



Education Challenges for women in India: A special reference to Andhrapradesh

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With promptly changing technologies and more globalisation, higher education and training has become critical for long-term growth, improved livelihoods, and economic effectiveness. To contribute to the eradication of poverty and backwardness, to ensure sustainable growth, and to build human capacity for rural development, education and training must be prioritised in the rural development agenda. Education is the process of mental liberation. It is the release of all types of darkness and ignorance. Literacy is critical for women's economic viability and independence. One of the conditions for human progress is the acquisition of knowledge. All development organisations now believe that educating women is critical for promoting and maintaining family education, health, nutrition, and overall well-being. The goal of education should be to prepare women to apply what they have learned in the classroom to their daily lives and to be ready for the jobs they will be doing.

Keywords: Education, Globalization, long-term growth, and poverty eradication

Introduction

The process of education is one of mind liberation. It is the emancipation from all types of darkness and ignorance. For economic sustainability and independence, women's literacy is critical. One of the requirements for human development is knowledge acquisition. Today, all development organisations agree that educating women is critical for promoting and maintaining family education, health, nutrition, and overall well-being. The goal of education should be to prepare women to apply what they have learned in the classroom to day-to-day activities and to be ready for the jobs they will be doing. Women's education should always be focused on their overall growth. A woman's understanding of her own health needs and views, as well as her ability to make health and family planning decisions, are enhanced by education. As a result, the rates of mother and infant mortality and morbidity are reduced. Women's empowerment, marriage age deferral, and family size reduction are all aided by increased education for women and girls.

Objectives

The following are the goals of this paper:

1. To investigate the problems surrounding women's education.
2. To investigate the issues and causes of school dropouts.
3. To investigate women's literacy programmes.

Review of Literature

Karuna Chanana (1990)¹ briefly addresses the evolution of girls' and women's education since independence. It starts with the literacy rate, then moves on to enrolment in school and higher education, highlighting regional differences. More differences between rural and urban locations, as well as among disadvantaged groups such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, are highlighted. As a result, the goal of studying the developments is to identify both positive and negative tendencies, as well as imbalances, in the growth and expansion of girls' education. Finally, we will attempt to analyse the elements and processes that obstruct females' education, as well as potential solutions.

Uniyal (1996)² pointed out that whereas educating a man just educates one individual, educating a woman educates an entire family. This insight attests to the value of a woman's education. It is impossible to overemphasise the importance of rural women's education. Some individuals consider and believe that education is not as vital as building a factory as Pandit Nehru, the architect of modern India. He can give up as many factories as he wants. He will not, however, sacrifice the people who build industries and manufacture the goods that we desire.

Education, according to Uma Devi, K. (2000)³, brings perfection to life, which entails personal growth and development. It qualifies a person to perform specific economic, political, and cultural functions, consequently improving people's socioeconomic conditions. It also serves to level the playing field for people from various social classes. The Indian constitution envisions bringing about social change through the use of law as a tool. One of the goals inherent in the preamble, the fundamental rights, and the directive principles of state policy is to achieve state equality for women. However, social transformation is a calculated process, and it is not always consistent with constitutional directives.

Education increases the quality of life, according to Neelima and Shyam Swaroop (2000)⁴. It improves health, provides work opportunities, boosts market productivity, and facilitates social and economic engagement. It is a valuable sort of human capital that boosts a country's productivity, health, and nutrition while also slowing population growth. 'Social mobility' and 'social empowerment' are also aided by education. Education allows a person to build a feeling of self-identity, self-worth, and recognition. Education aids a person in all aspects of life on an irregular basis, from purchasing tickets at counters to applying for loans and establishing one's legal rights. Also, following Class-V, a high percentage of those enrolled drop out. As a result, not all children benefit from the formal education system. Furthermore, first-generation students lack motivation and a welcoming environment at home. Because the parents are illiterate and uneducated, they place little value on education. Children are seen as prospective wage earners who can help supplement low-income families.

