



Literacy and Women Development

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings of some recent research on the social and the economic benefits of female education and considers the pathways through which women's schooling leads to social gains. This paper discusses about various aspects of women's literacy effect of women social conditions on literacy. Role of literacy in the development and liberation of women. Components of curriculum needed women's literacy and development projects. The potential for women's literacy to reshape the developing world remains an untapped developmental resource. This paper illustrates the positive effects of female literacy, such as increased economic security, solidarity among women,

and enhanced status in the family. In addition, educated women are less likely to fall into early marriage, early motherhood, HIV infection, and street life. Mothers who are literate are much more able to run their households well and understand health education materials that directly impact the lives of their children. The second half of this paper

explores some of the most effective ways of achieving increased education and literacy for women. Financial incentives prove very successful in recruitment and retention of female students. In addition, the most effective development initiatives tend to educate women with the goal of transforming them into agents, mentors, and teachers so that the legacy of literacy will extend to future generations.

KEYWORDS : literacy, female education, women development

Introduction:

literacy learning can support women's empowerment and the development of greater equality, benefiting not only individual women, but families, communities and economies too. It describes and reflects upon some of the most promising approaches to developing literacy and learning for women, who form the majority of the world's illiterate adults. Key success factors are identified to inform recommendations for others seeking to support the empowerment of women.

These are stories of hope and possibility. They demonstrate how, with imagination and determination, literacy learning is taking place and making a difference. Some programs are available because policies and strategies are in place at international, national or regional levels. In other cases, developments are due to local initiatives, inspired belief in learning for everyone, and voluntary determination. They show how change, transformation and empowerment of some of the world's most vulnerable women, and the development of greater equality are possible. The stories are drawn from LIFE (Literacy Initiative for Empowerment), E-9 (nine high-population countries) and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation) countries.

The major responsibility of a local self-government representative (LSGR) is to initiate and implement development programmes in his/her area. This may mean construction of a road, a bridge over a river or provision of schooling facilities for children, youth and adults. You might have realized from your own experience that development means much more than just an improvement in the economic well-being or condition of community members. Development includes the fulfillment of each person's material, spiritual and societal needs. It is defined as: "a process for enlarging people's choices. These choices primarily reflect the desire to lead a long and healthy life; acquire basic knowledge; and have an access to resources essential for a decent standard of living." You may notice from this simple definition that development is a dynamic process. Development empowers people and promotes important changes in their lives. However, development cannot take place by itself. It requires a educated, skilled and competent people. Seen from this angle, education becomes the most important factor for development as well as for empowering people. Education provides you with knowledge and information which in turn bring about desirable changes in the way you think, feel and act. Education also builds in you a strong sense of self-esteem, self-confidence. It contributes very effectively to the realization of your potential. Therefore, education is considered as a social instrument for developing human resources and for human capital formation. People having reasonable literacy and numeracy skills tend to produce more farm crops, have limited number of children and enjoy a relatively better quality of life as compared with uneducated families. Educated people earn more and are respected by the society. It is

because of its tangible contributions in changing the lives of the people that education becomes an important part of the development policy in every country. Development A purposeful change in a society that contributes to social and economic well being and advancement of its people without creating any disharmony.

Definition of literacy

A definition derived from Oyitso and Olomukoro(2012) states that Literacy is not just the ability to read and write but also, ...the ability to [effectively] use the printed and written information to function in society. ...to be literate is not just to have mastered the skills of reading, writing and computing with numbers, but more than that, ...to be able to use those skills effectively for communications in all aspects of one's life in social, cultural, economic and political sphere "Societies that discriminate on the basis of gender have greater poverty, slower economic growth, weaker governance and a lower standard of living. Literacy programs as an empowering agent for women

Female education is a catch-all term for a complex set of issues and debates surrounding education for girls and women. It includes areas of gender equality and access to education, and its connection to the alleviation of poverty. Also involved are the issues of single-sex education and religious education in that the division of education along gender lines as well as religious teachings on education have been traditionally dominant and are still highly relevant in contemporary discussions of educating females as a global consideration.

While the feminist movement has certainly promoted the importance of the issues attached to female education, the discussion is wide-ranging and by no means narrowly defined. It may include, for example, AIDS education. Universal education, meaning state-provided primary and secondary education independent of gender is not yet a global norm, even if it is assumed in most developed countries. In some Western countries, women have surpassed men at many levels of education. For example, in the United States in 2005/2006, women earned 62% of associate's degrees, 58% of bachelor's degrees, 60% of master's degrees, and 50% of doctorates.

Education for women with handicaps has also improved. In 2011, Giuse Spagnolo became the first woman with Down Syndrome to graduate college in Europe (she graduated from the University of Palermo in Italy).

