

The Importance of Empowering and Educating Girl Child in India

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to comprehend the value of girls' education in India for their empowerment. Indian society is witnessing a patriarchal society where all the important power is vested in the hands of the male. The problem of the study is that inadequate education for girls and women, results in low self-worth, uncertainty, and a lack of trust in the country's future and we cannot say the nation is developed until and unless the Girls are empowered. But regrettably, some obstacles prevent young girls from being empowered. In this paper, various legal provision for education is also highlighted. This research is purely based on qualitative research and data for research is based on secondary data viz., authentic government reports, websites, books, and journals. In this study, an attempt is made to point out gender discrimination, female education, and the reason dropout of girls from school. In light of this, it was determined that education may catalyze awareness, equity, and equality for women and girls in their revolutionary process of empowerment and the long-term sustainable development of a nation. The findings of the study are that as we compared all the states, not a single state witnessed a higher or equal literacy rate concerning girls, it is always lower than boys. The highest rate of girl dropout in India in I- IV Meghalaya has the highest rate of female dropouts with 60.6 then Jharkhand and Bihar with rates of 43.2 and 30.7 respectively. The study further suggests a few measures to ensure holistic female education to empower them including both the economic and societal development of women.

Keywords- Education, Dropouts, Legal Provision, Gender, Barriers.

I. INTRODUCTION

The basis for your growth is education. It's the initial move towards building a better future for your neighbourhood, your family, and yourself. Education is one of the most significant indicators of future success in life, even after thousands of years of existence. Your chances of being able to support yourself financially and make a solid livelihood are higher the better educated you are. Since education equips women with the skills to overcome obstacles and improve their status in society, it is widely regarded as a significant step towards women's empowerment. By providing her with knowledge on how to maintain good physical health, which also affects her mental health, education enables women to become strong not only mentally but physically as well. Women are superior to men in all aspects of life, including

teaching, nursing care, and social work. Women have made significant contributions to the advancement of the family, economy, education, morality, and arts. Literacy and education give women power. To promote women's education and eliminate gender prejudice in the information and education they get, the government has set up women-only schools, colleges, and universities in each state. The cornerstone of women's empowerment, prosperity, progress, and welfare is education. Women are discriminated against from conception to death. Women continue to face discrimination, vulnerability, and oppression in all areas of society; therefore, they require empowerment in all facets of society. Women must swim against the system demanding greater power to combat the socially imposed gender biases.

Education and female empowerment are related because educated girls will pass on their knowledge and skills to the next generations. A girl might serve as an

example for other females in her society by getting an education. She has the potential to become a change agent for women globally as well as for everyone in her town. Education increases a girl's likelihood Women's education is crucial for India to become a developed nation, and education in general is needed. In the consciousness of Indian society, equality and progress can only be attained through fostering and assisting women's development. It's time for society to shift its outdated views on women and adopt new ones. To be a fully developed nation, India must see the total growth of its women. Given their strength in the social, political, and economic spheres, women ought to be compensated equally with men for work of equivalent quality. Numerous reforms and revisions to the constitution have changed how women live and are viewed in society.

The history of Indian women reveals a great deal more ups and downs for them. However, women had prominent positions in society and shared the same status as men during the Vedic era. In the political and commercial spheres, they were granted the same standing as males. They also relished their equality and ownership of their ancestral lands. During the Vedic era, women held a prominent position, but after that time, their situation steadily changed.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shunmuga, M., M, S., & Alagarsamy, S. (2015). The study's findings demonstrate the important role that education plays in women's empowerment, and it concludes that education is the only way to truly empower women. Therefore, it is crucial to increase women's educational attainment.

Parvinm. A (2020) studied and suggested that man cannot solve the social ills of unemployment, poverty, and inequality on his own. Women must participate equally and actively in this. Women cannot learn about their rights and self-empowerment strategies until they receive an education.

Pandy. D (2022) Studied how higher education contributes to women's empowerment. Development indicators include women's empowerment and education. It entails maintaining quality while guaranteeing more equitable and improved access to research, higher education, and technical and vocational training. The main topic of this message was women's participation in higher education through women's higher education institutions. It means maintaining quality while guaranteeing greater, more equitable access to research, higher education, and technical and vocational training.

