

Women Empowerment Through Education in India after Independence: A Review

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Abstract

Women's issues gained importance as a middle class with immense power and restrictions emerged. A new woman who aspired to the dignity of equality and freedom of spirit arose thanks to the power of education and employment. The evaluation of women's lives' quality is the most crucial. Women's status and society's level of development may both be clearly seen by looking at factors including women's participation in decision-making institutions, employment rates, and family and societal roles.

Modern India faces fresh obstacles to the growth of women. Concerns include the girl child's survival, women's health, their role in caste and communal conflicts, women in the media, and the rise in violence against women.

Access to status and power are both denied when people are denied access to education. Although the right to an education is upheld in India, the rigid caste, class, and gender systems have a significant impact on this right. Boys have easier access to school than girls, higher caste has easier access than scheduled caste and scheduled tribe, and upper and middle class has easier access than the destitute. The dropout rate follows a similar pattern.

One of the ironies of women's education has been the depressing perception of women in higher education, despite the fact that literacy and primary education affect the majority of women. Only 5% of all girls enrolled in basic education eventually move on to higher education. The percentage of women overall and enrolled rose from 10.9% in 1950–51 to 52% in 1996–97.

Nearly 52% of girls in the 16 to 14 age range do not attend school. For states like Uttar Pradesh (68.36), Bihar (70.90), Rajasthan (72.17), and Madhya Pradesh (57.46), the situation is exceedingly bleak. Kerala (7.63), Tamil Nadu (27.4), Maharashtra (32.93), Gujarat (41.08), and Karnataka (42.71), however, have substantially better situations.

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There are certain new problems in Indian society related to gender issues, Vidya, which are unsettling the minds of the intellectual elite. Concerns include the rising costs of communalism and community violence, which have gotten worse over the past few decades.

Keywords

Women's education, Primary education, Higher education, Women's issues, Growth of women.

Introduction

The position of women and the larger community is being changed in India. With this new environment, we are at least able to put women's issues front and center. Following independence, the Indian democracy demonstrated its dedication to the emancipation of society's underprivileged groups, particularly women. Women's issues gained importance as a middle class with immense power and restrictions emerged. A new woman who aspired to the dignity of equality and freedom of spirit arose thanks to the power of education and employment. Her stance on gender equality and justice created further tensions. Academics and the women's movement are facing new difficulties as a result of gender concerns in the competitive market economy.

By the 20th century's close, a new political and social order had supplanted the notions of a socialist society. We will inevitably transition to a free-market system and participate in globalization.

A society's growth can be studied using a variety of techniques. The evaluation of women's life quality is the most crucial. Women's status and society's level of development may both be clearly seen by looking at factors including women's participation in decision-making institutions, employment rates, and family and societal roles.

Women's action organizations are crucial to their emancipation. Collectively, these action groups may examine the women's movement's ability to foster female solidarity and offer a future vision through challenging the patriarchal system.

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Historical Background

In the 19th century, women first entered the formal educational system. Social reformers recognized the importance of women's education even as the government was exerting pressure on girls' education. The 19th and 20th-century social reform movements were crucial to the advancement of women. The demand for teaching women became more acute when Indian society interacted with Western education.

The missionaries had established 12 girls' schools in the Hugli district by the year 1827. Miss Cook, a missionary as well as an educator, founded and oversaw a number of girl's schools in Calcutta. Additionally, she opened schools in underprivileged communities where Muslim women were welcome and valued as educators^[1]. The Brahmo Samaj movement, which Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar founded, had a significant impact on Bengali women's education. Maharashtra emerged as the second hub of women's awakening after Bengal. The Young Pune group was created, following the Young Bengal movement's lead, and took up the cause of women's education along with social reforms. Girls' schools and a monthly journal for women were launched by Elphinstone College students in Bombay. Jyotiba Phule, a famous social reformer and member of the Dalit minority, founded the first girls' school in Puna in 1848. He had established three schools for Dalits and girls by 1852.

Dayanand Saraswati and the Arya Samaj movement in the north were devoted to the education of females and the advancement of women. He is adamant that an educated mother will be able to raise her children better.

