

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Education is a major constituent of human resource development and is thus basic to any progress of economic and social growth. It is indeed pathetic to say that in this globalization era the women are still in the last benches in education, health and socio-economic stages. There is at present a growing global recognition of the vital links between education and development. The society should plan to take care of women's aspirations and needs. Women's education is targeted by most educational policies because the lack of it can be costly to overall development. Of late, both global and regional attention is drawn towards eradicating illiteracy among women and reducing the constraints in their access to education. This paper attempts at a diachronic, descriptive, and analytical study of growth and development of women's education in Tamil Nadu with particular reference to Salem. The paper tries to show that expansion of opportunities is crucial and inevitable in dealing with the problems of educational backwardness. This research aims to take a fresh look at the present situation of education among females in Tamil Nadu primarily based on data provided in the Census of India.

KEYWORDS: *Literacy Rate, Vulnerability, Women Education, Development, Tamil Nadu*

INTRODUCTION

Through the ages, women have played an extremely important role particularly in the process of change and development. The nation's destiny is shaped through its education and particularly, the women education has importance. Health, job, income, and education are four interdependent variables, which enable a woman to climb high in the socio-economic ladder. An educated woman can ask for equal treatment in the family and the society, demand for equal rights and protest against any kind of discrimination. Education of a girl enables her to protest against her early marriage, which is the root cause of her sufferings like ill-health, malnutrition, a higher rate of infant mortality and even increased risk to the life of the mother. Due to the lack of proper education, most parents fail to recognize that little mother is not adequately equipped to take care of the newborn child or that early marriage puts tremendous pressure on the girl child to lay adult roles quite early in life. Khan and Pandey (2012) research on the topic "Girls Dropout is black spot on Indian Education" have identified that low family income, involvement in activities of domestic chores, care of younger ones, lack of interest in study, ill health of girl, negative attitude of society, fear of teacher, mental disability and early marriage are prominent reasons of girl's dropout from schools. Ahmad (2012) has identified key links between education and women empowerment and assessed the current size of the gender gap by measuring the extent to which women in India

have achieved equality with men in terms of educational attainment and reducing the gender gap at all level of education would be a focus area.

Education is not a product to be purchased. It is more or like a process. The process begins right from conception up to the last breath for learning never ends. Real education helps us to develop our sensitivity to the problems outside. It creates conditions for the development of a wholesome personality so that a man/woman can contribute his/her best to the family, society and the nation.

Thankachan (2012) established a relationship between literacy rate and women's status in India and found that Female literacy has positive relationship with sex ratio, women's economic status index, women's social status index, women's health status index, gross gender development index and negative relationship with gender disparity index which further indicate that enhancement of literacy is a better way for gender development and promoting the status of women in society and in the nation's progress. Their education had become a source of moral danger, if not an actual vice, and only dancing girls learned to read and write (Dubois 1906). The importance of education to women was commonly debated as redundant, for women in any case, were in a 'state of domestic degradation and servitude (Dubois 1906).The education level of both men and women are considered as the fundamental indicators of the developmental level accomplished by a society.

Today, women have realized that they cannot remain forever confined to the kitchen and the four walls of the room. They want to play multifaceted roles to offset the challenges emerging out of the socio-economic changes taking place in the country. There is a great awakening among women. They have engaged themselves and trying their best to become proficient in many activities and professions. With the adequate opportunities, they will deliver the best result with their strength i.e. tolerance, honesty, hard work, co-operation, adjustment and dependence, determination and self-confidence. Education develops the personality and rationality of individuals. It is Education that progresses women's social as well as economic status. If a woman is not educated she will not have self-confidence and the ability to handle various situations. Women in our country are denied the benefits of improvement in various aspects. In fact, after Independence, there have been many changes in the educational field. But a considerable majority of women, particularly from rural areas, continue to be either illiterate or semi-literate. Education liberates women form ignorance and enhances their self-esteem. It enables them to choose their own way and look after their families in a better way. In the end, certain some measures are proposed to overcome the illiteracy problem among women and to nurture their journey towards a noble life.

OBJECTIVES

- To find out the growth of women education in Tamil Nadu.
- To identify the level of increase in women's enrolment by higher secondary and higher education level.

Growth of Literacy in Tamil Nadu

Percentage share of Tamil Nadu in India's populace is 5.96. There was observed a versatile growth in the educational institutions and organizations as well as students in current years. The growth and development of Tamil Nadu in the literacy area have always been remarkable. From the details of districtwide effective rates given in Table 1.1, the following features emerge.

Education was provided exceptional importance by the government from time to time with its programmes and policies. Therefore, in current years the education system prolonged swiftly with innovative technologies and implemented innovative educational approaches. But the women’s education remains underdeveloped. The following facts and figures shed light on the seriousness of the issue as well as the task ahead.

