



## CHAPTER - II

# HISTORY OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA : A BRIEF OUTLINE

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### **HISTORY OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA : A BRIEF OUTLINE**

The present study deals with "Women in higher education". Therefore, it would be logical to review progress in women's education through the ages. In view of this, an overview of progress in women's education is presented in this chapter.

The material is organised in three broad heads:

- A) Women's education during Vedic and Post – Vedic period.
- B) Women's education in Pre – independence British period.
- C) Progress of Women's education in independent India.

#### **A) WOMEN'S EDUCATION DURING VEDIC AND POST – VEDIC PERIOD.**

It is believed and also supported by works of scholars such as Altekar that, in the vedic period, women were enjoying far greater freedom in the field of education. They were allowed to study the Vedas and the performance of sacrifices. 'Upanayana', the vedic initiation of girls was as common as that of boys. According to A. S. Altekar, during

the 'vedic period, "in the higher sections of society the sacred initiation of girls was common and they used to go through a regular course of education. Some attained distinction in the realm of theology and philosophy and a considerable number of women used to follow the teaching career" ( 1973 : 340 ).

"The period of study usually lasted till the age of 16 and , not in frequently till the age of 24 , when the student got married and became a grhastha ( Mathur, 1973 : 1 ).

Altekar further notes that, "That women are like Sudras, ineligible for vedic studies is the view of a later age; in prehistoric times lady poets themselves were composing hymns, some of which were destined to be included even in the vedic Samhitas. According to the orthodox tradition itself as recorded in the Sarvanukramanika, there are as many as twenty women among the 'seers' or authors of Rigveda. Some of these may have been mythical personages, but internal evidence shows that Lopamudra, Visvavara, Sikata Nivavari and Ghosha, the authors of the Rigveda 1.179, V. 28, VIII. 91, IX, 81. 11-20 and X .39 and 40 respectively, were women in flesh and blood, who once lived in Hindu Society. The authors

of X. 145 and 159 are undoubtedly ladies, though it may be doubted whether their real names were Indrani and Sachi, as recorded by tradition. Among the authors and scholars to whose memory a daily tribute of respect is enjoined to be paid at the time of brahmayaina, a few ladies also are seen to figure; they are Sulabha Maitreyi, Vadava Prathiteyi, and Gargi Vachaknavi . These ladies must have made real contributions to the advance of scholarship; otherwise their names would not have been recommended for daily remembrance by posterity for all time to come" (Altekar, 1973 : 10 ).

Women students were divided into two classes, Brahnavadinis and Sadyodvdhas. The former were lifelong students of theology and philosophy; the latter used to prosecute their studies till their marriage at the age of 15 or 16. During the eight or nine years that were thus available to them for study, they used to learn by heart the vedic hymns prescribed for the daily and periodical prayers and for those ritual and sacraments in which they had to take an active part

after their marriage. Brhmavadinis used to aim at a very high excellence in scholarship (Altekar, 1973 : 10 – 11 ).

The admission of women to the Buddhist order gave a great impetus to the cause of female education among the ladies in commercial and aristocratic families. Like the Brahnavadinis in Brahmanical circles, several ladies in Buddhist families used to lead a life of Celibacy with the aim of understanding & following the eternal truths of religion and philosophy. Some of them like Sanghamitra went even to foreign countries like ceylon and became famous there as teachers of the holy scriptures. Among the authoresses of Therigatha, who were all believed to have obtained the salvation, 32 were unmarried women and 10 married ones. According to the Jain tradition, Jayanti, a daughter of king sahasranika of kausambi, remained unmarried and received ordination at the hand of mahavira after being convinced by him in discussion. Many educated women used to follow teaching career either out of love or out of necessity. Sanskrit language found it necessary to coin a special word in order to distinguish them from wives of teachers . The latter, who were

not necessarily scholars, were called Upadhyayanis, but women who were themselves teachers must have been fairly numerous in society; otherwise a new term would not have been coined to designate them (Ibid : 12-13 ).

<sup>During</sup> In the vedic age, education was mostly centred in the family; brothers, sisters and cousins probably studied together under the family elders. Subsequently, when specialisation became the order of the day, students had to leave their homes and often <sup>had</sup> to go to distant place<sup>s</sup> to study under celebrated teachers available, parents must have <sup>n</sup> naturally preferred to send their daughters to read under them. But the number of these could not have been very large. The percentage of girls receiving co-education was however not large. Usually, ordinary girls who did not go in for higher education were educated in their own families by their fathers, uncles or brothers or by local lady teachers. It has to be remembered that, down to the 4<sup>th</sup> century A. D. there were no Public schools even for boys. It is not easy to determine the extent of education among women from the Vedic to the sutra period ( down to C. 300 B. C . ) most of the girls in the well-to-do

families used to be given fair amount of education down to C. 300 C (Ibid : P. 13 - 15 ).

The cause of women's education suffered a good deal after C. 300 B. C. on account of the new fashion of child marriage that then began to come into vogue. By the beginning of the christian era prepuberty marriages became the order of the day. This meant a serious handicap to advanced studies, which could not be obviously finished the ages of 12 or 13, which was the new marriageable age. Even the initiation ritual (Upanayana Samskara), so necessary for endowing woman with the proper Aryan status, was first reduced to a mere formality and then dropped out altogether. This put an end to their vedic education. Rich families were naturally few in society. They had sufficient resources to enable them to employ special teachers. However, many other families could not afford to do this and their daughters, who had to be married at ~~this at about~~ the age of 10 or 11, could therefore hardly receive any education.

