UNIT 10 :WOMEN AND EDUCATION

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10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this chapter you will be able to

- understand curriculum content, drop outs and negative capability in education
- understand values in education and vocational education
- understand recent trends in women's education
- know the Committees and commissions on education
- know about adult literacy and non-formal education for women's developement

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Until the middle of nineteenth century, girls and women were educated only for traditional household works. Now, as time passed on the society is witnessing changes in the role-status of women. There is greater emphasis

on education of girls and women in the same way as boys and men are educated. In modern times, there is an effort on the part of parents to fulfill the aspiration of their children without gender parity.The educated women insist on exercising their civil, social, political and economic rights. This will help in improving the overall condition of women in the society. With 65.46% female literacy rate as per the 2011 census, women's education in India is still a point of discussion. It is still below the world average of 79.7%. Schooling has become a norm now and every child by the age of 3 starts some form of schooling. But in many rural areas, if the child is a girl then there are varied hindrances to her access to education in India. Women's education in India is still perceived as an unnecessary and inefficient indulgence in many parts. While Kerala tops when it comes for women education with 92.07% female literacy (and 94.00% overall literacy), Bihar scores much lesser with 51.50% of female literacy (and 61.80% overall literacy).

Women's education refers to all form of education that aims at improving the knowledge, and skill of women and girls. It includes general education as well as higher education at schools and colleges, vocational and technical education, professional education, health education, etc. Women education encompasses both literary and non-literary education. Women can contribute to society if they are educated well. Educated women are capable of bringing socio-economic changes. The constitution of almost all democratic countries, including India, guarantees equal rights to both men and women.Primary education is now a fundamental right under the Constitution. When a woman (or a girl) is ensured of her rights, the society at large is ensured of its sustainability.Realizing the importance of women education, the government and many non-government organizations from time to time took a lot of projects to spread women education. Literacy programs are being taken to empower women.

10.3 CURRICULUM CONTENT

Gender is a form of social construct that impacts attitudes, roles, responsibilities and behavior patterns of boys and girls, men and women in

all societies. Gender concerns in education have also been reflected in curriculum frameworks within school system developed by apex national organization like National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).In this regard curriculum frameworks of 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005 have made specific efforts to focus attention on gender disparities in education. The focus has been from concern to substantial inclusion.While a lot of efforts have been made on integrating gender concerns in education; forces of globalization,liberalization and expansion in information technology have once again made it mandatory for revisiting gender concerns in education in a proactive manner as an important developmental agenda.

There is now an emerging need to reflect and focus in a proactive manner on transforming attitudes,beliefs and behavioral patterns that may impact gender relation in family, community, school and workplace and so on. Gender debates and discourses have to be operationalised within the overarching concern for democratizing education. In this context, constitutional provisions and commitments, policy initiatives,schemes and programmes have been conceptualized by Centre and State Governments at different points of time to address gender barriers in education.

Curriculum is an important component of diverse schooling process operating across our country. It is considered as an integral part of all activities that take place within and outside classrooms that are learned but not openly intended. Curriculum is related to the transmission of norms, values,beliefs and behavior that either reinforces existing social and cultural ethos of the society or attempts to question and critique them. In the context of gender relation, it either perpetuate unequal power relations operating among gender, or help in evolving methods of questioning it and thereby becoming an important equalizing agency for addressing paradoxes between policies on gender equality in education and practices. Different aspects of learning that contribute to the success of hidden curriculum are practices, procedures, rules, relationship and structure operating in different types of schools. Aspect of unintended learning can result from interactions with educational administrators, teachers, peers and other functionaries that play a crucial role in overall personality development.

Curriculum, therefore, includes a process of continuous interaction among teacher, learner, subject matter and the socio-cultural milieu of the school and society. It is determined by the socio-cultural traditions, political ideologies, philosophy of life and the needs of society at a particular time. This is especially true when we deal with the question of gender equality in the context of curriculum. Access of women to education in a particular society at a particular period of time has always been dictated by the social role which a woman has to play in a society. Therefore, it is necessary to trace back the historical antecedents of the development of the present curriculum pattern in the country.