Table 1: District Wise Effective Literacy Ratio of Female

District	Total Literacy Rate	Female Literacy Rate	Literacy Percentage (%)
Kanyakumari	15,67,580	775195	49.45
Chennai	38,50,472	1845974	47.94
Nilgiris	5,76,799	273550	47.42
Tuticorin	13,56,564	650477	47.95
Coimbatore	26,78,637	1260346	47.05
Kanchipuram	30,65,799	1431685	46.69
Nagapattinam	12,27,311	578056	47.09
Trichy	20,55,742	959617	46.67
Thiruvavarur	9,60,036	449899	46.86
Thiruvallur	28,12,839	1306316	46.44
Thanjavur	18,02,291	850488	47.18
Tirunelveli	22,98,262	1074298	46.74
Madurai	22,48,749	1054118	46.87
Ramanathapuram	9,86,038	448341	45.46
Virudhunagar	14,21,270	648084	45.59
Sivagangai	9,76,384	439861	45.05
Tirupur	17,79,379	807347	45.37
Vellore	28,04,762	1282572	45.72
Cuddalore	18,49,805	830645	44.90
Theni	8,79,259	394012	44.81
Dindigul	15,07,310	676067	44.85
Pudukkottai	11,26,580	508959	45.17
Karur	7,41,610	331295	44.67
Namakkal	11,84,344	525112	44.33
Perambalur	3,79,797	169484	44.62
Erode	15,16,380	674652	44.49
Tiruvannamalai	16,53,284	727195	43.98
Salem	23,11,715	1010841	43.72
Arialur	4,86,446	213388	43.86
Krishnagiri	12,16,436	533584	43.86
Villupuram	22,23,605	974999	43.84
Dharmapuri	8,67,631	392064	45.18

Source: Census of India 2011

Table 2: Rate of Women’s Literacy in Tamil Nadu (1951-2011)

Year	Total Literacy (%)	Female Literacy	Gap in Literacy Rate
1951	27.19	8.87	18.32
1961	40.41	15.34	25.07
1971	45.98	21.93	24.05
1981	56.39	29.79	26.60
1991	64.14	39.29	24.85
2001	74.86	54.17	21.69
2011	77.01	57.10	19.91

Source: Census India

Table 2 indicates the growth of literacy rates according to the last census India 2011. The gap that was 18.32% in 1951 saw an increase of 25.07 % in 1961 and 26.60% in 1981. Later, there was seen gradual decrease in the consequent years. The cause of downfall in the gap of literacy rates among men and women is because of certain governmental interventions. It showed that nearly 46% of women are uneducated. In the study period, the literacy size amplified 8.87% to 57.10%, but the level fluctuated in both ways.

Table 3: Percentage of Women Enrolment in Higher Secondary and Higher Education Level

Year	Higher Secondary Level (%)	Higher Education Level (%)
1951	13.4	10.1
1961	20.6	16.3
1971	25.4	20.1
1981	29.7	26.6
1991	32.0	33.2
2001	38.7	39.3
2012	44.6	45.8

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, 2011-12

The involvement of girls in higher secondary and higher educational level has been swelling progressively throughout the years. Since 1950-51, women involvement in education has amplified multi folds.it has increased from 13.4% to 44.6 % in higher secondary level, while the level increased from 10.1 %to 45.8% in higher education. Though, the women's involvement and literacy is yet below 50% at both the levels. The literacy rate in the state has improved from 8.87 % in 1951 to 57.10 % in the 2011 census as revealed in table 1.3. In this framework, the factors accountable for the low female literacy are as provided below.

- Gender-based discrimination.
- Economic and social exploitation
- reduced enrolment of girls in schools because of caste issues
- High dropout level with Small retention rate.
- Very low access to information and decision-making processes.
- Deficiency of female teachers in schools.
- Schools built in distant places etc.

The above-stated factors played a significant role in lowered women literacy rate in Tamil Nadu. Presently quite a lot of technologies, expediency, regulations and decrees are created for women education and several awareness programmes associated with education is implemented for better improvement yet, the old adaptation thoughts are still dominant in the minds of women, thus paving the way for very low interest in education. As a consequence of these factors, many women are trapped in a spiteful self-propagating cycle and their incapability of pursuing education again strengthens the stereotype of jobs amongst women.