By 1860, discussions over topics like the nature of females' education had already begun. The orthodox Hindu community was opposed to women's education and social reforms in general. On the one hand, there was a controversy between English education introduced by missionaries and pure Indian education.

Leaders of the Brahmo Samaj movement and later the Arya Samaj period believed that traditional Indian education and cultural life were being devalued by Christian missionaries and British educationalists in the middle of the 19th century. Alexander Graham's book *India and Indian Mission*, which harshly disparaged Hinduism and Indian culture, was published around this period. In addition to this, upper-class Hindu youth with English educations who were being converted to Christianity and hired for government employment.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan started a movement for the Muslim community's awakening and the right to bring them together through the shared experience of contemporary education. He was also in favor of educating Muslim women, although he believed that they should do so at home. He also warned Muslim women from being too Westernized.

While defending Indian culture from the aggressive spread of Christianity, the Bengal and Arya Samaj movements gradually began to take on a communal frame. They had previously been discussing the education of Indian women, but now they were discussing the education of Hindu girls.

Sheikh Abdullah undoubtedly saw the necessity for contemporary education for Muslim ladies after seeing this situation. In 1905, he founded a female education society and opened a school with only six girls. The girls' school was a movement, and today the women's college at AMU serves as a significant hub for the education of Muslim females in North India.

We'll keep an eye out for any mention of Rokeya Khatoon, a woman with a missionary mindset who strove to educate Muslim women. She was prohibited from studying any other texts than the holy Quran after being born in Pairabowd, Bangladesh, in 1880 to a highly traditional Zamindar family. Without her father's knowledge, her brother began teaching her basic English after observing her desire to learn. She married the senior Syed Shekhawat Hussain at the age of 16 in the year 1896. She established the Shekhawat Memorial Girls' School in Bhagalpur after his passing in 1909. She was forced to leave the area very quickly, and when she returned to Kolkata in 1911, she faced opposition from the locals. She worked tirelessly to promote education and to fight against social and religious discrimination against Muslim women. She was a wonderful writer who published multiple novels in Bengali and English in addition to being a social reformer.

The school was acknowledged as a first-grade educational institution during her lifetime. Later, the West Bengal government took over Shekhawat Memorial Government Girl's School after she passed away in 1932.

The all-India women's conference presented the first significant program on girls' education at the national level. The conference on women's education was held in Ferguson Hall, a convent in Pune University, thanks to the efforts of its secretary Margaret Cousins in 1925. There were 2000 delegates present.

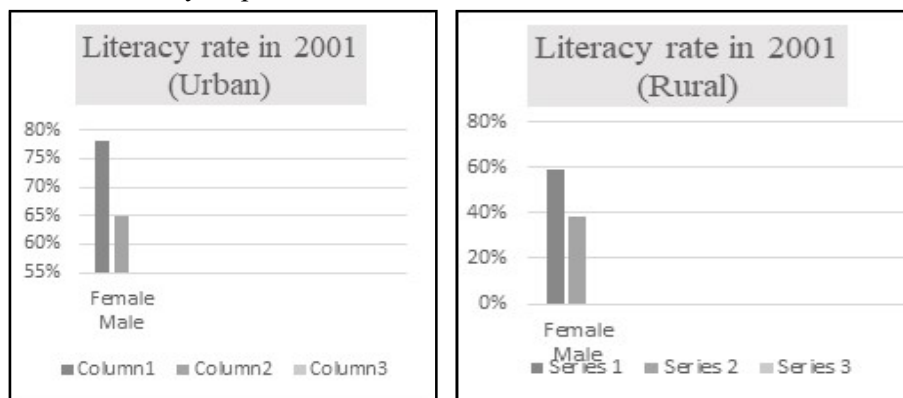
Independent India and women's education

Unquestionably, the country's overall female literacy rate has increased since independence. The female literacy rate was only 9% at the time of independence, whereas overall literacy was only 30%. While the national literacy rate was 52% in 1991, only 24% of women were literate. The total literacy rate was 65% in 2001, and the female literacy rate rose to 48%. The literacy rate for urban women in 2001 was 78%, compared to 65 for urban men. The literacy rate for women in rural areas was 58%, compared to 38% for men (Graphs 1 and 2)^[2].

