CHAPTER-III

EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: A MACRO PERSPECTIVE

- Introduction
- Indian Education System
- Women Education in India
- Women Employment in India
- Women Empowerment- Plans and Policies in India
- Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

The importance of education has been emphasized by a number of international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, recognized that women's literacy is the key to empowering, increasing women's participation in decision making in society and to improving families' well-being. In addition, the United Nations has articulated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include goals for improved education, gender equality, and women's empowerment. The MDGs emphasize education's essential role in building democratic societies and creating a foundation for sustained economic growth.

Education contributes directly to the growth of national income by improving the productive capacities of the labor force. A study of 19 developing countries, including Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia, concluded that a country's long-term economic growth increases by 3.7 percent for every year the adult population's average level of schooling rises. Thus, education is a key strategy for reducing poverty, especially in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, where poverty is not as deep as in other developing regions. According to the United Nations Population Fund, countries that have made social investments in health, family planning, and education have slower population growth and faster economic growth than countries that have not made such investments.

In the increasingly open global economy, countries with high rates of illiteracy and gender gaps in educational attainment tend to be less competitive, because foreign investors seek labor that is skilled as
well as inexpensive. Various global trends pose special challenges to women who are illiterate or have limited education. Economies' export orientation and the growing importance of small and medium-sized enterprises create opportunities for women, but women need the appropriate education and training to take full advantage of these opportunities. Developing countries including India are working towards this direction.

This chapter focuses on women education and empowerment in India. It tries to analyse Indian education system in general, women education in specific. It also attempts to analyse national policies for women empowerment in India.

INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education in India can be traced back to the 3rd century BC. A monastic order of education under the supervision of a guru was a favored form of education for the nobility in ancient India. The knowledge in these orders was often related to the tasks a section of the society had to perform. The priest class namely the Brahmins, were imparted knowledge of religion, philosophy, and other ancillary branches while the warrior class, the Kshatriya, were trained in the various aspects of warfare. The Vaishya, i.e., business class were taught their trade and the lowered class of the Shudras was generally deprived of educational advantages. The book of laws, the Manusmriti, and the treatise on statecraft the Arthashastra were among the influential works of this era.

Apart from the monastic orders, institutions of higher learning and universities flourished in India well before the Common Era, and continued to deliver education. Secular Buddhist institutions cropped up
along with monasteries. When Buddhism started spreading in India, education became available to everyone and this led to the establishment of some world famous educational institutions Nalanda, Vikramshila and Takshashila. These institutions systematically imparted knowledge and attracted a number of foreign students to study topics such as logic, grammar, medicine, metaphysics, art and crafts.

By the time of the visit of the Islamic scholar Alberuni (973-1048 CE), India already had a sophisticated system of mathematics and science in place, and had made a number of inventions and discoveries. It was in the 11th century that the Muslims established elementary and secondary schools. This led to the forming of few universities too at cities like Delhi, Lucknow and Allahabad. Medieval period saw excellent interaction between Indian and Islamic traditions in all fields of knowledge like theology, religion, philosophy, fine arts, painting, architecture, mathematics, medicine, and astronomy.

With the arrival of the British Raj in India, a class of Westernized elite was proficient in the Western system of education which the British had introduced. This system soon became sound in India as a number of primary, secondary, and tertiary centers for education cropped up during the colonial era. The British increased the percentage of the population in primary and secondary education from around 0.6 per cent of the population in 1867 to over 3.5 per cent of the population in 1941. However, this was much lower than the equivalent figures for Europe where in 1911, between 8.0 and 18.0 per cent of the population were in primary and secondary education. Additionally, literacy was also improved. In 1901 the literacy rate in India was only about 5.0 per cent which was increased to 20.0 per cent during the period of India’s Independence.
After the independence in 1947, Maulana Azad, India's first education minister envisaged strong central government control over education throughout the country, with a uniform educational system. However, given the cultural and linguistic diversity of India, it was only the higher education dealing with science and technology that came under the jurisdiction of the central government. The government also held powers to make national policies for educational development and could regulate selected aspects of education throughout India.

The central government of India formulated the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 and also reinforced the Programme of Action (POA) in 1986. The government initiated several measures like launching of DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) and SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, India's initiative for Education for All) and setting up of Navodaya Vidyalaya and other selective schools in every district, advances in female education, inter-disciplinary research and establishment of open universities. India's NPE also contains the National System of Education, which ensures some uniformity while taking into account regional education needs. The NPE also stresses on higher spending on education, envisaging a budget of more than 6.0 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. While the need for wider reform in the primary and secondary sectors is recognized as an issue, the emphasis is also on the development of science and technology education infrastructure.

With hundreds of universities and thousands of colleges, in fact India has positioned itself comfortably as a country that provides quality higher education to its people in specific and to the world in general.
Present education system in India

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is the apex body for curriculum related matters for school education in India, today The NCERT provides support and technical assistance to a number of schools in India and oversees many aspects of enforcement of education policies In India, the various curriculum bodies governing school education system are.

- The state government boards, in which majority of Indian children are enrolled
- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) board
- The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) board
- The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) board.
- International schools affiliated to the International Baccalaureate Programme and/or the Cambridge International Examinations
- Islamic Madrasah schools, whose boards are controlled by local-state governments, or autonomous, or affiliated with Darul Uloom Deoband
- Autonomous schools

In addition, NUEPA (National University of Educational Planning and Administration) and NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) are responsible for the management of the education system and teacher accreditation.

Access to basic education in India is improving. The number of primary schools has grown rapidly from 5,29,000 in 1986 to 7,67,000 in 2005 and at upper primary from 1,34,000 to 2,75,000. Now, the total number of schools has crossed 13 lakhs (NCERT, 2005).
In addition, the number of private pre-primary, primary and upper primary schools has also increased considerably. However, government and local bodies continue to be the main providers managing around 91.0 per cent of primary and 73.0 per cent of upper primary schools. Many new schools particularly those opened under the employment guarantee scheme (EGS) and alternative and innovative education scheme (AIE) are small in size. Most are located in rural areas. Around 28.0 per cent of children are educated in primary schools with 50 students or fewer. Questions of quality of provision persist with many schools which are having weak infrastructure and poor teaching and learning conditions.

According to gross enrolment (GER) data available at the national level, India has achieved near universal enrolment in primary education in most areas. The average GER across all India was 108.5 per cent at the primary level and 70.5 per cent at the upper primary level in 2004-05. GERs at primary varied from less than 80.0 per cent (Chandigarh, Punjab, to more than 120.0 per cent (Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh), and at upper primary from less than 60 per cent (Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar) to over 100.0 per cent (Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh).

