Child Development came into existence in 2006 as a separate Ministry. Earlier it was under the department of Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Ministry was created under headship of Hon'ble Minister Smt. Menaka Gandhi. Main vision of this ministry is to cater to needs of women and children in particular throughout the state and country as a whole. Promoting social and economic empowerment of women and ensuring care protection and development of the children of India is the main mission of this department. Holistic development of women and children is the broad vision of this Ministry. Thus with the initiation of this Ministry needs of women and children were given special importance and as a nodal ministry for women and child development it formulates plans, policies and programmes, amends, guides and coordinate the efforts of both Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations working in the field of women and child development.

• **Legislations Related to Children**

Article 39 of Constitution of India provides security to the children so they are not forced into the job market due to economic needs at young age. It also provides healthy environment for the children to develop with freedom and dignity. There are various statues under which a child is covered in India.

(i) Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986

This is an Act passed in the Indian parliament to decide where and how children can work and where they cannot. It gives a detail outline about the working condition of the Indian children. The Act prohibits employment of the children below 14 years of age in certain hazardous

occupations. The Act listed 83 such hazardous occupations where children below fourteen years of age were not allowed to work. The act prohibited the children to work in any occupation mentioned in Part A and Part B of the schedule. Working on the railways like catering or construction on railways or anywhere near the railway tracks, factories, automobile garages etc. are listed in Part A of the Act. It also prohibits children in Part B to work in certain places where manufacturing process is taking place like beedimaking , brick kiln, soap and tanning industries etc.

However there are certain areas not listed above the children can work provided certain regulations given in the act like the number of hour a child can work has to be set, no child can work for more than three hour stretch. No child is allowed to work overtime and work in more than one place at the same time.

(ii) Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1986

Article 23 of the Indian Constitution prohibits trafficking in human beings and beggars and other similar forms of forced labour. In 1956 Indian government passes the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act (SITA). This act was passed in pursuance of the International Convention signed by India at New York on May 1950 for the suppression of immoral traffic in women and girl (Sen and Nair, 2005). This act defines a child as a person who has not completed the age of 18 years. This act punishes any person who keeps or manages or acts or assists in keeping and management of brothels. This was amended in 1986 and came to be known as Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA or PITA). This act made prostitution illegal and grant punishment for brothel owners and pimps who take share of the earning of the prostitutes. The act punishes by law those people who are involved in trafficking for prostitution of children below 18 years of age and people recruiting, procuring, transferring or receiving of person for prostitution. (source: www.chidlineindia.org)

(iii) The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000

This act put emphases on children with criminal offences are in need of

care and protection. It requires the state to cater to the developing needs of a child and provide utmost care and protection to him/her. It also requires adopting a child friendly attitude in handling the children and establishing rehabilitation center to give them the best care possible. (Bajpai, A. 2003) On the other hand the recent edition of the Act known as **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015** came into effect on 15 January 2016. This Act replaced the Juvenile delinquency Law and JJ Act 2000 and allowed juveniles under age group of 16- 18 years involved in heinous crimes to be tried as adults. The bill was passed in the parliament and it proposes to try the accused those who are above 16 years of age as an adult in the court of law. The bill was first introduced by Women and child Minister Maneka Gandhi in August 2014. (The Indian Express, 2015, December 22).

(iv) Right of the Child to Free and Compulsory education Act 2009

86th amendment of the Indian constitution inserted article 21 A to the Indian Constitution which states that “the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.” The Act also known as Right to Education Act (RTE) enacted on Indian Parliament on 2009 and India is among 135 countries to make education a fundamental right for the children when it came into effect on 1st April 2010. The main objective of the act was to provide free and compulsory education to children of six to fourteen years of age as per the 86th constitutional amendment. The Act confers various roles, responsibility and power to the central, state, district and local authorities along with teachers and school administrators.

Chapter 2 of the act lay emphasis on free and compulsory education of all children between 6-14 years of age and in doing that it provides special provision for the children who are not admitted and are above age 6 years to be admitted to the age appropriate class of the children near to his/her school after special training and he/she be allowed to complete education without failing him in any class up to 14 years of age. Any child has the right to transfer to a school which provides education up to class VIII if it is not provided in his/her school.

