

Role Of Education In Empowering Women In Tamil Nadu

Mrs. M. Usha

Ph.D. Research Scholar, (Part –Time) Department of History

Queen Mary's College for Women (Autonomous)

Mylapore, Chennai – 600 004.

Introduction

Education is the prime factor for women's Development and Empowerment. Through education it is possible to improve women's opportunities for participation in the various fields of life. For improving skills, the bare minimum is literacy. The relationship between educational attainments and awareness of hygiene, improvement in family health, child health, girl's education and general family welfare is well established, formal education delays marriage, kindles a desire for a small family, increases the chances of survival of children and has thus a positive effect o fertility reduction. It increases a women's earning capacity and the potential for empowerment. It is one of the most important tools of expanding social opportunity. But in India and the global level, gender inequalities are the barriers in the women literacy and women empowerment. 'gender inequalities continue to limit girl's education policy planers ad educational have realised that without promoting education of women which is important section of humanity, growth and development of the society cannot take place. Without education we cannot develop in the society particularly women.

The objectives of inclusive education will be achieved through the following

Objective of Role of Women Education:

1. Reduction in regional imbalance.
2. Support to institutions located in border, hilly, remote, small towns, and educationally backward areas.
3. Support to institutions with larger students populations of SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, and physically challenged.
4. Support to the SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, physically challenged and girl students with special scholarships/fellowships, hostel facilities, remedial coaching and other measures and
5. Setting up of an equal opportunity office in all universities to bring all schemes relating to this group under one umbrella for effective implementation.

Importance of women education

It is universally recognised that “mother is the first school of the child”. In particular, education has come to be considered more important for women than men at least in theory. University Education Commission (1949) remarked: “there can be educated people without educated women. If general education

had to be limited to men or the women, then opportunity should be given to women, from them it would more surely be passed to the next generations.”

Jawaharlal Nehru very rightly observed, “Education of a boy is the education of one person, but the education of a girl is the education of entire family.”

A year later the **Bhaktavasalam Committee** was appointed to look into the causes for the lack of public support particularly in rural areas for girl’s education and to enlist public cooperation. The Committee after going into details of the causes suggested interalia “the strategy for the development of the education of girls and women will have to take two forms. The first is to emphasise the special, programmes recommended by the National Committee on Women’s Education and the second is to give attention to the education of girls at all stages and in all sectors as an integral part of the general programmes for the expansion and improvement of education”.

The **Education Commission (1964-1966)** which discussed at great length almost all aspects of education, on the issue of women’s education endorsed all recommendations made by the previous Committees on girl’s education.

Literacy Rate of Women

“Tamil Nadu is an educationally better placed State with general literacy rate of 62.66% compared to the national average of 52.21%. It ranks third among major States with regard to general literacy rate.” Female literacy is a more critical indicator of social development. According to Human Development Report, 2011 the Human development Index for India was 0.547 in 2011 with a overall global ranking of 134 countries compared to 119 countries as per HDR 2010. It has been widely accepted that the goals of human development are closely intertwined with development and empowerment of women, who as an independent group, constitute 48.2% of the total population of India as per the Census 2011. Women constitute a valuable human resources and their socio-economic development is imperative for sustainable growth of the economy. In this context, the greatest single factor which can incredibly improve the status of women in any society is education.

Education is a potent remedy for most of the ills of the society. Education is the main instrument for transformation in any society. The economic and social returns to education for women are substantial. By educating its women, a country can reduce poverty, improve productivity, ease population pressure and offer its children a better future.

TABLE-1
Literacy Rate In Tamil Nadu And All – India

Year	Tamil Nadu Literacy Rate (%)		All India Literacy Rate (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1951	31.7	10.1	27.16	8.86
1961	51.59	21.06	40.40	15.35
1971	59.54	30.92	45.96	21.97
1981	68.05	40.43	56.38	29.76
1991	73.75	51.33	64.13	39.29
2001	82.83	64.55	75.26	53.67
2011	86.81	73.86	82.14	65.46

Source: Directorate of Census Operations, Tamil Nadu, 2011.

