

## Women empowerment through education in Karnataka

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### Abstract

Women education in India can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large women of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited." Education of women is the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. Only literacy can help women to understand the Indian's constitutional and legislative provisions that are made to strengthen them. To bring more girls, especially from marginalized families of BPL, in mainstream education, the government is providing a package of concessions in the form of providing free books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing for the hostilities midday meals, scholarships free circles and so on. Female literacy rate India e.g. 7.9% in 1951 and 54% in 2001 and 65.46% in 2011. Female literacy rate had an of 68.13% in Karnataka basis in 2011 while comparing literacy rate of female 11.26% increase in 2011 census is increase from 56.87 to 68.13.

**Keywords:** Education, Female Literacy Rate, Women Empowerment.

### 1. Introduction

Education is recognized as a fundamental human right, along with other necessities, such as food, shelter and water in The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948). The advantages it confers on individuals and nations are multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. It sustains economic growth by providing basic as well as specialized skills that ensure increased productivity and higher per capita incomes. Human development is predicated upon universal access to education, with its implications for equity and social justice. Education empowers people to make informed choices about their lives and about their rights as citizens in a democracy. Gender justice gets a boost when women have access to education, which, by enhancing women's knowledge and employment capacity, increases their sense of autonomy and self-worth. People's health status improves as their education levels rise. Above all, education is valued, quite simply, for itself and the avenues of knowledge and awareness that it opens for us. Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

### Definition

"Women's empowerment is defined as the process in which their spiritual, political, social or economic status is raised". This also includes the right to raise their level of confidence regarding their own capabilities. Empowerment includes the following aspects.

1. The ability to take their own decisions.
2. To take information and have other facilities at their disposal which would enable them to take proper decisions.
3. To have wide choices (Only 'Yes/No' and not 'If/ Else' choices).
4. Firmness while taking collective decisions.
5. Possessing positive way of thinking regarding the ability to bring about transformation.
6. The ability to bring about improvement in one's own capabilities.
7. The competence to modify other's attitudes in a democratic manner.
8. To participate in continuous and self-propagated development process and to take active participation in the transformation process.
9. To control on negative factors and build up a positive image of oneself.

### History of women education in India

Women's education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. However, in the British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. During this period, various socio religious

movements led by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India. However women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and the government has taken various measures to provide education to all Indian women.

As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 1971 only 22% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2001 54.16% female were literate. The growth of female literacy rate is 14.87% as compared to 11.72 % of that of male literacy rate.

### Importance of education in women's empowerment

Women's empowerment is not limited only for the Indian society. If we consider the global aspect in this regard, we see that women are being given equal treatment in developed nations. In fact, if we take a retrospect of history, we come to know that women have always been given secondary position in society, but the difference between men and women created by the Nature is but natural. It is education through which we realize this fact. When American women realized this, they opposed this injustice which was meted out to them by way of a huge movement, through which they asked for equal rights. For eradicating this injustice, the UNO (United Nations' Organization) framed a Convention / Charter which is called 'The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women' (CEDAW), which further led to the formation of Women's Commission. Taking an account of this background, we come to know that women's empowerment has now become a topic of global discussion. Seeing all the aspects of this discussion, we will realize that education is the only means for empowerment of women. Therefore, literacy should spread amongst women. The literacy rate amongst the women in the post Independent Era is not as per the expectations. We, as a nation, dream of becoming a Super Power by 2020. For becoming a Super Power, each element of our society/nation should contribute in the nation building process. But women, who are a major factor of this society, aren't literate then we can't expect to become a Super Power. Therefore, it is urgent for us to know the importance of women's education, which would, in turn, give an impetus to the process of women's empowerment

### Women empowerment through education

The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference Nairobi in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. The 2001 census report indicates that literacy among the women as only 54%, it is virtually disheartening to observe the literacy rate of women in India is even much lower to national average that is 65.38%. The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large women folk of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited. Moreover education is also not available to all equally. Gender inequality is reinforced in education which is proved by the fact that the literacy rate for the women is only 65.46% against 82.14% of men as per 2011 census.

**Table 1:** Literacy rate in India

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1961	24.0	34.4	13.0
1971	29.5	39.5	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	65.38	76.0	54.0
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source: Census of India 2011

According to the table No. 1 the pre-independence time literacy rate for women had a poor spurt in comparison to literacy rate of men. This witnessed from the fact that literacy rate of women has risen from 0.7% to 7.3% whereas the literacy rate of men has risen from 9.8% to 24.9% during these decades. After the independence literacy rate has shown a substantial increase in general. However the literacy rate of male has almost tripled over a period that is 25% in 1951 and 76% in 2001. Surprisingly the female literacy rate has increased at faster pace than male literacy during decade 1991-2001. The growth is almost 6 times that is 7.9% in 1951 to 54% in 2001 and 65.46% in 2011.