**Literacy in India**

India spends 3.8 per cent of its GDP on education. However, even in 2011, about 26.0 per cent of its 7 plus people are illiterates. The fact that 35.0 per cent of Indian women are illiterates speaks of serious gender discrimination within the system. Moreover, we have not yet achieved more than 68.0 per cent literacy for the 0-9 Age group, indicating that the pool of illiterates is ever increasing. This has far reaching consequences as Literacy has wide socio-economic impacts. It is generally accepted that 4 social phenomenon like Birth rates (CBR),
Death rates (CDR), Infant Mortality Rates (IMR), and Population Growth Rates (PGR) decelerate with improvements in Literacy levels. Apart from these social impacts, improvements in literacy levels lead to uplifting of living standards also. While work participation rates (WPR), per capita income (measured by per capita net state domestic product – PCNSDP) and per capita consumption (monthly private consumption expenditure – MPCE) are observed to have significantly positive association with the literacy rate of the state, percentage of people below poverty level has a significant negative association with literacy. Thus, improvement of the ‘inclusion rate’ has not only aggregate uplifting effect but also desired distributional consequences. Significantly, in all these cases the association is found to be stronger with female literacy than male literacy, thereby underlying the importance of female education in India. This also identifies gender gap in educational attainment (EA) as an important issue for exploration.

**Literacy trends and patterns**

Over the last century, literacy in India has increased from 5.3 per cent in 1901 to 65.4 per cent in 2001. It has increased to 74.04 per cent in 2011. However, the improvement is much in case of males for the males compared to the females, especially till 1981. As a result, the gender gap (difference between the percentage figures for the males compared to the females - GG) in literacy increased from 9.2 points in 1901 to 26.8 points in 1981, but declined thereafter to 16.7 points in 2011. However, this attainment has not been uniform across regions. While Kerala has achieved 94.0 per cent literacy level in 2011, with a GG of only 4 points, Bihar lags far behind with 63.8 literacy and 20 points GG. Gender gap is also significantly high for Rajasthan, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. It is also observed that the hierarchies of the states have remained fairly stable over the period of study and the rank correlation coefficient between the literacy ranks of
the states for the four time points are significantly positive. This is a matter of concern, as the relatively poor performers have remained slow movers also. However, there seems to be a certain degree of convergence among the states with regional disparity (as shown by Coefficient of Variation among the states) declining continuously over the 2001-2011 decade.

**Some of the important highlights of Literacy Rate in India 2011**

- The male literacy rate has increased to 82.14 per cent, which shows an increase of 6.29 per cent.

- On the other hand, the female literacy of 65.46 per cent has increased at a much faster rate of 11.3 per cent.

- The male-female literacy gap has reduced from 21.59 per cent in 2001 to 16.68 in 2011.

- All States and Union Territories without exception have shown increase in literacy rates during 2001-2011.

- In all the States and Union Territories the total literacy is now over 60.0 per cent, male literacy is above 70.0 per cent and that of female is above 50.0 per cent.

- The total number of illiterates has come down to 26.0 per cent from 35.0 per cent.

- Kerala ranks 1st in total literacy rate as well as in female literacy rate among all states with 93.91 and 92.0 per cent respectively; Bihar has lowest literacy rate with 63.82 per cent. Among Union Territories Lakshadweep stands 1st with literacy rate of 92.28 per cent.

- Kerala, Mizoram, Lakshadweep and Tripura are the consistent forerunners for both 2001 and 2011.
Table-3.1: Literacy Rate in Indian States- 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI No</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chattisgarh</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Odissa</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>83.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Union territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI No</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andaman &amp; Nicobar Islands</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Daman &amp; Diu</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lakshadweep</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All INDIA

Source Census of India 2011
It is observed that India is far behind acceptable standards regarding the first step towards education i.e. literacy. However, even that level is not uniformly attained throughout India. Female literacy is also subjected to the same problem. This wide regional disparity in education attainment standards is a crucial problem in India.

Table-3.2: Literacy Rate in India 1901-2011 (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7404</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India

As observed in Table-3.2, during pre-Independence, literacy rate for women had a very poor spurt in comparison to literacy rate of men. This is witnessed from the fact that literacy rate of women has risen from 0.7 per cent to 7.3 per cent whereas the literacy rate of men has risen from 9.8 per cent to 24.9 per cent during these four decades. During the post-independence period, literacy rates have shown a substantial increase in general. However, the literacy rate of male has
almost tripled over the period i.e 25.0 per cent in 1951 and 76.0 per cent in 2001. Surprisingly, the female literacy rate has increased at a faster pace than the male literacy during the decade 1981-2001. The growth is almost 6 times i.e. 7.9 per cent in 1951 and 54.0 per cent in 2001. From this analysis, it can be inferred that, still the female literacy rate (only half of the female population are literates) is lagging behind male literacy rate (three fourth of the male population are literates).

The rate of school drop outs is also found to be comparatively higher in case of women. This higher rate of illiteracy of women is undoubtedly attributing for women dependence on men and to play a subordinate role. The lack of education is the root cause for women’s exploitation and negligence. Only literacy can help women to understand the Indian’s constitutional and legislative provisions that are made to strengthen them. Thus promoting education among women is of great importance in empowering them to accomplish their goals in par with men in different spheres of life.

Table-3.3: Percentage of Girls to Total Enrolment by Stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Upper Primary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>44.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>48.09</td>
<td>46.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source* Dept of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development
Table 3.3 shows that percentage of girls enrolled in schools at primary and upper primary level has been increasing. But it is to be noticed that the growth rate is very slow.

Table-3.4: Institutions of Higher Education in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of university level institutions</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of colleges</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>7346</td>
<td>16885</td>
<td>18064</td>
<td>25951</td>
<td>33000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of students enrolled (in million)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>16.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UGC reports

As it is observed in table 3.4, the number of university level institutions is growing indicating increased demand for higher education. During 60 years of time period, the number of colleges has increased from mere 700 to 33000.

Public expenditure on education in India

Since government has realised the importance of ‘education for all’, public expenditure on education is increasing. Under Eleventh Five Year Plan allocation of Rs 2,69,873 crore has been made available for the Ministry of Human Resource Development [Rs 1,84,930 crore for Department of School Education & Literacy and 84,943 crore for Department of Higher Education and 6000 crores for adult literacy]. This constitutes 4.6 fold increase over the expenditure of about Rs 58,820 crore incurred during X Five Year Plan and 19.4 per cent of
the overall Central Plan allocation. The increased allocation provided during XI Five Year Plan was proposed to be utilized for expansion of existing institutions, opening of new institutions and improvement in the quality of education.