Chapter 3 of the Act talks about the powers and responsibilities of the center, state and local authorities. Apart from establishing school in all the areas of neighborhood and sharing the financial responsibilities it must ensure no discrimination is made of the children on the grounds of their educational and social backwardness.

Chapter 4 of the Act deals with the roles and responsibilities of the parents and school authorities. It mentioned that it is the responsibility of the parents to send the children to a school. The schools are not allowed to charge capitation fees and screening of the students or take admission test. They can only ask for proof of age but they cannot deny admission if it is lacking. Aided schools, private schools and special school should reserve 25% of their seats for the students belonging to the disadvantaged sections of the society.

Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Rule 2006, promotes the incorporation of child rights into the school curriculum, teacher training and training of personnel dealing with children. (The Gazette of India, 31st July 2006)

(v) POCSO (Protection of the Children from Sexual Offence) Act 2012.

This is an Act to protect children from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography and provide establishment of special court for the trial of such offences. (The Gazette of India, 2012) It is the first law that was passed in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to address the issue of sexual offence against children. In this Act a crime is considered as “aggravated” when committed by a person of trust of the particular child, like police officer, security force, anybody at the institution of the child. Keeping the best interest of the child in the forefront the Act requires establishment of special court for trial of the offences. It stress on providing child friendly environment while interrogating the children in concern for that police should not be in uniform while interviewing the child, child should not be detained at police station at night and assistance has to be provided to the child if he/she needs them. The media has been barred from disclosing the identity of the child without the permission of the special court. National Commission on Protection of Child Rights and State Commission on

Protection of Child Rights are vested with the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the Act at Centre and State level respectively. (Child line India)

(vi) Child Labour(Prohibition and Regulation) Act 2016

This act amends the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986. This Act was amended in July, 2016 and widened the scope of Child Labour by providing strict punishment for those who violate the rules. The present amendment prohibits and completely banned employment of the children below 14 years of age and, except those which are run by his or her family member provided his/her education is not hampered. It adds a new category of children or person called ‘adolescent’ which included children between 14 to 18 years and prohibits their employment in any hazardous environment. Further the recent amendment made child labour a cognizable offence i.e. within the jurisdiction of court and increased the jail term for those who employed children below 14 years. The jail term was increased from 6 months to two years (which was earlier 3 months to one year) or a penalty between twenty thousand to fifty thousand or both. The number of hazardous occupation where a child is prohibited to work has been brought down to 3 in the 2016 amendment which was 83 in 1986 Act. The three most hazardous occupations mentioned in the present Act are mining, inflammable substances and hazardous processes under factories Act. The Act also provided power on the District Magistrate to ensure that the Act is properly implemented at the grass root levels.

• Schemes, Programmes and Policies related to Children

There are number of policy, planning and Commissions undertaken by Indian government for the rights, care and protection of the child.

(i) National Policy for Children 1974 states that children of our nations are important assets and they should find major place in national plans for human resource development. For this the policy laid stress on the following points.

- To provide for adequate growth and development of the children both before and after birth and also throughout the period of their growth.

- To foster physical, mental and social development.
- All children in the country should enjoy optimum condition for their balanced growth.
- To provide adequate nutritional program for removing deficiencies in the children's diet.
- Free and compulsory education to be provided to all children up to fourteen year of age.
- Provision for non- formal education has to be there.
- Equality of educational opportunity of all the children has to be ensured
- Children are to be protected against neglect cruelty and exploitation.
- Special facilities for education, training and rehabilitation to be provided for the socially disadvantaged children, mentally, physically, emotionally retarded children.
- For meeting the needs of the children national children boards will be constructed.
- Adequate resources will be provided for the child welfare program of voluntary organizations.

(ii) Integrated Child Development Scheme 1975

It is a government programme which comes under the purview of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The scheme was discontinued in 1978 again relaunched in Tenth Five Year plan period. The scheme provides for integrated package of service which includes nutrition, immunization, medical checkups, preschool, non-formal education and nutrition and health services. In order to ensure overall care and protection of the children it is provided in package as one factor is interrelated with the other. The scheme caters to the proper physical, psychological and social development of the child and laid special emphasis on nutritional development of the child of 0-6 years of age. This scheme also includes mothers and supports and makes them aware of the necessary nutritional and development needs of their child as well as their needs during pregnancy. (Lokshin et al 2005)

(iii) National Policy on Education 1986 (Modified in 1992)

National Policy on Education via Programme of Action 1992 sought to launch National elementary Education Mission, Education for All in 1993.