Improving girls' educational levels has been demonstrated to have clear impacts on the health and economic future of young women, which in turn improves the prospects of their entire community. In the poorest countries of the world, 50% of girls do not attend secondary school. Yet, research shows that every extra year of school for girls increases their lifetime income by 15%. Improving female education,

and thus the earning potential of women, improves the standard of living for their own children, as women invest more of their income in their families than men do. Yet, many barriers to education for girls remain. In some African countries, such as Burkina Faso, girls are unlikely to attend school for such basic reasons as a lack of private latrine facilities for girls.

Higher attendance rates of high schools and university education among women, particularly in developing countries, have helped them make inroads to professional careers with better-paying salaries and wages. Education increases a woman's (and her partner and the family's) level of health and health awareness. Furthering women's levels of education and advanced training also tends to lead to later ages of initiation of sexual activity and first intercourse, later age at first marriage, and later age at first childbirth, as well as an increased likelihood to remain single, have no children, or have no formal marriage and alternatively, have increasing levels of long-term partnerships. It can lead to higher rates of barrier and chemical contraceptive use (and a lower level of sexually transmitted infections among women and their partners and children), and can increase the level of resources available to women who divorce or are in a situation of domestic violence. It has been shown, in addition, to increase women's communication with their partners and their employers, and to improve rates of civic participation such as voting or the holding of office.

Chinese history

Along with the custom of foot-binding among Chinese women that lasted through the end of the 19th century, it was recognized that a woman's virtue lay with her lack of knowledge. As a result, female education was not considered to be worthy of attention. With the arrival of numerous Christian missionaries from Britain and the US to China in the 19th century and some of them being involved in the starting of schools for women, female education started to receive some attention.

Due to the social custom that men and women should not be near one another, the women of China were reluctant to be treated by male doctors of Western medicine. This resulted in a tremendous need for female doctors of Western Medicine in China. Thus, female medical missionary, Dr. Mary H. Fulton (1854-1927), was sent by the Foreign Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to found the first medical college for women in China. Known as the Hackett Medical College for Women (this College was located in Guangzhou, China, and was enabled by a large donation from Mr. Edward A.K. Hackett (1851-1916) of Indiana, United States. The College was dedicated in 1902 and offered a four-year curriculum. By 1915, there were more than 60 students, mostly in residence. Most students became Christians, due to the influence of Dr. Fulton. The College was officially recognized, with its diplomas marked with the official stamp of the Guangdong provincial government. The College was aimed at the spreading of Christianity and modern medicine and the elevation of Chinese women's social status. The David Gregg Hospital for Women and Children (also known as Yujii Hospital was affiliated with this College. The graduates of this College included CHAU Lee-sun and WONG Yuen-hing), both of whom graduated in the late 1910s and then practiced medicine in the hospitals in Guangdong province.

Islamic history

Women in Islam played an important role in the foundations of many Islamic educational institutions, such as Fatima al-Fihri's founding of the University of Al Karaouine in 859. This continued through to the Ayyubid dynasty in the 12th and 13th centuries, when 160 mosques (places of worship) and madrasahs (places of education) were established in Damascus, 26 of which were funded by women through the Waqf (charitable trust or trust law) system. Half of all the royal patrons for these institutions were also women.

According to the Sunni scholar Ibn Asakir in the 12th century, there were opportunities for female education in the medieval Islamic world. Asakir wrote that women should study, earn *ijazahs* (academic degrees), and qualify as scholars and teachers. This was especially the case for learned and scholarly families, who wanted to ensure the highest possible education for both their sons and daughters. Ibn Asakir had himself studied under 80 different female teachers in his time. According to a hadith attributed to Muhammad, he praised the wom-

en of Medina because of their desire for religious knowledge.

"How splendid were the women of the *ansar*; shame did not prevent them from becoming learned in the faith."

While it was not common for women to enroll as students in formal classes, it was common for women to attend informal lectures and study sessions at mosques, madrasahs, and other public places. While there were no legal restrictions on female education, some men, such as Muhammad ibn al-Hajj, did not approve of this practice and were appalled at the behavior of some women who informally audited lectures in his time.

While women accounted for no more than one percent of Islamic scholars prior to the 12th century, there was a large increase of female scholars after this. In the 15th century, al-Sakhawi devotes an entire volume of his 12-volume biographical dictionary *al-Daw' al-lāmi'* to female scholars, giving information on 1,075 of them. More recently, the scholar Mohammad Akram Nadwi, currently a researcher from the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, has written 40 volumes on the muḥaddithāt (the women scholars of ḥadīth), and found at least 8,000 of them.

European history

In ancient Rome, upperclass women seem to have been well-educated, some highly so, and were sometimes praised by male historians of the time for their learning and cultivation. Cornelia Metella, for instance, was distinguished for her knowledge of geometry, literature, music, and philosophy. In the wall paintings of Pompeii, women are more likely than men to be pictured with writing implement. Some women had sufficient knowledge of the law and oratorical training to conduct court cases on their own behalf, or on behalf of others. Among occupations that required education, women could be scribes and secretaries, calligraphers, and artists.