**Table-3.5: Public Expenditure on Education in India (as percentage of GDP)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>3.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>3.49</td>
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<td>2004-05</td>
<td>3.39</td>
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<td>2005-06</td>
<td>3.46</td>
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<td>2006-07</td>
<td>3.64</td>
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<td>2007-08</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<td>2008-09</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Dept of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development*

From table 3.5, it is observed that the percentage of public expenditure as a proportion to GDP was more than 4 per cent in 2000-01 which constantly decreased till 2004-05. From 2006-07 onwards again it started gearing up.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), India has the lowest public expenditure on higher education per student in the world.
In recent times, several major announcements were made for developing the poor state of affairs in education sector in India. The most notable ones is the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. The announcements were (a) To progressively increase expenditure on education to around 6 percent of GDP (b) To support this increase in expenditure on education, and to increase the quality of education, there would be an imposition of an education cess over all central government taxes (c) To ensure that no one is denied of education due to economic backwardness and poverty (d) To make right to education a fundamental right for all children in the age group 6–14 years (e) To universalize education through its flagship programmes such as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Mid Day Meal.

However, even after five years of implementation of NCMP, not much progress has been made on these promises or announcements. The public expenditure on education has actually not yet reached even 4 percent of GDP. As a proportion of total government expenditure, it has declined from around 11.1 percent in 2000-2001 to around 9.98 percent. Due to a declining priority of education in the public policy paradigm in India, there has been an exponential growth in the private expenditure on education also. The private out of pocket expenditure by the working class population for the education of their children in India has increased by around 12.5 times over the last decade.

WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA

Education is an important tool for the empowerment of women. Women's education in India has been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country.
History of Women Education in India

Women education in India can be traced back to the ancient Vedic period. Although in the Vedic period women had access to education, they had gradually lost this right. However, in the British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. When the British arrived in India, English education came into force. European missionaries came and established many schools. These missionaries promoted schooling for girls from the early part of 19th century. These schools were mostly attended by girls from poor families.

In 1857, three universities were established in three presidencies—Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. Acquiring higher education posed a challenge to middle class girls, but the participation of Christian and Parsi women was much higher than that of Hindu women, and it was the lowest among Muslims. (In 1882 there were 2,700 schools and colleges for girls with 127,000 students.) The social reform movement of the 19th century had a major role in this upsurge of education among women, but this movement was largely an urban phenomenon.

Indian National Congress played a vital role in emancipating women. Within a year of its formation in 1885, a Ladies Association was formed. By 1890s, more and more highly educated women were visible in public sphere. Later prominent Indian women like Ramabai Ranade, Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Rameshwari Nehru, Rajkumari Amrit kaur, Aruna Asif Ali, Sucheta Kriplani, Usha Mehta, and Vilasini Devi Shenai played a crucial political and social role.

By the end of the 19th century, women were graduating from colleges and universities in a sizeable number. During the beginning of the 20th century, the new emphasis on education for women was not just
to make them better housewives and mothers but to help them educate
their children and so contribute to nation-building. In 1906, Sarojini
Naidu said in a speech to Indian Social Conference in Calcutta,
"Therefore, I charge you, restore to your women their ancient rights, for,
as I have said, it is we, and not you, who are the real nation builders, and
without our active co-operation at all points of progress all your
Congresses and Conferences are in vain. Educate your women and the
nation will take care of itself; for it is as true today as it was yesterday
and will be to the end of human life that the hand that rocks the cradle
rules the world"

By the 1920s, different rationales were being presented to
provide quality higher education to women. This period also saw a shift
in consciousness of and about working class women. Once women were
recognized as an integral part of the work force, higher education
became a necessary stepping stone

Many universities were established during this period. Benaras
Hindu University in 1916, Aligarh Muslim University in 1920, and
Delhi University in 1922, became new hubs of women's liberation. At
this stage many enlightened national leaders took much interest in this
area and strove hard to bring about a change in the mindset of the
people

Women's education got a fillip after the country got
independence in 1947. The government started to introduce various
measures to provide education to all Indian women. As a result,
women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades. While in 1971
only 22 per cent of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2011,
65.46 per cent female were literates. The growth of female literacy rate
is 11.46 per cent as compared to 6.14 per cent of that of male literacy rate.

After independence, women's education, especially higher education, took off. Education started playing a great role in the emancipation of women from traditional dependencies. Women became more vocal, articulate, and assertive. Indian constitution granted equal rights to women and that included the Right to Education.

The National Policy of 1968 marked a significant step in the history of education in Post-Independent India. It aimed to promote national progress, a sense of common citizenship, and culture, and to strengthen national integration. It was acknowledged that the growth of our population needed to be brought down significantly over the coming decades. The largest single factor that could help achieve this was the spread of literacy and education among women. This Policy laid special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity for men and women.

Education was to be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there was a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System played (and continues to play) a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It fostered the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, training, and orientation of teachers, decision-makers, and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. This was to be an act of faith and social engineering. Women's studies were promoted and educational institutions were encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development. The system worked vigorously to eliminate sex stereotyping in vocational and professional courses and to
promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations, as well as in existing and emergent technologies

The Constitutional Amendment of 1976, which includes Education in the Concurrent List, was a far-reaching step. New Education Policy of 1986 and the Revised Education Policy of 1992 also laid adequate emphasis on women's higher education.

Present Women education in India

Women education in India has been showing a positive trend in terms of literacy rate, enrollment rates at school and college levels, proportion to university education, etc. The number of literate women among the female population of India was 20 per cent during the British Raj period, which increased to 60 per cent in 1947. Concerted efforts led to improvement from 15.3 per cent in 1961 to 28.5 per cent in 1981. By 2011, literacy for women had exceeded 65.0 per cent of the overall female population.

Though female literacy rate is gradually rising, it is lower than the male literacy rate. Compared to boys, very fewer girls are enrolled in the schools, and many of them drop out. According to the National Sample Survey Data, only the states of Kerala and Mizoram have approached universal female literacy rates. The major factor behind the improved social and economic status of women in Kerala can be attributed to literacy.