(iv) National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education 1995

This programme also known as Mid-day meal scheme started in 1995 to ensure enrollment, retention and attendance in addition to providing correct nutrition to the children at government and government aided primary schools. The objective of the scheme was to encourage and ensure attendance of the children of the disadvantaged group to attend school regularly. Initially the scheme catered to the children on class I to V but in 2007 it was revised to cover children of upper primary stage also. After revision up to class VII the children of Government and Government aided elementary school came under the scheme of mid-day meal. It is a centrally sponsored scheme where central government supplies free food to the state and union territories. Central government provides 100gms of food grain be it rice or wheat per child per school day. (Shankar et al. 2013)

(v) Childline Services

Childline is a National mechanism initiated as an experimental project in 1996 which comes under child targeted schemes and programmes. This is a service for children in need of care and protection which provides 24 hours free emergency phone outreach service. The toll free number is 1098 which can be reached at any time by children or adult in need of help. Childline caters to the children in need of care and protection and includes street children, vulnerable children, child labours, victims of abuse and exploitation, differently abled children, mentally retarded children and any children who are in need of help. After responding to the emergency need of the children Childline provides for long term care and rehabilitation for the children in distress. Ministry of Women and Child Development since its initiation in 2006 recognized Childline India as the mother Non-Government Organization for implementing the child related policies and showing direction to all the organizations working for the children in various states. (Childline India)

(vi) Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan 2001

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan has its root in 1993-1994 District Primary Education Programme which was launched to achieve the objective of Universal Primary Education. In this effort to universalize elementary education in 2001 Sarva Siksha Abhiyan was launched. Its objective was to provide quality basic education to the children of age group six to fourteen years through community ownership of school system. It aimed to include the stakeholders of elementary education involving local level organizations in the administration of elementary schools. Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan laid stress on removing any kind of barriers like social, regional and gender disparities in the education system with the active participation of community members. It also emphasized on the early childhood stage of education and included children of 0- 14 years as a continuum. (Government of Inida, MHRD)

(vii) National Charter for Children 2003

National Charter for the Children adopted in 9th February 2004 is a reminder of all the policies concerning children. It intends to secure for every child its inherent right to be a child. It emphasized the state to recognize the rights of every child's survival, need for proper health and nutritional facilities of children including their mental health. The charter stresses on every child's need to protection from abandonment and neglect. It also emphasized on the need to protect the girl child from neglect and abuse and ensure her survival and all-round development. The charter also recognizes a child's need for health and hygiene and safe drinking water. (Childline India) The charter confers responsibilities to the state to pay special attention to the vulnerable and marginalized children and handle these children with special care. Thus the Charter gives importance to the fact that the child should enjoy a healthy and happy childhood and to do this the society should be aware and protect the children from all forms of neglect, abuse and exploitation. (The National Policy for Children, 2013)

(viii) National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

Under the administrative control of Ministry of Women and Child development, Indian Government set up the National Commission

for Protection of Child Rights March 2007 under the Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005. The Commission defines a child as a person below the age of 18. The major area of concern of the commission is to look that various laws, policies and programs are in accordance with the child rights as enshrined in the Constitution of India, different policies and programme undertaken time to time and also United Nation Convention of child Rights. The Commission believes in grass root level intervention of state, district, Block levels and local bodies to get involved in the problems concerning children. There are State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) at all the states of India which caters to the rights of the child at the State which seeks deeper penetration to communities and households.

(ix) Integrated Child Protection Scheme 2009

It is a government implemented program proposed in 2006 and implemented in 2009. The main purpose of the scheme is to create a standardized scheme for protection of child in India. The objective of the scheme is to help secure the safety of those children who are in need of care and protection, juvenile in conflict with the law and other vulnerable children. The scheme works at the grass root level. (Kannan, A. 2012) It is administered in States by State child Protection Committees, at the district level by district child protection committees and societies. There is also block level and village level child protection committees. It caters to the need of children in difficult and vulnerable situation and also it look after those children who are abused, abandoned or separated from their parents. It provides care, support and rehabilitation facilities for the children in need. Its objective is to create data base and knowledge base for child protection services. (Childline India)

(x) National Policy for Children 2013

To address the continuing and emerging challenges of the children, the Government of India adopted the resolution on the National Policy for Children, 2013. The policy was undertaken to guide and inform all laws, policies and programmes affecting children. The policy recognizes every child's universal human rights i.e. right to life, survival, development, education and protection. It recognized all- round development of the child and stress on mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural

development of the child. The policy also states that all children have equal rights and nobody can be discriminated on the grounds of caste, creed, colour, sex, language, disability, social, economic and any other status.