Table 1 presents the statistical picture of the literacy rate in Tamil Nadu and All-India which proves the fact that Tamil Nadu is seeing an upward trend and the literacy rate in general is 80.33% as per the 2011 Census. The literacy rate of females in the State has improved from 64.55% in 2001 to 73.86 % in 2011 and it is higher than the national average of 65.46%. In actual numbers, total literates in Tamil Nadu stands at 52,413,116 of which males were 28,314,595 and females were 24,098,521. Among the districts, Kanyakumari has the

highest female literacy rate of 87.6%, whereas Ariyalur has the lowest female literacy rate of 64.1%. The literacy rate in urban areas is considerably higher in the State than in rural areas. The difference in the levels of literacy between males and females was significantly higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

Growth of Elementary Education

The Elementary Education of Government consists of primary as well as middle school education. The main vision of this education is achieving education for all and ensuring harmonious development of child's personality in an atmosphere of happiness and love in the spirit of peace, dignity, freedom and equality. In the field of primary education our state has achieved a remarkable progress. During 2008-2009 the total number of primary schools are 32,242, which covers 29.4 lakhs girls students out of 61.4 lakhs of total students in Tamil Nadu. In the same way 8,525 middle schools are functioning with 10.2 lakhs of girl's students out of total students in our State.

Growth of Secondary Education

The State Secondary education consists of high and higher secondary school education. This education aims at providing value based universal secondary education to bring about social harmony and universal well being. It further aims at improving the ability to apply knowledge develop the skill and promoting talent among them. The different laboratories such as science, maths,

and language are setup to improve educational infrastructure in school. Physical education and yoga is made compulsory. The educational management information system is implemented on 2007.

Current Policies

After independence, India has been lacking active steps towards women's status and education, The 86th Constitutional. Amendment act, 2002, has been a path breaking step toward the growth of education especially for females. According to this Act, elementary education is a fundamental right for children between the ages of 6 and 14. The Government has undertaken to provide this education free for cost and make it compulsory for those in that age group. This under taking is more widely known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

Since then, the SSA has come up with many schemes for inclusive as well as exclusive growth of Indian education as a whole, including schemes to help foster the growth of female education.

Mahila Samakhya Programme (MSP), this programme was launched in 1988 as a result of new education policy (1986). It was created for the empowerment of women from rural areas especially socially and economically marginalized groups.

Kasthurba 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 females is very low. The schools that were set up have 100% reservation, 75% for backward class and 25% for BPL (Below poverty Lines) females.

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 school’ have been setup to provide better opportunities to girl.

Conclusion

Today, in the 21st century we cannot afford to ignore the importance of education in empowering women any longer. Women education is the determining factor for many other social and economic Indicators too because education leads to many social benefits. Further most of the increased allocations are more due to the effect of pay commission increasing staff expenditures. Studies all over the world have shown that accelerated economic and social development has been possible only in countries that have managed to correct such imbalances so that at least 10-15% of expenditure is spent on

inputs that go to raise the quality. Therefore, this paper is attempting to analyse the female literacy rate in Tamil Nadu from 1951 to 2011 and proves the fact that education is a potent remedy for real empowerment of women which leads to the transformation of society.

REFERENCES

1. Census of India, 1981-2011
2. Bipin kumar : *Globalisation and women empowerment multi dimensional Approches,*
3. Anita Arya: *Indian women education and empowerment –vol-II,* Gyan publishing House, New Delhi.
4. M. Alamgeer: *Dynamics of women empowerment in India,* published by Aixs book pvt.ltd, New Delhi.
5. Jaspreet kaur soni: *Women Empowerment the Sustainable Challenges,* gyan publishing house, New Delhi.
6. Surya kumari: *Women’s Studies An Emerging Displine,* Gyan publishing House, New Delhi.
7. E.V. Swarna latha: *Women’s Education and Occupational Aspirations,* Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi.

8. Debal K.Singha Roy: *Women, New Technology and Development*
Changing Nature of Gender Relations in Rural India, Manohar
publishers&distributers, New Delhi.
9. Rajiv Sakar: *Status of Women in Contemporary World*, G.S Rawat for
cyber tech Publications, New Delhi.
10. Usha Sharma: *Women in South Asia Employment, Empowerment and
Human Developmet*, World Wide Circulation Authors Press, Delhi.
11. Government of Tamil Nadu, *Tamil Nadu Human Development Report
(2011)*.
12. State Planning Commission, *Annual Plan 2002*.
13. Tamil Nadu Census Operations, 1991-2011.
14. "Tamil Nadu Compulsory *Education Act 1994*".
15. "Policy Note on Education 2000-2001", *School Education Department,
2000*.
16. UNDP : *Human Development Report 1997*, Oxford University Press,
Oxford,1997.