Some and perhaps many Roman girls went to a public primary school. Boys and girls were educated either together or with similar methods and curriculum. One passage in Livy's history assumes that the daughter of a centurion would be in school; the social rank of a centurion was typically equivalent to modern perceptions of the "middle class."^[29] Girls as well as boys participated in public religious festivals, and sang advanced choral compositions that would require formal musical training.

Medieval period:

Medieval education for females was in charge of schools for girls: typically tied to a convent. Research has uncovered that several early women educators were

St. Ita of Ireland - died 570 AD. Founder and teacher of a co-ed school for girls and boys at her monastery of Cell Ide. Several important saints studied under her, including St. Brendan the Navigator.

Caesaria the Younger - died 550 AD. Successor to the sister of St. Caesarius and abbess of the convent he founded for her nuns, Caesaria the Younger continued the teaching of over a hundred women at the convent and aided in the copying and preservation of books.

St. Hilda of Whitby - died 680 AD. Founder of the co-ed monastery of Whitby (men and women lived in separate houses), she established a center of education in her monastery similar to what was founded by the Frankish nuns. According to the Venerable Bede, "Her prudence was so great, that not only meaner men in their need, but sometimes even kings and princes, sought and received her counsel."

St. Bertilla - died c. 700 AD. Queen Bathild requested her services for the convent she had founded at Chelle. Her pupils founded convents in other parts of western Europe, including Saxony.

St. Leoba - died 782 AD. St. Boniface requested her presence on his mission to the Germans and while there she founded an influential convent and school.

St. Bede the Venerable reports that noble-women were often sent to these schools for girls even if they did not intend to pursue the religious life, and St. Aldhelm praised their curriculum for including

grammar, poetry, and Scriptural study. The biography of Sts. Herlinda and Renilda also demonstrates that women in these convent schools could be trained in art and music.

During the reign of Emperor Charlemagne, he had his wife and daughters educated in the liberal arts at the Palace Academy of Aachen, for which he is praised in the Vita KaroliniMagni. There is evidence that other nobles had their daughters educated at the Palace Academy as well. In line with this, authors such as Vincent of Beauvais indicate that the daughters of the nobility were widely given to education so that they could live up to their social position to come.

Early modern period, humanist attitudes:

In early modern Europe, the question of female education had become a commonplace one, in other words a literary topos for discussion. Around 1405 Leonardo Bruni wrote *De studies et letteris*,^[39] addressed to Baptista di Montefeltro, the daughter of Antonio II da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino; it commends the study of Latin, but warns against arithmetic, geometry, astrology and rhetoric. In discussing the classical scholar Isotta Nogarola, however, Lisa Jardine notes that (in the middle of the 15th century), '*Cultivation*' is in order for a noblewoman; formal competence is positively unbecoming. Christine de Pisan's *Livre des Trois Vertus* is contemporary with Bruni's book, and sets down the things which a lady or baroness living on her estates ought to be able to do.

In his 1516 book *Utopia*, Thomas More advocated for women to have the right to education.

Erasmus wrote at length about education in *De pueris instituendis* (1529, written two decades before); not mostly concerned with female education, in this work he does mention with approbation the trouble Thomas More took with teaching his whole family. Catherine of Aragon "had been born and reared in one of the most brilliant and enlightened of European courts, where the cultural equality of men and women was normal". By her influence, she made education for English women both popular and fashionable. In 1523, Juan Luis Vives, a follower of Erasmus, wrote in Latin his *De institutione feminae Christianae*. This work was commissioned by Catherine, who had charge of the education of her daughter for the future Queen Mary I of England; in translation it appeared as *Education of a Christian Woman*. It is in line with traditional didactic literature, taking a strongly religious direction. It also placed a strong emphasis on Latin literature.

Elizabeth I of England had a strong humanist education, and was praised by her tutor Roger Ascham. She fits the pattern of education for leadership, rather than for the generality of women. When Johannes Sturm published Latin correspondence with Ascham centered on the achievements in humanist study of Elizabeth and other high-ranking English persons, in Konrad Heresbach's *De laudibus Graecarum litterarum oratio* (1551), the emphasis was on the nobility of those tackling the classics, rather than gender.

Schooling for girls was rare; the assumption was still that education would be brought to the home environment. Comenius was an advocate of formal education for women. In fact his emphasis was on a type of universal education making no distinction between humans; with an important component allowed to parental input, he advocated in his *Pampaedia* schooling rather than other forms of tutoring, for all.

Modern period:

The issue of female education in the large, as emancipatory and rational, is broached seriously in the Enlightenment. Mary Wollstonecraft, who worked as a teacher, governess, and school-owner, wrote of it in those terms. Her first book was *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, years before the publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

The Commission of National Education in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, founded in 1777, considered the first Ministry of Education in history, was a central, autonomous body responsible for nationwide, secular and coeducational training. In the late 19th century, in what was then the Russian province of Poland, in response to the lack of higher training for women, the so-called Flying University was

organized, where women were taught covertly by Polish scholars and academics. Its most famous student was Maria Skłodowska-Curie, better known as Marie Curie, who went on to win two Nobel Prizes.