As a result of higher participation of women in literacy campaigns the gender gap in literacy level is gradually getting reduced. Even more significant is the fact that disparity in enrolment of boys and girls in neo-literate households is much lowered compared to the non-literate householders.

**Table 2:** State wise percentage of female literacy in India 2011

	Name of the State	Female literacy rate in Percentage		Name of the State	Female literacy rate in Percentage
1	Andhra Pradesh	59.7	16	Maharashtra	75.5
2	Arunachal Pradesh	59.6	17	Manipur	73.2
3	Assam	67.3	18	Meghalaya	73.8
4	Bihar	53.3	19	Mizoram	89.4
5	Chhattisgarh	60.6	20	Nagaland	76.7
6	Delhi	80.9	21	Orissa	64.4
7	Goa	81.8	22	Punjab	71.3
8	Gujarat	70.7	23	Rajasthan	52.7
9	Haryana	66.8	24	Sikkim	76.4

10	Himachal Pradesh	76.6	25	Tamil Nadu	73.9
11	Jammu & Kashmir	58.0	26	Tripura	83.1
12	Jharkhand	56.2	27	Uttar Pradesh	59.3
13	Karnataka	68.1	28	Uttarakhand	70.7
14	Kerala	92.0	29	West Bengal	71.2
15	Madhya Pradesh	60.0			
	Union Territories				
1	Andman and Nicobar	81.8	4	Daman and Div	79.6
2	Chandigarh	81.4	5	Lakshadweep	88.2
3	Dadar and Nagar Haveli	65.9	6	Pondicherry	81.2
	All India	65.46			

Source: Census of India 2011

According to the table 2 the state wise female literacy rate an average of 65.46% in all India as per 2011 census, the high literacy rate is 92.0% in Kerala and least literacy rate is 52.7% in Rajasthan as per 2011 census while comparing literacy rate of female 11% increased in 2011 census is increased from 54.16% to 65.46%. Women's are growing well in the last 10 years. Government of India has been taken various steps and plans for women in every movement.

### Female Literacy rate in Karnataka

Education is recognized as a fundamental human right, along with other necessities, such as food, shelter and water in The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948). The advantages it confers on individuals and nations are multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. It sustains economic growth by providing basic as well as specialized skills that ensure increased productivity and higher per capita incomes. Human development is predicated upon universal access to education, with its implications for equity and social justice. Education empowers people to make informed choices about their lives and about their rights as citizens in a democracy. Gender justice gets a boost when women have access to education, which, by enhancing women's knowledge and employment capacity, increases their sense of autonomy and self-worth. People's health status improves as their education levels rise. Above all, education is valued, quite simply, for itself and the avenues of knowledge and awareness that it opens for us.

Achievements in education in Karnataka have been quite remarkable, and the state is moving towards universal literacy at a steady pace. The literacy rate increased from 56.04 per cent in 1991 to 66.64 per cent in 2001, with the female literacy rate increasing more swiftly than the male literacy rate. Overall, the gender disparity in literacy is declining rather perceptibly and the decline is much more evident in the less economically developed districts of the state. Karnataka has 51,904 primary schools (2003-04) and the number of habitations with primary schools within a distance of one kilometer increased from 84 per cent in 1993 to 88 per cent in 2002. Enrolment in primary education grew at the rate of one per cent for boys and two per cent for girls per annum from 1990-91 to 2003-04. The dropout rate for Classes I to IV came down from a high 31 per cent in 1993-94 to six per cent in 2001-02, but increased thereafter, to 11 per cent in 2003-04. For classes I to VIII, the dropout rate declined from 54-59 per cent between 1992 and 2000 to 45.4 per cent in 2003-04. Karnataka has taken steps to recruit women teachers, whose numbers went up to 54 per cent in 2003-04. At present there exists an extensive high school network in the state and the midday meal scheme covers nearly 66 lakhs children in

