

**ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT & DEVELOPMENT IN
SHAHDOL DIVISION, (M.P.), INDIA****Mamta Prajapati¹, Ph.D., & Balram Pd.Prajapati², Ph.D.**¹*Asst. Professor of Chemistry, Pt. S. N. S. Govt. P.G.(Auto.) College, Shahdol*²*Research Scholar, Pt. S. N. S. Govt. P.G.(Auto.) College, Shahdol***Abstract**

Differences in access to human capital continue to be one of the most critical dimensions of inequality of opportunity. Some of the most striking inequalities are visible along the gender dimension. For education to be equalizing, it must ease restrictions on women's life chances and increase the opportunities available to them. This paper proposes to investigate the potentially powerful role education can play in improving women's lives by looking at the social/ gender/ economic empowerment effects of education. The paper uses data from household and labour force surveys from Shahdol division of Madhya Pradesh to investigate education's role in women's labour market outcomes. While the economic dimension of empowerment is important as it encompasses the ability to access lucrative and rewarding occupations as well as the ability to both earn and control an income, it constitutes only one aspect of empowerment. The socio-cultural, inter-personal, political and psychological dimensions are also critical especially given the cultural constraints posed on women's lives in the central region of Madhya Pradesh. Although much progress has been made, much remains to be done. Whilst educational policy makers and planners have attempted to identify and overcome barriers to women's participation. Finally, this paper proposes to go one step further to identify whether empowerment correlates with education.

Key-Words: *Women Literacy, potential powerful role, poverty reduction and women's empowerment.*



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Introduction

In all countries of the world, education is recognized as the milestone for sustainable development. It is a fulcrum around which the quick development of economic, political,

sociological and human resources of any country resolves. Literacy and education are important indicators in a society and play a central role in human development that impacts overall social-economic development milieu. Higher levels of literacy and education lead to better attainment of health and nutritional status, economic growth, population control, empowerment of the weaker sections and community as a whole. Also, higher literacy rates improve development indicators consistently. Census obtains information on literacy for every individual, as this is recognized as one of the most important social characteristics. In census, a person aged seven years and above who can both read and write in any language, is treated as 'literate'. The fact that women constitute two-thirds of the world's non-literate population has been a cause for concern for several decades now. Despite a number of high-profile literacy interventions specifically targeting women the disparity between male and female literacy rates persists in many parts of developing countries of the world . This starting point for thinking about women's literacy has however often led to a narrow focus on literacy access and outcomes. Since the inception, quest to "enable the rural poor to overcome their poverty", the study has been focusing on women in general, and indigenous women in particular. Having recognized education as "an instrument per-excellence for effective national development" as well as "a dynamic instrument of change," it is also the basis for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women. Education empowers women by improving their living standard. It is the starting point for women's advancement in different fields of human endeavor. It is the basic tool that should be given to women in order to fulfill their role as full members of the society.

Background of the Study

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. All Asia- Pacific countries share a common characteristic. Their women are unable to give their best to the national development. The resulting curricula and materials help prepare women for self-development as active members of their family, community and nation. They seek overall personal development and account for the notorious double responsibility that women shoulder as economic producers and as mothers and wives. The above approach concentrates on imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes that help women operate as efficient and equal partners of men. It is important to stress collaboration between the sexes and to make sure that empowerment does not mean "pitting women against men".

The benefits of educating girls and women are well understood, but education's role as a catalyst for promoting gender equality and empowering women is not. Because research has established that basic education of girls and women improves key development outcomes, such as reducing fertility and child mortality or increasing worker productivity, it is often assumed that education enhances women's well-being and gives them a greater voice in household decisions, more autonomy in shaping their lives, and better opportunities for participating in the community and labor market. But a recent literature review by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), entitled "Impact of Investments in Female Education on Gender Equality," shows that education is a necessary but not sufficient investment to achieve gender equality or improve women's well-being. The international development community and most developing country governments have made increasing girls' primary education a central policy aim. That's a good start. However, a review of available research shows that education is most beneficial to women in settings where they have greater control over their mobility and greater access to services. In many developing countries, women do not have such mobility or access to the resources they need to improve their health or the health of their families. Often, health services are not widely available, or where available, they are of poor quality. In such situations, primary education alone often cannot equip women with the skills and knowledge they need to overcome the many constraints.

