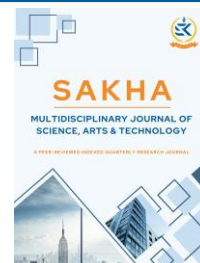




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Barriers to Girls' Education in Rural India: An Examination of the Link Between Poverty, Patriarchy, And Access to Quality Education in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Education is the protuberant tool for ameliorate the status of marginalized or weaker session in India. Indeed, the progress gradually made by self determination and the aid of the Government. However, it has some barriers to getting proper education the rural areas, especially the women. Despite India's progress in expanding options in education, girls from rural areas have still found some serious impediments to obtaining a good education. The complicated interplay of poverty, deep-seated patriarchal attitudes, and a lack of proper educational infrastructure in general puts limitations on rural girls in terms of achieving education and developing their socioeconomic potential. The paper, therefore, tries to understand the complex interrelation among these factors by highlighting subtle impediments to girls' schooling in rural India and pointing out solutions for development.

Keywords: Rural India, Women Education, Poverty, Patriarchy, Quality Education, Tamil Nadu.

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Introduction

In India, education is the most effective means of improving the lot of the weaker or disadvantaged segments of society. Indeed, with the help of the government and self-determination, progress was accomplished gradually. Nonetheless, there are still obstacles to receiving a quality education in rural regions, particularly for women. Even though India has made strides in increasing educational alternatives, rural girls continue to face significant barriers to receiving a quality education. Rural girls' access to school and the development of their socioeconomic potential are hampered by the complex interactions of poverty, ingrained patriarchal beliefs, and a general lack of adequate educational infrastructure. Therefore, by identifying subtle barriers to girls' education in rural India and suggesting alternatives for growth, the research attempts to comprehend the intricate interplay among these issues.

1.1 Tamil Nadu

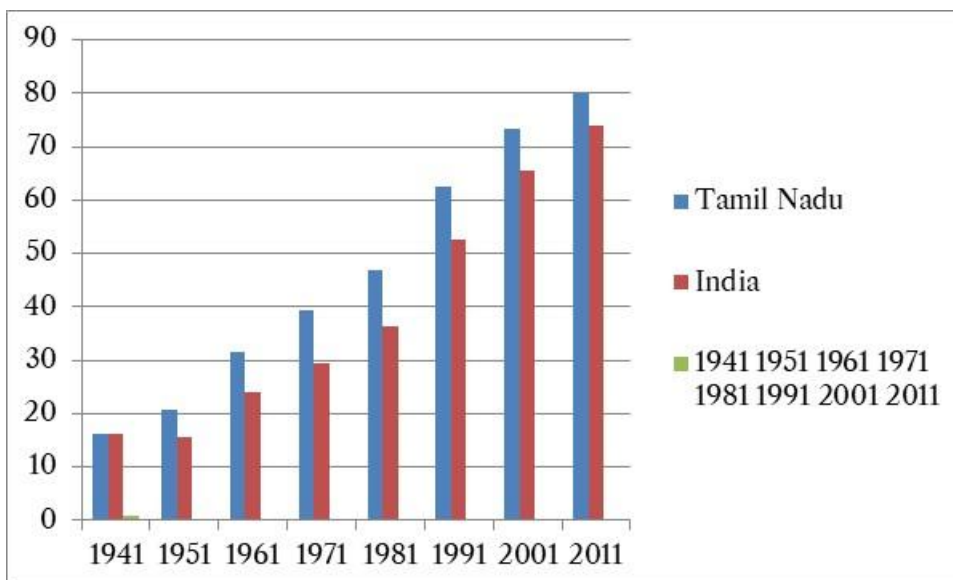
Situated in the southernmost point of the Indian Peninsula, Tamilnadu State has borders with the Indian Ocean to the south, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to the north, the Bay of Bengal to the east, and Kerala State to the west. Each of the 29 administrative districts that make up the State of Tamilnadu is further split into 16,317 villages and other minor entities. Madras, the state capital, has been renamed Chennai, which is presently the 30th biggest metropolis in the world and the fourth largest city in the Indian Subcontinent. It is 174 square kilometers in size.

Literacy Rate

The literacy rate in Tamil Nadu State increased from 62.66% in the 1991 survey to 73.47% in the 2001 census. This illustrates the robust growth in literacy. The population's literacy rate in 2001 was 65.38%, compared to 52.21% in 1991, and this growth rate is consistent with growth rates across India. The literacy rates of Tamil Nadu from the 1941 and 2001 censuses are contrasted with the national average below.