Over two-thirds of the world's projected 1.2 billion poor people are women, according to Mandakini Pant (2004)⁵. They are impoverished in terms of food, clean water, sanitation, and health care. They frequently lack crucial resources such as credit, land, and inheritance. They are denied opportunities, choices, access to knowledge, education, and skills, and they have no sense of authority. At home and in the community, their participation in decision-making is negligible.

The enrolment ratio of children in schools is quite low in tribal communities, according to Kukreti B.R. (2004)⁶, while the dropout rate continues to be very high at all levels of schooling. The purpose of this study is to determine the causes of dropout among tribal students and to offer some recommendations for lowering the dropout rate among tribal students. The pervasive illiteracy and ignorance of parents is the primary reason of dropout. More over half of the population is still illiterate, despite vigorous literacy efforts. Although the rural tribal masses have become more conscious of the importance of education, the habitual inhibitions and family imperatives continue to stymie efforts to send their children to school on a regular basis.

Literacy Trends in India

India inherited an educational system that was not only tiny in terms of quality, but also marked by significant regional and structural disparities at the time of independence. Only 14% of the population was literate, and only one in every three children had attended primary school. Despite the official education system's development, the majority of Indian women remain outside of its grasp.

The best literacy rates and educational facilities determine a country's social and economic success. Despite the fact that our country's literacy rate is rising, female literacy remains lower than male literacy. According to the 2011 census, India's literacy rate was 74.04 percent, while women's literacy rate was 65.46 percent. The major goal of presenting women's literacy levels in our country is to emphasise the current discrepancies in literacy rates between males and females, as well as to highlight regional differences and areas that require special attention. Table 1 shows the percentage of people who are literate.

Table 1 Percentage of literates in India and Andhra Pradesh

Year	India			Andhra Pradesh		
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Persons (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Persons (%)
1901	9.8	0.7	5.5	8.5	0.6	4.6
1911	10.6	1.1	6.0	9.2	0.9	5.1
1921	12.2	1.8	7.2	10.9	1.6	6.3
1931	15.6	2.9	9.5	11.7	1.8	6.8
1941	24.9	7.3	16.1	16.8	5.0	11.0
1951	24.9	7.9	16.7	22.7	7.6	15.2
1961	34.4	13.0	24.0	30.2	12.0	21.2
1971	39.5	18.7	29.5	33.2	15.7	24.6
1981	41.0	20.0	35.8	39.2	20.4	29.9
1991	64.1	39.3	52.3	35.1	32.7	44.1
2001	75.8	52.1	65.4	70.8	51.2	61.1
2011	82.14	65.46	74.04	74.8	60.0	67.4

Source: Computed from census reports.

Table 1 shows the literacy levels in India and Andhra Pradesh from 1901 to 2011. Literacy rates in India went from 5.5 percent in 1901 to 74.4 percent in 2011, whereas literacy rates in Andhra Pradesh increased from 4.6 percent to 67.4 percent over same time. In terms of literacy rates by gender, it is clear that for males it is above 80% and for females it is below 65% for the country as a whole, and practically same data can be seen for the State of Andhra Pradesh in 2011.

Table 2 Gender-wise, Area-wise literacy rates in Andhra Pradesh during 1961 to 2001
(in per cent)

Year	Rural Area		Urban Area	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1961	25.14	8.45	53.62	29.33
1972	27.31	10.92	57.30	36.31
1981	32.25	14.08	61.89	41.55
1991	47.28	23.92	75.81	56.41
2001	57.31	38.55	78.54	61.33
2011	69.38	51.29	85.79	73.31

Source: Andhra Pradesh Director, 1991 and Census of India 2011.

From 1961 to 2011, Table 2 demonstrates that the literacy rate in rural areas is lower than in urban areas, and that female literacy is lower than male literacy in both rural and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh. In 1961, the female literacy rate in rural areas was 8.45 percent, whereas it was 29.33 percent in urban areas. These percentages grew to 51.29 percent and 73.31 percent, respectively, in 2011.