Sami, S., & Roychowdhury, S. (2022) studied that, India ranks lower than many other developing nations, and to attain SDG-5, the plan and policies must be reviewed and adjusted and also make some recommendations for how to guarantee comprehensive

women's empowerment, including how to support women's social and economic advancement.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To understand the importance of education for girls and women to empower them.
- 2) To highlight the social barriers faced by girls that prevent them to empowered.
- 3) To discuss the legal provision for the girl's education.
- 4) To analyze the rate of dropout of the girl child from school

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Inadequate education for girls and women, results in low self-worth, uncertainty, and a lack of trust in the country's future. Every girl needs to be educated in terms of their good future. but in comparison to boys, girls are less educated.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study is to comprehend the importance of girls' education in India. Girls' education is crucial since it has the power to significantly influence a woman's life. She is capable of making the right choices for her family, marriage, and profession on her own.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is purely based on a qualitative approach and data for research is based on secondary data viz., authentic government reports, websites, books, and journals. In this study, an attempt is made to point out gender discrimination, female education, and the reason dropout of girls from school.

VII. RESEARCH GAP

Girl education and empowerment is a major area of concern in India various research has been conducted to highlight the necessity of girl education to empower women. But still, the girl education in India is lacking. Different provisions, policies, and programmes are adopted but the implementation at ground level is not up to the mark.

VIII. SOCIAL STATUS OF GIRL CHILD IN INDIA

Despite the constitution's guarantees of equality between men and women, gender inequality persists in Indian society. Ironically, individuals in our nation pray to female gods in hopes of receiving her blessings to

have a male child born into the family. In India, gender discrimination stems from a deeply ingrained patriarchal culture that places a low value on girls. The only sizable nation where girls outnumber boys in terms of both mortality and school dropout rates is India. Discrimination against girls takes many ugly forms: unequal opportunities in employment and decision-making; early and forced marriage; female foeticide and infanticide and other crimes against women; restricted access to information and services in areas such as education and health; etc. Gender equality necessitates immediate action to remove the social barriers preventing girls and women from achieving their full potential since it is essential to a peaceful and progressive society.

The Role of Education in the Empowerment of Girls or Women

The International Declaration on Education for All (1990) declared that ensuring girls' and women's access to high-quality education and removing any barriers to active social engagement should be the top priorities. Women now have more options and opportunities because of education. Education enhances one's capacity for thinking, reasoning, imagination,

strength, and principle in a variety of domains, making it easier to survive and acquire knowledge. Women who are empowered have equal positions, opportunities, and freedom to grow as individuals. Women grow to be independent in all spheres. They grow to be self-sufficient, and she stops depending on her brother, father, spouse, or son. Women who have equal rights in terms of society, politics, culture, gender, and religion are better able to overcome any obstacles in their daily lives. Their education enables individuals to make decisions based on their preferences. Through education, they learn how to distinguish between good and bad. Their ability to stand firmly on their own is aided by education. They can differentiate between good and wrong. Their ability to stand firmly on their own is aided by education. Women's defense against crime, the social devil, marital rape, sexual harassment, and other social stressors will be strengthened by education. When women possess the necessary qualifications and abilities, they may support their families financially and improve both the family and national economies.

Legal Provision for Education

The Indian Constitution specifies provisions for education

	Provision	Article
1	Right of free and compulsory education	45
2	Right to education	21A
3	Education for women	15(3)
4	Promotion of education and economic interests of SC, ST, and other weaker sections	46
5	Religious education	25, 28(1)(2)(3)
6	Education of minorities, protection of interests of minorities	29
7	Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions	30
8	Instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage	350-A
9	Promotion of Hindi	351
10	Education in Union territories	239
11	Fundamental duty to provide the opportunity for education	51(A)

Schemes and Programmes to Promote Girl Education in India

There are rising worries about the consequences of the Gender Inclusion Fund for equal education for

females and transgender pupils and a significant increase in public expenditure to raise education spending to 6% of GDP.