Under Non-Formal Education programme (NFE), about 40 per cent of the centres in states and 10.0 per cent of the centres in Union territories are exclusively reserved for females. As of 2000, about 0.3 million NFE centres were catering to about 7.42 million children, out of which about 0.12 million were exclusively for girls. In urban India,
girls are nearly at par with the boys in terms of education. However, in rural India girls continue to be less educated than the boys.

Indian women's participation in higher education is quite high and growing. Today 53.5 per cent of young women below 30 have university degrees. This is due to high job aspirations and parental support. However, most women still attend local universities as their parents want them to stay at home and study. A lot depends upon their social class, and parental educational status.

The achievements of women during these times are so significant that they have altered the gender landscape of schools, colleges, offices, courts, police stations, hospitals, hotels, and business establishments. Women are everywhere making their mark in every field. This revolution has been brought about surprisingly, without there being an organized women's movement in the country. Women have begun to take the possibilities for their careers for granted.

One of the recommendations of National Policy on Education (1986) by the Government of India is to promote empowerment of women through the agency of education and it is considered to be a landmark in the approach to women's education of illiterate. The National Literacy Mission is another positive step towards eradication of illiteracy in the age group of 15-35 years. Women's education has assumed special significance in the context of India's planned development, as it is incorporated in every Five-year plans as the major programme for the development of women. Universalization of elementary education, enrolment and retention of girls in the schools, promotion of balwadis and creches, raising number of schools and colleges of arts, science, and professional courses for girls, polytechnics, girls hostels, multipurpose institutions and adult education programmes.
are some of the steps being taken by both central and state governments in India to boost-up women’s education.

**Government policies and programmes to promote women education in India**

After realising the importance of women education in India, government has initiated several policies and programmes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan etc in order to encourage education in general, women education in particular.

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which covers all States and Union Territories in the country, is one of India's important social sector programmes for universalisation of elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access to education and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education, and achieving significant enhancement in learning levels of children. With the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, the vision of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has acquired added significance because steps for achieving UEE will be as per legislative requirement.

SSA promotes girls' education to equalize educational opportunities and eliminate gender disparities. SSA has made efforts to mainstream gender concerns in all activities under the programme. A two pronged strategy is adopted for the promotion of girls education, namely, to make the education system responsive to the needs of girls, and, simultaneously, to generate a community demand for girls' education. A strategic shift has been made in education planning to target low female literacy pockets and reduce gender disparity.
effort is also made to bring out-of-school girls, especially the girls from the disadvantaged sections, to school.

Girls' education has received predominance through two special interventions subsumed under SSA, namely, the National Programme for Girls Education at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV). SSA provides a clear thrust and special focus on education of girls in the planning and provisioning for universalisation of elementary education. SSA works to ensure, in partnership with States, that all habitations in the country have access to elementary schools, with adequate infrastructure and teachers.

Provisions for girls under SSA are:
- Availability of school at one km of each habitation at primary level and within a range of three km at upper primary level
- Separate toilets for girls
- Back to school camps for out-of-school girls
- Bridge courses for older girls.
- Recruitment of 50.0 per cent women teachers
- Early Childhood care and Education centers m/near School in convergence with Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programmes etc
- Teachers' sensitive programmes to promote equitable learning opportunities
- Gender-sensitive teaching-learning materials including textbooks
- Intensive community mobilization efforts
- "Innovation fund" per district for need based interventions for ensuring girls' attendance and retention
National Programme for Girls Education at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

This programme is meant for reducing drop out rate of girls from schools. NPEGEL is a holistic effort to address obstacles to girls' education at the micro level through flexible, decentralized processes and decision-making. NPEGEL is implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) and addresses the needs of girls who are 'in' as well as 'out' of school. NPEGEL also reaches out to girls who are enrolled in school, but do not attend school regularly. Children become vulnerable to leaving school when they are not able to cope with the pace of learning in the class or feel neglected by teachers/peers in class. The scheme emphasizes the responsibility of teachers to recognize such girls and pay special attention to bring them out of their state of vulnerability and prevent them from dropping out. Recognizing the need for support services to help girls with responsibilities with regard to fuel, fodder, water, sibling care and paid and unpaid work, provisions have been made for incentives that are decided locally based on needs.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

The second major initiative in the Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) is the "Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya" (KGBV) scheme which provides for setting up of residential upper primary schools for girls from SC, ST, OBC and Muslim communities. This scheme targets areas of scattered habitations, where schools are at great distances and are a challenge to the security of girls. This often compels girls to discontinue their education. KGBV addresses this issue through setting up of residential schools, in the block itself. KGBV scheme specifically targets-

- Adolescent girls who are unable to go to regular schools
- Out of school girls in the 10 plus age group who are unable to complete primary school
• Younger girls of migratory populations in areas of scattered habitations that do not have primary/upper schools

The KGBV scheme provides for a minimum reservation of 75.0 per cent seats for girls from SC/ST/OBC and minorities communities and 25.0 per cent to girls from families that live below the poverty line.

**Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)**

This scheme was launched in March 2009 with the objective to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality. It was implemented from 2009-10. It is envisaged to achieve an enrolment rate of 75.0 per cent from 52.26 per cent in 2005-06 at secondary stage within 5 years by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of any habitation. The other objectives include improving quality of education imparted at secondary level through making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms, removing gender, socio-economic and disability barriers, providing universal access to secondary level education by 2017, i.e., by the end of 12th Five Year Plan and achieving universal retention by 2020.

**Scheme for setting up of Girls' Hostels for students of Secondary & Higher Secondary Schools**

This is a centrally sponsored Scheme launched in 2008-09 and implemented from 2009-10 to set up Girls' Hostels with 100 seats in about 3,500 educationally backward blocks. The scheme has replaced the earlier NGO driven scheme for construction and running of Girls' Hostels for Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools, under which assistance was provided to voluntary organization for running Girls' Hostels.
The main objective of the revised scheme is to retain girl child in secondary school so that the girl students are not denied the opportunity to continue their study due to distance to school, lack of financial affordability and other societal factors. The girl students in the age group 14-18 studying in classes IX to XII and belonging to SC, ST, OBC, Minority communities and BPL families are the target group of the scheme. Students passing out of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya are given preference in admission in hostels. Under this scheme, at least 50.0 per cent of girls admitted should belong to SC, ST, OBC and Minority communities.

Central Government will bear 90.0 per cent of the recurring and non-recurring project cost and the remaining 10.0 per cent is to be borne by the State Governments. The scheme is to be implemented by the State government societies established for implementation of the scheme.

**Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education**

The Government of India launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme called "Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education" in 2008-09. According to the scheme, a sum of Rs 3,000/- will be deposited in the name of eligible girls as fixed deposit and she would be entitled to withdraw it along with the interest thereon on reaching 18 years of age and she should have already passed 10th class examination. The objective of the Scheme is to establish an enabling environment to reduce the dropouts and to promote the enrolment of girl child belonging to SC/ST communities in secondary schools and ensure their retention to the age group of 18 years.

The scheme will cover all girls belonging to SC/ST communities, who pass class VII, all girls who pass VIII examination.
from Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalayas (irrespective of whether they belong to SC/ST) and enroll in class XII in Government, Government-aided and local body schools

**University grants commission (UGC) and women education**

The University Grants Commission (UGC), a premier apex body governing university education has launched a number of schemes to achieve gender equity. Such schemes being run by UGC are:

**Day care centres in Universities and Colleges**

The objective of the scheme is to provide day care facility within the university system on demand basis for children of around three months to six years of age, when their parents (university/college employees/students/scholars) are away from home during day time and also to provide a secure place and environment during working hours for their children.

**Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child for pursuing Higher and Technical Education**

The purpose of the scheme is to support higher education through scholarships to such girls who are the only child in their families and also to make them recognize the values of observance of small family norms. Girl students up to the age of 30 years at the time of admission of Postgraduate courses are only eligible. The number of slots for scholarships available under the scheme is 1200 p.a. The monthly scholarship amount is of Rs.2,000/ for 20 months.
Construction of Women's Hostels for Colleges

Increasing mobility of students to seek the education they desire raises the demand for hostels. Accordingly, the UGC has been providing hostels and other infrastructural facilities to achieve the goal of enhancing the status of women and harness the potential availability for the development of the society at large, as also to bring about gender equity and equal representation of women through a special scheme 'construction of women's hostels.' The main objective is to support all the eligible colleges for construction of hostels for women in order to provide a residential place for women students/researchers/teachers and other staff. The assistance will be on a 100 percent basis subject to the ceilings. For colleges located in non-metropolitan cities, the assistance is from Rs 40 lakhs to Rs 80 lakh whereas it is Rs 80 lakh to Rs 120 lakh in the case of colleges in metropolitan cities depending on the size of women enrolment in the college. This would encourage girls to pursue higher education.

Development of Women's Studies in Universities and Colleges

The scheme provides assistance to universities for setting up new women's study centres as well as to strengthen and sustain the university women's study centres by establishing them as statutory departments in the university system. It also facilitates their own capacity to network in other constituent so that they are mutually reinforcing as well as synergizing one and another. The primary role of these centres is to make knowledge transmission through teaching and research till action and documentation. Currently, there are 51 centres in Universities and 16 centres in Colleges in the country. The pattern of assistance is Rs.25 lakh for Universities and Rs 15 lakh for Colleges in Phase-I, Rs 40 lakh for Universities and Rs 25 lakh for Colleges in Phase-II, and Rs 60 lakh for Universities and Rs 40 lakh for Colleges in Phase-III. All the centres set up prior to XI Plan period will be reviewed after the completion of...
third year It also envisaged that 30 new centres in Universities and 20 centres in colleges are to be started each year of XI Plan

Capacity Building for Women Managers in Higher Education

The overall goal of this scheme is to facilitate the constituencies of women faculty, administrators and staff within the higher education system to increase the participation of women in higher education management for better gender balance, to sensitize the higher education system through policies and procedures which recognize women equity and diversity and to involve the women capable of becoming administrators for the qualitative development of higher education.

During XI Plan, the following three approaches are being followed

• To offer training programmes focused on increasing their sensitivities to issues concerning women becoming managers
• To make it a movement of women rather than only a scheme like any other
• To involve Vice-Chancellors of the Universities or Principals of the concerned Colleges for the development of programme

However, it is to be noticed that in spite of government policies, school drop out rates among girls are still high, women literacy and educational level is still very less compared to that of men

WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA

Women workforce constitutes an integral part of total workforce in India. The participation of women in the labor force has always been lower than that of men, in the rural as well as urban areas. The work participation rate for women has increased significantly. In 1981, work
participation rate for women was only 19.67 per cent which increased to 22.73 per cent in 1991 and 26.68 per cent in 2001. Now it has increased to 29.0 per cent. In the women workforce, women from rural areas are greater in number as compared to the urban women. Among rural women workers, majorities are employed in agriculture and some are employed in cottage industries. In the urban areas, women workers are primarily employed in the unorganized sectors.

**Female labour participation in Indian Economy**

Indian economy is associated with 'high population' which is the second largest in the world. Proportion of female population to the total is around 50.0 per cent. However, workforce among female population is less and diversified. That is, female working population is seen in the highly salaried white collared jobs as well as less waged agriculture.

Some important highlights of women's economic participation in India are

- The workforce participation rate of females in rural sector was 26.1 in 2009-10 (NSS 64th Round) while that for males was 54.7. In urban sector, it was 13.8 for females and 54.3 for males.

- Among the States/Union Territories, workforce participation rate of females in the rural sector is the highest in Himachal Pradesh at 46.8 per cent and in the urban sector it is highest in Mizoram at 28.8 per cent.

- In the rural sector, 55.7 per cent females are self-employed, 4.4 per cent females have regular wage/salaried employment and 39.9 per cent females are casual labourers compared with 53.5 per cent, 8.5 per cent and 38.0 per cent males in the same.
categories respectively. It indicates that majority of female work force in rural India are self employed.

- A total of 20.4 per cent women were employed in the organized sector in 2010 with 17.9 per cent working in the public sector and 24.5 per cent in the private.

- The labour force participation rate of women across all age groups was 20.8 in rural sector and 12.8 in urban sector compared with 54.8 and 55.6 for men in the rural and urban sectors respectively in 2009-10 (NSS 64th Round). It shows the existence of wide gender gap in the work force.

- The unemployment rate for women of all ages was 2.4 compared with 2.0 for men in the rural areas in 2009-10. It was 7.0 for women and 3.1 for men in urban areas during the same period. It can be observed that majority of women are unemployed in urban areas compared to rural areas.

- Of the total job seekers registered with employed exchanges, women constituted 32.5 per cent in 2009.

- The female share of total Central Government employment stood at 10.0 per cent in 2009.

- The share of female employees in the scheduled commercial banks was 15.9 per cent in 2009 which rose slightly to 16.6 per cent in 2010.