The cultivation of fine arts like music, dancing and painting was encouraged in the case of girls since very early

times. Musical recitation of the Sama hymns was originally the special function of ladies. In the post-vedic period also society went on encouraging music and dancing in the case of girls. Among the arts which ladies in cultured families were expected to cultivate, the Kamasutra assigns the most prominent place to dancing and music, both vocal and instrumental (1,3,16). Other arts which they were recommended to master were painting, gardening, garland-making, house decorations, etc. Girls in ruling families used to receive some military and administrative training also. Women guards of kings, referred to in dramas, belonged to this Class. They were usually experts in the use of the bow and the sword. South Indian inscriptions of the medieval period disclose the existence of many Kshatriya heroines defending their hearths and homes in times of danger. It is quite well known that Rajput princesses were adepts in the use of the Sword and the spear. They could lead the armies and direct the government in the hour of need. Kurmadevi, a queen of king Samarasi, took over the administration of her kingdom





on her husband's death and repulsed the attacks of kutub-ud-Din (Ibid : P. 19 - 22 ).

This tradition of giving military training to girls continued in the Maratha royal families, which were ruling over a considerable part of India during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Tarabai the founder of kolhapur state, used to lead her army and direct her government. The example of queen Lakshmibai of Jhansi, who excited the admiration even of her opponents by her remarkable bravery and sound generalship, is well known. The late princess Kamalabai Scindia of Gwalior, was an expert in all military exercises (Ibid : 22).

During this period female education received a great setback due to the deterioration of the religious status of women and the lowering of the marriage age ( Agrawal S. P. & Aggarwal J. C. 1992 : 20 ).

Rich and cultured families were as a rule ruined by the new political revolution; they were no longer in a position to make special arrangements for the education of their daughters. Some new Hindu families also no doubt rose to eminence with the rise of Islam, but their number was

generally small and they did not, as a rule, possess sufficient culture to induce them to take active steps for the fostering of education among the girls of their households. The daughters in Rauput, Nair and Zamindar families could read and write; the same was the case with Jain nuns, who were generally in a position to read their own scriptures. These, however, were exceptional cases. Society had a general prejudice against female education. It was believed that a girl taught to read and write would become a widow. Ordinarily only prostitutes and dancing girls could read and write. The decline of literacy among women was so marked and rapid that by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, hardly one woman in a hundred could read in Madras and Malwa. In the former province in 1826 A. D. only 1,023 girls were attending schools as against 1,57,664 boys. According to the then population of the presidency the percentage of girls receiving some kind of education was only 0.5. It may, therefore be stated that at the advent of the British rule female education had practically disappeared from Hindu community ( Alteker, 1973 : 23-24 ).

## **B ) WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN PRE – INDEPENDENCE ( BRITISH ) PERIOD**

When the Britishers established their rule in our country, a section of the female population was educated up to the modest requirements of a household life ( Mathur, 1973 : 18 ). The three main agencies of women's education in British India were the missionaries and philanthropic foreigners, the British Government and the Indian social reformers. Women's education was promoted in the initial stages by the missionaries. They made their contribution by opening Zenana schools and day schools since 1820. Among the Britishers and foreigners, one may mention David Hare, J. D. Bethune, Professor Patton, Margaret Cousins, Mary Carpenter and Annie Besant.

Indian social reformers were the main promoters of women's education in India. The noteworthy Indian social reformers were: Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshabchandra Sen, Justice M. G. Ranade, Jyotiba Phule, Maharshi Karve, Dayanand Saraswati and Vivekanand. The Indian reformers worked either independently or through

voluntary organizations. In 1850, Lord Dalhousie, the Governor noticed the growing disposition among the Indians to establish female schools. He issued orders: 'Government should give its frank and cardinal support to the education of Indian women'. Yet, the progress in the sphere of primary education for girls was not at all satisfactory. In 1881, there were only six girls for every hundred boys enrolled in primary schools( Barve, 1992 : 5-6 ).

“ In 1891 – 1892, over three lakh girls were enrolled in primary and secondary schools; yet only two percent of them were being educated at the secondary level. As girls reached puberty, they were rapidly withdrawn from the formal educational sphere, which meant among other things exposure to the external world. The privacy of the Zenana system was mooted to be eminently suited for those whose primary aim in life was to be that of home-maker. The Review of Education of 1886 pointed out that “Indians at large encourage or tolerate the education of their girls only up to an age and in standards at which it can do little good or, according to the



point of view, little harm” (Desai Neera, Maithreyi Krishnaraj, 1987 : 149).

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the newly emergent middle class became interested in the education of girls. With the establishment of the Bethune school in Calcutta in 1849, Indian initiative in the sphere of women’s education was formalised. In later years a number of schools started, and also the Zenana system of education flourished. “In 1882, the Education commission stressed the importance of Zenana education in a culture where women’s seclusion was still prevalent. In the Bengal presidency, by 1907, the number of girls being instructed through this system had gone up to 1431 recorded cases, as against 1200 at the end of the earlier quinquennium. Apart from the advantages of limiting women’s exposure to external influences, this method allowed for learning over a number of years which could often be continued – or even started – after marriage.”

During first half of the twentieth century, a little progress in women’s education was made. “Prior to 1921-22, the higher education of girls had made very slow progress. In

1921-22, the total number of girls enrolled at the university stage was only 1529. Of these, nearly two-thirds belonged to three small minority communities – Europeans and Anglo-Indians ( 460 ), Indian Christians ( 480 ) and Parsi ( 56 ). On the other hand, the Hindu numbered only ( 312 ) and the muslims ( 31 ). Naturally, the reasons for this slow advance of higher education of women were frequently discussed. A common viewpoint put forward at that time was that the system of collegiate education was designed mainly for boys and that it would have to be modified considerably to meet the requirements of girls and to attract them to higher education. It was out of this thinking that the separate university for women was established by Maharshi Karve in 1916. Short duration courses, Indian languages as medium of instruction and physical, psychological and social needs of women were the three main characteristics of this university” ( Barve, 1992 : 7 ).