Table 3 Literacy rates in post-Independent India

Year	Rural			Urban			Combined		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
1951	4.87	19.02	12.01	22.3	45.6	34.5	8.8	27.1	18.3
1961	10.1	34.3	22.5	40.5	66	54.4	15.3	40.4	28.3
1971	15.5	48.6	27.9	48.8	69.8	60.2	21.9	45.9	34.4
1981	21.7	49.6	36	56.3	76.7	67.2	29.7	56.3	43.5
1991	30.17	56.9	36	64.0	81.0	67.2	39.2	64.1	52.2
2001	46.7	71.4	59.4	73.2	86.7	80.3	53.6	75.2	64.8
2011	58.75	78.5	67.8	79.9	89.6	84.1	65.4	82.1	74.0
% increase in 2011 over 2001	26%	10%	14%	9%	3%	5%	22%	9%	14%

Source: Census of India, Office of the Registrar General, Delhi, India.

The literacy rates in post-independence India are shown in Table 3. In 1951, the total literacy rate was 18.3%, but by 2011 it had risen to 74%. In 1951, 8.8% of women were literate, compared to 65.4 percent in 2011. In 2011, female literacy increased by 22% compared to 2001.

Women's Education Issues

Low enrolment and high dropout rates among girls who enter the formal school system have exacerbated the problem of female illiteracy. While the number of girls enrolled in schools has increased, it is still not equal to the number of boys enrolled. The dropout rate among girls, especially those in rural regions, continues to be quite high. In light of these statistics, the following are some of the key causes behind women's low literacy rates:

1. Dowry and early marriage.
2. Reluctance to send girls out of the house once they have reached puberty.
3. Severe poverty and parents' incapacity to pay for their children's education.
4. School inaccessibility.
5. Women teachers are in short supply.
6. Inadequate infrastructure, resulting in low enrolment and high dropout rates.
7. The need for females to assist in the farms, in the family's occupation, in home tasks, or in the care of younger siblings:

Although most parents agree that education is beneficial to females, many parents, particularly those from low-income families, do not send their daughters to school. Because their daughters are required to perform agricultural and household production jobs, as well as domestic duties such as cooking and caring for younger siblings. There are also the actual costs of clothes, school fees, and books, in addition to the opportunity cost of daughter's labour. Poor parents are discouraged by these costs, but for sons, families are often prepared to forego their labour and even incur with his own family after marriage to help with home earnings. Education, on the other hand, increases the expense of having a lady married for her natal family, because a good and more educationally educated groom wants a larger dowry. Any financial gain from her future earnings would be distributed to her family.

Causes of dropouts

1. Parents who are illiterate and uneducated.
2. Poverty and economic issues.
3. Early-marriages
4. Semi-settled tribal existence
5. Non-stimulating social environment
6. The migratory character of the species.
7. A depressing school climate
8. Students' needs on the farm and in pastureland;
9. Children's participation in household economic activities.
10. Language barriers
11. There is no immediate benefit from children.
12. Parents' reluctance to work for a wage or income.
13. You must take part in domestic activities.
14. Inequitable behaviour by teachers.

Table 4 Year-wise Dropout Rates from 2004-05 to 2012-13 (All) in Andhra Pradesh

S. No.	Years	Classes I-V	Classes I-VII	Classes I-X
1	2004-05	22.31	48.12	64.55
2	2005-06	17.36	44.31	63.45
3	2006-07	19.11	38.87	62.96
4	2007-08	11.75	31.25	60.95
5	2008-09	7.69	29.83	56.35
6	2009-10	8.93	21.03	50.18
7	2010-11	9.55	15.66	44.19
8	2011-12	7.45	14.95	41.98
9	2012-13	6.08	20.38	33.41

Source: Commissioner, Director of School Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

Table 4 shows the dropout rates from 2004-05 to 2012-13. The percentage is steadily dwindling. It dropped from 64.55 percent in 2004-05 to 33.41 percent in 2012-13.