- In 2009-10, the average wage/salary received by regular wage/salaried employees of age 15-59 years was Rs 155.87 per day for females compared with Rs 249.15 per day for males in rural areas. For urban areas, it was Rs 308.79 and Rs 377.16 per day for females and males respectively. Thus, wide gender gap exists in terms of wages/salaries as well.
The female labour participation as a proportion to male labour force is depicted in table 3.6. As it is observed from the table, female labour force as a proportion to male labour has been changing with fluctuations during past decade. It had increase with slow growth rate till the year 2005. But it started showing a downward trend after 2006, showing a downward trend. It indicates the need of upbringing the women labour force.

Table-3.6: Ratio of female to male labour participation rate (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of female labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>41.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>42.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>43.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>43.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>44.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>42.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>40.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>39.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>37.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>35.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census of India*

It is noticed that in case of rural labour force, percentage of female labour with secondary and higher secondary education is always less over that of below secondary education in every year. It may be because most of the female labour force in rural India is working in agriculture sector as casual labourers. But the proportion of graduate labour force is more comparatively. In case of urban labour force,
percentage of female labour force varies with consistency across educational status

Female labour force participation rate across educational level gives a better picture. It is depicted in Table 3.7

**Table 3.7: Female labour force participation rate by educational level (percentage)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>Literates below secondary</td>
<td>25.85</td>
<td>12.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary and higher secondary</td>
<td>23.76</td>
<td>17.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduates and above</td>
<td>37.06</td>
<td>35.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>Literates below secondary</td>
<td>26.35</td>
<td>12.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary and higher secondary</td>
<td>26.30</td>
<td>16.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduates and above</td>
<td>39.90</td>
<td>37.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>Literates below secondary</td>
<td>25.80</td>
<td>13.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary and higher secondary</td>
<td>20.01</td>
<td>14.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduates and above</td>
<td>44.80</td>
<td>35.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>Literates below secondary</td>
<td>36.64</td>
<td>17.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary and higher secondary</td>
<td>19.47</td>
<td>12.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduates and above</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>30.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Literates below secondary</td>
<td>41.95</td>
<td>20.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary and higher secondary</td>
<td>22.05</td>
<td>14.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduates and above</td>
<td>50.40</td>
<td>37.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>Literates below secondary</td>
<td>36.30</td>
<td>17.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary and higher secondary</td>
<td>23.50</td>
<td>11.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduates and above</td>
<td>49.50</td>
<td>35.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source*: *National Sample Survey*
Table-3.8 shows the percentage of women job seekers to total number of applicants on live register in India.

Table-3.8: Percentage of Women Job Seekers to total number of applicants on live register in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of total Women registered (in '000)</th>
<th>Percentage to total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10605 6</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>11781 0</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12001 5</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>12328 2</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>12404 7</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>12924 1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate of Employment and Training

Live register consists of systematic arrangement of index cards pertaining to applicants who are in need of employment assistance and who are registered with employment exchanges. Therefore, they can be called as job seekers. The number of total women job seekers has been increasing every year as shown in the table 3.8. The number of educated women job seekers is depicted in table 3.9.
Table-3.9: Number of Educated Women Job Seekers in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of educated Women registered (in lakhs)</th>
<th>Percentage of educated to total women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7542.5</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>8901.2</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>9553.7</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>9577.5</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9689.0</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Directorate of Employment and Training*

As in case of women job seekers in general, the number of even educated women job seekers too is increasing from year to year. But percentage of educated women job seekers to that of total is changing with fluctuations.

**Representation of women at decision making levels**

Women empowerment can be judged by the extent of decision making powers which women enjoy. If women are in decision making positions, it will reflect in terms of policies as well. It may take the form of administrative as well as political.

1) Administrative

In India, IAS (Indian Administrative Service) and IPS (Indian Police Service) are the two premier services. Today women are found in these services as well.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>1991 Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>2001 Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>2011 Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAS</td>
<td>512 (10.2</td>
<td>4991</td>
<td>535 (10.4</td>
<td>5159</td>
<td>- (13.1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPS</td>
<td>67 (22)</td>
<td>3045</td>
<td>110 (3.3)</td>
<td>3301</td>
<td>- 56</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>579 (7.2)</td>
<td>8036</td>
<td>645 (7.6)</td>
<td>8460</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source** India - A reference Annual

**Note** Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

It is to be noticed that though number of women in premier services has been increasing, their proportion to total is meager. Compared to administrative service, the number of women is very less in police service.

2) Political

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in 1993 have brought forth a definite impact on the participation of women in grass root democratic institutions viz, Panchayat Raj Institutions and Local Bodies. Of the 475 Zilla Parishads in the country 158 are chaired by women. At the block level out of 51,000 members of block samithis 17,000 are women. Nearly one-third of the Mayors of the municipalities are women.

Although the number of women in Panchayath Raj institutions has increased, their proportion to total decreased from 1995 to 2001. Though it has increased in 2008 it continues to be very low. This is shown in table 3.11.
Table-3.11: Women in Panchayath Raj Institutions
(Figures in ‘000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(33.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(26.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1038</td>
<td>2818</td>
<td>3856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(36.84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source* India- A reference Annual

*Note* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

**Education, Employment and Women Empowerment in India**

In India, many a times even if a woman is employed, she may not have control over the money she earns, though this money often plays an important role in the maintenance of the household. In Indian culture, as in many other countries, women are expected to devote virtually all of their time, energy, and earnings to their family. Men, on the other hand, are expected to spend time and at least some of their earnings on activities outside the household.

The effect of education on the employment status of women is not always positive. Higher levels of education for women do not directly translate into higher proportions of main workers. For example, 18.0 percent of illiterate women are employed as main workers, while just 11.0 percent of those with high school educations are employed as such. If women have a post-high school level of education there will be dramatic improvements in their employment status—about half of all women who receive a post-secondary non-college diploma are employed as main workers. These women likely have received training for specific jobs. Surprisingly, women with university degrees do not have relatively high employment rates, only 28.0 percent of these
women are employed as main workers. The confounding of the usual relationship between education and employment may be related to the likelihood that poorer and lower educated families require female members to work. Often, girls and young women work instead of receiving an education. Well-off and better-educated families may send their daughters to school, but are able to afford to follow the cultural practice of keeping women at home after schooling is complete. Until women receive specialized post-secondary education, significant improvements cannot be seen in their employment. Therefore, government has to work in this direction. Government can play a significant role in terms of plans and policies to empower women.

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT- PLANS AND POLICIES IN INDIA**

In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels. Women empowerment is also focused under Five Year Plans.