Purpose of the Study

India's newfound growth pattern owes much to a social infrastructure namely education. This service and its impact are visible in tertiary sector and the rest of the economy. Education is an end in itself as well as a means for realising other desirable ends. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which enables the individuals to realise their full identity and powers in all the spheres of life. Empowerment of women brings equal status to women, opportunity and freedom to develop her which also means equipping women to be economically independent and personally self-reliant. Providing them quality education is the fundamental way to empower women which makes them scientific, logical, open-minded, and self-respecting and ensures greater autonomy in making decisions or free themselves from the shackles imposed on them by custom, belief and practices in the society. Without such virtues being developed among women, empowerment has no meaning.

Objectives of the study

In independent India, illiteracy is the second most important problem following poverty. Female literacy rates are very low nationally. The gap between male and female literacy rate ultimately contributes to the subordination of women and greater dowry demand in the marriage market. Among the literate women only a handful of women obtain their education in order to acquire economic independence; for the majority, literate women receive an education only to become more eligible in for marriage. Even though, after independence, considerable developments have taken place in the lives of women, there remains a bleak picture. A majority of women are still underprivileged in a tradition bound society like ours, where there is a distinction between lawful legitimacy and general practice. “In spite of women's contribution towards family income, their position in the family hierarchy mostly remains subordinate”. The societal attitude is still discriminatory against women. This paper, therefore, seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To argue for the introduction and nurturing of educational programmes which will galvanize the empowerment of women of all categories in Shahdol division, irrespective of creed or religious beliefs and cultural inclination?
- To highlight the factors inhibiting women’s education which have contributed significantly towards female mass illiteracy in Shahdol; and
- To proffer suggestions for the establishment and running of educational programmes for the women which would definitely lift them up from the abyss of ignorance, poverty, total dependency on spouses, inferiority complex, lack of self confidence and depression etc.

Methodology

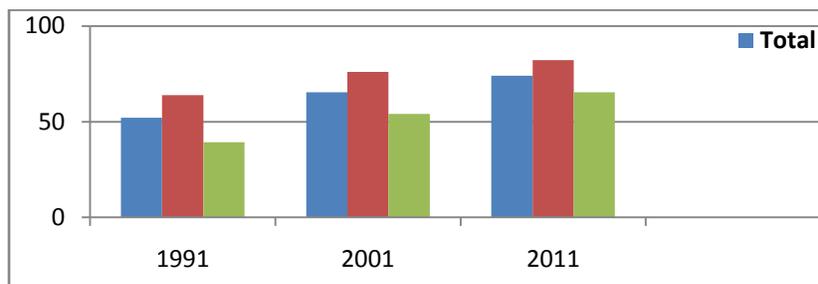
A descriptive survey method was employed in order to investigate the role of education for women empowerment in Shahdol. The data was generated through interview and documentary analysis. Interview was conducted with officials from the State Ministries of Education. In addition to this source of data, documents and previous studies on education and women empowerment were reviewed. The research, therefore, relied, in addition to the primary sources, on secondary sources of data which include journals, textbooks, seminar papers, magazines, bulletins, newspapers, and periodicals. A qualitative data analysis technique was employed in order to analyze the responses from the unstructured interview and related documents.

Conclusions in this study were arrived at using analysis of the existing data and responses from the interviewees.

