



## Quality education for sustainable development: A roadmap towards women empowerment in India

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### Abstract

The quality of education is the area of concern for the rural India as this could bring the revolutionary change for the entire nation. Economic and Educational Empowerment their potential as Human Assets can best be utilized to accelerate Women Development. Nation in general on a common forum has always been speaking of the important role women play in the development of the Country. The National Policies, Plans and Programmes all in combination aim towards women development in their different forms.

This paper is an attempt to highlight the problem of quality education for sustainable development in India and its importance for the growth of the nation as a whole. The paper will also address the emerging issues which are jeopardising the progress of women education and the steps taken by the government to smoothen up the education system.

**Keywords:** quality education, sustainable development, women empowerment, economic empowerment, educational empowerment, policies, plans, programmes

### 1. Introduction

Education is characterised in two parts, i.e. formal education and informal education. Formal education is the learning of the skills which we get from schools and institutions whereas informal education is the learning that goes on in daily life. Naturally informal education persons learned from relatives, societies and their friends in other hand formal education is required for empowering the individual with some special skills which make them distinguished in the society. Women constitute almost half of the human race but comparatively education level of women is lower than men. Despite the growing concern in India about the quality of education, there is no consensus regarding a definition of this. Most people will view the quality of education as the extent to which the student has acquired the curricular learning as measured by scores in tests. A quality education output can be achieved only if quality is ensured at each level of the educational process from setting standards, establishing the learning environment, preparation of teachers, through the teaching-learning process, assessment of learning, evaluation, and monitoring. Other indicators of quality are decreasing rates of dropout and increasing rates of stay-ins, the number of students who complete the elementary education cycle on time (within eight years) and, gender and social equality. Though for encouraging the growth of rural education, from making policies to introducing laws -our government has lined up the education system up to the mark but implementing the process into an effective way has been the lacunae of the entire system. Rural women spend most of their lifetime in taking care of the household and livestock, rearing children and contributing towards agricultural activities. As individuals they are generally not given the freedom to take decision on improving their quality of life as well as their families.

### 2. Review of Literature

The word "Empowerment" means rendering authority and power. In the International Encyclopedia (1999) it has been explained as a capacity and the means to direct one's life towards desired social, political and economic goals or status. According to Robert Jensen, television is very helpful in increasing the status of women in India. In his paper "The Power of TV, Cable Televisions and Women Status in India" has found that the introduction of television appears in general to have had large effects on Indian society. This is particularly the case for gender, since this is an area where the lives of rural viewers differ greatly from those depicted on most popular shows. By virtue of the fact that the most popular Indian serials take place in urban settings, women depicted on these shows are typically much more emancipated than rural women.

Scrase (2002) reports that several of his respondents thought television might lead women to question their social position and might help the cause of female advancement.

According to Anju and Sidney (2002), in their study measuring women's empowerment as a variable in international development, attempted to outline the most promising methodological approaches to measuring and analyzing women's empowerment. They review major strands of theoretical, methodological and empirical literature on empowerment from the fields of economics, sociology, anthropology, and demography, and attempt to summarize what we know and do not know about what leads to women's empowerment, and its consequences for development and poverty reduction. Based on their analysis, they provide some concrete recommendations regarding where the field stands in defining, conceptualizing, and measuring empowerment, and what might be next steps for utilizing and refining existing

frameworks, collecting data and conducting analyses, and incorporating approaches from related literatures.

According to Shakuntala (2005), in her book *Empowering women: An alternative strategy from rural India*, pointed out that the more vital inhibiting factors leading to the disadvantaged position of women are their ignorance, powerlessness and vulnerability. She emphasized the need for bringing about an attitudinal change among women as the most important step towards empowerment.

According to Mr. Mukut Sonowal, modern education and facilities have influenced much in women empowerment. But still rural women are lacking behind in comparison to women living in urban areas. Moreover, women of SC, ST communities living in village areas are more lacking behind in comparison to general women living in these places. On the other hand we did not think about the rural development without empowering the women. There is difference in equality and vulnerability of women in all sectors - Economic, Social, Political, educational, Health-Care, Nutrition, Right and Legal etc. Education is the main barrier for women empowerment and rural development.

As per Nideesh KB (2008) women have understood the importance of education for themselves and for their children which is reducing the apathy in sending the children to school. N. Prasanna Kumar (2014) <sup>[13]</sup> considers education as an important tool in the hands of women that will help them change their position in the society. Further emphasis has been laid on the assistance provided by the Government in various forms to bring girl children into the main stream of education. Awasthi O.N. (1993) with all the efforts being put in the direction of female education the literacy rate among women has certainly gone up in the last three decades.

The quality and the effectiveness of education depend on qualitative variables such as characteristics of schools, teachers and classrooms, as well as quantitative variables such as achievement scores

Mayer *et al.*, (2000) <sup>[3]</sup>. The quality of education served in a school campus can be judged by the quality of the school. Researches have been done to determine the indicators of school quality which in turn determines the quality of education.

However, there are certain directional indicators that characterize quality elementary education. Class size, Teacher qualifications, curriculum implementation, school climate, parental involvement, availability of educational technology and instructional materials were acknowledged as important indicators of school quality (Taneri, P.O., Mayer *et al.*, 2000, European Report, 2000) <sup>[3]</sup>.

Scheerens, 1997 <sup>[4]</sup> is of the view that the experience and qualifications of teachers were assumed to have a direct impact on the overall performance of both the school and students. Ballou 1996; Ehrenberg & Brewer 1994, 1995; Ferguson 1991 have encountered in his research that teachers with strong academic skills are very successful to teach students. Implementation of English course was also scrutinized as a school quality indicator.