**Women empowerment under five Year Plans**

The First Five Year Plan sought to "promote the welfare of women" by helping them to play their legitimate role in the family and the community but emphasised that the major burden of organising activities for the benefit of the female population had to be borne by the private agencies. Five Year Plans continued to reflect the same welfare approach to women's interests though they placed priority to education.
for both, men and women and launched measures to improve maternal and child health services and supplementary nutrition for children as well as expectant and nursing mothers.

Under Sixth Five Year Plan, the focus on women's interests shifted from 'welfare' and 'development'. Planners and policy makers began to recognize women not only as partners but also as stakeholders in the development of the country. The Seventh Five Year Plan saw developmental programmes which aimed at raising the economic and social status of women and at ensuring that they get the benefits of national development. This is when 'beneficiary oriented programmes' extending direct benefits to women in different developmental sectors began. There was a stress upon the generation of both skilled and unskilled employment through formal and non-formal education and vocational training. The Eight Five Year Plan had a Human Development focus. It tried to ensure that the benefits of development do not bypass women and it implemented special programmes for women to complement the general development programmes and to monitor the flow of benefits to women in education, health and employment.

The Ninth Five Year Plan was rather determined. It took up 'empowering women as agents of socio-economic change and development' as a major commitment. To begin with, it adopted the 'National Policy for Empowerment of Women'. This policy sought to organise women into Self Help Groups to work for their own empowerment, accorded a high priority to schemes for maternal and child welfare and most importantly, made a bid at easy and equal access to education through the Special Action Plan of 1998, plans for the free education of girls up to the college level (including professional courses) and vocational training.
National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001)

Though Women Empowerment was focused during Five Year Plans under different approaches such as welfare, development, human development etc no specific thrust on 'Women Empowerment' was found in terms of policies. Since women constitute half of Indian population and are equally potential participants of economic growth of the country, government felt the need for a specific policy to empower women. Therefore, in the year 2001, National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was initiated to strengthen the position of women.

Goals and Objectives of National Policy

The goal of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Specific objectives of this Policy are-

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential
- The *de-jure* and *de-facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil
- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation
- Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc
- Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
• Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women
• Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process
• Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
• Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women’s organizations

Policy Prescriptions

In order to empower women, the Policy has made several provisions. The Policy prescriptions can be broadly classified as judicial and legal systems, economic empowerment of women, social empowerment, gender sensitization, panchayath Raj institutions and international co-operation.

1) Judicial Legal Systems

Legal-judicial system will be made more responsive and gender sensitive to women’s needs, especially in cases of domestic violence and personal assault. New laws will be enacted and existing laws reviewed to ensure that justice is quick and the punishment meted out to the culprits is commensurate with the severity of the offence.

The Policy would aim to encourage changes in laws such as those related to marriage, divorce, maintenance and guardianship, ownership of property and inheritance, so as to eliminate discrimination against women.

a) Decision Making

Women’s equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, including decision making in political process at all levels will be ensured for the achievement of the goals of empowerment.
All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision making bodies at every level, including the legislative, executive, judicial, corporate, statutory bodies, and also the advisory Commissions, Committees, Boards, and Trusts etc. Affirmative action such as reservations/quotas, including in higher legislative bodies, will be considered whenever necessary on a time bound basis.

b) Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Development Process

Policies, programmes and systems will be established to ensure mainstreaming of women's perspectives in all developmental processes, as catalysts, participants and recipients. Wherever there are gaps in policies and programmes, women specific interventions would be undertaken to bridge these. Women's issues and concerns as a result will specially be addressed and reflected in all concerned laws, sectoral policies, plans and programmes of action.

c) Legislation

Some specific measures will be taken to implement the legislation effectively. They are-

- Strict enforcement of all relevant legal provisions and speedy redressal of grievances will be ensured, with a special focus on violence and gender related atrocities.
- Measures to prevent and punish sexual harassment at the place of work, protection for women workers in the organized/unorganized sector and strict enforcement of relevant laws such as Equal Remuneration Act and Minimum Wages Act will be undertaken,
- Crimes against women, their incidence, prevention, investigation, detection and prosecution will be regularly reviewed at all Crime Review forum and Conferences at the Central, State and District.
levels Recognised local, voluntary organizations will be authorized to lodge Complaints and facilitate registration, investigations and legal proceedings related to violence and atrocities against girls and women

- Women's Cells in Police Stations, Encourage Women Police Stations Family Courts, Mahila Courts, Counselling Centers, Legal Aid Centers and Nyaya Panchayats will be strengthened and expanded to eliminate violence and atrocities against women
- Widespread dissemination of information on all aspects of legal rights, human rights and other entitlements of women, through specially designed legal literacy programmes and rights information programmes will be done

2) Economic Empowerment of women

a) Poverty Eradication

Since majority of women population fall below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macro economic policies and poverty eradication programmes will specifically address the needs and problems of such women. There will be improved implementation of programmes which are already women oriented with special targets for women. Steps will be taken for mobilization of poor women and convergence of services, by offering them a range of economic and social options, along with necessary support measures to enhance their capabilities.

b) Women and Economy

Women's perspectives will be included in designing and implementing macro-economic and social policies by institutionalizing their participation in such processes. Their contribution to socio-
economic development as producers and workers will be recognized in
the formal and informal sectors (including home based workers) and
appropriate policies relating to employment and to her working
conditions will be drawn up. Such measures could include:

- Reinterpretation and redefinition of conventional concepts of
  work wherever necessary e.g. in the Census records, to reflect
  women's contribution as producers and workers
- Preparation of satellite and national accounts

c) Globalization

Globalization has presented new challenges for the realization of
the goal of women's equality, the gender impact of which has not been
systematically evaluated fully. However, from the micro-level studies
that were commissioned by the Department of Women & Child
Development, it is evident that there is a need for re-framing policies for
access to employment and quality of employment. Benefits of the
growing global economy have been unevenly distributed leading to
wider economic disparities, the feminization of poverty, increased
gender inequality through often deteriorating working conditions and
unsafe working environment especially in the informal economy and
rural areas. Strategies will be designed to enhance the capacity of
women and empower them to meet the negative social and economic
impacts, which may flow from the globalization process

d) Women and Agriculture

In view of the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied
sectors, as producers, concentrated efforts will be made to ensure that
benefits of training, extension and various programmes will reach them
in proportion to their numbers. The programmes for training women in
soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and other
occupations allied to agriculture like horticulture, livestock including small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries etc will be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector

e) Women and Industry

The important role played by women in electronics, information technology and food processing and agro industry and textiles has been crucial to the development of these sectors. They would be given comprehensive support in terms of labour legislation, social security and other support services to participate in various industrial sectors.