Literacy Rate	Tamil Nadu	India
1941	16.19	16.10
1951	20.85	15.67
1961	31.41	24.02
1971	39.46	29.45
1981	46.76	36.23
1991	62.66	52.51
2001	73.47	65.38
2011	80.09	74.04

In 2011, the Tamil Nadu literacy rate has high to compare to national literacy rate. However still have to move on the cent -percent literacy in the same, especially rural background.



2.1 History of Women's education in India

For the nation to completely grow, women's education is crucial. It works similarly to an effective medication in curing a patient and restoring their health. India has a great chance to advance socially and economically via women's education. Through their contributions at home and in the workplace, educated women are the weapons that have a good influence on Indian society. They are the cause of the nation's better economy and society. A woman with education is

capable of managing both her personal and professional lives. Due to their preference for later marriages compared to uneducated women, they may successfully aid in population control in India.

In addition to being regarded as one of the best democracies in the world, India's economy grew at the quickest rate in the world during the October–December 2018 fiscal quarter, surpassing China in the process. This accomplishment was only made possible by the implementation of gender equality and universal education. The main reasons for India's development have been encouraging women's education and guaranteeing their literacy. According to the data, women's education and development have increased at an unprecedented rate in recent decades. India is rapidly moving toward socioeconomic development never before witnessed as more and more Indian women join the workforce via empowerment and education.

When India attained independence, the country's female literacy rate was a pitifully low 8.6%. After being permitted to participate in the independence movement, women were now restricted to the home, which resulted in the establishment of a patriarchal society controlled by males. According to the 2011 census, India's female literacy rate rose from 8.6% in 1951 to 64.63%. Although this rise in the female literacy rate is positive and encouraging, there is a negative aspect to it as well. India's current female literacy rate is lower than its male literacy rate, which is 81.3% and 65.6%, respectively. India's female education rate of 65.6% is far lower than the global average of 79.7%. The situation is particularly dire in rural regions, where the dropout rate among females is frightening and fewer girls attend school than boys.

Over time, women's education in India has seen significant transformation. Women's education was valued in ancient India and had a resurgence during the British colonial era after declining throughout the medieval era. Following independence, the Indian government passed laws aimed at promoting women's education, and programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan were established to increase access. Notwithstanding advancements, obstacles still exist, and more work has to be done to achieve the objectives of women's education and empowerment.

2.2 Factors Influencing the Education of Women

The issues that plague women's education in India are complex and multifaceted. Males predominate in Indian society. Women are restricted to the boundaries of their homes and are not granted the same social standing as males. Even though women are better educated and employed in metropolitan regions, gender equality is still lacking in rural areas, which make up 70% of India's population. In many communities, educating a lady or a female child is seen as an unprofitable endeavor. In many rural civilizations, women are seen as a burden that must eventually be passed on to another family after marriage.

These include, among other things, Sociological Challenges Women's educational opportunities are restricted by deeply embedded gender stereotypes and segregation in Indian culture. In actuality, Indian society's conventional patriarchal mindset often limits women's options by prioritizing the education of males above that of girls. Gender Stereotypes: Before going to school and getting a career, girls are often expected to take care of their kids and home duties. Early Marriage and Childbearing: Due to early marriage or pregnancy, many Indian girls either never attended school at all or ultimately quit out. Family and Community Pressures: Women are often influenced by their families and society to prioritize domestic chores above their education. Women's limited mobility due to safety concerns often prevents them from enrolling in educational institutions. Social norms and expectations: Women in particular are often expected to adhere to established roles and performance standards, which unquestionably limit their access to higher education and employment prospects. Caste and Class Barriers: Women from lower castes and economically disadvantaged groups find it more difficult to get an education due to systemic prejudice and inequality. Absence of Female Mentors and Role Models: Women are unable to see themselves in leadership positions since there aren't enough female mentors and role models in institutions. bias and Discrimination: Women may experience bias and discrimination as a result of their education, which might reduce their expectations and prospects. Rural-Urban Divide: Due to problems with opportunity, infrastructure, and resources, women's educational goals face unique challenges in rural regions.

