

Women and Education

Resource Person

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Education is the gateway to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and under development. But mostly the children in under developed countries lack full time education and this situation gets worst when rural areas and females are concerned. According to the 2000 World Education report of United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 905 million men and women, almost a quarter of world's adult population are illiterate and about 587 million of them are women. Illiteracy in rural areas continues to be high in most regions, even in countries where urban women have made significant progress.

What is Education?

Education is the formal process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, customs and values from one generation to another e.g. instruction in school. Education means to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of students.

Types of Education

Formal

What students are taught from the syllabus.

Informal

Consists of the norms and values acquired from the school environment, such as doing what you are told and acceptance of a hierarchy. Sociologists often call informal education the "hidden curriculum"

Reasons for Discrimination in Education

Economic

Social

Cultural

All these reasons form an obstacle in the way of women's involvement in modernity and participation in development and decision-taking.

Importance and Need of Women Education

Researchers believe that if a nation expects to live in a modern, democratic state while remaining ignorant, it will never happen. Women education is some times more necessary than men education. Following are the some advantages that women education provides:

- Character Building
- For providing a better quality of life for human beings
- Essential for creating democracies
- Familial Benefits: Improved Finances, Better family life, Healthy children and other family members, maintaining peace in home and ultimately in society.
- Female's personal, social and economic Empowerment
- Personal grooming
- Respectful place in society
- Positive economic impact for family and for nation

- Social impact
- Protection from the Environment Pollution
Women, who comprise half of the world population, can play a better role in protection from pollution, because they are the ones who socialize their children and inculcate values and ethics their minds. Similarly, they can play a part in cleanliness and other preventive measures.
- Education contributes a lot to survival.

Educated mothers are better aware of disease prevention, significance of proper nutrition, importance of medical consultation, child development patterns and healthy life style as compared to uneducated mothers. The UN study which was carried out in 115 countries, makes clear that relationship between the woman's educational level and the probability of giving birth to a living child is stronger. Moreover, educated women are better aware of family planning methods which further improve mother-child health.

Educational Deprivation

Denial of the right to education, or inaccessibility of educational facility has deep rooted personal and social consequences. It blocks a number of economic block ways for economic and social empowerment. Educated women can better protect themselves and their children against health issues, violence and abuse. Illiteracy makes the female not to use their optimal potentials.

Barriers to Women Education

- **Early Marriages**
- **Cultural Practices**
- **Lack of Educational Facilities**
- **Feudal System**
- **Mind set or Stereotypes** against educated women e.g education makes women out of control
- **Insecurity** abuse, harassment, bullying
- **Poverty**
- **Far off Schools**
- **Lack of Achievement on Women's Part**

Education of Women in Pakistan

Pakistan and all the Muslim world, which unfortunately comprises, third world is among the countries which do not spend much on education and especially on female education. In Pakistan, women's education traditionally been confined to Nazra Quran, currently 60% of Pakistani women are even illiterate in Quran.

Our overall literacy rate is 36.8% for women out of which literacy rate for Urban women is 55% and 20.8% for rural women (UNESCO, 2002). Gender disparity (inequality) in Pakistan is much higher than other countries in Asia & world.

Pakistan is in the world's bottom ten countries for female enrolment in primary school, i-e 50% and at secondary level it reaches to 19.4%.The dropout rate is 56% before completing primary education. In universities women have lower enrolment and usually they go to humanities and social sciences. Dropout

rate at college is considerably high, 14% who enroll in 3rd year drop in 4th year because of marriage. Women's participation in technical and vocational education is also far behind men.

During the last five decades, there has been an expansion in the number of educational institutions and enrolments in Pakistan and in the rest of the world but this expansion has predominantly benefited males rather than females.

Pakistan Education Task Force

In October 2009, government of Pakistan, supported by the UK government, initiated the Taskforce to support the implementation of the new National Education Policy. The policy recognizes Pakistan's previous failures to implement policy and identifies "widening access and raising quality" as overarching priorities. The Taskforce signals a renewed commitment by the Government of Pakistan to deliver on policy pledges and to be held accountable for bringing about change. The Pakistan Education Task Force aims to be a rich resource of information for anyone interested in education in Pakistan.

Current Scenario of Women Education in World

Large proportions of women are either denied the right of education or do not have access to that. Out of the 875 million illiterate adults in the world, two third are females. Majority of 121 million children of the world, who are not in schools, are girls.

In 2002, 24 million girls were not going to school in Sub Saharan Africa. In Africa, south Asia, east Asia and the pacific 83% girls are out of schools. Illiteracy in most regions continues to be high in most regions, even in countries where urban women have made significant progress. The drop-out rates among girls are much higher than among boys.

In Mali 80 % girls never attend school and 60% of those who attend drop out.

In Brazil only 63 % of those who attend school reach second grade and 47 % reach fourth grade.

In America women are entering universities & colleges beyond their share of population but their participation in law, medicine, dental & other healthcare programs is lower than men

Women in Developed World (UNESCO Statistic, 1996)

Women in developed world have made significant progress in education since 2nd half of 20th century. British women were successful in getting Anti Discrimination Act passed which changed the patterns of girl education. In Australia, there seemed a gradual increase in girls' participation in school which leads to 55 % female participation in universities. In Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Germany & Switzerland 70 % girls enroll for tertiary education but 60 % of them enroll in social sciences and humanities.

Research consistently shows that economic growth is fueled when all children especially girls go to school. Girls' education is strongly associated with progress and economic productivity. It is estimated that a 1 percent increase in female education would increase the average level of GDP by 0.37 percent. Same is the case with child mortality rate. Giving girls one additional year of education would save as many as 60,000 children's lives. Depriving women from education will ultimately result in slower national growth and reduced income. Shortly, we can say that education saves and improves the lives of

girls and women. It allows them with skills to contribute to their personal life and to their family and nation.

The School Experience and Gender

Usually school experiences strengthen the gender stereotypes, unisex schools make it difficult for a girl child to adjust later on in co education schools. Usually teachers are not appropriate role model for children. In case of kindergarten level mostly teachers are female who are not appropriate role models for boys. Similarly brighter males go for occupations other than teaching which creates lack of role models even in higher education. Elementary school teachers usually promote compliance in children.

Gender Differences in Education

- Girls' grades are better than boys in reading and writing
- Girls usually don't opt physical sciences as major area of interest
- Although girls are comparable and get better grades in mathematics than boys but they are less interested in mathematics
- Girls usually prefer humanities and social sciences
- The dropout rates among girls are much higher than boys

Steps for Improving Status of Education

- Non formal education should be provided for women and children, where there is no education provision
- Education of women and children in prisons and in Dar-ul-Aman
- Primary schools should be upgraded to secondary schools so that girls of far off areas could have a better access to education
- Linkages of women's literacy programs to technical institutes
- Proper planning and implementation of educational plans.