Another crucial point to note is that the discussion on gender question in curriculum is linked to the various levels of education, namely, primary, secondary and tertiary. There is a general agreement that there is no requirement for differentiated curricula at the primary stage. The greatest need for differentiated curricula has been felt at the secondary level with a view to prepare boys and girls for their respective adult roles in society. At the higher level, though the curriculum is not differentiated and the girls have the option to opt for different courses, yet the principle of role socialization continues to dominate and the majority of women chose for traditional courses like teaching, etc. India had an age-old tradition of universal education for boys and girls since the ancient times of Vedic period. Unfortunately this system of universal education disappeared almost completely due to social changes that tookplace in later years. By the medieval period the education of girls became slow and the purdah system' created a devastating effect on the freedom and education of girls. During the British regime,the situation improved to some extent due to the efforts of Christian missionaries and the recommendations of various committees and commissions. But the British effort was a selective and the differentiated curriculum led to the segmentation and segregation of society. A review of women's education during-the pre-independence period indicates that it was directly linked to the women's domestic role as a house-wife and mother. Education was intended to train boys for jobs, and since girls were not expected to work outside the home, the curriculum was so conceived as to

suit their social role. In this process certain subjects emerged as feminine subjects, e.g. hygiene, needle work, music, home science, etc.,while physics, chemistry and mathematics became masculine subjects.Separate schools, therefore, were opened for boys and girls to prepare them for their respective social roles and social behaviour .Besides the social role expectation, the level of education was another crucial determinant of the type of content included in the curriculum. While the need was not felt for a differentiated curriculum at the primary level, strict bifurcation of curriculum was observed at the secondary level. At the higher stages, though in principle there was no differentiation, yet the social role model played a strong role in a woman's choice for a particular course with the consequence that the majority of women opted for traditional courses at the higher level.

With the setting up of Hansa Mehta Committee in 1961 by the National Council for Women's Education, the emphasis is shifted to the present curricula of school education and its relevance to individual and social needs of women in the prevailing circumstances of the country. The most salient feature of Hansa Mehta Committee was that it felt that a woman can pursue a career of her own choice without disturbing her role as a mother or house-wife. Another break-through in the direction of gender equality in curriculum was achieved by the recommendations of Indian Education Commission popularly known as Kothari Commission (1964-66). The Kothari Commission (1964-66) also recognized the significance and importance of girl's education in nation-building.

National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) in continuation with its curriculum-related work carried out studies and consultations subsequent to 1975, and had drafted a curriculum framework as a part of its activity. Followed by this there was articulation of National Curriculum Framework, 1988 by NCERT. National Curriculum Framework -2005 was developed in the light of the report, 'Learning Without Burden, 1993'. However, the vast effort made by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in this respect, on the basis of the National Curriculum Framework 2005, has yet to make an impact on textbook development processes used by state governments and private publishers.

It is observed that NCERT's new syllabi and textbooks take a proactive and analytical, rather than a remedial, stance towards gender asymmetry. It is argued that they rearticulate social and economic relations in ways that would enable both teachers and children to notice the presence of women in social spaces where they have been rendered invisible by the symbolic power of patriarchy.

Such observations was explained by an instance where in the class VI textbook of the new subject called socio- political life, the farmer whose profile is portrayed to draw children's attention towards the rural economy is a woman. However, gender relations are introduced in other subjects and textbooks at a deeper, epistemic level, not merely to avoid the charge of bias towards women.