Women should not be excluded from any development activity and should have the same educational opportunities as males. Since women make up over half of the population, if half of the nation lacks education, the socioeconomic situation will be terrible. India's social and economic progress will be accelerated by women's education. Nationwide awareness and propaganda campaigns are essential to raising awareness of the value of women's education and raising its standard across the nation. A well-educated lady may teach her whole family and, thus, the entire nation. Because of the low level of education among women, India is the second most populous nation in the world. If a woman lacks education, the nation's future will also lack education. In the medieval ages, women's education was a problem in India, although it has since been mostly resolved. In India, women's education has been prioritized equally as much as men's in order to improve the nation's social and economic standing. In the past, women were prohibited from leaving their homes. Their schooling consisted mostly of household chores. During British administration in India, notable social reformers who focused on women's education were Raja Ram Mohan Ray and Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar. Men and women make up half of the nation's population. Since they are like two sides of the same coin, they should have equal opportunities to contribute to the progress of the nation. Women are essential because they bear the next generation, therefore one cannot live without the other. They would produce educated future generations and improve India's social and economic circumstances if they were well-educated.

2.3 Economic Issues

The main obstacles preventing females from receiving an education are poverty, a lack of funds, and competing demands for their domestic work. Poverty: Many Indian families are unable to pay for their daughters' education due to their financial situation. Cost of schooling: Many families cannot afford the tuition, textbooks, and uniforms that come with schooling. Opportunity Cost: Families often choose to invest in boys' education rather than girls' because boys' education is seen to provide higher returns on investment than girls'. restricted financial resources: Women's restricted access to financial resources might make it challenging for them to seek higher education. Household tasks: Women are

often expected to do household chores, which drains their energies and leaves them with little time and energy for academic pursuits.

2.4 Absence of resources for financial help and scholarships

In India, there aren't many options for financial help and scholarships to encourage women's education. work and income possibilities: Women would find it difficult to defend the expense of attending school given the dearth of work and earning options available to them. Social and cultural pressures: These forces may force families to prioritize the education of males above that of girls. Limited Technology Access: Women may find it more challenging to access educational opportunities and resources if they have limited access to computers and the internet, for example. Economic Dependency: Women's financial reliance on their family members may limit their ability to make independent decisions about their education and careers.

Safety and Infrastructure In addition to worries about safety and security, one of the main issues influencing girls' attendance at school is the absence of proper sanitary facilities.

Barriers related to infrastructure One of the primary reasons for poor enrollment and dropout rates is a lack of proper educational infrastructure. Basic facilities including drinking water, power, and bathrooms are absent from the majority of Indian schools. **Limited access to technology:** The quality of education that women should get is significantly impacted by the fact that the majority of Indian schools lack computers and have poor internet and other digital resource availability. **Absence of instructors and classrooms:** A poor learning environment may arise from both overcrowding and a teacher shortage. **Lack of hostel facilities:** The majority of universities and institutes do not provide safe and secure hostel rooms for ladies. **Insufficient transportation:** Due to a shortage of transportation choices, the majority of women are unable to go to educational institutions.

Barriers for Safety **Concerns about safety when commuting:** Students, especially women, experience harassment and abuse while traveling to school. **Sexual harassment on campus:** Many female students experience sexual harassment and

abuse on campus, which makes the studying environment unfriendly. Inadequate security measures: Most educational institutions do not guarantee guards, CCTV cameras, or emergency response systems. An environment of fear and intimidation may be produced by stalking and cyberbullying, in which female students are the victims. Absence of support systems: The majority of educational establishments lack a grievance procedure and/or security-related counseling services.

2.5 Women Teachers and Role Models Are Underrepresented

It is difficult for females to picture themselves in academic and professional roles since there are so few female educators and role models. Absence of Female Teachers

The poor representation: Poor and rural regions have a disproportionately low number of female teachers in Indian schools. Few role models: Because there are fewer female instructors, there aren't many female role models. Effect on girls' education: When there aren't enough female instructors, females are less likely to pursue further education, particularly in STEM fields. The underrepresentation of women in education feeds patriarchal attitudes and prejudices.

2.6 Insufficient Female Role Models

The lack of exposure makes it difficult for girls and women to see themselves in leadership roles since they too often do not see women in these roles. Stereotyping: Society and the media often perpetuate negative stereotypes about girls and women, which contribute to constricting expectations and goals.

2.7 Lack of Mentors

It is difficult for girls and women to pursue their educational and professional goals when there aren't enough role models. Effect on ambitions and self-esteem: Girls' aspirations and self-esteem may suffer due to a dearth of female role models, which may restrict their chances and potential.

