



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Status of Women Education in India- An Analysis

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### Abstract:

The present study is an attempt to examine the importance of women education, empowerment, challenges and schemes for upliftment of girls' education in India. Education plays a significant role in the development of any nation. Without education, the individual, society and the nation will not develop and not explore the new things, ideas and creativity. It gives us knowledge, awareness, enlightens and recognition of the society and world around us. Education make develops a good perspective in life. Women play a vital role in the nation and make develop to change the status of women in the society. Educated women play a significant role in the socio-economic development. Education makes improvement, eliminates inequalities and discriminations which existed in the society, it is the key element for prosperity, women empowerment and development for the welfare activities. It provides more power, strength, develops rights, equality, tolerance, ability and capability to women. Education is a great achievement of women empowerment, because it makes changes the primitive nature and traditional mindset which evolves in every society.

**Keywords:** Importance, empowerment, challenges and schemes for upliftment of girls' education in India.

### Introduction

Women play a vital role in the development of a family, society and nation. In order to make successful democracy of the country women education is equally important and it is necessary to working together with men. Educated women can give lots of knowledge to the society and nation, if the women is educated they can give the real source happiness and prosperity in the family.<sup>1</sup> Women education in India is very important for the progress of society and country as a whole. In globally the women constitute nearly half of the population. But due to the hegemonic masculine ideology and male dominated characters made them suffer and denied equal right and opportunities in different parts of the globe. In the present days the women raise

the feminist movement and against inequality evolve in the societies which lead to the huge improvement of women's position all over the world in recent year. To access of education for all the girl children and women across the world has been one of the most significant demands of women's rights movements.

### **Objectives of the study:**

The present study is an attempt to examine women education, empowerment, challenges and initiatives by the government to upliftment of women in India. The following are the objective of the paper:

1. To examine the important of women education and how the education made empowering the status of women in the society; and
2. To examine the challenges of girls education and schemes upliftment for girls' education in India.

### **Methodology:**

The data for the present study has been based on secondary sources, the data has collected from some official report, records, articles and any published and unpublished materials, wherever is relevant. Non-participant observation method has been employed. The area of study has covered the education system of whole India.

### **Importance of women Education:**

Right to education is the fundamental right of every individual irrespective of caste, creed, sex and place of birth. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE) is an act of Indian Parliament which was enacted on 4 August 2009, and specify the importance of free and compulsory education for children between the age of 6 to 14 years in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution.<sup>2</sup> India became the 135 countries in the world to make education as a fundamental right of the constitution and the RTE act came into force on 1 April 2010<sup>3</sup>. Education for all is one of the important tasks which was accomplish by the government of Indian but still India have the lowest female literacy rate in Asia<sup>4</sup>. India is trying to achieve the target of female education but the pace is slow, so we could not achieved the actual target what had plan so far. During the British period till independence only 2-6% of females' population were literate. And the percentages were proceeding up to 15.3% in 1961 and 28.5% in 1981. In 2001 the female literacy rates were crossed 50% and by 2011 it stood at 65.46%.<sup>5</sup> According to the report of national statistical office (NSO) conducted by a nationwide study on 'Household Social Consumption: Education in India from July 2017 to June 2018 and it gives an inclusive analysis of female literacy rate for every state of India, as per the report, in India's the female literacy rate is 70.3%, while the male literacy rate is estimated at 84.7%.<sup>6</sup>

The lower literacy rate of women in the country has been a great negative impact on overall growth and development of the nation, where women are taking responsible for child care and development. As per the research report, it has proved that children who are taken care of by educated mothers are well-nourished and healthy.<sup>7</sup> Education provides empowers to women and makes develop ability, capacity to think, and standard of life and takes proper decisions, and protect themselves from oppression & abuse. As per the United Nation

report, education for women is one of the most effective ways to improve the lives style and health of a family, society and nation at a large. Educated women become a powerful person; she has the potential to educate the children and her family members, guide them to take proper decisions, contribute socially, politically, economically, and financially and provides valuable inputs for the development of their family, society as well as developmental on their personal life.<sup>8</sup>

Some eminent persons define importance of women education in different ways:

“If you do not raise the women who are living embodiments of the divine mother, don’t think that you have any other way to their social and economic status” SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

“I am strongly of the opinion that women should have the same facilities as men even special facilities where necessary”. MAHATMA GANDHI. “Education of a boy is the education of one person but education of girl is the education of the entire family”. PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU. “There cannot be educated people without educated women.” DR. S.RADHAKRISHNAN. “For full development of human resource, the improvement of human beings and for molding the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women is of great importance than that of men”. KOTHARI COMMISSION (1964-1966). “The education of women should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation. THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 1986.<sup>9</sup> if we observe the above definition given by the various thinkers, we understand that what so ever revolutions that happened in our past, education is at the counterfeit of them. Education means change and modification of behavior in every sphere, such as mentality, capability, and attitude and outlook etc.<sup>10</sup>

### Total Literacy rate of India Since 1901 to 2011

Sl.NO	Census year	% of Male Literacy	% of Female Literacy
1.	1901	9.8 %	0.6 %
2.	1911	10.6 %	1.0 %
3.	1921	12.2 %	1.8 %
4.	1931	15.6 %	2.9 %
5.	1941	24.9 %	7.3 %
6.	1951	21.16 %	8.86 %
7.	1961	40.40 %	15.35 %
8.	1971	45.96 %	21.97 %
9.	1981	56.38 %	29.76 %
10.	1991	64.13%	39.29 %
11.	2001	75.26 %	53.67 %
12.	2011	82.14 %	65.46 %

Source: www.jagranjosh.com<sup>11</sup>

### **Women Empowerment through Education:**

Educations play a significant role in the development of every nation. It provides a positive impact and spread a progressive and development message to the society and makes empowerment to women. The nation and citizen will not develop without goals, dreams and achieved effective education. Educations not only provide or educate an individual but also modify their character and behavior and help them to realize. Occupational achievement, satisfaction of life, self-awareness and development of living standard will be ensured by achieved meaningful and effective use of education. Proper guidance and career counseling also give through good education; it helps women to choose their career paths and select proper jobs which are suitable for her. Education makes women to empower and provides good knowledge in the development of science and technology, new creativity and ideas and makes them courage to face various issues and challenges of today's technological world. Education not only provides knowledge or educates women but also makes empowered her to take proper decisions in right time in right place and accept social responsibilities in family, society and nation as a whole. Education helps women to understand their equal rights and opportunity in socially, politically, economically, culturally and in religiously manner. Education defense women against crime, social evil, forceful marriage, extra marital affairs, sexual harassment, and mental stress which are evolve in society.

### **Challenges of Women Education in India**

The challenges of women education in India is one of the most important factors which needs to improves in our nation, all the organization like civil society, NGO's, women group, government and non-government organization must be focus on the causes of challenges on women education. If we see the literacy rate of India since 1901 till 2011, it is showing huge variations in the male and female literacy rate. The male literacy rate is always higher than that of the female. The government is trying to uplift of girls education and adopted various schemes. But still women are facing lots of challenges for education and there are various reasons for these challenges.

### **Lack of school environment for girls**

Still there are so many schools which are not good environment for girls' education are not interesting and encouraging. There are so many schools specially which is run by the government organization having poor basic facilities such as lack of pure drinking water, not have sufficient classrooms to accommodate to all the students, improper facilities of latrine and toilet, lack of proper school building and inadequate number of female teachers.

### **Lack of proper counseling and guidance in school**

Proper counseling and guidance is one the important weapons for the growth and development of students especially for primary and secondary level of school. Without the proper counseling and guidance their study, character and behavior will be not fully develop, and they are becoming failures students in every fields, So it needs to provides the good guidance and counseling in schools to motive their study and practice good manners. And also need to provide the knowledge of sex education, subjects, degree, diploma and professional courses which are taken to be for their higher education.

