

EDUCATION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN : OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLE**Ms. Rachna R. Kuradia**

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Abstract

Gender discrimination in developing world is a crucial reality. In modern times women are performing exceptionally well in different spheres of activities. The problem of gender inequality still prevails in all spheres of life. Though Indian constitution has granted equality to women in principle, in reality majority of Indian women are facing the problem of inequality and discrimination. The paper tries to focus on gender inequality in education in India where the situation is contradictory. On the one hand girl students are performing very well in all faculties of education, many of them are topping the merit lists, the percentage of passing is more than the boys, but at the same time many girls and women are illiterate. The paper tries to highlight the challenges in education before the girl. The data was collected from 50 student teachers through a survey. The data was analyzed qualitatively using coding method. And the research shows awareness towards gender inequality in education, the challenge and opportunities the girls and women face and government support towards education for women.

Introduction:

Women are the inherent part of our society and cannot be neglected due to their less power and authority. They are created as a companion for men and men have to make her walk with them in the course of life. The basic unit of society is a woman. As woman makes a family, family makes a home and homes make a society. So, we should never think that a society would come into existence without the contribution of women. We all know that without education, no development is possible. Here we have forgotten that the very first and best school of a child is its mother's lap. A good healthy society doesn't automatically emerge on its own and stands firm but it needs to be emerged and for its emergence women play a vital role. Education is a human right and gender equality in education is essential for sustainable development. Women education in India plays a key role in the social and economic development of the country.

2 Theoretical Background

Free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14 is a fundamental right of citizens under the 86th Amendment to the Constitution of India. Yet, the state of education of women in India is far from 'free' or as totalising and encompassing as the right appears to guarantee. Although the government, through its various initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, attempts to improve the education of women, the barrier to educating women is not always monetary and within the purview of the state.

Some of the barriers to women's education are sociological, rooted in gender stereotyping and gender segregation, and others are driven by economic concerns and constraints. A consequence of gender profiling and stereotyping is that women tend to participate more in programmes that relate to their domestic role. In institutions of higher learning, women are more inclined to enrol in courses traditionally considered more suitable for them such as arts and education, but less in courses related to science and technology.

Parental reluctance to educate girls is a huge factor inhibiting their access to education. There exist various factors that fuel the choices parents in Indian society make with regard to refusing or limiting the education of the girl child. The way a society views its women determines the roles it delegates to them and the choices made for them or those they are allowed to make. When women are seen primarily as child bearers and rearers, then education is sometimes viewed as an unnecessary and extravagant indulgence. A mindset that views education for girls as unlikely to reap any returns ascribes to the view that investing in the education of the male child is like an

investment as the son is likely to be responsible for caring for aging parents, and women with largely a reproductive role in society have little need for education.

Thus, considering issues pertaining to women's access to education may require a unique lens focusing on the differing levels, issues and varying degree of impact. Educating a woman uplifts her life as well as the quality of her life and her entire family. It is a fact that any educated woman will definitely support the education of her children especially a girl child and provide a better guidance to her children. An educated woman will easily imbibe an independent and progressive outlook in her children. More importantly, an educated woman in a society like India will assist in reducing the infant mortality rate and control the blossoming of the population, empowerment.

3 Methodology

The data was collected from 50 student teachers through a survey. The data was analyzed qualitatively using coding method.

The questions asked were:

1. Why are women education important?
2. What are the advantages of women education?
3. What can be done to improve women education?
4. What are the challenges for women education in India?
5. Do you think parents' poverty is major hinderance of the female education?
6. Do you think, people in society are interested only in educating the male?
7. Do you think schemes implemented by government had helped women education?
8. Are you aware of the schemes that government had implemented to increase women education?
9. Do you think the help provided by the government to increase women education are reaching to the people?

4 Research Findings

The research findings are presented according to the aforementioned research questions. Distribution of the answers is also based on the respondents'

Question 1. Why are women education important?

Question 2. What are the advantages of women education?

Question 3. What can be done to improve women education?

Question 4. What are the challenges for women education in India?

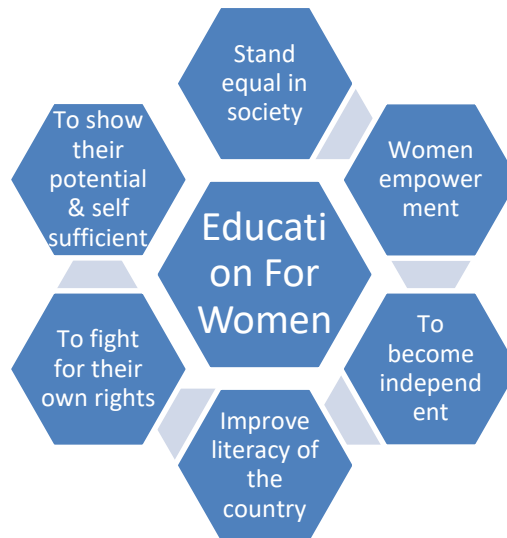
Question 5. Do you think parents' poverty is major hinderance of the female education?