Much education was channeled through religious establishments. Not all of these educated women only for marriage and motherhood; for example, Quaker views on women had allowed much equality from the foundation of the denomination in the mid-17th century. The abolitionist William Allen and his wife Grizell Hoare set up the Newington Academy for Girls in 1824, teaching an unusually wide range of subjects from languages to sciences.

Actual progress in institutional terms, for secular education of women, began in the West in the 19th century, with the founding of colleges offering single-sex education to young women. These appeared in the middle of the century. *The Princess: A Medley*, a narrative poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson, is a satire of women's education, still a controversial subject in 1848, when Queen's College first opened in London. Emily Davies campaigned for women's education in the 1860s, and founded Girton College in 1869, as did Anne Clough found Newnham College in 1875. Progress was gradual, and often depended on individual efforts - for example, those of Frances Lupton, which led to the founding of the Leeds Girls' High School in 1876. W. S. Gilbert parodied Tennyson's poem and treated the themes of women's higher education and feminism in general with *The Princess* in (1870) and *Princess Ida* in 1883.

Once women began to graduate from institutions of higher education, there steadily developed also a stronger academic stream of schooling, and the teacher training of women in larger numbers, principally to provide primary education. Women's access to traditionally all-male institutions took several generations to become complete.

Educational reform:

The interrelated themes of barriers to education and employment continued to form the backbone of feminist thought in the 19th century, as described, for instance by Harriet Martineau in her 1859 article "Female Industry" in the *Edinburgh Journal*. Despite the changes in the economy, the position of women in society had not greatly improved and unlike Frances Power Cobbe, Martineau did not support the emerging call for the vote for practical reasons.

Slowly the efforts of women like Davies and the Langham group (under Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon) started to make inroads. Queen's College (1848) and Bedford College (1849) in London started to offer some education to women, and by 1862 Davies was establishing a committee to persuade the universities to allow women to sit for the recently established (1858) Cambridge Local Examinations, with partial success (1865). A year later she published *The Higher Education of Women*. She and Bodichon founded the first higher educational institution for women, with five students, which became Girton College, Cambridge in 1873, followed by Lady Margaret Hall at Oxford in 1879. Bedford had started awarding degrees the previous year. Despite these measurable advances, few could take advantage of them and life for women students was very difficult.

As part of the continuing dialogue between British and American feminists, Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman in the US to graduate in medicine (1849), lectured in Britain with Langham support. They also supported Elizabeth Garrett's attempts to assail the walls of British medical education against strong opposition; she eventually took her degree in France. Garrett's successful campaign to run for office on the London School Board in 1870 is another example of how a small band of determined women were starting to reach positions of influence at the level of local government and public bodies.

Africa:

Christian missionaries in the 19th century opened modern educational methods, but they usually focused on boys. After early experiments they settled on promoting ideology of domestic femininity imparted through girls' schooling. In South Africa after 1820 male Scottish missionaries decided that only the most basic education was necessary to prepare native women for the propagation of Christianity within the home. They prevented female teachers from operating in the Scottish mission's territory. They delayed the establishment of a Girls' Department at Lovedale Institution. Finally new leadership arrived

who had a broader vision of uplifting native women so they could promote Christianity and Western gender codes.

Muslims from India who came to East Africa in the late 19th century brought along a highly restrictive policy against schooling for their girls.

India:

Ancient Vedic age (1000 BC)

The history of female education in India has its roots in ancient Vedic age.

"The home has, verily, its foundation in the wife" - The Rig Veda

During the Vedic age, more than 3,000 years ago, women were assigned a high place in society. They shared an equal standing with their men folk and enjoyed a kind of liberty that actually had societal sanctions. The ancient Hindu philosophical concept of 'shakti', the feminine principle of energy, was also a product of this age. This took the form of worship of the female idols or goddesses. In India even today people worship Goddess "Saraswati" as the Goddess of education. Vedic literature praises the birth of a scholarly daughter in these words: "A girl also should be brought up and educated with great effort and care." (MahanirvanaTantra); and "All forms of knowledge are aspects of Thee; and all women throughout the world are Thy forms." (Devi Mahatmya).

Women, who so desired, could undergo the sacred thread ceremony or 'Upanayana' (a sacrament to pursue Vedic studies), which is only meant for males even to this day. The mention of female scholars and sages of the Vedic age like Vac, Ambhrni, Romasa, Gargi, Khona in the Vedic lore corroborates this view. These highly intelligent and greatly learned women, who chose the path of Vedic studies, were called 'brahmavadinis', and women who opted out of education for married life were called 'sadyovadhus'. Co-education seems to have existed in this period and both the sexes got equal attention from the teacher. Moreover, ladies from the Kshatriya caste received martial arts courses and arms training

Women of the Vedic period (circa 1500-1200 BCE), were epitomes of intellectual and spiritual attainments. The Vedas have volumes to say about these women, who both complemented and supplemented their male partners. When it comes to talking about significant female figures of the Vedic period, four names - Ghosha, Lopamudra, SulabhaMaitreyi, and Gargi - come to mind.