Access to status and power are both denied when people are denied access to education. Although the right to an education is upheld in India, the rigid caste, class, and gender systems have a significant impact on this right. Boys have easier access to a school than girls, higher caste has easier access than scheduled caste and

scheduled tribe, and upper and middle class have easier access than the destitute. The dropout rate follows a similar pattern.

In 1950, the Indian Republic's Constitution was enacted, and it contained several significant clauses that either directly or indirectly impacted education. The states were directly responsible for education under Article 45.



Graphs 1 and 2 show the literacy rate

The Education Commission (1964–1966), also referred to as the Kothari Commission, which examined in-depth the role and objectives of education in the process of national development towards a secular, socialist, and democratic society, endorsed the opinions of the Hansa Mehta and Durgabai Deshmukh Committee and noted that in the modern world, women's roles go far beyond the home and raising of children. She is now accepting a job offer and assuming equal responsibility for the growth of society in all of its facets alongside men. The way we have to go is in this direction. Indian women fought with males in the fight for freedom.

This cooperative relationship must continue in the struggle against poverty, ignorance, and disease. The group recommended two things: improving women's access to higher education and offering them financial aid and a dormitory facility.

One of the ironies of women's education has been the depressing perception of women in higher education, despite the fact that literacy and primary education affect the majority of women. Only 5% of all girls enrolled in basic education eventually move on to higher education. The percentage of women overall and enrolled rose from 10.9% in 1950–51 to 52% in 1996–97^[3].

The government and numerous financing organizations have started a lot of schemes, but the issue of girls' education once they complete primary school becomes

critical. In rural India, the dropout rate is quite high, especially among females from socially and economically disadvantaged communities and those who live in distant places. It has been discovered that students' attendance rates are influenced by their families' monthly per capita income. When compared to boys, it is even lower for girls.

Nearly 52% of girls in the 16 to 14 age range do not attend school. For states like Uttar Pradesh (68.36), Bihar (70.90), Rajasthan (72.17), and Madhya Pradesh (57.46), the situation is exceedingly bleak. Kerala (7.63), Tamil Nadu (27.4), Maharashtra (32.93), Gujarat (41.08), and Karnataka (42.71), however, have substantially better situations^[4].

The National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) was established in 1978 at a time when the idea of using education as a tool for emancipation and a force for social change was widely accepted on a global scale. NGOs were given a place to work together on this scheme. The government saw it required the help of NGOs to accomplish some of the goals, and the NGOs themselves realized they needed to do more than just deliver the goods—they also needed to offer new approaches and ways of thinking.

It would be helpful to keep in mind how the Arak movement was affected by the literacy project in this setting. The initial mobilization of women for literacy sessions in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore coastal district was highly successful. The repercussions of alcoholism on the family and various attempts to eradicate the evil were discussed in the primer that was used as a textbook. Thousands of women emerged from their houses very quickly, and the Anti-Error campaign was launched in 1992^[5]. The Andhra Pradesh government imposed a ban on the practice in 1993 because the education was so successful. An offshoot of this was the successful launch of a self-help campaign. Similar to this, the literacy movement in 1992 in Tamil Nadu's Pudukkottai district saw the unprecedented mobilizing of women. It's remarkable to see how the cycle has come to represent women's power in this culture.

Having access to transportation and learning the alphabet gave NGOs' literacy programs fresh hope. The NGOs Lok Jumbish, Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad Eklavya (MP), Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, which was born out of the people science movement, and others made major contributions beyond the field of literacy while continuing to work on other projects.

We fought for women's rights to education as citizens in the 20th century, just as we did in the 19th century, when we argued that education would make women better partners for their husbands.

Conclusion

In India, general studies have established itself. Beginning with the document towards equality (1974), it has always had a tight relationship with the women's movement in addition to advancing the position of women in India. Western hegemonic influence has not stifled the advancement of women's studies or the women's movement.

There are certain new problems in Indian society related to gender issues, Vidya, which are unsettling the minds of the intellectual elite. Concerns include the rising costs of communalism and community violence, which have gotten worse over the past few decades.

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