Women at present cannot work in night shift in factories even if they wish to. Suitable measures will be taken to enable women to work on the night shift in factories. This will be accompanied with support services for security, transportation etc.

f) Support Services

The provision of support services for women, like child care facilities, including crèches at work places and educational institutions, homes for the aged and the disabled will be expanded and improved to create an enabling environment and to ensure their full cooperation in social, political and economic life. Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process.

3) Social Empowerment of Women

a) Education

Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured. Special measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational
system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation/vocation/technical skills by women. Reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area. Sectoral time targets in existing policies will be achieved, with a special focus on girls and women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes/Minorities. Gender sensitive curricula would be developed at all levels of educational system in order to address sex stereotyping as one of the causes of gender discrimination.

b) Health

A holistic approach to women’s health which includes both nutrition and health services will be adopted and special attention will be given to the needs of women and the girl at all stages of the life cycle. The reduction of infant mortality and maternal mortality, which are sensitive indicators of human development, is a priority concern. This policy reiterates the national demographic goals for Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) set out in the National Population Policy 2000. Women should have access to comprehensive, affordable and quality health care.

c) Nutrition

In view of the high risk of malnutrition and disease that women face at all the three critical stages viz., infancy and childhood, adolescent and reproductive phase, focused attention would be paid to meeting the nutritional needs of women at all stages of the life cycle. This is also important in view of the critical link between the health of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women with the health of infant and young children. Special efforts will be made to tackle the problem.
of macro and micro nutrient deficiencies especially amongst pregnant and lactating women as it leads to various diseases and disabilities

d) Drinking Water and Sanitation

Special attention will be given to the needs of women in the provision of safe drinking water, sewage disposal, toilet facilities and sanitation within accessible reach of households, especially in rural areas and urban slums. Women’s participation will be ensured in the planning, delivery and maintenance of such services.

e) Housing and Shelter

Women’s perspectives will be included in housing policies, planning of housing colonies and provision of shelter both in rural and urban areas. Special attention will be given for providing adequate and safe housing and accommodation for women including single women, heads of households, working women, students, apprentices and trainees.

f) Environment

Women will be involved and their perspectives reflected in the policies and programmes for environment, conservation and restoration. Considering the impact of environmental factors on their livelihoods, women’s participation will be ensured in the conservation of the environment and control of environmental degradation. The vast majority of rural women still depend on the locally available non-commercial sources of energy such as animal dung, crop waste and fuel wood. In order to ensure the efficient use of these energy resources in an environmental friendly manner, the Policy will aim at promoting the programmes of non-conventional energy resources. Women will be involved in spreading the use of solar energy, biogas, smokeless chulahs.
and other rural application so as to have a visible impact of these measures in influencing eco system and in changing the life styles of rural women.

g) Science and Technology

Programmes will be strengthened to bring about a greater involvement of women in science and technology. These will include measures to motivate girls to take up science and technology for higher education and also ensure that development projects with scientific and technical inputs involve women fully. Efforts to develop a scientific temper and awareness will also be stepped up. Special measures would be taken for their training in areas where they have special skills like communication and information technology. Efforts to develop appropriate technologies suited to women’s needs as well as to reduce their drudgery will be given a special focus too.

h) Women in Difficult Circumstances

In recognition of the diversity of women’s situations and in acknowledgement of the needs of specially disadvantaged groups, measures and programmes will be undertaken to provide them with special assistance. These groups include women in extreme poverty, destitute women, women in conflict situations, women affected by natural calamities, women in less developed regions, the disabled widows, elderly women, single women in difficult circumstances, women heading households, those displaced from employment, migrants, women who are victims of marital violence, deserted women and prostitutes etc.
i) Violence against women

All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs, traditions or accepted practices shall be dealt with effectively with a view to eliminate its incidence. Institutions and mechanisms/schemes for assistance will be created and strengthened for prevention of such violence, including sexual harassment at work place and customs like dowry, for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence and for taking effective action against the perpetrators of such violence.

j) Rights of the Girl Child

All forms of discrimination against the girl child and violation of her rights shall be eliminated by undertaking strong measures both preventive and punitive within and outside the family. These would relate specifically to strict enforcement of laws against prenatal sex selection and the practices of female foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child abuse and child prostitution etc. In implementing programmes for eliminating child labour, there will be a special focus on girl children.

4) Gender Sensitization

Training of personnel of executive, legislative and judicial wings of the State, with a special focus on policy and programme framers, implementation and development agencies, law enforcement machinery and the judiciary, as well as non-governmental organizations will be undertaken. Other measures will include:

1) Promoting societal awareness to gender issues and women’s human rights
(2) Review of curriculum and educational materials to include gender education and human rights issues

(3) Removal of all references derogatory to the dignity of women from all public documents and legal instruments

(4) Use of different forms of mass media to communicate social messages relating to women’s equality and empowerment.

5) Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Indian Constitution have served as a breakthrough towards ensuring equal access and increased participation in political power structure for women. The PRIs will play a central role in the process of enhancing women’s participation in public life. The PRIs and the local self Governments will be actively involved in the implementation and execution of the National Policy for Women at the grassroots level.

6) Partnership with the voluntary sector organizations

The involvement of voluntary organizations, associations, federations, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, women’s organizations, as well as institutions dealing with education, training and research will be ensured in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and review of all policies and programmes affecting women. Towards this end, they will be provided with appropriate support related to resources and capacity building and facilitated to participate actively in the process of the empowerment of women.

7) International Co operation

The Policy will aim at implementation of international obligations/commitments in all sectors on empowerment of women such
as the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and other such instruments. International, regional and sub-regional cooperation towards the empowerment of women will continue to be encouraged through sharing of experiences, exchange of ideas and technology, networking with institutions and organizations and through bilateral and multi-lateral partnerships.

CONCLUSION

It is observed that in spite of government programmes in India, women are not empowered to the expected level. Gender disparity still persists in many parts of the country. It manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and societal levels are some of the other manifestations. Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women persists in parts of the country. The underlying causes of gender inequality are related to social and economic structure, which is based on informal and formal norms, and practices. Consequently, the access of women particularly those belonging to weaker sections, majority of whom are in the rural areas and in the informal, unorganized sector – to education, health and productive resources, among others, is inadequate. Hence, they still remain largely marginalized and weaker section of the society.

Therefore, it can be said that there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other.
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