### **Priority gives to son's education.**

In our nation, if we observed the literacy rate of male is higher than that of the female since from 1901-2011. There are various reasons for educational disparity in the country. Some of the parents do not give emphasis on girl's education and give more priority to boy's education. And to get admission to their son in good private schools, colleges and universities whereas their daughter is admit in government school or do not take much care of them. "As per the report, based on Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2019), survey conducted in 26 districts across 24 states in India and covering 36,000 children in the age group of 4-8 years, it has found that more girls are enrolled in government pre-schools, although more boys dominate the enrolment in private schools." <sup>12</sup> Some of the parents think that the daughter is not permanent members of the family, after get married they will stay with husband or her-in-laws and parents will not directly get benefits from her education. In addition to that so many parents think that educating sons as a good investment because the sons will be take responsibilities for the family in the near future and caring for their aging parents.

### **Poverty:**

Poverty is one of the main causes of challenges for women education and illiteracy in India. It is the biggest reasons why girls are denied in education and do not get equal access of education specially those who are residing in the rural areas, belong to poor or minority family, physical disability. Due to all these reason parents could not afford the girls education and the literacy rate of girls is lower than that of boys, some of the parents also practiced gender biased in the family. They prefer boy education than that of girl children. "As per the report given by Right to Education Forum and Centre for Budget Policy with support of the World Bank and UNICEF. It reveals that nearly 40% of adolescent girls in the age group of 15-18 years are not attending school, while 30 % of girls are from poorest families have never set foot in a classroom." <sup>13</sup>

## Early marriage

Early or child marriage in another challenges of women education in India, as per the Indian law, the eligible criteria of marriage for girls is above the 18<sup>th</sup> years of age and boys and can get marriage after 21 years of age, but many girls child get married in underage or before 18<sup>th</sup> years of age, especially in rural areas due to the poor socio-economic conditions generally, it drive parents to marry their daughters early ages. And in rural areas many people are not aware about the value of girl's education, due to all this reason the girls could not get their proper education. "As per the DNA report based on International centre for research on women, it is reveals that that the state of Bihar has the highest rates of child marriage in India. The frequency of child marriage in India is 47 percent, but in Bihar, the figure is showing at 60 percent."<sup>14</sup>

## Dowry system

In India, the marital custom of dowry system is generally practiced in many places. The dowry system in India refers to the transfer of wealth from the bride's family to the groom's family as a condition of the marriage. Dowries include jewelry, clothing, furniture, vehicles, property, money, appliances, and any kind of gift that can be given <sup>15</sup>. The dowry system is put huge financial burden on the bride's family. In place of educate their daughter some parents are collect the money and keep for their marriage as a dowries, but do not educate their daughter. The parents think that without dowries their daughter will never get married in life. This is the main causes to neglect the girls' education and discrimination against them including the deprivation of right to education.

## Lack of female teachers

Shortage of female teachers is another obstacle for girls' education. Girls are being more comfortable with the female teachers especially in the primary and secondary level of education and likely to attend school and get higher education academic achievement, if there have female teachers they could feel comfortable and share their every personal problem with her and feel like as their parents, but as per the report of all India survey on higher education 2018-2019. "At present the total number of teachers are 14, 16,299 out of which 57.8 % are male teachers and 42.2% are female teachers. And all India level there are only 73 female teachers in per 100 male teachers."<sup>16</sup>

## Gender gaps in Higher Education

If we observed the report of all India survey on higher education 2018-2019 the male –female ratio in each level, it is found that the ratio of male is higher than that female in almost every level, except M.Phil, post graduate and certificate. Student enrolment at under graduate level has 51% male and 49 % female. Diploma has a unbalanced distribution with 66.8 % male and 33.2 % female. Ph.D level has 56.18 % male and 43.82



% female. Integrated levels have 57.50 % male and 42.59 % female. PG diploma student enrolment is 54.09% for male students and 45.91% female students. The comparatively in higher education level the share of male enrolment is higher than female enrolment it has found most of the states.<sup>17</sup>

### **Gender Inequality**

In India, discriminatory nature towards men and women has existed from the olden days. It affects the lives of both the genders. Whereas the constitution of India has granted equal rights of men and women, but gender gap are still remains.<sup>18</sup> According to the report of United Nation International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) it has found that the poverty and traditional beliefs system is the main cause of discrimination against girls which drive to gender inequality in education system. AC Nielsen and NGO Plan carried out a study in India they revealed that 23% of girls leave school once they hit puberty.<sup>19</sup>