classes I to VII, in both government and aided schools. As many as 1,088 high schools have computer-aided learning centres, thereby bringing information technology within the reach of rural students. The constraints and challenges will have to be confronted head-on. Overall, the mean years of schooling have improved only marginally over a four-year period, from 1999-2000 to 2003-04. The high levels of regional, caste and gender disparities imply that not all the children in the state have equal access to education. The dropout rate in south Karnataka districts in 2003-04 was lower than the state average as well as north Karnataka's average for boys and girls. In terms of infrastructure in primary schools, Hyderabad Karnataka performs poorly while south Karnataka has better infrastructure than other regions. More than 3 per cent schools do not have teachers and 19 per cent function with single teachers (Seventh All-India School Education Survey, Provisional Statistics, 2002). The percentage of girls' and boys' enrolment in secondary education in the state still shows marked differentials (boys: 6,86,893 and girls: 5,97,244 in 2003-04) despite a steady improvement over the years. The quality of instruction and instructional material will have to improve considerably to ensure better retention of students. As noted in chapter 3, from 1990-91 to 2002-03, the largest allocation of public education expenditure went to general education, and primary and secondary education within general education, a pattern which reflects the government's priorities. Despite this, the share of primary and secondary education in the state income and in the education budget has been more or less static. The combined public expenditure ratio (PER) and the social allocation ratio (SAR) for primary and secondary education has straggled along at around 2.4 per cent and 13.3 per cent for over 12 years. While the state government has, quite rightly, prioritized primary and secondary education in terms of resources, the overwhelmingly large share of revenue expenditure in total expenditure indicates that, in Karnataka, as in other southern states, not enough investment is being directed towards capital expenditure. The non-salary component is low and the expenditure on school infrastructure, curriculum development, instructional material, in-service teachers' training – in short, all the elements that contribute to improving the quality of education – is inadequate.

According to the table 3 female literacy rate had an of 68.13% in Karnataka basis in 2011 census. 2011 census while comparing literacy rate of female 11.26% increased in 2011 census is increased from 56.87 to 68.13.

Karnataka has been divided into four revenue divisions, 49 sub-divisions, 30 districts, 175 talukas, 745 hoblies/revenue

circles and 29406 villages. The state has recorded 6,11,30,704 population against 5,28,50,562 in 2001 that is an addition of 82,80,142 during the decade 2001 to 2011. This makes

15.66% growth rate during 2001 to 2011. The same was 17.5% during 1991 to 2001. This shows reduction in growth rate by 1.84% points.

**Table 3:** Literacy rate in Karnataka 2011

Year	Persons	Male	Female
1951	20.60	12.7	7.9
1961	25.40	36.20	14.20
1971	31.50	41.60	21.00
1981	38.50	48.80	27.70
1991	56.0	67.30	44.30
2001	66.64	76.10	56.87
2011	75.60	82.85	68.13

**Table 4:** District percentage of female literacy in Karnataka 2011

	Name of the district	Female literacy rate		Name of the district	Female literacy rate
1	Belgaum	64.74	16	Chikkamangalur	72.88
2	Baglaktot	58.55	17	Tumkur	66.45
3	Bijapur	56.54	18	Bangalore	84.80
4	Bidar	61.66	19	Mandya	62.10
5	Raichur	49.56	20	Hasan	68.30
6	Koppal	56.22	21	Dakshin Kannada	84.04
7	Gadag	65.29	22	Kodagu	77.91
8	Dharwad	73.57	23	Mysore	66.59
9	Uttar Kannada	78.21	24	Chambrajnagar	54.32
10	Haveri	70.65	25	Gulbarga	55.87
11	Bellary	58.28	26	Yadgir	41.31
12	Chitrdurga	66.05	27	Kolar	66.56
13	Davangere	69.39	28	Chikkaballapura	61.55
14	Shimoga	74.89	29	Bangalore Rural	70.73
15	Udupi	81.41	30	Ramanagara	61.30

**Source:** census of Karnataka 2011

According to the table 4 the district wise female literacy rate had on average of 68.1% in all Karnataka basis in 2011 census the high literacy rate is 84.80% in Bangalore district and least literacy rate is 41.31 in Yadgir district in 2011 census while comparing literacy rate of female 11.23% increased in 2011 census in increased from 56.87 to 68.10. Women's are growing well in the last ten years. Government of Karnataka has been taken various steps and plans especially for women in every movement.

**Conclusions**

Education of Women is the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. Only literacy can help women to understand the Indians constitutional and legislative provisions that are made to strengthen them. To bring more girls, especially from marginalized families of BPL, in main stream education, the government is providing a package of concessions in the form of providing free books, uniforms, boarding lodging, clothing for the hostilities, midday meals, scholarship, free cycles etc. Female literacy rate in India 7.9% in 1951 and 68.13 in 2011, female literacy rate had an of 68.13 in Karnataka basis in 2011 while comparing literacy rate of female 11.23% increased 2011 census is increased from 56.87 to 68.13.

Taking an overview of all the above aspects, we come to know that the transformation is very much needed, accepting

at the same time that its pace may be less than the desired pace. For giving this process a momentum, education is indispensable. Hence, if women's empowerment is to be effected, it can be carried out only through the medium of education. Hence, it is of foremost importance to raise the level of education amongst women.

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