Sl. no.	Scheme/Programme	Purpose
1.	Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna	Girl children fund for future education and marriage expenses.
2.	Balika Samridhi Yojna	The scheme's major aims include promoting the enrolment and retention of female children in schools and assisting in raising girls until the legal age of marriage. If they are successful, young girls will receive an education that will earn a consistent wage
3.	CBSE Scholarship Scheme/Policy for Girl Education	It is available in India for one girl child per family and is intended to complement the school tuition expense.
4.	National Scheme of Incentive to Girls For Secondary Education	The scheme was launched to promote enrolment of girl child in the age group of 14-18 years to encourage secondary education among girls.

5.	Pragati Scholarship for Girl	Pragati is a Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) scheme which is aimed at providing encouragement and support to girl child to pursue technical education. It is implemented by AICTE. The scholarship is designed to cover 'one girl' per family and it can be extended to two girl children per family where the family income is less than Rs. 8 lakh per annum.
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Source- <https://transformingindia.mygov.in/>

IX. ANALYSIS/ FINDINGS

Educational status of women in India: As per the 2011 census the total literacy rate in India stands close to 75% and the rate of literacy among women is 65.46%. According to the census held in 2001, the percentage of female literacy in the country was 54.16%. The literacy rate in the country has increased from 18.33% in 1951 to 65.38% as per 2001 census. The

female literacy rate has also increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 65.46% in 2011. It is noticed that the female literacy rate during the period 1991-2001 increased by 14.87% whereas the male literacy rate rose by 11.72%. Hence the female literacy rate increased by 3.15% more compared to the male literacy rate. Data in Table 1 presents statistics regarding the general rate of literacy in all the states in India along with a breakdown of the rate of literacy among males and females.

Table 1: Rate of literacy (census 2011)

State	Total literacy rate	Male literacy rate	Female literacy rate
J & K	67.16%	76.75%	56.43%
Himachal Pradesh	82.80%	89.53%	75.93%
Punjab	75.84%	80.44%	70.73%
Chandigarh	86.05%	89.99%	81.19%
Uttarakhand	78.82%	87.40%	70.01%
Haryana	75.55%	84.06%	65.94%
Delhi	86.21%	90.94%	80.76%
Rajasthan	66.11%	79.19%	52.12%
Uttar Pradesh	67.68%	77.28%	57.18%
Bihar	61.80%	71.20%	51.50%
Sikkim	81.42%	86.55%	75.61%
Arunachal Pradesh	65.38%	72.55%	57.70%
Assam	72.19%	77.85%	66.27%
Nagaland	79.55%	82.75%	76.11%
Mizoram	91.33%	93.35%	89.27%
Meghalaya	74.43%	75.95%	72.89%
Tripura	87.22%	91.53%	82.73%
Manipur	76.94%	83.58%	70.26%
West Bengal	76.26%	81.69%	70.54%
Jharkhand	66.41%	76.84%	55.42%
Orrisa	72.87%	81.59%	64.01%
Chhattisgarh	70.28%	80.27%	60.24%
Gujarat	78.03%	85.75%	69.68%
Daman And Dui	87.10%	91.54%	79.55%
Dadar And Nagar Haveli	76.24%	85.17%	64.32%
Andhra Pradesh	67.02%	74.88%	59.15%
Goa	88.70%	92.65%	84.66%
Karnataka	75.36%	82.47%	68.08%

Tamil Nadu	80.09%	86.77%	73.44%
Kerala	94.00%	96.11%	92.07%
Pondicherry	85.85%	91.26%	80.67%
Andaman And Nicobar	86.63%	90.27%	82.43%

During the census 2011, the state of Kerala with its highest literacy rate in India at 94% and a female literacy rate of 92.07%, and Mizoram is the second highest with 91.33% and a female literacy rate of 89%. The lowest literacy rate during this period was in the state of Bihar with the lowest literacy rate of 61.80% and

female literacy rate 51%. The patriarchal setup of society that prevails in India contributes to the low literacy rate of females in comparison to males. As we compare all the states, not a single state witnessed a higher or equal literacy rate in regards to females, it is always lower than males.