The policy recognizes the safety and security of all children and emphasized that every child has the right to dignified life free from abuse and exploitation. Children's view should be given importance with special emphasis laid on girl children, children from disadvantage groups, marginalized and vulnerable children.

The policy confers upon the State the following four responsibilities to be ensure to all the children. They are

- The survival, health and nutritive rights of the children.
- Equal right of every child to learn, get knowledge and education.
- Every child has the right to be protected where ever they are.
- Child right to participate in expressing their view and actively involved in the matters concerning them.

Ministry of Women and Child Development are given the duty to coordinate and implement this Policy. A National Coordination and Action Group for children and similar Coordination and action group at State and District levels will be formed to monitor the progress. The National Commission for Protection of child Rights and State Commission for Protection of Child Rights will see that the principles of this policy are followed at all sectors and rules, regulation and laws are made in accordance with the policy. (The National Policy for Children, 2013)

(xi) Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat, 2014

It is a country wide programme launched in 2014 by Smriti Irani, Ministry of Human Resource Development. This programme is implemented under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan i.e. it is a nationwide sub-programme of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. This program caters to the needs of those children who lag behind in reading writing and arithmetic skills in early stage of education and thus fail in the examinations. Thus through this programme the government of India tries to improve the

reading, writing and mathematical skills of students of class I and II. Thus its main objective is to make the children self-sufficient readers and writers. Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat programme helps children to understand the basic logic behind number, shape and measurement. The children should feel the eternal joy while doing reading writing and solving mathematical problems. The students should get the basic standard of education at par with their age group. Thus it proposes to create base for the children so they can smoothly transform to higher classes of education without failure. This programme also laid emphasis on mother tongue of the children. Education at preliminary stages should be on mother tongue so that the students can get hold of subjects. (Department of School education and Literacy, MHRD, Government of India)

(xii) Integrated Programme for the Street Children

Department of Women and Child development started the Integrated Programme for Street Children very recently to provide nutrition, shelter and health care to the street children. It seeks to protect the street children from abuse and exploitation. The scheme caters to the children who are homeless and without family, children who are vulnerable and exposed to abuse and exploitation specially the children of sex workers or pavement dwellers. Children living in the slums with their parents do not come under this scheme. The objective of this scheme is to prevent destitution of the street children so that they can withdraw from the life of the street. Government provides 90% of the cost to any organization who are working to rescue and rehabilitate these children. State, Union territories, local bodies, non- government organizations come under this scheme who work with these children. This programme is currently under the umbrella programme of ICPS (www.inida.gov.in/integrated-programme-for-street-children-ministry-women-and-child-development)

Government of India celebrates National Girl Child Day on 24th January. To protect the rights of the girl child, present Government along with Ministry of Women and Child Development, government of India has taken the following policy programme and legal safeguards and gave

special emphasis on these programmes. They are (The Telegraph, 2016, January 24) :-