Regarding the reasons for a slow advance in women's education in pre-independent India it has been pointed at that, the historical roots of prejudice against

women's education, and later, against its expansion in non-traditional areas, lay in a basic conviction that there was something special about women's nature which would be destroyed by excessive education. Access to various scientific theories from the west served to reinforce the belief in women's uniqueness, if not their interiority. The rudiments of reading, writing and a little arithmetic, hygiene, needlework, embroidery and the vernacular language as well as English were regarded as being more than adequate for girls. There were not only debates on the kind of syllabi and textbooks to which girls should have access, but also little unanimity about the amount of education to be given to them. While a number of the more radical social reformers argued for granting of education to girls, because they as much as boys needed to develop their total personalities, there was another forum which demanded educated daughters. Western education had created a new breed of young men who expected something more from their prospective brides" (Desai and Maithregi, 1987 : 160 ).

In 1921, education was transferred to the control of Indians under the system of Diarchy, and in 1937, provincial autonomy was introduced. This permitted greater Indian initiative in educational policy and facilitated implementation (Barve, 1992 : 8 ).

Some statistical data indicating progress of women's education in Pre-Independent India is presented in the next section.



**PROGRESS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN PRE -  
INDEPENDENT INDIA : STATISTICAL INDICATORS**

**TABLE 2.1  
PROGRESS OF ENROLMENT AMONG GIRLS.**

Sr.No	Year	Percentage of Girls Enrolment to Total Enrolment
1.	1881 – 82	5.6
2.	1886 – 87	7.8
3.	1891 – 92	9.2
4.	1896 – 97	9.5
5.	1901 – 02	11.8
6.	1906 – 07	12.2
7.	1911 – 12	14.3
8.	1916 – 17	16.0
9.	1921 – 22	17.3
10.	1926 – 27	16.7
11.	1931 – 32	19.6
12.	1936 – 37	22.3
13.	1941 – 42	23.2
14.	1946 – 47	23.4

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal ( Eds ), “Women’s  
education in India”, concept, New Delhi, 1992 P. 113 )

TABLE 2.2  
NUMBER OF GIRLS PER 100 BOYS.

Sr. No.	Year	Number of Girls Per 100 Boys
1.	1881 – 82	06
2.	1901 – 02	11
3.	1921 – 22	21
4.	1931 – 32	24
5.	1936 – 37	30
6.	1946 – 47	31

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C. ( Eds ),

“Women’s education in India”, concept, New Delhi, 1992 P.

113)



TABLE 2.3

## ENROLMENT OF GIRLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

r. No.	Year	Total	Girls
1.	1881 – 82	20,61,541	1,24,491
2.	1886 – 87	25,37,502	2,04,117
3.	1891 – 92	28,37,607	2,70,802
4.	1896 – 97	32,09,825	3,17,561
5.	1901 – 02	32,04,336	3,45,397
6.	1906 – 07	39,37,866	5,13,248
7.	1911 – 12	49,88,142	7,85,508
8.	1916 – 17	58,18,730	10,36,125
9.	1921 – 22	63,10,400	11,98,550
10.	1926 – 27	82,56,760	15,49,281
11.	1931 – 32	94,54,360	20,77,103
12.	1936 – 37	1,05,41,790	26,11,577
13.	1941 – 42	1,20,18,726	31,23,643
14.	1946 – 47	1,30,36,248	34,75,165

Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C. ( Eds ),

"Women's education in India", concept, New Delhi, 1992 P.

TABLE 2.4  
ENROLMENT OF GIRLS IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS.

Sr. No.	Year	Total	Girls
1.	1881 – 82	1,58,425	---
2.	1886 – 87	3,16,253	20,140
3.	1891 – 92	3,41,135	88,668
4.	1896 – 97	3,42,996	31,449
5.	1901 – 02	3,59,909	34,386
6.	1906 – 07	4,15,066	49,352
7.	1911 – 12	5,16,605	46,527
8.	1916 – 17	6,14,074	77,031
9.	1921 – 22	6,44,414	92,466
10.	1926 – 27	10,59,866	1,30,321
11.	1931 – 32	13,42,468	1,77,488
12.	1936 – 37	13,63,346	2,33,214
13.	1941 – 42	13,40,841	2,42,794
14.	1946 – 47	17,81,390	3,21,508

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C. ( Eds ),

“Women’s education in India”, concept, New Delhi, 1992 P.

114 )

TABLE 2.5

## ENROLMENT OF GIRLS IN HIGH SCHOOLS.

Sr. No.	Year	Total	Girls
1.	1881 – 82	52,937	2,054
2.	1886 – 87	1,02,159	5,574
3.	1891 – 92	1,32,159	6,574
4.	1896 – 97	1,92,159	8,574
5.	1901 – 02	2,62,859	10,309
6.	1906 – 07	2,98,276	11,885
7.	1911 – 12	4,07,765	16,884
8.	1916 – 17	5,72,261	24,948
9.	1921 – 22	5,94,910	36,698
10.	1926 – 27	7,94,210	54,826
11.	1931 – 32	9,55,051	92,538
12.	1936 – 37	11,33,488	1,34,290
13.	1941 – 42	13,33,948	1,67,539
14.	1946 – 47	21,93,439	2,80,772

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C. ( Eds ),

“Women’s education in India”, concept, New Delhi, 1992 P.

114 )

**13813**

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TABLE 2.6  
ENROLMENT OF GIRLS IN TECHNICAL AND  
INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

Sr.No.	Year	Total	Girls
1.	1881 – 82	520	--
2.	1886 – 87	2,582	--
3.	1891 – 92	4,902	--
4.	1896 – 97	4,494	--
5.	1901 – 02	6,152	167
6.	1906 – 07	7,940	266
7.	1911 – 12	12,990	130
8.	1916 – 17	13,580	2,677
9.	1921 – 22	15,359	2,770
10.	1926 – 27	26,172	4,121
11.	1931 – 32	28,771	5,050
12.	1936 – 37	32,286	6,345
13.	1941 – 42	37,189	8,103
14.	1946 – 47	36,048	11,004

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C. ( Eds ),

“Women’s education in India”, concept, New Delhi, 1992 P.