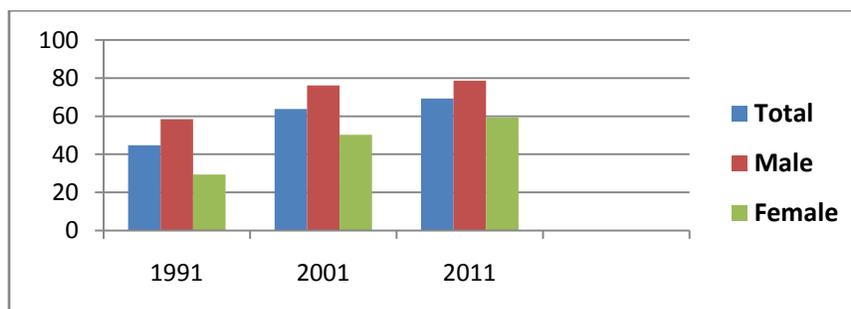
Conceptual and Operational Framework

This section clarifies the concept of education and women empowerment. It also examines the gap between the literacy level of male gender and that of the female gender. The benefits women derive from educational ventures and constraints inhibiting women's education in Shahdol are also dealt with in this section. Mahatma Gandhi defines education as a process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of all his potentialities and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reason and thereby achieve his perfect self-fulfillment. Education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult (male or female) develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which they live. It is a process through which a person acquires knowledge, skills, habits and values that enables him to function effectively as a member of the society. Education helps one to maximize his physical, mental and emotional capabilities which are useful for him and his society. In this sense, women education means the process by which women acquire the knowledge, skills, norms and values that are necessary for their development and that of the society.