Question 6. Do you think, people in society are interested only in educating the male?

Question 7. Do you think schemes implemented by government had helped women education?

Question 8. Are you aware of the schemes that government had implemented to increase women education?

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Question 1. Why are women education important?**Question 2. What are the advantages of women education?****Question 3. What can be done to improve women education?**

To increase women education-

- Promote awareness especially in the extremely rural areas
- Awareness about the schemes made available by government and non-government organizations can improve this condition.
- The mindset of the people needs to be changed and the society as a whole and they should start believing that even a girl can succeed in all the professions
- Encourage Parents to send them schools and colleges.
- Educate them about Their own rights and importance of education.

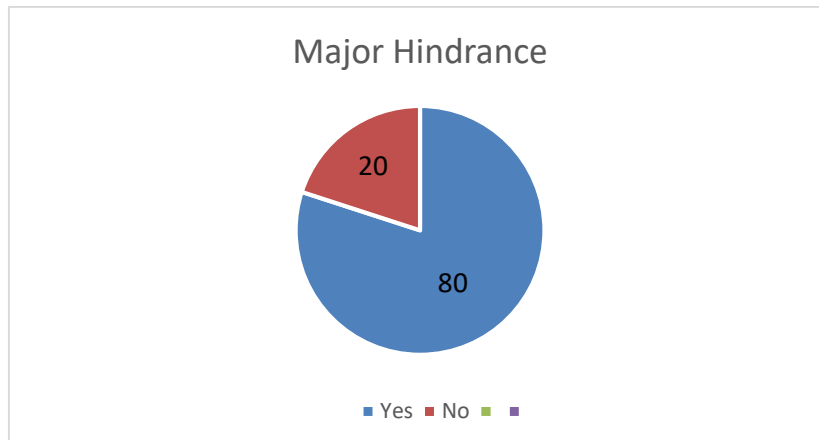
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Challenges-

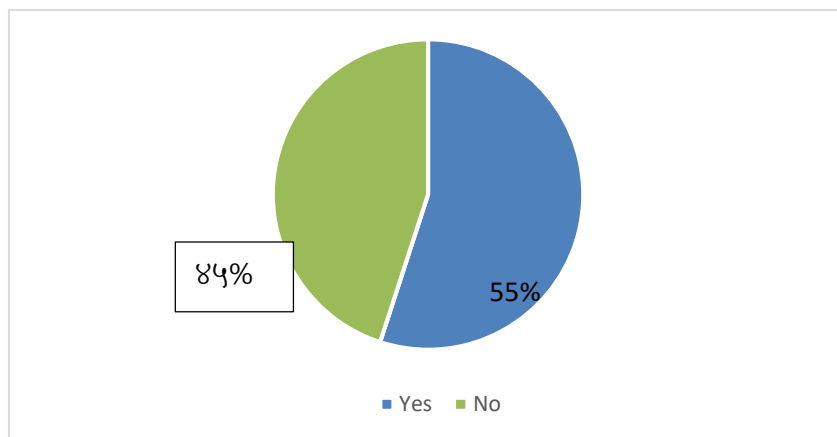
- The traditional mindset of patriarchy, lack of opportunity in interior sectors.
- Peer pressure and poverty
- Economical problem

- Gender stereotype
- Family responsibilities, gender biased society, threat to women with respect to security.