Ghosha

Vedic wisdom is encapsulated in myriad hymns and 27 women-seers emerge from them. But most of them are mere abstractions except for a few, such as Ghosha, who has a definite human form. Granddaughter of Dirghatamas and daughter of Kakshivat, both composers of hymns in praise of Ashwins, Ghosha has two entire hymns of the tenth book, each containing 14 verses, assigned to her name. The first eulogizes the Ashwins, the heavenly twins who are also physicians; the second is a personal wish expressing her intimate feelings and desires for married life. Ghosha suffered from an incurable disfiguring disease, probably leprosy, and remained a spinster at her father's house. Her implorations with the Ashwins, and the devotion of her forefathers towards them made them cure her disease and allow her to experience wedded bliss.

Lopamudra

The Rig Veda ('Royal Knowledge') has long conversations between the sage Agasthya and his wife Lopamudra that testifies to the great intelligence and goodness of the latter. As the legend goes, Lopamudra was created by sage Agasthya and was given as a daughter to the King of Vidarbha. The royal couple gave her the best possible education and brought her up amidst luxury. When she attained a marriageable age, Agasthya, the sage who was under vows of celibacy and poverty, wanted to own her. Lopa agreed to marry him, and left her palace for Agasthya's hermitage. After serving her husband faithfully for a long period, Lopa grew tired of his austere practices. She wrote a hymn of two stanzas making an impassioned plea for his attention and love. Soon afterwards, the sage realized his duties towards his wife and performed both his domestic and ascetic life with

equal zeal, reaching a wholeness of spiritual and physical powers. A son was born to them. He was named Dridhasyu, who later became a great poet.

Maitreyi

The Rig Veda contains about one thousand hymns, of which about 10 are accredited to Maitreyi, the woman seer and philosopher. She contributed towards the enhancement of her sage-husband Yajnavalkya's personality and the flowering of his spiritual thoughts. Yajnavalkya had two wives Maitreyi and Katyayani. While Maitreyi was well versed in the Hindu scriptures and was a 'brahmavadini', Katyayani was an ordinary woman. One day the sage decided to make a settlement of his worldly possessions between his two wives and renounce the world by taking up ascetic vows. He asked his wives their wishes. The learned Maitreyi asked her husband if all the wealth in the world would make her immortal. The sage replied that wealth could only make one rich, nothing else. She then asked for the wealth of immortality. Yajnavalkya was happy to hear this, and imparted Maitreyi the doctrine of the soul and his knowledge of attaining immortality.

Gargi

Gargi, the Vedic prophetess and daughter of sage Vachaknu, composed several hymns that questioned the origin of all existence. When King Janak of Videha organized a 'brahmayajna', a philosophic congress centered around the fire sacrament, Gargi was one of the eminent participants. She challenged the sage Yajnavalkya with a volley of perturbing questions on the soul or 'atman' that confounded the learned man who had till then silenced many an eminent scholar. Her question - "The layer that is above the sky and below the earth, which is described as being situated between the earth and the sky and which is indicated as the symbol of the past, present and future, where is that situated?" - bamboozled even the great Vedic men of letters.

British-Ruled India:

Women's employment and education was acknowledged in 1854 by the East India Company's Programme: Wood's Dispatch. Slowly, after that, there was progress in female education, but it initially tended to be focused on the primary school level and was related to the richer sections of society. The overall literacy rate for women increased from 0.2% in 1882 to 6% in 1947.

In 1878, the University of Calcutta became one of the first universities to admit female graduates to its degree programmes, before any of the British universities had later done the same. This point was raised during the Ilbert Bill controversy in 1883, when it was being considered whether Indian judges should be given the right to judge British offenders. The role of women featured prominently in the controversy, where English women who opposed the bill argued that Bengali women, whom they stereotyped as "ignorant" and neglected by their men and that Indian men should therefore not be given the right to judge cases involving English women.

Bengali women who supported the bill responded by claiming that they were more educated than the English women opposed to the bill and pointed out that more Indian women had degrees than British women did at the time.

Independent India

After India attained independence in 1947, the University Education Commission was created to recommend suggestions to improve the quality of education. However, their report spoke against female education, referring to it as: "Women's present education is entirely irrelevant to the life they have to lead. It is not only a waste but often a definite disability."

However, the fact that the female literacy rate was at 8.9% post-Independence could not be ignored. Thus, in 1958, a national committee on women's education was appointed by the government, and most of its recommendations were accepted. The crux of its recommendations were to bring female education on the same footing as offered for boys.

Soon afterward, committees were created that talked about equality between men and women in the field of education. For example, one committee on differentiation of curricula for boys and girls (1959)

recommended equality and a common curricula at various stages of their learning. Further efforts were made to expand the education system, and the Education Commission was set up in 1964, which largely talked about female education, which recommended a national policy to be developed by the government. This occurred in 1968, providing increased emphasis on female education.