Table 5. Reasons for Dropouts

S. No.	Reason	SC	ST	BC	Others	Total
1	Reluctance of parents	5 (13.89)	3 (7.50)	4 (10.53)	6 (16.67)	18 (12.00)
2	Poverty	18 (50.00)	24 (60.00)	15 (39.47)	11 (30.35)	68 (45.33)
3	Death of the parent	10 (27.78)	11 (27.50)	12 (31.58)	14 (38.89)	47 (31.33)
4	Need of the girl for work	3(8.33)	2 (5.00)	7 (18.42)	5 (13.89)	17 (11.34)
	Total	36 (100.00)	40 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	150 (100.00)

Source: Primary data

When parents have been questioned about their children's dropouts, they have stated their reasons. Table 5 explains them in detail. The table 5 shows that the majority of dropouts are related to familial poverty. 68 members, or 45.33 percent, have stated that their children had dropped out of school due to poverty, followed by the death of their parents. Because their parents are deceased, 31% of youngsters are dropped.

Women's literacy programmes run by the government

The Indian government has taken a number of efforts and implemented a number of programmes to boost literacy in the country. They are as follows:

Mahila Samakhya: The Mahila Samakhya scheme, which began in 1989, recognises the importance of education in empowering women to attain equality. The project is currently being implemented in over 8,000 villages across 53 districts in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan strives to mobilise the human, financial, and institutional resources needed to achieve the goal of universalizing primary education. Under the chairmanship of the Minister of Human Resource Development, a national committee of state education ministers has been formed.

Non-formal Education: There are currently 2.92 lakh non-formal education centres in 25 states/UTs, serving around 73 lakh students. 1.15 lakh girls-only centres receive up to 90% of their funding from the government.

National Literacy Mission: The National Literacy Mission's initiative aims to increase functional literacy to a threshold, sustainable level of 75% by 2005. In India, this campaign approach is widely considered as the most effective strategy for reducing illiteracy.

The Navodaya Vidyalaya (NV) scheme has three goals: offering good quality modern education to children in rural regions, ensuring that all students complete the three-language formula, and serving as focal points for improving the quality of school education in each district. These Vidyalayas are co-educational, fully residential institutions that provide education up to the senior secondary level. All

students in NVs receive free room and accommodation, textbooks, uniforms, and other educational benefits.

Literacy initiatives must be performed aggressively, according to the Kothari Commission's report from 1980, especially among the 15-35 age group. A well-educated woman ensures a well-educated family. The universalization of elementary education and the retention of girls in secondary schools are linked to adult literacy. A girl who attends school until she is 17 years old cannot revert to illiteracy. Both campaigns must be run at the same time.

Conclusion

To promote girls' education, it is necessary to change societal attitudes as well as spend money to increase the number of school spots available to girls. Donors who sponsor education can help by requiring that their donations be used to educate both boys and girls. New ways of engaging policymakers, such as a bottom-up approach in which civil society exerts pressure, or greater use of evidence to demonstrate the benefits of girls' education, could be fruitful. Religious leaders, as well as men in general, who are typically the primary decision-makers in households, require persuasion. It takes time and effort to change cultural views regarding women. Such reforms have often required strong political will as well as leadership in countries that have succeeded.

Suggestions

1.It may be advised that pre-primary schools, primary schools, and secondary schools be established in remote areas. It may also be proposed that an orientation programme for teachers working in remote areas be organised in order for them to effectively discharge their obligations.

2.It may be advised that committed persons from retired teachers, retired armed personnel, and other groups be appointed to impart better education and improve the running of special schools established in rural areas, in order to reap the benefits of these centres within the time frame set. It is also proposed that instructional materials be made available for free.

3.In order to eradicate illiteracy in slum areas, it may be suggested that officials, teachers, and elected representatives hold awareness campaigns about literacy, the benefits of education, and the importance of education for their families and society as a whole, which will increase women's literacy.

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