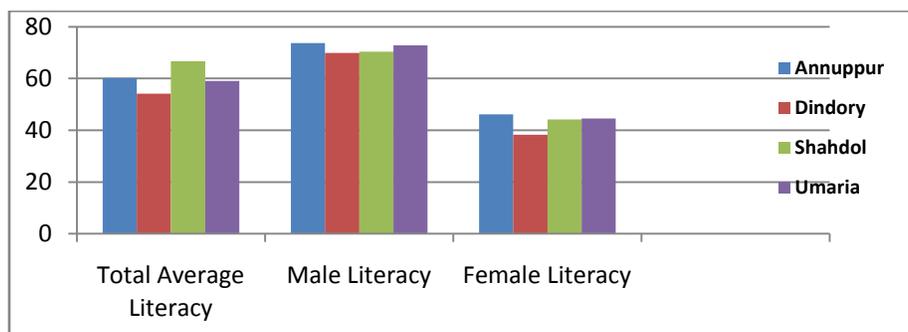
1. Literacy Rate in India



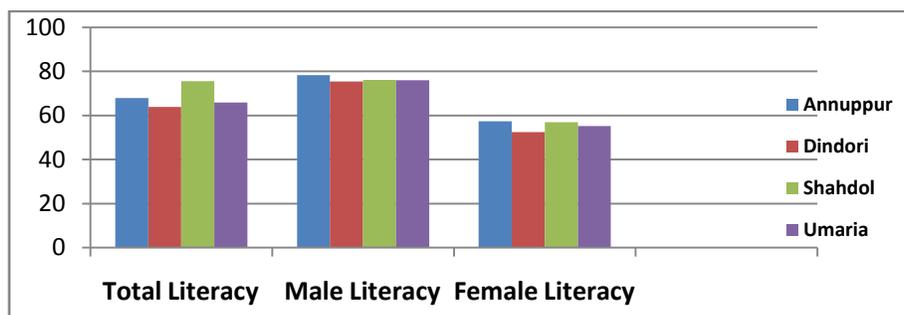
2. Literacy Rate in Madhya Pradesh



3. Literacy Rates of Various Districts of Shahdol division in 2001



4. Literacy Rates of Various Districts of Shahdol division in 2011



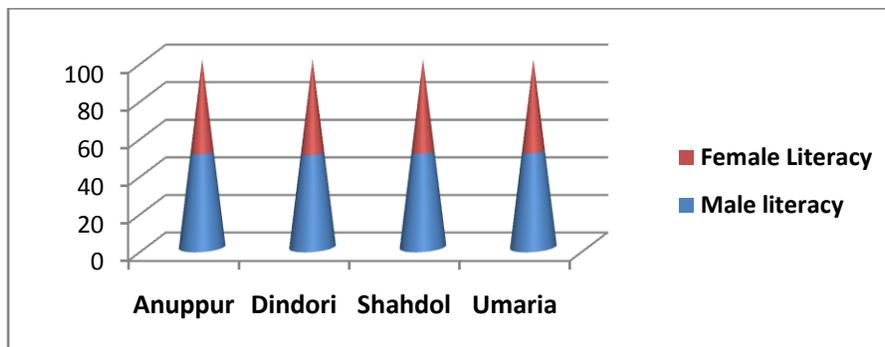
It is evident from the graphs drawn above that overall Gap in the Literacy rates of Males and Females over decades has fallen down in Shahdol Division.

Table No.1 Block wise Enrollments of Male and Female Candidates of Various Districts of Shahdol Division in Education in 2015.

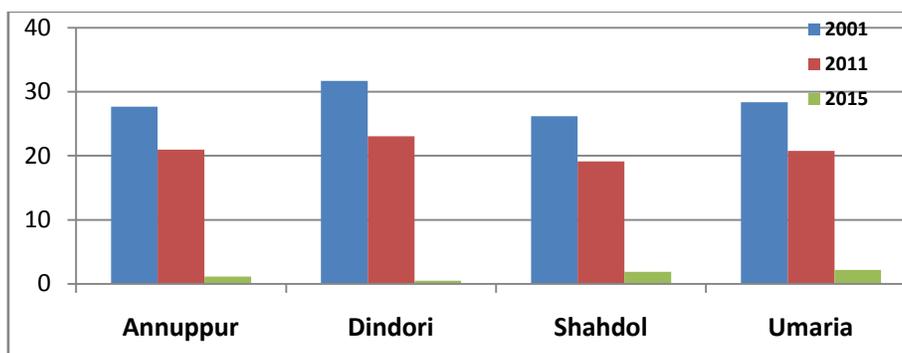
Name Blocks	Of	Boys					Girls				
		SC	ST	OBC	GEN	Total	SC	ST	OBC	GEN	Total
Anuppur		2135	5178	5766	1832	14911	2019	5031	5704	1655	14409
Jaithari		2203	10417	7488	1759	21867	1985	10509	7214	1437	21145
Kotma		1842	3999	5389	2713	13943	1899	3836	5227	2345	13307
Pushparajgarh		1609	16458	2684	534	21285	1727	16745	2602	477	21551
Karkeli		3299	17459	8612	4219	33589	3189	16946	8417	3766	32318
Manpur		2898	11622	9708	2921	27149	2752	11211	9437	2750	26150
Pali-2		761	6960	1764	1184	10669	725	6398	1763		9906
Beohari		2474	10850	8784	3041	25149	2222	10176	8320	2826	23544
Burhar		2838	11154	6005	2117	22114	2808	11109	5645	1968	21530
Gohparu		863	7193	2530	642	11228	845	7220	2420	700	11185
Jaisinghnagar		1946	10756	6177	2019	20898	1941	11016	6107	1936	21000
Sohagpur		2521	12859	10740	6911	33031	2496	12544	10001	5989	31030
Amarpur		141	5501	2250	109	8001	140	5659	2248	79	8126
Bajag		271	4151	1686	61	6169	268	4239	1616	73	6196
Dindori		1005	8922	5368	489	15784	1065	8659	5169	405	15298
Karanjia		349	7374	1917	117	9757	318	7493	1693	116	9620

Mehandwani	83	5832	1612	24	7551	100	5828	1544	96	7568
Samnapur	224	5453	2537	101	8315	200	5390	2417	163	8170
Shahpura	1905	8099	2645	300	12949	1992	8088	2487	272	12839