115 )

TABLE 2.7

## ENROLMENT OF GIRLS IN PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES.

Sr. No.	Year	Total	Girls
1.	1881 – 82	--	--
2.	1886 – 87	2,411	27
3.	1891 – 92	3,292	31
4.	1896 – 97	4,363	43
5.	1901 – 02	5,358	87
6.	1906 – 07	6,250	113
7.	1911 – 12	6,636	90
8.	1916 – 17	11,504	180
9.	1921 – 22	13,662	266
10.	1926 – 27	17,951	345
11.	1931 – 32	18,483	579
12.	1936 – 37	21,226	955
13.	1941 – 42	27,025	1,625
14.	1946 – 47	44,437	2,903

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C. ( Eds ),

“Women’s education in India”, concept, New Delhi, 1992 P.

115 )

TABLE 2.8  
ENROLMENT OF GIRLS AND BOYS IN ARTS AND  
SCIENCE COLLEGES

Sr. No.	Year	Total	Boys	Girls
1.	1881 – 82	7,205	7,199	6
2.	1886 – 87	8,127	8,119	8
3.	1891 – 92	12,985	12,940	45
4.	1896 – 97	14,420	14,333	87
5.	1901 – 02	17,651	17,544	177
6.	1906 – 07	18,918	18,758	160
7.	1911 – 12	29,648	29,369	279
8.	1916 – 17	47,135	47,293	842
9.	1921 – 22	45,933	44,670	1,263
10.	1926 – 27	71,968	70,035	1,933
11.	1931 – 32	81,010	79,644	2,966
12.	1936 – 37	97,554	91,513	6,041
13.	1941 – 42	1,32,129	1,20,451	11,778
14.	1946 – 47	2,12,306	1,89,002	23,304

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C. ( Eds ),

“Women’s education in India”, concept, New Delhi, 1992 P.

115 )



The table 2.1 shows that, girls enrolment increased more or less steadily during the period 1881 – 82 to 1941 – 42. However, between 1941 – 42 and 1946 – 47 it registered very low increase.

The table 2.2 shows that, Number of girls per 100 Boys were 06 in the year 1881 – 82 but it has jumped up to 11 in the year 1901 – 02. The Number of girls per 100 Boys increased more or less steadily during the period 1901 – 02 to 1936 – 37, but in the year 1936 – 37 to 1946 – 47 it has been not more increased the number of Girls per 100 Boys.

The table 2.3 shows that, girls enrolment increased more or less steadily during the period 1881 – 82 to 1946 – 47. However, between 1926 – 27 it registered very low increase.

The table 2.4 shows that, the year 1881 – 82 the enrolment of girls in middle schools to the total enrolment were not available. The enrolment of girls in middle schools to the total enrolment increased more or less steadily during the period 1886 – 87 to 1946 – 47. However, between 1891 – 92 it registered very high increase.

The table 2.5 shows that, the enrolment of girls in high schools to the total enrolment increased more or less steadily during the period 1881 – 82 to 1946 – 47. However, between 1901 – 02 and 1906 - 07 it registered very low increase.

The table 2.6 shows that, the enrolment of girls in technical and Industrial Schools to the total enrolment increased more or less steadily during the period 1901 – 02 to 1946 – 47. However, between 1911 – 12 it registered very low increase, and the year 1881 – 82 to 1896 – 97 information were not available.

The table 2.7 shows that, the enrolment of girls in Professional Colleges to the total increased more or less steadily during the period 1886 – 87 to 1946 – 47. However, between 1891 – 92 and 1896 – 97 it registered very low increase. In the year 1881 – 82 information were not available.

The table 2.8 shows that, the enrolment of girls in Arts and Science Colleges to the total enrolment increased more or less steadily during the period 1881 – 87 to 1946 – 47.

*Handwritten notes:*  
The enrolment of girls in Arts and Science Colleges to the total enrolment increased more or less steadily during the period 1881 – 87 to 1946 – 47.

However, between 1881 – 82, 1886 – 87, 1891 – 92, 1896 – 97, and 1906 – 07, 1911 - 12 it registered very low increase.

### **C ) PROGRESS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDEPENDENT INDIA**

The attainment of independence marked a watershed in the history of women's education in India. The importance of bringing about improvement in the position of women was recognised. The idea of treating women as equals and providing them social justice had its reflection in the constitution. The constitution of India guaranteed equality to everyone irrespective of sex, caste and religion.

In independent India women's education received a special attention. Serious efforts were made to encourage education for women. As a result, women's education expanded fairly rapidly in the post-independence period ( Shah Beena, University News, 38 ( 34 ), August 21, 2000 ).

The list of priorities in the Government of India's programme of education development include;

- a) Provision of universal, free and compulsory basic education for all children of school age;

- b) Provision of social [adult] education to eradicate illiteracy;
  - c) Improvement and expansion of technical education in order to provide trained personnel for industrial and technical development; and
  - d) Re-Organization and improvement of university education in the light of the new national needs and aspirations
- (Bhatt B. D. and Sharma S.R. , 1992 : 95)

### **Recommendations Of Various Committees Commissions And Policy Documents On Women's Education : A Brief Review**

The problem of women's education has been examined by a number of committees. An attempt has been made in this section to review important recommendations of these regarding women's education committees, commissions and Documents.

- i) University Education Commission. ( 1948 – 49 )
- ii) Secondary Education Commission. ( 1952 – 53 )
- iii) The National Committee on women's Education under the chairmanship of smt. Durgabai Deshmukh ( 1959);
- iv) The committee appointed by National council for women's Education on the Differentiation of curricula for Boys

and Girls under the chairmanship of smt. Hansa Mehta (1964);

- v) Committee to look into the causes for lack of Public support particularly in rural areas for girls education and to enlist public co – operation. ( 1963 )
- vi) Education Commission. ( 1964 – 66 )
- vii) Committee on the status of women. ( 1971 – 74 )
- viii) National Policy on Education. ( 1986 )
- ix) National Perspective plan for women's Education. ( 1988 to 2000 A.D. )

Recommendations of Various Commissions for the Women's Education are follows.