10.4 DROPOUTS

Despite government efforts to incorporate all sections of the population into the Indian education system, through mechanisms such as positive discrimination and non-formal education, large numbers of young people are still without schooling. Although enrolment in primary education has increased, it is estimated that at least 35 million and possibly as many as 60 million, children aged 6–14 years are not in school. Severe gender, regional, and caste disparities also exist. The poor quality of schooling is considered responsible for low retention. Other factors are slum dwelling population being vulnerable due to associated influences such as low socio-economic status, lower parental literacy rates, high of juvenile delinquency, and low status of female children delinquency, and low status of female children. Studies show that as student moves from primary school to a higher stage of school, the chance of dropping out of school increases 2.7 times. Besides, the chance of Muslim student discontinuing is 1.9 times more than that of Hindus. However, despite of governmental efforts, huge investment and many innovative programmes, the school dropout remains alarmingly high in many states. In this context, it is not only the provision of schooling facilities and quality of education, but also other household and social factors play a major role in influencing the discontinuation of

education. Therefore, it is very important to understand the family and parental characteristics to examine the reasons behind school dropouts. Unless there is considerable improvement in the economic status of households and change in the social attitudes of parents, achieving the goal of universalisation of school education will remain a major challenge for India.

10.5 NEGATIVE CAPABILITY IN EDUCATION

Negative capability is a term which connects what is measured with what is valued and not easily quantified. A number of historical accounts of what has been measured in education have shown how the arguments made about measurement were linked with ideas about improving education quality, policy delivery and enhancing accountability. Measuring gender equality in education is a feature of many of the most well-known metrics and the question of what is measured, why and how surfaces very clearly in this area.

10.6 VALUES IN EDUCATION

Value based Education is a kind of approach related to teaching that works with values. It creates a strong learning environment that enhances academic achievement and develops students' social and relationship skills that last throughout their lives. Value based education imparts social, moral, integrity, character, spirituality and many more.

Academic feminists have been engaged in a self-conscious struggle to reject patriarchal perceptions of women and to reinterpret social reality based on women's experiences and values. Consciousness raising for academic feminists involves a form of struggle to embrace a consciousness that questions all oppressive social structures. Valuebased education can draw from a number of sources, and that will be critical to its success. It needs to provide space for individual preferences and sensibilities, cultural differences, the variety of environmental and social contexts, the rationalist and the mystic. Some of the dimensions of values-based education include the moral and ethical foundations of society, of knowing and doing what is

right. Moral values state what is good and of primary importance to human civilization in the past, present and future. These are often articulated as ideals that define right from wrong. Ethical principles are the operational expression of moral values that provide guidance to decision-making and action. Values are kind of qualities on which worth, desirability, or utility depend. They are principles or rules generated by an ethical or spiritual framework. Values are what determine how humans relate to each other and they are the social equivalent of DNA, encoding the information through which society is structured. Value based education should be designed to target women's and girls' specific concerns and needs, as well as those of men and boys.

10.7 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education is one form of education that prepares people to work in various jobs, such as a trade, a craft, or as a technician. Vocational education is also sometimes referred to as career education or technical education. Women education in India has been given a lot of importance in all Five Year Plans from time to time with special emphasis on technical and vocational education with a view to enable the women to be economically independent and become better homemakers. However, the National Policy of Education 1986 was a major landmark in the evolution of status of women in India. Women's participation and empowerment are fundamental to enabe women to have control over their lives and put forth influence in society. Women often face discrimination and gender inequalities, with some women experiencing multiple discrimination and exclusion because of factors such as social background or caste. Skills provided through vocational training along with various schemes such as Pradahan Mantri Kausal Vikas Yojna, National Skills Development Corporation, National Skills Development Mission. Ministry of Labor and Employment has taken a number of initiatives in the field of skill development and employment. For instance, training of trainers, Vocational Training for girls is being conducted by Advanced Training Institutes and Regional Vocational Training Institutes run by the Ministry. Vocational Education and training are essential mechanism of any strategy

to improve farm and nonfarm productivity that improves rural incomes across regions. Skill is the relationship between job and workforce.

10.8 RECENT TRENDS IN WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Female education has long been acknowledged to have strong correlations with other dimensions of human and social development.In recent years, India has reportedly shown considerable improvement at each level of education for boys as well as for girls. Along with improvements in literacy, India has witnessed a significant increase in primary as well as upper primary enrolments.