Table 2: School Dropout rate (2011-2012)

Sl no	State and Union Territories	Classes I- V			Classes I -VIII			Classes I -X		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	15.9	15.3	15.6	28.6	27.7	28.2	45.5	46.3	45.9
2	Arunachal Pradesh	32.5	29.0	30.9	52.4	47.1	50.0	62.4	60.3	61.4
3	Assam	35.6	28.7	32.2	46.4	54.1	50.2	74.1	70.7	72.4
4	Bihar	38.0	30.7	34.8	58.6	51.1	55.5	70.8	71.9	71.3
5	Chhattisgarh	28.8	29.8	29.3	43.6	43.8	43.7	43.7	51.4	50.8
6	Goa	4.0	5.5	4.7	3.6	6.7	5.1	15.8	17.4	16.6
7	Gujarat	38.1	8.3	27.1	50.2	40.8	46.7	49.5	59.3	54.1
8	Haryana	7.2	7.0	7.1	2.5	-	1.2	23.6	18.5	21.3
9	Himachal Pradesh	3.1	4.3	3.7	-	3.4	1.6	7.3	7.0	7.1
10	Jammu & Kashmir	9.8	6.8	8.4	9.6	13.8	11.6	45.5	42.6	44.2
11	Jharkhand	42.6	43.2	42.9	54.2	49.5	52.0	70.9	70.6	70.7
12	Karnataka	4.3	4.2	4.3	13.0	13.08	13.4	37.9	36.6	37.3
13	Kerala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Madhya Pradesh	31.2	23.1	27.4	46.4	43.3	44.9	31.0	53.7	42.3
15	Maharashtra	9.0	10.2	9.5	24.3	29.0	26.5	35.9	38.8	37.3
16	Manipur	45.1	44.5	44.8	54.5	52.9	53.7	72.0	70.3	71.1
17	Meghalaya	65.6	60.0	62.9	69.8	66.1	68.0	76.6	72.4	74.5
18	Mizoram	41.5	40.0	40.8	39.3	39.9	39.6	48.4	40.2	44.5
19	Nagaland	38.5	38.6	38.5	48.6	46.7	47.7	55.5	51.6	53.6
20	Odisha	17.4	13.5	15.5	55.8	58.3	57.0	62.3	61.6	61.9
21	Punjab	-	7.0	-	-	-	-	-	2.2	-
22	Rajasthan	43.2	43.4	43.3	55.3	58.5	56.7	54.3	69.4	61.7
23	Sikkim	14.7	2.9	9.1	54.8	42.4	48.8	61.5	53.1	57.4
24	Tamil Nadu	-	-	-	-	-	-	41.0	35.0	38.1
25	Tripura	27.6	26.5	26.8	44.8	39.7	42.4	50.9	48.3	49.6
26	Uttar Pradesh	15.3	22.2	18.6	49.2	51.3	50.2	44.2	50.7	47.2
27	Uttarakhand	35.7	33.7	34.8	41.1	40.2	40.7	35.1	37.4	36.2
28	West Bengal	27.6	20.8	24.3	46.2	37.8	42.1	62.6	58.5	60.6
29	A&N Islands	8.1	7.2	7.7	12.2	13.5	12.8	17.5	21.4	19.4
30	Chandigarh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31	D&N Haveli	9.8	18.9	14.2	22.6	33.5	27.9	44.3	59.4	51.7
32	Daman & Diu	2.2	6.7	4.3	14.6	9.4	12.3	26.4	23.3	25.0

33	Delhi	-	-	-	-	4.5	-	-	-	-
34	Lakshadweep	15.3	10.5	13.0	27.1	4.9	16.2	7.6	4.7	6.3
35	Pondicherry	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	1.1	-	-
	India	23.4	21.0	22.3	41.5	40.0	40.8	48.6	52.2	50.3

Source - https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/SSE1112.pdf

According to the statistic of school education 2011-2012, the rate of school dropouts in India related to both males and females is comparatively high. If we observe the overall school dropout in class I- IX the state of Meghalaya witnessing the highest rate of school dropout rate and the state of Assam is the second highest. The state of Kerala and Chandigarh is remarkably a place with no number of school dropouts during this year. The highest rate of girl dropout in India in I- IV The state Meghalaya has the highest rate of female dropouts with 60.6 then Jharkhand and Bihar with rates 43.2 and 30.7 respectively. In class I – VIII the highest rate of girl dropout in the state of Meghalaya is 66.1.