#### **I) University Education Commission, ( 1948 – 49 )**

The University Education Commission noted the importance of Women's education and stated that, "There cannot be an educated people without educated women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, that opportunity should be given to women, for then it would most surely be passed on to the next generation" ( Agerwal S. P. & Agerwal J. C. 1992 : 29 ).

The commission observed, "The greatest profession of woman is, and probably will continue to be, that of home maker. Yet her world should not be limited to that one relationship. There are varied conditions which may properly lead a woman to seek fulfillment of her life in other fields.....sometimes husband and wife wish to share a common occupation through the years. Sometimes with woman, as with men the needs of home and family leave time for useful and interesting occupations. For all such circumstances educational opportunities should be available. One of the desirable development of Indian life and education for both men and women is a great increase in the kinds of work open to them."

**Recommendations :**

- 1) Ordinary amenities and decencies of life should be provided for women in colleges originally planned for men, but to which women are being admitted in increasing numbers.
- 2) There should be no curtailment in educational opportunities for women, but rather a great increase;

- 3) There should be intelligent educational guidance, by qualified men and women to help women to get a clearer view of their real educational interest, to the end that they shall not try to imitate men, but shall desire as good education as men get. Women's and men's education should have many elements in common, but should not in general be identical in all respects, as is usually the case today ;
- 4) Women students in general should be helped to see their normal places in a normal society, both as citizens and as women and to prepare for it, and college programmes should be so designed that it will be possible for them to do so;
- 5) Through educational counsel and by example the prevailing prejudices against study of home economics and home management should be overcome ;
- 6) Standards of courtesy and social responsibility should be emphasised on the part of men in mixed colleges .
- 7) Where new colleges are established to serve both men and women students, they should be truly co-educational institutions, with as much thought and consideration given

to the life need of women as to those of men . Except as such colleges come into existence there are no valid criteria for comparing segregated education with co-education .

- 8) Women teachers should be paid the same salaries as men teachers for equal work ( Ibid : 29 - 32 ).

## **II) Secondary education commission [1952 – 53]**

The commission felt that, The following are some of the notable observations of this commission. there is no special justification to deal with women's education separately. Every type of education open to men should also be open to women. These commission noted that, the women have found admission to practically all the faculties which a generation ago would have been considered as unsuitable for them or beyond their easy reach . It is a matter of gratification that many women have joined the faculties of engineering, agriculture, medicine, veterinary, science, commerce, Law and teaching as well as the arts and science and have taken to research and some have made their mark in it .

The commission also pointed out that, India greatly needs the services of women outside the four walls of their



homes and that its backwardness in the last century was due in no small degree to the low place in society accorded to women. The commission insisted that, women must be given exactly the same education as men, so that they may <sup>to</sup> compete with them on equal terms at school and college as well as in the various professions and services ( Ibid : 33 - 34 ).

The commission observed that there was <sup>a</sup> general agreement that for girls as well as for boys education needs to be more closely connected with the home and the community... It should do much more to prepare them for the part they will have to play later as parents and as citizens, i.e. the claim of family life should be considered as important as those of public life. For this reason, it was urged that the teaching of Home science in Girls' school, should be radically improved not necessarily with the idea that women's place is restricted to the home, but because it is essential that she should be educated to fulfil her two-fold duty to family and society ... An educated girl who cannot run her home smoothly and efficiently within her resources can make no worthwhile contribution to the happiness and the well-being of

her family or to raising the social standards in her country. The primary and the university stages are concerned, co-education was generally favoured, but in regard to education at the secondary stage there was considerable divergence of opinion. Many maintained that, during the period of adolescence, it is desirable that the education of boys and girls should be carried on in separate institutions. In co-education as well as mixed schools there should be provision for special co-curricular activities suited to girls, in addition to those activities in which they participate side with the boys – e.g. Girl Guiding, Home Nursing, Needle work, etc( Ibid : 34 - 36 ).

### **III ) National committee on women's Education. [1958 – 59 ]**

The first committee on women's education situation appointed by the Govt. of India in 1958 was the National committee on women's Education under the chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh. It covered almost all aspects of women's education except higher education. In its report, which was submitted in 1959, the committee emphasized the need for special care and support to women's education within the prevailing socio-cultural environment. It concluded that the

education of girls and women's had been sadly neglected in the past and consequently there was a wide disparity in the education of men and women and boys and girls at all levels and stages of education.

The main purpose of the committee was to suggest special measures "to make up the leeway" in women's education at all levels including professional and vocational education for the adult women (Brave, 1992 : 14 ).

**Special Recommendations :**

1.) The education of women should be regarded as a major and a special problem in education for a good many years to come and a bold and determined effort should be made to face its difficulties and magnitude and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible. The funds required for the purpose should be considered to be the first charge on the sums set aside for the development of education.

2.) Steps should be taken to constitute as early as possible a

National council for the Education of Girls and women.

- 3.) The problem of the education of women is so vital and of such great national significance that it is absolutely necessary for the center to assume more responsibility for its rapid development .
- 4.) The state governments should establish state councils for the education of girls and women .
- 5.) Every state should be required to prepare comprehensive development plans for the education of girls and women in its area.
- 6.) It is also necessary to enlist the co-operation of all semi – official organisations, local bodies voluntary oraganisations, Teachers' organisations, and members of the public to assist in the promotion of the education of girls and women .
- 7.) The planning commission should set up a permanent machinery to estimate, as accurately as possible, requirement<sup>s</sup> of the plans from time to time and make the results of its studies available to government and the public ( Agerwal S. P. & Aggarwal J. C. 1992 : 38 ) .

#### **IV ) Committee on Differentiation of curricular for boys and girls[1961]**

The committee was appointed by the national council for the women's education on the differentiation of curricular for the boys and girls under the chairmanship of smt. Hunsu Mehta [1964]. The foremost aim of this committee was to examine comprehensively the problem of curricular for girls at all stages of education ( Barve, 1992 : 10 - 16 ).