2.8 Repercussions

In fact, a shortage of female educators and role models may be a factor in the low educational attainment of women and girls. In this way, the underrepresentation of female educators and role models perpetuates inequity in academic performance and other domains. Without female mentors or role models, females may miss out on chances to reach their full potential and accomplish their dreams. Curriculum and Educational Resources

Educational resources and curricula that are gender-based have the potential to restrict girls' ambitions and perpetuate prejudices. A comprehensive strategy including community involvement, governmental policy, and personal empowerment is needed to remove these obstacles. Women's education is important in India.

Every person has the basic right to education, which is also a major factor in socioeconomic growth. However, one of the largest obstacles still facing India is the education of women. Despite a number of improvements over the last 20 years, millions of women and girls still lack access to high-quality education. According to UNESCO, India has one of the lowest percentages of female literacy worldwide. This is particularly problematic in rural places, where a high rate of poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and other conservation-related factors cause many females to drop out of school. Women's restricted access to education has far-reaching effects. It upholds patriarchal traditions, restricts economic prospects, and prolongs poverty. Furthermore, contemporary women are denied the opportunity to fully engage in India's expanding economy and support the nation's social and cultural advancement.

In response to these issues, the Indian government has started a number of initiatives for women's education, including the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which are meant to provide girls and women greater access to high-quality education. However, much more work has to be done. To encourage and motivate girls and women to pursue education, civil society organizations, community leaders, and individuals must work together to create an enabling environment. By educating women, half of India's population could become an engine of social progress, economic growth, and an equitable society for all.

2.9 Plans and Initiatives

The Indian government now has many programs promoting women's education, including Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, a social program for girls' education and to prevent female foeticide that was started in 2015, and Working Women Hostels, which provide lodging for working women. It will support the Training and Employment Programme (STEP), which provides education and training to prepare women for gainful employment, self-employment, or entrepreneurship; Mahila-E-Haat, an online marketplace established in 2016 to sell goods and services provided by female entrepreneurs; and RGSEAG, the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Employment of Adolescent Girls. One-Stop Centre Scheme: A programme offering integrated support services, including education, counselling, and legal aid to women victims of violence; Nari Shakti Puraskar: An award scheme recognising and honouring women's contributions to society and their empowerment; Swadhar Greh: This programme provides food, shelter, and other care facilities to impoverished women for education and rehabilitation.

Concluding remarks and suggestions In India's rural regions, the fundamental problems with girls' education may be intricate and multifaceted.

Education For All

Everyone has a right to education, according to the statement "education for all." Its goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to acquire and gain from a basic education—not as a result of luck or privilege, but as a right.

According to Article 45 of the Indian Constitution, all children up to the age of fourteen are entitled to free and compulsory education. The objective of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) was to be accomplished within the following 10 years, or by 1960, when the Constitution was adopted in 1950. The objective was far too ambitious to accomplish in only 10 years, especially considering the educational resources that were available in the nation at the time. The National Institute of Educational Planning & Administration (NIEPA), the National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT), and several other institutions were established in the 1960s to help realize the UEE mission. The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1968, the NPE of 1986, the Program

of Action (POA) elaborated in the NPE of 1986, and the updated form of the NPE in 1992 all gave the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) program unqualified priority in order to provide access to elementary education for all children up to the age of 14 and to ensure universal participation until they complete the elementary stage of educational programs. India inherited a system of education at the time of its independence in 1947 that was not only numerically tiny but also marked by the maintenance of significant structural and intra-regional disparities. One in three children had attended elementary school, and just 14% of the population was literate. A literate populace and universal education for all children aged 6 to 14 were acknowledged as essential components of nation-building and were appropriately addressed in subsequent five-year plans. The NPE of 1968 placed a strong emphasis on improving school quality and eradicating inequalities in the educational system. The focus was not only on enrollment, but also on retention. Although the number of elementary schools increased significantly between 1950 and 1968, statistics indicate that the retention rate dropped to 35% in 1967–1968 (Shirname, 2007). This demonstrates that the policy statement was not converted into a thorough implementation plan. As a consequence, issues with quantity, quality, accessibility, usefulness, and cost have grown to enormous proportions throughout time. According to the Fifth All India Educational Survey (1986), there is still a primary-level enrollment gap amongst the states. In 1986, the Indian government created a new education strategy to address these issues. This program prioritized a significant increase in educational quality in addition to universal access, enrollment, and retention of students up to the age of 14. Addressing the issue of school dropouts was given top emphasis under this approach. The policy's focus on non-formal education makes this clear.