### 3. Objective of the study

1. To identify the indicators of quality education for sustainable development in India.

2. To find out the issues hindering the progress of women education in India.
3. To elucidate the steps taken by the government for the development of education in rural areas.
4. To Participate distribution of Rural Women in Labour Force according to Education Level.

### 4. Methodology used for study

This study is descriptive in nature & uses secondary data collected from various statistical reports published by the Annual Status of Education Report, All India Education Survey, National Council of Educational Research and Training, reports published by the Ministry of Higher Education Department, etc. Extensive literature survey on the subject has been done to examine the indicators of quality education in rural areas, to find the issues hindering the progress of rural education, also to determine the moves of the government to improve the situation. Findings and conclusion have been drawn therein.

### 5. Educational Evolution of Rural Women

A review of the rural literacy status over the last 50 years generates a satisfactory feeling as the literacy level has gone up. In the last 15 years the numbers are on a decrease in the category of illiterate rural women but majority of literate women fall in the category of literate only up till primary. It appears that higher education in the lives of rural females is not considered necessary by their family and society. Since the beginning their role is defined as that of a care taker of the family and children. It is not always the parents or society to be held responsible for the girl child not being educated. The reasons stated by girls who do not attend school indicate that they are pressurized with household job and the value of education is not inculcated in them. As compared to their male counterparts they are more interested in studies but are not able to live their interest due to their incorrectly defined roles in the society. Quite of the females are not send to school for school being far and no proper conveyance available for travelling. There are scenarios of proper amenities and resources not being available in schools. This even includes under qualified and non-dedicated teachers and other staff. Huge amount of fund is released periodically for the female education which is not invested on the target population.

### 6. Steps taken by the Government

Soon after gaining independence in 1947, making education available to all had become a priority for the government. The education sector has received considerable attention in the recent Budget (for the year 2013-2014) too - which has announced a significant increase of 17 per cent in the total allocation for education sector. The existing operational norms of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan have also been revised to implement the right of children to free and compulsory education, which has come into effect from 1 April 2010. Allocations to achieve the objectives of the Right to Education (RTE), which has been aligned with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, were hiked from Rs 15,000 crore in to Rs. 27,258 crore.

The budget also allocated Rs.49, 659 crore to the school education sector that caters to over 230 million students. The

sector got a moderate Rs.3, 690-crore hike from the previous budget estimate. This comprises the SSA allocation, Rs.13, 215 crore for the mid-day meal scheme and Rs.3, 983 crore for the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), a scheme to universalize secondary education and curb the high drop-out rate. For higher education, the finance minister pegged an allocation of Rs. 16,210 crore for 2013-14 against an allocation of Rs. 15,458 crore in the budget estimate for 2012-13.

### 7. Discussion and Suggestion

It is challenges to providing higher education to rural Indian women must be put in the context of the demographics and cultural traditions of the country. The Indian Government has made heroic efforts to provide universal literacy and primary education. The literacy rate (ages 5 & up) of India increased to 62% in 1997 from 52.21% in 1991, but the 1997 female literacy rate was just 50% and the rural female literacy rate was just 43%. The adult rates (ages 15 and up) were 54% total, 40.7% for women. The total enrolment in secondary schools in 1997-98 was still only 50% of the eligible population of which 44% were girls in primary school, 40% in middle school and 37.1% in secondary school. So the percentage of students who qualify for higher education is still small, particularly among female students. On the other hand, as of 1997-98 there are 229 universities in the country, 16 central universities and remaining operated by the states. And there are some 9,274 colleges, 7,199 of them colleges for general education and 2,075 colleges for professional education. Together they enroll some 7 million students and employ 331,000 teachers. In addition the Indira Gandhi National Open University provides flexible higher education opportunities to large segments of the population who have no access to the colleges and universities. Established in 1987, it now has 47 programs consisting of 553 courses and 1999, it reached over 172,000 students.

### 8. Findings

Researchers have found that deficiencies in education system, especially in rural areas, are financial difficulties, shortage of teachers, and lack of school buildings, laboratory equipment's, computers, and libraries. Focus should be given to infrastructural development, recruitment of qualified teachers. Having adequate physical infrastructure in the school, including water, latrines, electricity, and infrastructure around the school makes a positive difference to teachers' attitudes to work. For the progress, we need to concentrate on the drop-out rates as this hinders the growth of rural education. Resources should be deployed in a better manner so as to improve instructional quality. Successful implementation of curriculum is essential to increase school effectiveness. It was also found that teachers are paid less so they do not take interest in teaching, therefore, Teacher accountability and incentives need to be improved.

### 9. Conclusion

The position of quality education for sustainable development in India is worse so the need of the hour is to facilitate the sector with quality teachers, better facilities and to ensure quality in rural education, teachers should give sustained

attention to the quality of materials, teaching methodology and the assessment of results in school should be a matter to be looked upon. Development of teacher is yet another aspect that requires attention. Government is continuously putting its efforts to improve the condition and also huge amount have been allocated for the growth and the development of the sector. However, there is a need to look at the entire set of problems and deal with the issue holistically taking into consideration the specific context of different sections of the society. It will also require a constant and strong central support for policy, strategy, technical assistance, and monitoring and evaluation combined with increased decentralization within government, stronger public-private partnerships, and improved accountability relationships between the service providers, policy makers, and the target population. Men and women complement each other. If men were supposed to handle outside stuff then women were more responsible for internal affairs. The only difference in this notion is, today women are equally competent behind the veils and outside world. They are more confident and one can find them in every possible sphere of human's life. No male bastion is untouched by females and that's a wonderful sign of strides made by women. Education is one composite single variable, which has the capacity to transform many odds turning in favour of girls more specially so in the rural India. Therefore, an exclusive emphasis on girls' education is necessary.

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