##### **Terms of reference**

- 1) To examine the present curricular of school education and to determine the extent to which they take care of the individual and social need of women in the prevailing circumstances of the country.
- 2) To suggest necessary reforms without, at the same time, causing an upheaval in the general pattern of education .
- 3)'In view of the need of trained women personnel for development projects under social service, to consider the need for providing additional diversified courses of a pre-vocational nature, apart from fine arts and home science, at the secondary stage .

4) To review the content of courses under the group "Fine Arts" and "Home Science" and to suggest such modifications as are necessary to enable women to take up some gainful employment .

5) To examine the types of suitable occupations for which training should be given in the polytechnics and junior technical schools that are being set up for girls ( Agrawal S. P. & Aggarwal J. C., 1992 : 42 ).

**The committee recommended the adoption of the following measures :**

1) The existing gap between the education of boys and girls should be rapidly bridged .

2) Intensive efforts should be made to educate the public regarding the scientific findings about sex differences and to develop proper attitudes in each sex towards the other.

In particular the public mind will have to be disabused of all traditional concepts of the physical and intellectual inferiority of women. The public in general and the teachers in particular will have to be made to realise that it is unscientific to divide tasks and subjects on the basis of sex

and to regard some of them as 'masculine' and others as 'feminine' Similarly, the fact that the ~~So~~ <sup>Two</sup> called psychological differences between the two sexes arise, not out of sex but out of social conditions, ~~will~~ <sup>Two</sup> have to be widely published and people will have to be made to realise that stereo-type 'masculine' and 'feminine' personalities do more harm than good.

### **Co – education**

- 1) Co-education should be adopted as the general pattern at the elementary stage.
- 2) At the secondary and collegiate stages, there should be full freedom to the management<sup>s</sup> and parents either to evoke common institution or to establish separate ones for girls.
- 3) Steps should be taken to appoint women teachers in all education institution at the secondary and university stages, which are ordinarily means for boys. Similarly, some men teachers should also be appointed in separate secondary schools and colleges for girls ( Ibid : 42 ).

### **General Curricular Reform**

- 1) No differentiation should be made in the curricular for boys and girls at the primary stage.
- 2) The provision should be made for "Intensive vocational courses which will begin after the middle school stage and be spread over one to three years.... They should be sufficiently diversified to meet the requirements of girls"

( Barve, 1992 : 17-18 ).

### **V) Committee to look into the causes for lack of Public support particularly in rural areas for girls education and to enlist public co-operation ( 1963 )**

The committee appointed under the chairmanship of Shri. M. Bhaktavatsalam, which studied the causes for lack of public support particularly in rural areas for girls education in six states ( Barve, 1992 :10 ).

The State councils for women's Education are the most suitable agencies for providing the organisation and leadership for mobilising community effort. They should function as a part of the network of which the District councils at the district level, and the Mahila Mandals and similar voluntary



bodies at the town and village levels would be strong and active links. These agencies should look upon mobilising of community effort and educating public opinion to promote girls education as their main and primary responsibility. They should aim at building up in villages and towns teams of voluntary workers, men and women, who are willing to devote themselves to this cause and work actively for its promotion ( Agrawal S. P. & Aggarwal J. C., 1992 ; 50 ).

The committee expressed the view that the state should create public opinion in favour of girls education through :

- 1) School improvement conferences ;
- 2) Seminars ;
- 3) Radio talks, audio-visuals aids and distribution of informative pamphlets and brochures ;
- 4) Enrolment drives, generally in June and special additional drives for girls education during Dussehra; and
- 5) Assisting voluntary, welfare and other organisations, private individuals and associations engaged in the field of education of girls and women .

## VI) Education commission (1964-66)

62

The Education commission ( 1964-66 ) fully endorsed the recommendations of the earlier committees which had examined the problem of women's education .

The Commission observed :

“ In the modern world, the role of the women goes much beyond the home and the bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with man, the responsibility for the development of society in all its aspects. This is the direction in which we shall have to move. In the struggle for freedom, Indian women fought side by side with men. This equal partnership will have to continue in the fight against hunger, poverty, ignorance and ill-health”  
(Agrawal S. P. & J. C. Aggarwal 1992 : 57 ).

The commission invited special attention to the following recommendation of the National committee on women's Education :

- 1) The education of women should be regarded as a major program in education for some years to come and a bold and determined effort should be made to face the

difficulties involved and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible.

2) Special schemes should be prepared for this purpose and the funds requirement for them should be provided on a priority basis.

3) Both at the center and in the states, there should be a special machinery to look towards the education of girls and women. It should bring together officials and non-official in the planning and implementation of programs for women's education.

In addition, it will also be necessary to give adequate attention to the education of girls at all stages and in all sectors.

The role of women outside the home has become an important feature of the social and economic life of the country and, in the years to come, this will become still more significant. From this point of view, greater attention will have to be paid to the problems of training and development of women. Opportunities for part-time employment which would enable women to look after their homes and to have a

career outside, will have to be largely expanded. As the age of marriage continues to rise, full-time employment will have to be provided for almost all young and married women. As the programme of family planning develops, elder women whose children have grown up, will also need employment opportunities. Teaching, nursing and social service are well-recognised areas where women can have a useful role to play. In addition, several new avenues will have to be opened out to them ( Ibid : 58-59 ).

Thus the education commission emphasized the need to open up new avenues for educated women.

#### **VII) Committee on the status of women [1971-74]**

Committee on the status of women in India, 1974, had also considered the development of education among women and determined the factors responsible for slow progress in some areas and had suggested remedial measures.

Some of the salient recommendation of the committee on the education of girls and women were as follows :

- 1) Wherever separate school / colleges for girls are provided, it has to be ensured that they maintain required standards in

regard to the quality of staff, provision of the facilities, relevant course and co-curricular activities.