The overall literacy rate in India is 65.38 percent. The literacy rates for men and women are 75.85% and 54.16%, respectively. West Bengal has an overall literacy rate of 69.22%, with 77.58% of men and 60.22% of women being literate. Males from the scheduled caste have a literacy rate of 66.64%, while females have a rate of 41.90%. According to the 2001 Census of India, the literacy rate among scheduled tribes is 34.76% for women and 59.17% for men. The 2001 Indian census has been taken into consideration for this purpose since the 2011 census

data is unavailable for the aforementioned categories. Education for all refers to equality across caste and tribal lines as well as the provision of free and mandatory education up to the age of 14. However, the aforementioned figures show that tribal tribes have experienced educational backwardness, inequality, and hardship that is much worse than that of West Bengal's Scheduled Caste community. Due in large part to their ignorance of education as a fundamental right, Scheduled Caste Communities often have poorer educational attainment than the general population. Nonetheless, the government has an obligation to inform the general public about the laws and rights that will tangentially support the preservation of equality.

At the same time, it was determined that every five years, the different aspects of the New Policy's implementation must be evaluated. This would determine how well the policy is being implemented and concentrate on the new developments in the field of education. The preceding policy was updated in several ways by the NPE, 1986, which was changed in 1992 as a "Program of Action (POA)." Universal access and enrollment, universal retention of children until the age of 14, and a significant increase in educational quality to allow all children to attain fundamental learning levels at the primary school levels were the three main focuses of the POA, 1992.

Every human being has the basic right to an education. It establishes the framework for society's growth. Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Right (1628), the US Constitution (1787), the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), and the US Bill of Rights (1791) are just a few of the written documents that set the foundation for human rights today. Every person benefits from education, but this is especially true for India's underprivileged groups, such as scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. As a fundamental right, education improves a nation's involvement in various fields and raises the living standards of the general populace. In 2009, the Right to schooling Act was passed by the Indian Parliament, requiring all children between the ages of six and fourteen to receive free and compulsory schooling. The Act declares that providing free and compulsory education is a legally binding obligation of both the federal government and the states.

3.1 Education as a Tool of Empowerment

The two main issues facing us at this point are how to begin the process and how to empower Dalit women. It goes without saying that action plans by themselves do not guarantee that the intended audience will respond. It is often recognized that unless the intended beneficiaries are unable to engage in the programs designed to improve their situation, a highly constructive strategy, an effective action plan, enough financial resources, and competent and efficient implementation machinery would be ineffective. Targeted individuals might also actively engage if they are capable of doing so. Therefore, starting capacity building initiatives is a fundamental need before beginning any empowering or developing endeavors. Here, "capacity to participate" refers to the ability to read, write, acquire and absorb new concepts, methods, and communication skills, as well as to embrace new technologies and a variety of related educational activities.

Everyone agrees that education is the only technique that works and the best way to empower people. Education is more than simply teaching someone how to read and write or making them literate. Here, it refers to a wider range of abilities, such as absorbing information, technology, and skills in addition to being able to read and write. Education is thus the more potent and successful instrument of empowerment. If women are more educated, knowledgeable, and capable of making logical judgments, empowerment will become more significant. The opposite sex must also be made aware of the need of women's empowerment. Changes in cultural attitudes and ideas about the role of women in many areas of life must be ushered in. This might be accomplished by:

- Ensuring Dalit women and girls have equal access to education,

Special steps should be taken to end discrimination based on caste and class; a gender-sensitive educational system should be established; girls' enrollment and retention rates should rise; education quality should be improved to support lifelong learning as well as the development of occupation, learning, and acquiring/technical skills; and closing the gender gap in secondary and higher education should be a priority.

- Reaching sectoral and time-bound goals within current policies, with an emphasis on women and girls, especially those from underrepresented

groups like Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, and Minorities.

- In order to combat sex stereotyping as one of the root causes of gender discrimination, gender-sensitive curriculum should be developed at all educational levels.
- Offering financial support, establishing more dorms, enhancing remedial coaching programs, etc.

In order to overcome these obstacles, extensive action must be taken at the individual, community, and policy levels of government. Increasing funding for programs aimed at educating girls, enhancing school safety and infrastructure, hiring and training more female teachers, encouraging community involvement and raising awareness of girls' education, and offering scholarships and other forms of financial assistance for girls are some of the recommendations.

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