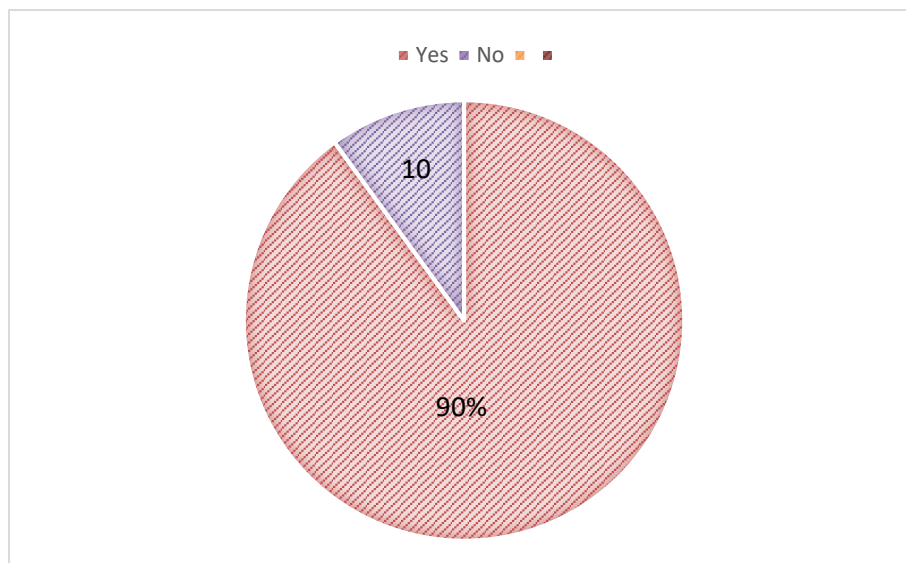
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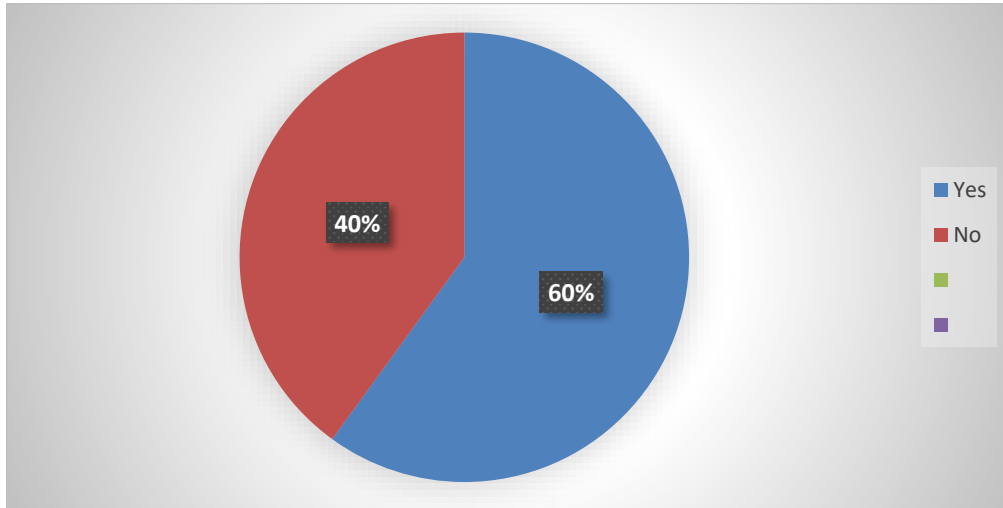
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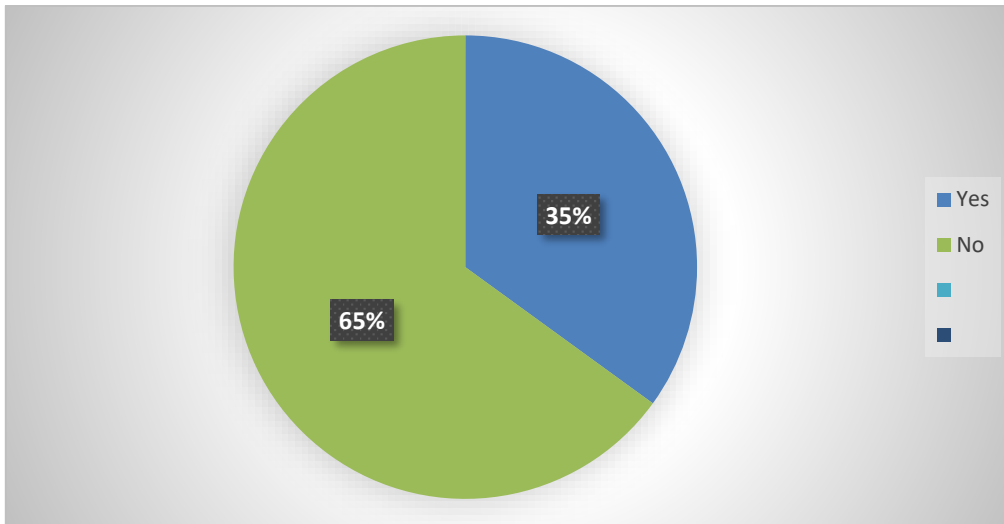
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Question 8. Are you aware of the schemes that government had implemented to increase women education?



Question 9. Do you think the help provided by the government to increase women education are reaching to the people?



Conclusion:

“Marriage can wait, Education cannot” -Khaled Hosseini

One may ask why education of women is even important, or why the state ought to focus on it, beyond improving the numbers and statistics to reflect figures at par with the rest of the developed world. Is it a mere image building exercise in an attempt to stay on top of the numbers? Although that may be equally important, there are more to accrue for the individual, family unit and ultimately the nation, with investment in education of its women.

Neglecting the education of women, who constitute nearly half of the population, does not auger well for the development of any nation. Beyond the obvious imbalance in the labour pool, education for women is an important determinant of their enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, helping to build a positive image, developing their ability to think critically, fostering better decision making and helping them make more informed choices about health, employment and even the education of their children. Education will not only ensure more participation in developmental processes but also enhance awareness of rights and entitlements in society, so that women can enhance their participation in society on an equal footing in all areas.