International Literacy Day focuses attention on the need to promote worldwide literacy.

- UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, estimates that nearly 800 million people—one-fifth of the world's adult population do not know how to read or write; women make up two-thirds of this number. More than 67.4 million school-age children do not attend school.

UNESCO founded International Literacy Day.

- The first International Literacy Day was observed on September 8, 1967, and it continues to be celebrated on September 8 every year.

Current policies:

Before and after Independence, India has been taking active steps towards women's status and education. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, has been a path breaking step towards the growth of education, especially for females. According to this act, elementary education is a fundamental right for children between the ages of 6 and 14. The government has undertaken to provide this education free of cost and make it compulsory for those in that age group. This undertaking is more widely known as SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA).

Since then, the SSA has come up with many schemes for inclusive as well as exclusive growth of Indian education as a whole, including schemes to help foster the growth of female education.

The major schemes are the following:

- **MahilaSamakhya Programme:** This programme was launched in 1988 as a result of the New Education Policy (1968). It was created for the empowerment of women from rural areas especially socially and economically marginalized groups. When the SSA was formed, it initially set up a committee to look into this programme, how it was working and recommend new changes that could be made.
- **Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalayaScheme(KGBV):** This scheme was launched in July, 2004, to provide education to girls at primary level. It is primarily for the underprivileged and rural areas where literacy level for females is very low. The schools that were set up have 100% reservation: 75% for backward class and 25% for BPL (below Poverty line) females.
- **National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL):** This programme was launched in July, 2003. It was an incentive to reach out to the girls who the SSA was not able to reach through other schemes. The SSA called out to the "hardest to reach girls". This scheme has covered 24 states in India. Under the NPEGEL, "model schools" have been set up to provide better opportunities to girls. One notable success came in 2013, when the first two girls ever scored in the top 10 ranks of the entrance exam to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). SibbalaLeenaMadhuri ranked eighth, and AditiLaddha ranked sixth.

Raising awareness:

The Canadian start-up Decode Global has developed the mobile game Get Water!, a game for social change focusing on the water scarcity in India and the effect it has on girls' education, especially in slums and rural areas. In areas with no ready access to water, girls are often pulled out of school to collect water for their families.

Effects on economic development:

Both individuals and countries benefit from women's education. Individuals who invest in education receive a net monetary gain over the course of their lifetime. According to Harry Patrinos, lead education economist at the World Bank, "the profitability of education, according to estimates of private rate of return, is indisputable, universal, and global." The principle holds particularly for women, who can expect a 1.2% higher return than men on the resources they invest in education. Providing one extra year of education to girls increases

their wages by 10-20%. This increase is 5% more than the corresponding returns on providing a boy with an extra year of schooling.

This individual monetary gain creates an increase in the overall economic productivity of a country. Girls are underrepresented in schooling, meaning that investments aimed specifically at educating women should produce bigger dividends. Although investment in women's education is not present everywhere, David Dollar and Roberta Gatti present findings that show this decision along with other failures to invest in women are not "an efficient economic choice for developing countries" and that "countries that under-invest grow more slowly. Looking holistically at the opportunity cost of not investing in girls, the total missed GDP growth is between 1.2% and 1.5%. When looking at different regions, it is estimated that 0.4-0.9% of the difference in GDP growth is accounted for solely by differences in the gender gap in education. The effect of the educational gender gap is more pronounced when a country is only moderately poor. Thus the incentive to invest in women goes up as a country moves out of extreme poverty.

In addition to total economic growth, women's education also increases the equitability of the distribution of wealth in a society. Increased women's education is important for achieving this as it targets the impoverished women, a particularly disadvantaged group. There is also evidence that lower gender disparity in educational attainment for a developing country correlates with lower overall income disparity within society.

A literate mother has the skills and knowledge to provide better child care and healthier children, understands the importance of providing balanced nutrition, comprehends the advantages of a small family norm, has the skills to promote learning and education, and can instill "in her offspring the right attitudes and behavior expected from them by the society". Boliva (2010) stated that investing in women's literacy carries very high returns: it improves livelihoods, leads to better child and maternal health, and favours girls' access to education" (Oyitso&Olumukoro, 2012.). "They also use more family planning and have fewer and healthier children than non-literate women" (Kagitchibasi, Gosken&Gulgoz, 2005.). "Literate women are found to enjoy a higher status in the family than non-literate women" (Olateju, 2007.). "Educated mothers are more likely to send their children to school than the uneducated ones" (Oyitso&Olumukoro, 2012.).