5. Literacy Rates of Various Districts of Shahdol division in 2015



6. District wise Gap in the Literacy rates of Males and Females over decades



Women Empowerment

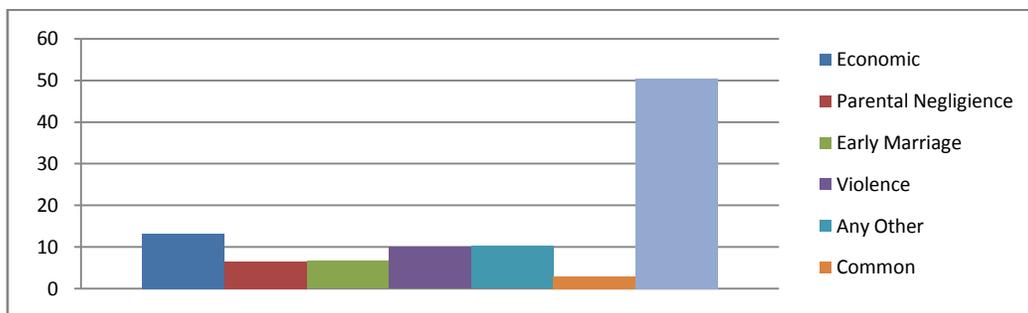
Perhaps there are as many definitions of women empowerment as are authors' empowerment. Sako defines empowerment as: The process of strengthening the existing capacities and capabilities of disadvantaged groups in society so as to enable them perform towards improving themselves, their families and the society as a whole. It involves the provision of enabling environment for their productive and intellectual abilities to be realized. In some societies where some groups have suffered discrimination for a long time, ways have been found to address this problem. Laws have been made to protect these groups against future discrimination with the goal of providing equal opportunities for all. Enemuo quoting Sandbrook and Halfani, viewed empowerment as: a multi-dimensional process involving the transformation of the economic, social, psychological, political and legal circumstances of the powerless. In the specific case of women, empowerment entails not only positive changes in these critical respects but also the dismantling of the cultural norms and traditional practices that devalue, disempower and

dispossess women. The process must necessarily also include the expansion of women’s access to educational opportunities, facilities for skills acquisition and positions of authority.

Need of Women Empowerment

Empowerment enables women to acquire knowledge ,skills and techniques which will help them in their personal and social growth as well as foster in them sensitivity towards problems in the society. Lack of education is the root cause for women’s exploitation and negligence. Only literacy and education can help women to understand the Indian’s constitutional and legislative provisions that are made to strengthen them. Education is “potential affirming and performance confirming”. Empowerment of a girl starts even enterprise makes empowerment operational. That is full filling journey for a mother too: from a painful situation to a gainful situation. For the purpose of this study, it is a multi-dimensional process involving the transformation of the economic, social psychological, political and legal circumstances of the powerless. In the specific case of women, empowerment entails not only positive changes in these critical respects but also the dismantling of the cultural norms and traditional practices that devalue, disempower and dispossess women. It means giving traditional and legal status to the efforts of women to develop and contribute to the creation of wealth, taking and participating in decision making of their families and societies at large and to reduce their present state of vulnerability, decrease dependency and passivity and be at the centre, not at the periphery.

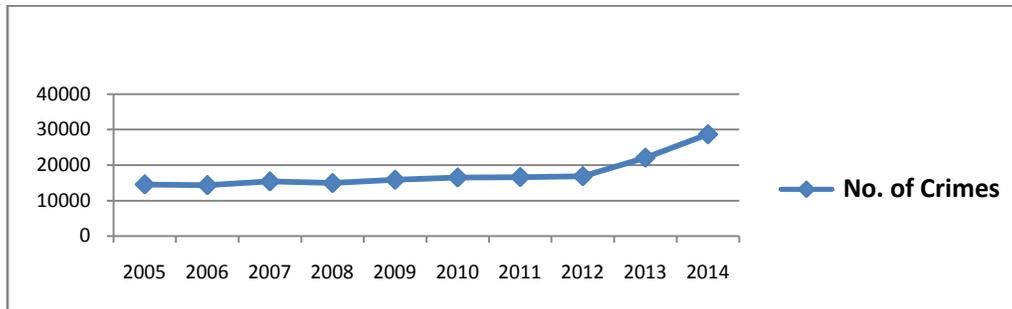
Obstacles to Women Empowerment



There are several challenges that are currently plaguing the issues of women’s right in the modern society and crime against women is the most important one. The crime against women fly directly against orchestrating women empowerment in Madhya Pradesh. A report on the crime against women by National Crime Records Bureau comes up with an alarming statistics. These crimes includes Cruelty by Husbands and Relatives, Assault on Women with intent to

