

## The Educational Development of Women in Tamil Nadu

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### Introduction

Any country can progress politically, socially, culturally and economically only if both men and women have access to education. Women education is far more important than men.

Mahatma Gandhi, says men's education is the education of an individual but women's education is the education of the whole family and society. If not women have the right to education, a nation cannot progress and achieve its goal of development. Tamil Nadu played an significant role for the development of Women's education. The writings and speeches of social reformers gave new motive force to fight for their rights. The emergence of Social Reformers created an atmosphere and paved the way for Social Reforms in general and the Emancipation of Women in particular. Women constitute almost half the population. Before the independence, Indian women affected with persecution and discrimination on the basis of their gender. In all aspects of life, gender prejudice prevails. This is mainly due to partial treatment of both men and women which are started from home itself .But after independence Government takes number of steps to rectify this gender discrimination. Considering education to be a critical component of their development, both the national and state governments have undertaken several programmes and initiatives. As a consequence of continued effort taken by these governments, the trend has been changed. So there was a considerable development of women's condition in recent year because of the availability of education opportunities to them particularly in higher education.

### Women Education in India.

In India Women education plays a very significant role in the development of the country. It is helps in the development of half of the human resources, and improving the quality of life at home and outside .The education system of India has two important structures, one is formal and another one is non-formal education. Some other educational programmes also produce to encourage the women education such as online education and distance education. The purpose of the entire educational programme is to make every girl child to educate. This low level of literacy not only shows a negative impact on women's lives but also on their families and country's economic development. Therefore it is of most importance to raise the level of education amongst women. There are an estimated 33.3 million Indians enrolled in higher education courses in India, according to the HRD ministry's All India Survey on Higher education report for 2015. On these, 17.9 million are boys and 15.4 million are girls as of 2014-2015. Fundamental Rights of women are equality, freedom to religion, educational rights, cultural and educational, against exploitation, freedom. Improving girls' educational levels has been demonstrated to have clear impacts on the health and economic future of young women, which in turn improves the prospects of their entire community.

### **Importance of women education in India:**

According to the International Encyclopaedia on women various authors emphasis the contribution of education for the empowerment of women. Since employment plays a vital role in improving women's status in a society education of women is of prime importance in any women empowerment programme. The social and economic development of India is greatly impacted by the education of an Indian woman. An educated Indian woman will have a positive impact on the society by contributing positively to the economy of both the country and the society. An educated woman reduces the chances of her child dying before the age of five. The population can be controlled because educated women are more likely to marry later than uneducated women.

### **Need of Women Education**

Women empowerment requires the provision of adequate and functional education to women. This is crucial because no matter how rich or vast a nation is, without an effective, efficient, adequate and functional education for all its citizens (men and women) education which is relevant to its immediate needs, goals and objectives, such a nation would find it difficult to stand on its own. The brand of education being advocated is that type of education in which is embedded the spirit of self realization and all that are needed for the country's over all development like mass literacy, economic empowerment etc.

The need for women's education is also informed by the fact that purposeful occupational achievement and satisfaction are ensured by deep self-awareness and understanding which can only be achieved through the provision of effective and functional education and guidance & counseling. This, has been noted is likely to guarantee women empowerment with its root based on women struggle to improve their status. The approach recommended involves the method of questioning authority dynamics and acquiring broader influence over power sources. This, however, cannot be achieved without the provision of reasonable access to formal and functional education to the women folk. This is based on the premise that education has been adjudged to be a viable instrument of change in the positive direction. Provision of formal and functional education is needed for the women folk, because:

- It would empower them to know and ask for their rights to education, health, shelter, food clothing etc.
- It would empower them to fight against every form of discrimination against their folk, assert themselves about their right to equal treatment with their men counterpart as bonafide citizens of this nation.
- It would enable the women take decisions and accept responsibilities for taking such decisions concerning themselves.
- It would give economic power to the women and there by enable them to contribute their quota to the economic growth of the nation.
- It would empower the women scientifically through exposure to science and technological education for the challenges of the present technological age and information computer technology break through unfolding world wide.
- It would help women to reduce maternal and infant mortality through improved nutrition, improved child rearing practice, health care and prevention against killer diseases.
- It would avail women with the opportunity of participating keenly in the world of sophisticated politics and governance as enlightened citizens.

## **Growth of women's colleges**

The development of women Education at the Higher Level was also appreciable. In 1946-1947, there were five Colleges for Women in the State and in these colleges, 1,236 Women were receiving instruction. To study the problems of Higher Education, the Government of India appointed the University Education Commission in 1948, under the Chairmanship of S. Radhakrishnan. The Report is a valuable document which deals with all the major problems in Higher Education including the Female Education. Since 1950, all Women's Colleges got improved. The Government improved their libraries, laboratories, hostels and play grounds. In 1956, the Collegiate Education was re-organised and the new pattern consisted of a one year P.U.C., followed by a Degree Course of three years and Post-Graduate Course of two years after the first degree. To raise the Standard of Collegiate Education Refresher Courses in English, Science and World History were conducted at Madras, Coimbatore, Madurai and Tirunelveli. As a result of the above measures, in 1948, Ethiraj College for Women of Madras, Lady Doak College of Madurai and Nirmala College of Coimbatore were affiliated to the Madras University. The Queen Mary's College, Madras, started Intermediate Courses in household Arts. For the benefit of employed women who wished to continue their studies, an evening College was started at Queen Mary's College, Madras. The strength in Women's Colleges grew enormously.

## **Tamil Nadu launches scheme to encourage women to pursue higher education**

Through a creative program launched by the Tamil Nadu government, aimed at motivating young women to continue their studies at the university level around 1 lakh girl students, who studied in government schools and are now pursuing undergraduate degree or diploma, or ITI

Government Initiatives and Legislative Reforms:

### **Government Initiatives and Legislative Reforms:**

The government of Tamil Nadu recognized the importance of women's education and took significant steps to address the gender disparity in educational opportunities. The establishment of the Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women in 1957 and the Tamil Nadu Women's University in 1985 further strengthened the higher education infrastructure for women in the state. Legislative reforms were also enacted to develop equal educational opportunities, including reservation policies and the abolition of discriminatory practices.

### **Contemporary Scenario and Challenges:**

In recent times, women's education in Tamil Nadu has witnessed further growth, with a greater emphasis on technical and professional education. The establishment of women-centric institutions, scholarships, and skill development programs has expanded opportunities for women across socio-economic backgrounds. However, challenges such as limited access in rural areas, societal prejudices, and gender-based violence continue to persist, necessitating ongoing efforts to address them effectively.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Women enrollment in higher education is also increasing. The rate of increase is slow in almost all the states of India. Admission depends on women teachers. Hope is yet to be achieved. Hence, establishment of higher education institutions for women especially in rural areas is still scarce and female enrollment is still low compared to male enrollment. There is no doubt that education is an important tool for human development. Human development plays a very important role in improving the standard of living of the people. Due to the Tamil Nadu state government's strong interest in women's education, enrollment of women in schools has increased significantly. As a result, the literacy rate of women enrolling in higher education has increased, yet disparity still

exists between male and female literacy rates, so measures must be taken to address the issues behind the low literacy rate of women to ensure 100 percent. The female literacy rate in the coming years helps the sustainable growth of the economy.

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