Links have been established between parents' educational level and children's achievement and "research studies show that children whose parents have less than a high school education tend to have the poorest performance on reading tests" (Kogut, 2004,) and further that mothers' literacy level predicts children's literacy development (van Steensel, 2006). "Effective adult literacy programs are not only important for adult literacy learning but are also important for the literacy development of children and adolescents" (Lynch, 2009). Purcell-Gates's (1996) research, cited by Lynch (2009), "also showed that children's early literacy achievement related to parents' engagement in specific types of print literacy activities, particularly those with more complex levels of discourse for leisure and entertainment". A child denied their right of a quality primary education is disadvantaged and handicapped all through life. Literacy, reading, writing, arithmetic and life skills are important to have the ability to succeed in life. Economic benefits Educating women also improves the level of economic development in a country. The higher the level of educational status for women, the more developed the nation. Imhabekhai and Olumukoro (2007) (cited in Oyitso&Olumukoro, 2012.) have pointed out that "literacy is a basic instrument in social transformation," including for empowering women in the process of economic development and reduce poverty. Further, Oyitso, &Olumukoro, (2012) observe that, "Aderinoye (2004), quoted in Adekola and Abanum (2010) says that the difference between the developed and underdeveloped countries of the world is related to the level of literacy among the populace". In short, newly literate women have a positive ripple effect on all the economic development indicators. "The role of women in the economic development of the nation cannot be over-emphasised. They constitute 70% of the group that produces food for the nations. They cultivate and grow food to feed the families and the nation at large". "Efed (2008) said literate women create income or wealth for the family through their good and benefiting employment whether in private or public sector" "There are 771 million adult illiter-

ates in the world today and two-third of them are women²⁸ : Church and university programs contributing to women's literacy church program details contributing elements Sabbath School engagement with Bible based life development principles and practices- program planning- participation in performance- discussion and rational support Annual International Women's Day celebration celebration of womanhood including adapting to the establishment of social equity day of celebration – church program, discussion, luncheon and social interaction and networking, promoting determination to- preach in church- pray in churches- share written material and if necessary communally read before the formal presentations- discuss written material to be used for the formal presentations- engage in all aspects of life Partners in Ministry programs monthly sessions incorporating both teaching skills and sharing information- health programs- sharing and reading together religious written material- health programs on women's cancers- budgeting and financial issues- how to read and fill-out government forms Women's Ministry programs outreach – services directed to the broader community visits to the local hospitals to read Bible verses and to sing in reach – services directed to a personal community Sabbath morning special prayer sessions and devotions taken by the women Adventist Youth program- search Sabbath afternoon, the AY program includes sessions that enable people some topics:- how to choose a marriage partner- parenting skills- systematic Bible reading skills Branch Sabbath Schools Sabbath morning visits to local villages- sharing of written material- presentations of worship programs, with an emphasis on engaging children- Health Summit yearly health summit information sharing and network establishment Research & Scholarship Political benefits Personal empowerment through literacy can translate into participation in the political process, and through informed discussion of policies, the enacting of democracy. "Educated people are to some extent more likely to vote and voice more tolerant attitudes and democratic values" (Hannum and Buchman, 2003; cited in Oyitso&Olmukoro, 2012, p. 73). Literate women have contributed to the political stability and peace of their country. In summary, educating women has the potential to improve all aspects of life: everyone in society benefits if women are educated. Literacy programs in PNG Papua New Guinea (PNG) is desperate to improve women's access to basic literacy. Basic Literacy Programs in PNG and the access by women's to literacy programs must be well-designed, culturally appropriate, linked to authentic reading and writing resources, consider social and family issues, and as well financial facilities. Provision of literacy programs Designing and implementing well-planned, organized and non-formal adult literacy programs can empower women. In PNG, most of these Pacific Adventist University program details contributing elements social inclusion activities gender equity programs counseling and ongoing support family and social learning

- sewing classes
- classes
- banking and financial sessions HIV education clinic support disabilities provision achieved by:
- acceptance and access to support if needed
- physical access provided to spaces
- sign language in church programs child protection and development Sabbath Schools, Pathfinders, education programs environment- campus communication regarding feral

Animals- recycling ideas and practices Food for Life improving life for people who are disadvantaged- providing food for people living on the local rubbish dumps- building, equipping and financially supporting new elementary schools in the Port Moresby district

- supporting HIV sufferers in hospitals academic schools School of Education
- yearly literacy training course for all teachers
- service type education program to education providers that cater for students with all forms of disabilities (eg Cheshire Homes, Red Cross)
- week of activities to celebrate Christian Education regular health services to residents of PAU and surrounding villages nurses individual medical appointments specialised services
- diabetics testing
- HIV testing
- malaria test prenatal and postnatal care
- birthing facilities

- regular times for baby clinic
- regular times for immunization

Research & Scholarship:

Programs are provided by church agencies. Literacy programs have a flow-on affect, strengthening the churches' capacity for development. By building the institutional capacity of PNG churches, churches are better able to contribute to strengthening governance in PNG, and improving service delivery. Church literacy programs, based on 'life in all its fullness', entails reframing the mission of the church to address issues of social and political concern, or 'living the gospel' through social action; holistic service for integral human development; and transformation. Through generating an understanding that men and women should be living in 'Christian partnerships', more equal and equitable gender relations can be fostered. Churches, with their networks and influence, have the potential to effect significant change in attitudes and behavior. Church sponsored courses are usually free of charge, commonly held at a church community hall and organized by female trainers.