- 2) In class XI –XII girls should have full opportunity to choose vocational and technical courses according to local conditions, needs and aptitudes .
- 3) There should be provision of incentive to prevent drop-outs.
- 4) Free education for all girls upto the end of secondary stage.
- 5) Provision of more need-cum-merit scholarship and hostel facilities for girls.
- 6) Development of more employment and guidance services for women entering higher education.

The committee had also recommended some new trends like part time education, multiple entry system, provision of additional space for the younger brother and sisters etc, ( Brave , 1992 :12 ).

Part IV of the Report of the committee entitled 'education for equality' devotes two paragraphs to 'Education for women's Equality :

“Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well conceived edge in favour of women ( The national educational system will play a possible, interventionist role in the empowerment of women) It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curriculum, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision makers and administrators and the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineering. Women’s studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institution encouraged to take up active programmes to further women’s development”.

“The removal of women’s illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets, and effective monitoring. ( Major emphasis will be laid on women’s participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels.) The policy of non-discrimination will be

pursued vigorously to eliminate sex Stereo-typing, in vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations as well as in existing and emergent technologies" ( Agrawal S. P. & Aggarwal J. C. 1992 : 86-87 ).

## **VII ) National Perspective Plan for Women's Education**

**[ 1988 to 2000 A. D. ]**

National Perspective Plan for women's Education 1988 to 2000 A. D. was prepared by a 14-member group, headed by Mrs. Margaret Alva, the then Minister of state for women, youth Affairs and sport ( Agrawal S. P. & Aggarwal J. C. 1992 : 99 )

In view of the social and cultural handicaps that have operated against women's education and taking account of the multiple roles that women are required to play, the plan emphasized need for adopting a set of objective specific to women's education is imperative. The objectives to be achieved by 2000 A. D. in regard to women's education noted in the plan are :

- 1) Elimination of illiteracy, universalisation of elementary education and minimization of the dropout rate in the age group 6–14 years and stagnation to negligible proportions .
- 2) Ensuring opportunities to all women for access to appropriate level, nature and quality of education and also the wherewithal for success comparable with men.
- 3) Substantial vocationalization and diversification of secondary education so as to provide a wide scope for employment and economic independent of women .
- 4) Making education an effective means for women's equality by,
  - a) Addressing ourselves to the constraints that prevent women from participating in the educational process;
  - b) Eliminating the existing sexist bias in the system ;
  - c) Making necessary intervention in the content and process of education to inculcate positive and egalitarian attitudes;
  - d) Ensuring that teachers perceive this as one of their essential roles.



- 5) Providing non-formal and part-time courses to women to enable them to acquire knowledge and skills for their social, cultural and economic advancement .
- 6), Impetus to enrol in various professional degree courses so as to increase their number <sup>^</sup> in medicine, teaching, engineering and other fields substantially .
- 7) Creating new system of accountability particularly in respect of the basic educational services, to the local community, inter alia, by active involvement of women ( Ibid : 99-102 ).

Thus the Govt. of India is trying its level best to identify and solve the problems in the field of education of girls and women. Yet, there are many gaps between the objectives set and actual achievements. We, even after 50 years of independence, have not been able to eliminate illiteracy. Though this is true, it does not mean that we have not made any progress in the field of education. The available data indicate improvement in the literacy rates and enrolment pattern at all levels and stages. Some statistical data indicating

progress of women's education in post-independent India are presented in the next section.

### **PROGRESS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDEPENDENT INDIA : STATISTICAL INDICATORS**

**TABLE 2.9**

**INDEPENDENT INDIA WOMEN LITERACY RATES IN  
INDIA (1951 TO 1991)**

Sr. No.	Year	Persons	Males	Females
1.	1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
2.	1961	28.31	40.40	15.34
3.	1971	34.45	45.95	21.97
4.	1981	43.56	56.37	29.75
5.	1991	52.11	63.86	39.42

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Aggarwal J. C., " Second  
Historical survey of Women's education in India 1988-1994,"  
New Delhi, 1996 P. 81 )

TABLE 2.10  
ENROLMENT OF GIRLS IN VARIOUS CLASSES AND  
AGE GROUPS 1950-51 TO 1991-92

Enrolment in ClassesAge-Group	1950-51	1991-92	Increase
<b>1. Classes 1 to V</b> (age-group.6to 11)			
(a)Total enrolment	191.5	1015.8	5.3 times
(b)Girls enrolment	53.8	423.6	7.8
(c)Boys enrolment	137.7	592.2	4.3
<b>2. Classes VI to VIII</b> (agegroup.11to14)			
(a)Total enrolment	31.3	344.5	11.0
(b)Girls enrolment	5.4	130.0	24.0
(c)Boys enrolment	25.9	214.3	8.3
<b>3.ClassesI to VIII</b> (age-group.6to 14)			
(a)Total enrolment	222.8	1360.3	6.0
(b)Girls enrolment	59.2	553.6	9.3
(c)Boys enrolment	163.6	806.7	5.0

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Aggarwal J. C., "Second  
Historical survey of Women's education in India 1988-1994",  
New Delhi, 1996 P. 83 )

TABLE 2.11  
 PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS ENROLMENT TO TOTAL  
 ENROLMENT AT THE PRIMARY STAGES  
 ( CLASSES I TO V) 1950-51 TO 1991-92

Sr. No.	Year	Girls Enrolment (In Lakhs )	Total Enrolment ( In Lakhs )	% of Girls Enrolment to Total Enrolment
1.	1950-51	54	192	28.12
2.	1960-61	114	350	32.57
3.	1970-71	213	570	37.36
4.	1980-81	285	738	38.61
5.	1990-91	410	991	41.37
6.	1991-92	424	1016	41.73

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Aggarwal J. C., "Second Historical survey of Women's education in India, 1988-1994", New Delhi, 1996 P. 84 )

TABLE 2.12  
 PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS ENROLMENT TO TOTAL  
 ENROLMENT AT THE MIDDLE UPPER STAGE :  
 CLASSES. VI TO VIII . 1950 – 51 TO 1991 – 92.