### **Girls engaged in child labour**

The term child labour is defined as work that children deprive of their childhood, their potential, ability and dignity, and that is harmful to mental and physical development. It refers to work that is physically, mentally, socially or morally harmful to children; and hinders with their schooling, depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; accommodating them to leave school prematurely or necessary them to attempt school attendance with excessively long and heavy work<sup>20</sup>. Child labour is one of the main challenges of girl's education in India; especially those who are belong to poor or BPL family that parents could not afford to send their child to school, in place of sending to school they keep engaged them manual labour in some places, which could drive their life in dangerous. "As per Census report of 2011, the total number of child in India at the age group of (5-14) years is 259.6 million. Of these, 10.1 million (3.9% of total child population) are working, either as main worker or as marginal worker. In addition to that more than 42.7 million children in India are out of school"<sup>21</sup>.

### **Government Schemes for Upliftment of Girls Education in India**

Government initiates a number of schemes and scholarships for the growth and development girl's education with the goals of advancing the social attitudes, enlightening their social status towards the girl's children in India. The central and state government approved various schemes for the progress of girl's education such as:

### **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao:**

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22<sup>nd</sup>, January, 2015 at Panipat, Haryana. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao acknowledges the declining of Child Sex ratio and issues which is related to women empowerment <sup>22</sup>. The main motives of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao is (Save the daughter and educate the daughter) which was initiated by jointly the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family welfare and the Ministry of Human Resources Development Government of India, that is focusing on spreading awareness and increase the efficiency of welfare activities for girls in the country. The campaign aims to provide that the girls are born, bring up and educated them without any discrimination and to build up empowered citizens of this country. The campaign is jointly made by National, State, District and Community level to bringing together with different stakeholders for accelerated impact <sup>23</sup>.

### **National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE)**

National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education is centrally Sponsored Scheme for encouraging and promoting of girls education in the age group of 14-18 years, especially in secondary education level. It was launched by Department of Secondary Education and Literacy Ministry of Human Resources Development Government of India. This scheme covers only the girls, who enrolled in Government School, and does not, covered the married women, the girls who studying in Private Schools and enrolled which is run by Central Government like Kendriya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti School. And under this Scheme, a sum of rupees 3000 deposited in the name of eligible girls as fixed deposit. They are entitled to withdrawn the deposited amount along with interest money when she reaching at the age of 18 years, and on passing the 10<sup>th</sup> class examination <sup>24</sup>.

### **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA)**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA) is a Flagship Programme of the Government of India, which was started in 2001, to ensure the Universalization of Elementary Education with special focus on Girls Education in India. The Legal Framework of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was to provide free and compulsory education for the children in the age group of 6-14 years, which was made as fundamental right of the Indian Constitution under Article 21 A. It is being implemented in partnership with Central and State Governments <sup>25</sup>.

### **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)**

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the Development of Secondary Education in Government School across the Country. It was launched in March, 2009 and started to Implementation from 2009-2010. The goals of these Schemes were to provide an efficient growth,



development and equity for all and universal education for children in the age group of 15-16 years and construction of new secondary school, Teachers quarters, Girls hostels, and toilet blocks in existing schools with separate toilets for girls. Organize awareness camps to improve girl's education at the secondary level. It was launched by Ministry of Human Resources Development Government of India <sup>26</sup>.

### **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme:**

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme was launched in July 2004 for setting up of residential schools at upper primary level for girls mostly belonging to STs, SCs, OBC and minority communities. This scheme is being implemented the educationally underdeveloped areas, where the female rural literacy rate is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is above. This scheme provide for a minimum reservation of 75% of the seats for girls those who belong to the STs, SCs, OBC and minority communities and remaining 25% will be give priority to girls from the families of below poverty line <sup>27</sup>.

### **Balika Samridhi Yojana**

Balika Samridhi Yojana was introduced in 1997 by Government of Indian under the policies of Women and Child Development to promote the girl child. The goals of this scheme is to initiative the support of birth and education of the girl child and works for the welfare of girls such as: Bring positive attitude of the family, community or society towards the mother and the girl child, protecting and promoting the enrollment of reservation of the girls in school, nurtured the girl child properly till she reaches the legal age for marriage, helping and motivating the girls to take up the income generating activities so in the near future she can stand by herself <sup>28</sup>.

