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The Educational situation of Women in India

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Introduction:

This paper sets out to review developments in the field of education since the 1950s with specific reference to girls/women. Briefly the positive trends and gains are discussed. Then the imbalances and gaps in the growth and expansion are pointed out.

Growth and Expansion:-

During the last 50-60 years the education system has expanded rapidly and has registered a phenomenal increase at all levels. We measure it in terms of the numbers of students, teachers and institutions or in terms of growth rate etc, All sections of the the populations have gained as a result of this expansion of the education system. Women too have been the beneficiaries of the growth and development in post – independence India.

Girls/Women Education:-

Education at the school level has been made free for girls in most states and union territories in order to attract them to schools. In fact in a large number of states, Education for girls is free upto the Tenth Std. although in four states and union territories. it is free upto 12th std.(1)

Female Literacy:-

Female literacy has increased from 7.93 % in 1951 to 24.88 % in India. Further, the enrollment of women has gone up from 64 lakhs to 398.64 lakhs during 1951 – 1981. In other words, there were 55 girls per 100 boys at all levels in 1981 as against 33 girls in 1951. If we looks at their percentage distribution there is decrease of women in the arts and Science faculties. In other words, of every 100 women , who join colleges and University, 56.1 joined arts faculty in 1981 against 64.3 in 1971. Similarly this percentage reduce to 25.7 in 1971 to 20.6 in 1982. (2)

This increase and decrease may indicate that women are no longer opting for feminine subjects, in addition to total higher education by levels, their proportion to total enrollment has increased at all the level (3).

Enrolment of Women Education :-

The National perspective plan for women reaffirms the goals set. out in NPE and in the programme of action. Yet will it be possible to achieve the target when women Constitute 57 percent of illiterate population. However, The participation of women has increased during 1980'81 to 1984'85. The number of adult education centers meant exclusively for women have increased from 30.739 to 98.151.

The total enrolment of women in all onetred (including the co-educational centres) has increased from 9.99 lakhs to 32.32 lakhs, of these 9.99 lakhs women , 9.36 were in the rural areas and 0.63 in the urban areas in 1981, The enrolment of girls and women is lower than that of boys and men at all levels of education. The gap increase as one moves from the lower to the higher levels of education. Again at the higher level, their proportion continues to be lower in all the faculties and they also tend to cluster in subjects like arts and humanities, science and teacher's training (education). Although girls are enrolled for engineering courses, their number can be counted. Thus the preference of boys for professional courses and of the girls for the non professional courses had been changed in a changing scenario.

Women Teachers :-

The number of women teachers has also increased at all levels of school Education for example, while there were 82000 women Teachers (15.3 %) in Primary schools in 1950-51, there were 368000 teachers (25.5 %) in 1983-84 Their number had increased from 13000 (15.1) to 276000. 31.3 % in the middle schools and from 20000 to 306000 in the high / higher secondary schools. (India, 1988:78)

Proportion of Women : A students & Teachers

The enrollment trends are reflected even when we look at the figures relating to teachers. For example the number and proportion of women teachers reduce drastically as we move up from the primary schools to colleges and Universities. Most of the women Teachers are primary school teachers and those in the universities can be counted. Generally it is agreed that the presence of women teachers in a village primary school especially a co-educational one attracts more girl students. Inspite of that the proportion of Women to men teachers continues to be Very low.

Table – 1

PROPORTION OF WOMEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Faculty	1951		1981	
	Students	Teachers	Students	Teachers
Arts	16.1	11.4	37.7	24.2
Science	7.1	6.3	28.7	17.1
Commerce	0.6	0.4	15.9	6.3
Education	32.4	24.3	47.3	22.9
Engineering / Technology	0.2	Nil	3.8	2.0
Medicine	16.3	9.8	24.4	20.9
Law	2.1	Nil	6.9	4.5
Agriculture/ Veterinary Science and Other	5.8	0.2	9.5	1.7

IN HIGHER EDUCATION (FACULTY-WISE)

Again , their representation as teachers in faculties such as education , where they are nearly half of proportion as students reduces (see table 1) . This is true of all faculties

and disciplines. In Others words , for a girl or women the chances of becoming a student are higher than of becoming a teacher.

Some Reasons for Educational Backwardness For Female :-

There are several factors have been identified by researchers,

- 1) Gender disparities in Educational provision e.g. lesser number of institutions for girls. Less financial investment in girls education.
- 2) The level of economic development of a country / state and poverty and social back ground factors along with socio-cultural milieu.
- 3) Early marriage the contents of schooling lack of faculties, household responsibilities social prejudice. Against the educational of a girls and feminine role expectations which are in contradiction to the pursuit of a career by a women.
- 4) There were no provision for accessibility it means provision of schools within walkable distance for each level of Education.
- 5) The Girls from poor homes needed on the farm, in the home (to relieve their mother for work) whether they look after the siblings. They are an economic asset and cannot be spared to join school which does not train them from their ' production ' function * (notes)4

Conclusion :-

There is a contradiction in the expected functions of education in terms of class If the curriculum is designed for 'reproduction' function only and not for skill training, vocation or a career the large majority of girls from the lower starta will remain out of school. If it is designed for skill training and for vocation alone, the girls from upper and middle starta may be kept away from the system While in the case of upper starta gender operates against the girls , among the poor gender and class together provide commutative handicaps.

While policy may be designed to reduce male-female disparities in education it may also ensure that intergroup inequalities are not accentuated. Thus policy has to be multipronged and may have to identify sub – groups as specific targets. Educational policies will also have to overcome the class bias in order to solve the problems of non – enrolment among the large majority of our population. In India 30 % of the burden is shared by the girls children between the age group of

6-11. And women share 45.57 % of the agricultural work, more than 20 % is shared by girls children.

However, the factors that emerges as being imperative is the availability and accessibility of education . What is required is so make education free and provide access to girls keeping in view the Socio – cultural and economic constraints. The Educational policies and strategies for girls should affect or change the lives of girls and contribute to the development of our country / society.

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