Sr. No.	Year	Girls Enrolment (In Lakhs )	Total Enrolment ( In Lakhs )	% of Gifls Enrolment to Total Enrolment
1.	1950-51	05	31	16.12
2.	1960-61	16	67	23.88
3.	1970-71	39	133	29.32
4.	1980-81	68	207	32.85
5.	1990-91	124	333	37.23
6.	1991-92	130	344	37.79

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Aggarwal J. C., "Second  
 Historical survey of Women's education in India 1988-1994",  
 New Delhi, 1996 P. 84 )

TABLE 2.13

PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS ENROLMENT TO TOTAL  
ENROLMENT AT THE HIGH HR. SEC. STAGE : CLASSES.  
IX TO XII . (1950 – 51 TO 1991 – 92)

Sr. No.	Year	Girls Enrolment (In Lakhs )	Total Enrolment ( In Lakhs )	% of Gifls Enrolment to Total Enrolment
1.	1950-51	03	15	13.33
2.	1960-61	07	34	20.58
3.	1970-71	19	76	25.00
4.	1980-81	35	119	29.41
5.	1990-91	69	209	33.01
6.	1991-92	70	212	33.01

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C. Second Historical  
survey of Women's education in India 1988-1994, New Delhi,  
1996 P. 84 )

TABLE 2.14  
ENROLMENT OF WOMEN AND THEIR NUMBER PER  
HUNDRED MEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

Sr. No.	Years	Total Women Enrolment (In Thousands)	Number of Women Per hundred Men
1.	1950 – 51	40	14
2.	1955 – 56	84	17
3.	1960 – 61	150	23
4.	1965 – 66	271	24
5.	1975 – 76	595	33
6.	1981 – 82	817	38
7.	1982 – 83	880	39
8.	1983 – 84	940	40
9.	1984 – 85	992	41
10.	1985 – 86	1067	42
11.	1986 – 87	1149	44
12.	1987 – 88	1224	46
13.	1988 – 89	1292	46
14.	1989 – 90	1367	47
15.	1990 – 91	1437	48
16.	1991 - 92	1510	49

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Aggarwal J. C., “Second  
Historical survey of Women’s education in India 1988-1994”,  
New Delhi, 1996 P. 89 )

TABLE 2.15

## PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN ENROLMENT TO TOTAL

## ENROLMENT IN DIFFERENT CLASSES.

( 1986 – 87 TO 1990 – 91)

Sr. No.	Class	1956-57	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
1	Ph.D/ D.Sc./ M.Phil.	33.18	33.14	33.26	32.82	26.17
2	M.A.	37.56	37.97	37.00	37.95	37.91
3	M.Sc.	33.25	32.51	33.28	33.39	33.86
4	M.Com.	14.68	15.52	18.43	18.30	18.92
5	B.A/ B.A.(Hons)	38.99	39.54	39.18	33.48	40.10
6	B.Sc./ B.Sc. (Hons )	30.93	30.99	31.87	36.51	37.12
7	B.Com./ B.Com. ( Hons )	21.97	22.37	22.45	23.74	24.12
8	B.E./B.R./ Eng / B.Arch	12.49	7.9	7.98	8.27	10.89
9	B.Ed/ B.T.	43.45	49.28	44.42	43.77	44.20
10	M.B.B.S.	32.15	32.59	32.72	34.17	54.25
11	Teacher Traning Schools	49.41	48.70	48.58	47.18	49.21
12	Polytechni- c Institutes	17.16	14.86	11.22	11.66	11.55
13	Technical, Industrial	24.21	-----	22.98	21.16	21.24



	Arts and Craft Schools					
14	Intermediate / Junior Colleges	23.69	24.48	25.70	26.28	26.63
15	Per-Degree	43.99	42.27	43.71	46.19	46.34
16	Per-university (Two-Year Course)	52.37	28.11	24.5	24.03	23.66
17	Hr.Second-ery (10+2) (New-Pattern)	48.80	34.19	34.13	34.26	34.41
18	Hr.Second-ery (Old Pattern)	20.33	-----	-----	-----	-----
19	Post Basis (IX – X )	3.87	31.42	32.27	32.53	33.43
20	Middle Senior Basic Junior Basic (Classes IX – VI)	35.56	35.78	36.15	36.72	37.37
21	Primary (Class I-IV)	40.16	40.46	41.35	40.67	41.18

( Source : Agrawal S. P. and Agrawal J. C., "Second Historical survey of Women's education in India 1988-1994", New Delhi, 1996 P. 95 )

*data have inserted in the table*  
*for appropriate place* 78  
The table 2.9 shows that, the female literacy rates has steadily increased from the year 1951 to 1991. In the year 1951 women literacy percentage was 8.86. While the year 1991 it has increased upto 39.42%.

The Table 2.10 shows that, girls enrolment in classes 1 to V had increased 7.8 times during five decades (1951 to 1991), in classes VI to VIII by 24.0 times and in classes I to VIII taken together it increased by 9.3 times.

The table 2.11 shows that the percentage of girls enrolment to total enrolment at the primary stages ( Classes I to V ) has increased steadily during the period 1950 – 51 to 1991 – 92.

The table 2.12 shows that the percentage of girls enrolment to total enrolment at the middle upper stages (Classes VI to VIII) has increased steadily during the period 1950 – 51 to 1991 – 92.

Table 2.13 the data presented in the , shows that the percentage of girls enrolment to total enrolment at the High Hr. Sec. stages (Classes IX to XII ) has increased steadily

during the period 1950 – 51 to 1991 – 92. However, between 1990-91 and 1991-92 it registered very low increase.

The data in the table 2.14 clearly shows that during 1950-51 and 1991-92 the number of women enroled per hundred men has steadily increased from 14 in 1950-51 upto 49 in 1991-92.

The data presented in the table 2.15 shows that in all classes and levels the percentage of women's enrolment to the total enrolments has increased during 56.57 to the 1990-91 but the rate of progress has remained low.

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