Churches, with sponsorship from Aid Agencies have a choice of programs. The most common program conducted consisted of a 120-hour curriculum, the Basic Literacy Program, provided by the Ministry of Education, and run over three to four months involving participants for three to four hours, three times a week. Some churches have designed their own programs. All have varying levels of success. Provision of broader educational training whichever type of literacy program is used, research has shown that adult literacy levels remain low despite a large number of adult literacy programs being implemented (Guy, 2005). Some research (Duffy, 1992; Janes&Kermani, 2001) has shown that providing literacy skills only is seldom enough. When people learn to read, they do not automatically gain access to all the information they may need because privilege or prejudice, such as that associated with class or gender, is a strong determiner of who can know what. In the PNG context, physical and social isolation, status in the family and lack of access to practice one's new skills, can deter and diminish the usefulness of the literacy classes. To address the ineffectiveness of some adult literacy programs, it has been suggested that programs should have strong links to adults' daily lives (Kagitcibasi, Goksen, & Gulgoz, 2005).

Learners must use discourse within the community to engage in authentic activities, and engage in value placed literacy events. For example, Lynch (2009,) cites the following three sources. Zubair (2001) found that in rural Pakistan, some of the print literacy practices of women entail reading prayers, newspapers, magazines, novels, medicine labels, cards, and calendars. Writing activities included letters, diaries, record keeping, messages, poetry, and short stories. Participants in another study, who were all low income mothers, liked word games, romance novels, and autobiographical writing that may support the need to express feelings, the need for recreation, and to escape from daily life stresses and activities (Finlay, 1999). Mace (1998) claimed that literacy might serve as a temporal excursion from the mundane... Purcell-Gates (1996) found that engagement included fliers, coupons, advertisements, television notices, grocery lists, name writing, and more. Indeed, for many of the reported studies, children would observe parents engaging in many of these literacy events. It is also suggested that participants use their literacy skills to discuss subjects such as communication in the family, child discipline, first aid, health and family planning, and citizenship rights. These topics can approach social and gender issues, such as the importance of marriage records, issues relating to marrying late, having a small family, and supporting the education of the girls in the family. Literacy skills can incorporate practical communication methods, such as using the mobile phone, electronic banking, following electronically recorded instructions, and filling out official documents. Literacy programs are more than teaching the rudiments of reading, writing and mathematics, it is about being an effective contributing member of society. Linking literacy programs to financial services Literacy is linked to economic empowerment. In the PNG context, the majority of women wish for economic security. Microcredit is more than access to money it is access to financial services. It is a self-help program that enables women to secure economic and financial strength. The effect of women having the capacity to save, access credit and banking services, has been more successful than when women just have access to credit subsidies (Babu, 2011.). The effect of women having contributed to

the financial situation at home, earned greater respect from both their husbands and children; and more importantly, has avoided family quarrels about money (Babu, 2011). Generally, women feel empowered, more confident, enjoy mobility and have a greater ease in visiting banks and financial institutions. Women empowerment initiatives such as microfinance operations and micro enterprises have been a powerful tool to assist women to operate and own their own business. Basic literacy, linked with these opportunities, has an enabling factor for women. The main benefits for linking literacy and access to financial opportunities is in inducing a multiplying effect. First, the income to families improves. Secondly, women have the confidence and self esteem to be independent, communicate, network, interact and enhance personal freedom. Lastly, economic independence can raise the family finances above the poverty line.

Conclusion:

The UN secretary General Ban-Ki-Moon said, "that if women are empowered through literacy, considering their multiple roles in the society, they will contribute greatly to the development of the nation. Women need greater access to educational opportunities, skill acquisition and positions of authority to be truly empowered" (Oyitso&Olo-mukoro, 2012,). Literacy programs, with a link to financial opportuni-

ties can improve living conditions of women; and, allow women to participate in "Literacy skills can incorporate practical communication methods, such as using the mobile phone, electronic banking, following electronically recorded instructions, and filling out official documents Research & Scholarship processes that will enhance their development at home, in the community and at national levels. Basic literacy education is linked to skills acquisition, access to information regarding health, nutrition status, legal rights and financial services, enhancing women's development socially, economically, politically. "Education, formal or non-formal, is the foremost agent of empowerment" (Oyitso and Olomukoro, 2012,). Effective programs, such as Functional Adult Literacy Programs, connect women to the public sphere and have the potential to create a sense of competence. Thus, while most learning still takes place within the context of the community, the public nature of the activity broadens the participants' horizon. Literacy provides a distinct advantage to these previously illiterate women in urban society. Literacy is therefore, a basic instrument for empowering women in the process of social transformation, modernization and economic development. When women are literate, everyone in society gains!

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