### **CBSE Udaan Scheme**

The CBSE Udaan is a project administered by the Central Board of Secondary Education under the policies of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The aim of this scheme is to promote the enrollment of girls in good engineering and technical colleges across the country. This scheme comprises an effort that to enhance the learning experiences with particularly focus of girl students who are belong to the economically backward sections of the society <sup>29</sup>.

### **Dhanalakshmi Scheme**

The Dhanalakshmi scheme was launched by Government of India along with the Women and Child Development Organization of India. The Dhanalakshmi scheme is mainly focused on reduce to female infanticide cases in India and provide education supports for girl child, offers insurance schemes to prevent her early marriage, encouraging parents to educate their girl children and covering certain medical expenses for her, value the life of a girl child and not treat them as a liability <sup>30</sup>.

### **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Scholarship Scheme for Girl Education**

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) scholarships is awarded to the meritorious female student, who is the only child of their parents and has passed CBSE Class X Board Examination with 60% and above is to be continuing for her further education of class XI and XII. This scheme is aim to acknowledge the efforts of the parents to encourage education among girls and give promoting and encouragement to meritorious students and her school fees should not exceed Rs 1500 per month and a sum of Rs 500 will be transferred to the beneficiary's account in per month for a period of two years <sup>31</sup>.

### **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY)**

Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) is a small diposit saving scheme for the girl child. It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015 in Panipat, Haryana; this scheme is a part of the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign. The bank accounts can be opened at any authorised commercial banks or any India Post office, the rate of interest was set at 9.1% but later it was revised to 9.2% in late March 2015 for FY2015-16 and again rate of Interest have been revised for FY 2016-17 to 8.6% <sup>32</sup>. Currently it provides 8.1 per cent and income-tax benefit under section 80 C of the Income Tax Act, 1961. The account can be opened any time after the birth or till she turns 10 years, with a minimum deposit amount of Rs 250 and a maximum of Rs 1.5 lakh can be deposited in a year. The bank account will remain effective for 21 years from the date of its opening or till the marriage of the girl after she turns 18 years<sup>33</sup>.

### **Some important measures taken by UGC**

UGC has taken a number of scholarships for the development of Women education. In these scholarships only girl students can avail.

1. Post-Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child.
2. Swami Vivekananda Single Girl Child Scholarship for Research in Social Science.
3. Post-Doctoral Fellowship for Women, funds is providing to Indian Universities which are constitute exclusively for women.

UGC has also made special schemes for the promotion and development of women hostels in colleges and universities and establishment of day care centre's <sup>34</sup>.

## The Scheme by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for Women:

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has launched Pragati Scholarship for Girls Students. Under this Scholarship a total numbers of 5000 scholarships are disbursed in every year to the meritorious girl's students who are pursuing technical education <sup>35</sup>. The scholarship are providing to assistance for the development of girls participation in the technical education. This scholarship empowers to the girls through technical education for advancing her future.

## State Government Sponsored Schemes for Girl Child

Apart from the central Sponsored Schemes, various State Sponsored Schemes also runs by many states for a girl child. Some of the popular schemes are listed here

- ❖ Bhagyashree Scheme Karnataka
- ❖ Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree Scheme from Government of Maharashtra
- ❖ Kanyashree Prakalpa West Bengal
- ❖ Mukhyamantri Rajshri Yojna – Rajasthan
- ❖ Mukhyamantri Kanya Suraksha Yojna – Bihar
- ❖ Mukhyamantri Laadli Yojna – MP & UP
- ❖ Ladli Scheme of Haryana
- ❖ Ladli Laxmi Yojana of Madhya Pradesh

## Conclusion

Women education is one of the very important components in the present's days and it plays a significant role for the development of empowering women and gender equality. Now Women education is the most important element for the basic development of our fundamental human rights and without promoting this, our human right will not being developed and remains incomplete. Hence the development of our country depends on the education status of women. Education is the most powerful weapon for the development of women empowerment in every field of the nation. But still there is lot of challenges in women education in our country due to various reasons and the central and many states government trying to implement various schemes and scholarship for the development of girl's education.

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