The Indian education system is one of the oldest and largest in the world. Some progress has been made in the field of women's education too. A recent trend according to government survey shows that a huge number of female students are enrolling into higher education: 79.44 % Undergraduate, 11.39% for Post graduate & 0.72% for Ph. D. Women's enrolment pattern has changed, currently it is much higher in Bachelor of Arts / Science / Commerce /Education. A similar trend is being seen in Engineering and Management.

10.9 COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS ON EDUCATION

The setting up of the University Education Commission popularly known as the Radhakrishnan Commission in 1948 was a major landmark for enunciating the goals and objectives of higher education in Independent India.In subsequent years, several Commissions and Committees were also appointed by the government for educational restructure and changes in the system of higher education in India and the important documents that have been published are:

- Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66
- National Policy on Education, 1968
- Draft Policy on Education, 1978
- National Commission on Teachers-II, 1983
- Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective, 1985

- National Policy on Education, 1986
- National Policy on Education: A Programme of Action, 1986
- Towards an Enlightened and Human Society- A Perspective Paper on Education, 1960
- National Policy on Education: A Programme of Action, 1992



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1 Fill in the Blanks

a. The Radhakrishnan Commission was set up in _____

b. Major landmark of the Radhakrishnan Commission for enunciating the goals and objectives of _____in Independent India

10.10 ADULT LITERACY AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT.

The Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) is the government machinery for delivering basic adult functional literacy. Being launched in 1991, the National Functional Literacy Programme has undertaken several activities to accelerate reduction of illiteracy in the country to facilitate rural and national development. Adult Education aims at extending educational options to those adults, who have lost the opportunity and have crossed the age of formal education, but now feel a need for learning any type, including literacy, basic education, skill development (Vocational Education) and equivalency.

While non-formal education can be imparted to minors as well as grown-ups, in the post-Independence period in India, it has been closely associated with adult education. Whereas adult education itself has been interpreted and envisaged in different ways ranging from citizen training to its redefinition as an alternative to formal education with a three-pronged objective:

- To focus on the target segment of young adults in the 15-25 year age group belonging to theunder privileged social segment

- To link formal education and non-formal education for optimal utilization of available resources
- To focus on inculcating functional skills as an imperative for development.

With the felt need for added impetus on occupational training beyond functional literacy, theNational Literacy Mission launched in 1988. It gave a fillip to adult education programmes which led to the emergence of the concept of developmental literacy. Further, the National Skill Qualification Framework launched in 2013 is a quality assurance framework system to organize qualifications in levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. The emphasis is more on learning outcomes which are imperative for learners regardless of whether they are acquired through formal, informal or non-formal learning. Other initiative includes Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), a Scheme of People's Education is an example of a polyvalent institute in the non-formal education sector under the aegis of Directorate of Adult Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. It was renamed as Jan Shikshan Sansthan in 2000, currently there are 271 sanctioned JSS across 28 statesand Union territories in India in 2013 out of which 252 are functioning JSS. The three objectives are to provide employment-based non-formal education to target groups, to provide polyvalent education linking literacy with vocational skill training, and to facilitate services to other similar organizations.



10.11 LET US SUM UP

- There are many reforms and strategies by the government towards the betterment of women education in India.
- However, societal attitude and perceptions has to be reformed in order to bring women at par .
- It is not the availability of education or the financial status, it has more to do with the thinking, attitude and mindset of people towards women education in India.

- There are many well-to-do families where women are confined to houses, not because they cannot do any better but because we take away their opportunity in letting them make their own place in the society.
- Therefore a holistic education is the need of the hour where women think beyond just earning degrees or continue working but are not encouraged to think about money.
- We need to strive continuously to pursue those matters which are considered only as man's work to achieve comprehensive women education in India.



10.12 FURTHER READING

1) Sharmila, N &Dhas, Albert Christopher, 2010. "*Development of Women Education in India*," MPRA Paper 20680, University Library of Munich, Germany, retrieved 10.2.2018



10.13 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

a. 1948

b. higher education



10.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) **Write Short notes** (Answer within 150 words)

1. What is National Curriculum Framework?

B) **Long type questions** (Answer within 300-500 words)

1. Explain Non - formal education.
2. Explain values in education.
3. What is curriculum content ? Explain