X. BARRIERS FACED BY THE WOMEN WHICH LEAD TO SCHOOL DROPOUT

1. Conviction that teaching girls is pointless

A girl's community has a big say in how much importance she sets on continuing her education. Adolescent females believed that their communities valued educating boys more than educating girls, both within and outside of schools. Interviews with instructors and parents provided evidence for this. For instance, a teacher noted that a boy's education is more important than a girl's in a society where men predominate.

2. System of education

Numerous obstacles in the educational system prevented girls from attending school. The study revealed several reasons, including distance, educational quality, and harassment by males and teachers. Furthermore, access to government programs that provide financial incentives like bicycles, school uniforms, and scholarships to encourage girls to attend school was not based on equal opportunity.

3. Patriarchal Set up of Society

Indian society is a patriarchal form of society, which always gives preference to the male community. Education for the girls is always like an impossible task. The mindset of some people is that girls are born to deal with household activities only.

4. Prevailing social evils

Different initiatives and reforms have been adopted by our social activists to remove some social evils like child marriage, dowry, female infanticide, girls trafficking, parda system. But still in some parts of India,

these evils are creating hindrances to girl's education. The girl child is considered a liability.

5. Teachers harassing students and boys "teasing" them

In addition to making girls feel unsafe, harassment from teachers and boy mocking on the route to school contributed to school dropout rates. Furthermore, teachers frequently reprimanded, harassed, disparaged, or physically restrained girls who performed poorly. During an interview, a teacher acknowledged engaging in verbal and physical abuse towards her students, although she was aware that such behavior is illegal.

6. Lack of awareness among the parents

Most Indian parents are not aware of the rights and facilities provided by the government. Most of the parents belonging to the BPL category are willing to send their students to work to income something rather than sending them to school.

7. Government scheme accessibility

The Department of Social Welfare offers different scholarships, uniforms, books, backpacks, pencils, and bicycles to poor and SC/ST groups as part of several initiatives to encourage attendance in school. Nearly all parents and teenage girls were aware of the government programs that were offered, and all but one of them used them. Plans, according to girls and parents, are crucial to allowing girls to finish school; yet, there have been allegations of corruption and inadequacies in the programs' coverage and accessibility. Parents frequently complained that additional funds were required to pay for the excess, as the plans did not give enough to meet actual and hidden costs. Furthermore, some girls said that their parents kept all of the scholarship money and spent it on other things.

XI. CONCLUSION

Denying females, the opportunity to receive an education upholds gender inequity as education is a fundamental right. Encouraging female education is a step toward reaching gender parity, which is a prerequisite for accomplishing other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as an objective in and of itself. Girls who receive an education acquire the abilities and information needed to enter the workforce. Girls who have an education are more likely to be able to find better professions and make more money, which helps the economy thrive both locally and nationally. It is more likely for educated women to escape poverty for

themselves and their children. Girls who receive an education are more equipped to make health, nutrition, and family planning decisions that can raise their standard of living. Education equips girls with the information.

SUGGESTION

- The importance of the daughter's education should be conveyed to the parents. "Educated mothers educate families, which results in an educated populace of a nation which builds strong nation" is a well-stated statement.
- To promote and strengthen women's socioeconomic engagement in national and international arenas.
- To promote women's involvement in various income-generating endeavours. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the relevant authorities to ensure that the government's programmes are implemented correctly.
- Based on sex discrimination, attitudes towards women need to change. Women should be induced to feel independent through various activities.
- The government ought to take into account that banning early marriages can help prevent childbearing at young ages. There should be a greater focus on eliminating gender inequity.
- It is important to encourage women to take an active role in social and political movements. All municipal and federal governments should set aside 50% of their seats for women.
- Disseminate the word that women's education is a prerequisite for combating their oppression
- It is imperative to raise awareness about the value of educating girls in order to equip them to make meaningful contributions to the socioeconomic advancement of the country.
- To improve the nation's perceptions of female education, increase media and communication efforts, and elevate social consciousness, a deliberate and intentional shift in national policy is needed.
- The Indian government ought to establish satellite schools for rural regions.

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