Impact of Women Education

Due to the growth of the educational level among the women, there was a positive impact on women. Educated women could lead to new social and economic life by acquiring and attaining the following aspects. Women's education should not create only good wives and mothers as expected in the past, but also enable them to become qualified women as well as responsible citizens. Each and every woman should have the awareness of their rights and responsibilities in society and should have adequate opportunities to get involved in the social activities at the national level. This could be achieved only through 100% female literacy. Education has stressed social consciousness equally for women as well as children. As females leave their homes to become educated, they attain an amplified wisdom of self-awareness and aspiration to attain knowledge of a host of women's issues. Education has promoted gender equality and has sought to empower them as to decision making about themselves, their families and their communities. The education has encouraged and inspired women to educate their children, chiefly their girl children. It prepares women for occupation. The more education a woman gets, the more expected she is to be in a good job. The important factor that forces more and more women to employment is a hard economic necessity. Employment has undoubtedly entailed economic freedom to women, if not fully at least partially. Economic freedom or access to self-generated income is considered as the major means of empowerment of women in the urban middle and lower middle classes. The government of Tamil Nadu established many schools for the educational development of Tamil children especially girl children. Women education makes women be equal with men in all positions. The urban women are entering into the men's reservations and their performance in this sphere is no longer inferior to that of men. As a result of their entry into special fields, we have now woman engineers, woman doctors, woman scientists, woman technocrats, woman lawyers and woman politicians, etc.

Special Schemes for Girl Children Education Implemented

Special Incentive Scheme for Encouraging Girls Education:

Under the special scheme of encouraging girls education brought out by Hon'ble Chief Minister during the last regime, in order to ensure 100% enrolment of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe girls in schools, a sum of Rs. 500/- is given for 10 months at the cost of Rs. 50/- per month for 60,000 girls in classes III to V of the academically backward districts such as

- Dharmapuri,
- Thiruvannamalai,
- Cuddalore,
- Villupuram,
- Virudhunagar,
- Kanchipuram,
- Tiruvallur,
- Vellore,
- Salem,
- Namakkal,

- Tiruchirapalli,
- Perambalur,
- Karur and
- Nagapattinam

Similarly to encourage the continuance of their studies after entering VI standard, 30,000 Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe girls are given a sum of Rs. 1000/- at the rate of Rs. 100/- per month for 10 months. An amount of Rs. 6.00 crores are spent on this scheme for each year. Hon'ble Chief Minister has allotted Rs. 6.00 crores for it in the present year too.

Supply of Free Bicycles Scheme:

Hon'ble Chief Minister who is very concerned about the educational development of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe girl children. A laudable scheme of supply of free bicycles to Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe/Scheduled Caste Convert girls studying in XI and XII Standards are being implemented by the Adi-Dravida Welfare Scheme. As per this scheme, 56,525 free bicycles were supplied to girls during the academic year 2001-2002 at a cost of Rs. 7.69 crores. Similarly, 47,980 girls were supplied with free bicycles at a cost of Rs. 6.91 crores during the academic year 2002-2003.

Incentives to Girl Students of Most Backward Classes and Communities:

Drop out in primary schools is quite common due to rural poverty, particularly, among the girl children belonging to Most Backward Classes and communities due to poverty and to encourage them to complete their study up to middle school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After prolonged and enlightened discussion on women's education, the University Education Commission made the following recommendations:

- Ordinary amenities must be offered for women in colleges.
- There should be no curtailment in educational opportunities for women but rather a great increase is needed.
- There should be intelligent educational guidance, by qualified men and women, to help women to get a clearer view of their real educational interest, to the end that they shall not try to imitate men, but shall desire as good education as men get.
- Women students, in general, should help to see their normal places in a normal society, both as citizens and as women and to prepare for it, and college programmes should be so designed that it will be possible for them to do so.
- With the help of educational counsel, the prevalent biases and partialities against the study of home management and economics must be overcome. Principles of courteousness, consideration and social concern ought to be highlighted on the men in co-education colleges.
- Women professors, lecturers, and teachers should be remunerated the same salaries as male teachers for equal

work.

CONCLUSIONS

Education is a milestone in a woman's life as it empowers them to face the challenges and to oppose the life imposed on them. A great disparity is observed between rural and urban women in every field of life because of the disparity in education. Women living in urban have comparatively come up in every field whereas women living in rural areas are still backward. Education has no place for them. They are busy with the laborious work depending only on to agricultural and cultivations which are also so meager because they are producing in the same old conventional methods. Therefore, education for them is just literacy without any vision of higher education especially female and so undergoing the same traditional attitude of ignorance, low economy and poverty till today. It is true that women of late have made their presence felt, with a difference in every field. Yet, larger populace undergoes non-education. Women must be well-educated for illiteracy eradication and to be advanced economically, politically and socially. The upbringing of girls by parents and schools attitude towards girls should not be taken on the sympathetic ground always but, they should be treated equally. Because, if girls are given sympathetic favors than they are already pre-supposed as weaker section of the society which in the process of later life if not treated a like face lots of problem in understanding oneself. Women education in Tamil Nadu is increasing but still many left unattended especially of higher education. Women must be motivated to pursue higher education and utilize the vision of education. It is with the combined efforts of all the parents, teachers and intellectuals and better policies, which will help in the upliftment of women education in the district.

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