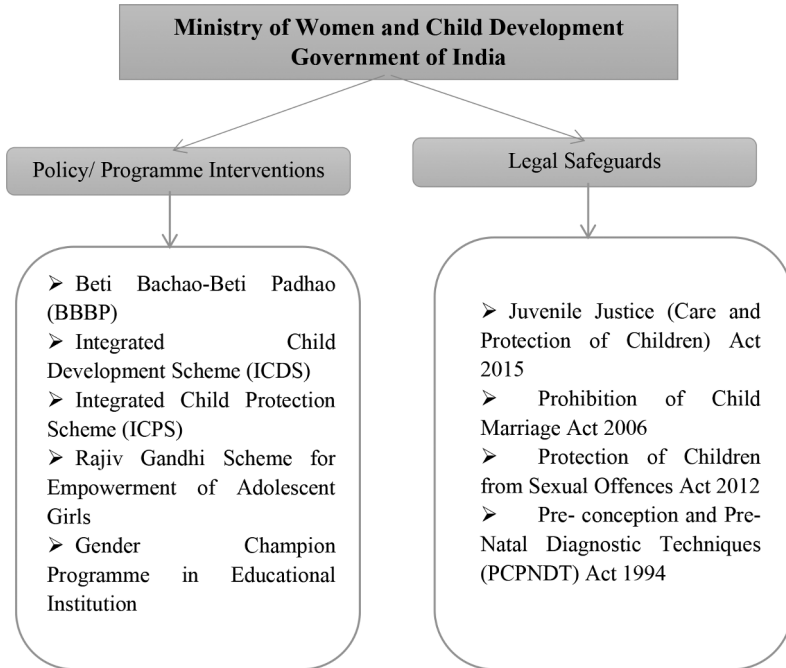


Figure 2.3 : *Policy, programmes and legal safeguard of government*

Education As The Tool For Development

Children are synonymous with innocence, freedom, joy, play and fun. Childhood is considered as the ‘golden age’ of one’s life as one is free from all worries and tension of adult life. As children are innocent they tend to be vulnerable especially when they are very young and as a result they need to be protected from the harshness of outer world. According to the census of 2011 children constitute 39% of the total population of India. For shaping the future of the nation it is essential that children get minimum care and protection. The present chapter deals with and discusses the provisions related to children. (Bakhry, S. 2006)

Democracy implies equality of opportunities. Children must go to school and get proper education for their all-round development and

this will end their intolerable exploitation. Education is one of the most important investments that any developing country can make for its future. It is also one of the effective tools for human empowerment and development. Thus to end all the negligence and exploitation that are meted out to the children education is essential. Apart from national development education plays an important role in social and individual development as well. Children of the nation are future human resource of the country. No nation can afford to neglect them. Education is also the main instrument for human resource development. Thus the first and foremost duty of any nation will be to empower its future citizens with proper education.

Education equips a man to make informed choices which empowers them to resist oppression and enables them to claim their rights. Education throws light on the dark world of ignorance, exploitation, malpractices and neglect. It brings the children from darkness to light and enables them to stand on their own feet. Education is investment in human capital. But Education does not mean gaining mere theoretical knowledge. Technical and vocational education is the need of the hour. Curriculum should not only include knowledge but also skill development that would result in change in attitude and behavior which is more tolerant and value based and which promotes equality, diversity and respect for human dignity. Thus apart from containing only literary aspects, education should be much more and go ahead and create a well informed and cultures personality.

Role of education does not stop with educating children and creating well informed future citizens, there is need for educating the masses and adult member of the society at large. The increasing incidence of rape exploitation, trafficking of children has unveiled the dark picture of how the moral values of people are degenerating day by day. Advocacy and sensitization is lacking in the common people. Thus education and gender sensitization programme for common people is required. Mere policy planning for the children will not solve the problem of children exploitation, overall education and sensitization programme is essential. Reformation in society can be brought and the gender gap can be bridged by community sensitization, advocacy programme and mobilization. Mere formulation of policy and laws will not end

the violence that the children face every day. A child focused culture has to be developed. There has to be child centered focus on legal proceedings. Indian legal system should speed up its decision-making procedure to provide justice to the child. Creating awareness among people is an essential aspect for promoting child rights in every sector. Various service providers like doctors, teachers, lawyers, police, nurses and social workers need to be made aware of the possible abuse and how to deal with it.

Conclusion

There are number of key initiatives taken by the government both at national and international level to provide protection to the child. This paper discusses the laws, regulation acts, schemes, policy and programme adopted by Indian government for the children of the nation. Government of our nation laid more emphasis on recognizing the child rights and giving them care and protection thought its policy and programmes. The paper also throws light on the rehabilitation and reintegration aspects of the children of sex workers and steps taken by government to implement the programme of rehabilitation and reintegration at grassroots levels. Article 14 of our Constitution gives equal rights to all the children but social stigma and hierarchy ignores the gender equality. Dignity of women is often ignored and they are forced to come to this profession for bread and butter. Their children suffers a lot and hence if these rights are taken into consideration the life of each child will be smooth and they will get a safe place to lead their life happily.

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