outrage her modesty, Kidnapping and Abduction of women, rape , Insult to the Modesty and Dowry Deaths etc.

Crime against Women



Measures and Mechanisms for the empowerment of women

Initiatives

According to the Human Development Report (1993) literacy is a person's first step in learning and knowledge building. So literacy indicators are essential for any measurement of human development. In India National Policy on Education (NPE) was set up in 1986 for the development of education and eradication of illiteracy. The higher rate of illiteracy of women is undoubtedly attributing for women to depend on men and to play a subordinate role. Within the framework of democratic polity, our legislation, development policies, plan and programmes have aimed for advancement of women in difference spheres. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the right and legal entitlements of women. The National Policy on Education(1986, revised in 1992) is perhaps the most luminous document on women's education. It emerged as a major breakthrough in addressing gender issues in government policy, which projected that education can be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) started in 1994 has a holistic approach to reducing gender and social disparities and globalising access, retention and achievement. Enrolment of girls has shown significant upward trend in DPEP districts as compared to non-DPEP districts. The Government of India has declared 2001 as Women's Empowerment year. The national policy of empowerment of women has set certain clear-cut goals and objectives. The policy aims at upliftment, development and empowerment in socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects, by creating in them awareness on various issues human rights, fundamental freedom, providing access to health care, quality education at all levels, career building ,vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational

opportunities, health, safety, social security and public life etc. in relation to their empowerment. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA – Education for All), which was launched in 2001-02, is the national umbrella programme that is spearheading the globalisation of elementary education through a community-owned approach, with a specific focus on the provision of quality education.

Suggestions

- Awareness of daughter's education is essential. It is said that "educated mothers educate family which results in educated population of a nation which builds strong nation".
- Change the approach towards women based on sex discrimination.
- Child bearing at young ages should be prevented by preventing early marriages.
- Spread the message that education of women is a pre-condition for fighting against their oppression.
- Awareness needs to be generated regarding the necessity of educating girls so as to prepare them to contribute effectively to the socio-economic development of the nation.
- Eliminating all forms of discrimination in employment especially to eliminate wage differentials between men and women.
- In order to change the attitudes towards female education and to raise the social consciousness of the country, a conscious strategic change is required in national media and communication effort.
- Education is capable of increasing women's sense of analysing which will support wider reforms in support of gender equality.
- Introduce satellite schools for remote hamlets.
- Be cautious and patience in the knowledge journey: it is from knowledge creation/discovery to knowledge transfer (KT).
- Encourage ICT tools and the use of internet , for the study and research by women.
- Increasing real representation of women in political bodies and governance institutions in order to move from being objects of legislation to initiators of change.

Importance of Women education: The importance of women education are briefly summarized below-

- Economic development and prosperity
- Economic empowerment

- Improved life
- Dignity and honor
- Justice
- Choice to choose a profession of her choice
- Alleviate poverty

Conclusion

The evils of poverty, unemployment and inequality cannot be eradicated by man alone. Equal and active participation of women is obligatory. Unless women are educated they will not be able to understand about their rights and their importance. Empowerment of women aims at striving towards acquiring higher literacy level and education, better health care for women and their children, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in economic and commercial sectors, awareness of their rights, improved standard of living and to achieve self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect among women. Recently the NDA Government has launched Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme which aims at making girls independent both socially as well as financially and which will help in generating awareness and improving the efficiency of delivery of welfare services meant for women.

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