



REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)

VOLUME - 15 | ISSUE - 5 | FEBRUARY - 2026



WOMEN EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In ancient Indian culture, education was considered the foundation of all-round development. During the Vedic period, women were given a respectable place in society and ample opportunity to get education. Various Indian sages like Gargi, Maitreyi, Lopamudra made important contributions in the field of Vedic literature and philosophy. But due to the change of time and social, religious and cultural changes, women's education started to decline. Gradually, many restrictions were imposed on women's education in the medieval period.



The main purpose of this research paper is to analyze the status, system and reasons for its decline of women's education in ancient India. Through this study, the educational position of women in ancient Indian society has been evaluated.

KEYWORDS: *ancient Indian culture, education, society and ample opportunity.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main tool for human development. For the all-round development of our society, it is necessary for both men and women to be educated. The ancient education system was very well-organized and value-based. During the Vedic period, women had the opportunity to get education. In the Vedic period, women were active in the fields of philosophy, religion and literature.

Mentions of women's education are found in Vedic literature. Women studied the Vedas, participated in religious rituals and also joined philosophical discussions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this research are as follows:

- To study the status of female education in the social system of ancient India.
- To understand the system of female education in the Vedic period in India.
- To analyze the various contributions of women scholars in ancient India.
- To find the reasons for the decline in female education over time.
- To understand the impact of ancient female education on modern society.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research attempts to find answers to the following questions:

- What was the system and status of female education in ancient India?
- How did women get education in the Vedic era?
- What contribution did women scholars make to the Indian knowledge tradition?
- Why did female education decline with the passage of time?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses historical and descriptive methods. This study is mainly based on secondary sources. In which conclusions have been drawn about women's education by analyzing Vedic literature, Upanishads, ancient Indian history texts, research articles, books of historians, etc.

EDUCATION SYSTEM OF ANCIENT INDIA

In ancient India, there was a Gurukul system for education. In which students used to stay in the ashram of the Guru and get education with various activities. In which not only books were given importance, but moral, spiritual, practical, religious, household, social and cultural education was also included. So that the child develops all-roundly as he grows up. In ancient India, every educated child was capable of fulfilling every responsibility.

In ancient India, students used to study subjects such as Vedas and Upanishads, grammar, mathematics, philosophy, music and art, martial arts, ethics, logic, psychology etc. In which some evidence shows that women also participated in education.

Women's Education in the Vedic Period

The Vedic period is considered the golden age for women's education. In the Vedic period, women could get education in their favorite subjects. There were no restrictions on them. During this time, women had freedom to get education. They studied the Vedas and Upanishads. Women also participated in various religious rituals. At that time, women were divided into two categories for education:

One was educated throughout life. Who studied the Vedas and philosophy.

The other was educated before marriage. After becoming educated, they entered family life.

SCHOLARLY WOMEN OF ANCIENT INDIA

Many scholarly women are mentioned in ancient Indian literature:

Maitreyi

Maitreyi is known as a wise woman and philosopher of the Vedic period. Maitreyi was the wife of the great sage Yajnavalkya. She was eager to learn spiritual knowledge and Brahminvidya. She is also known as "Brahmavadini". She had the highest knowledge of spirituality. She considered spirituality greater than wealth. It is known from the life of Maitreyi that even in ancient times, women were educated in philosophy.

Gargi

Gargi was intelligent and inquisitive from childhood. She was educated in the Vedas, Upanishads and philosophy. Gargi was present in the assembly of great sages and scholars in the court of King Janaka. She was considered the great philosopher of the Vedic age. She proved the capabilities of women. Women are also as capable as men in knowledge and philosophical thought. Gargi's life teaches us that: Men and women are equal in acquiring knowledge. Education leads to greatness. Even in ancient India, women had the freedom to get education.

Lopamudra

Lopamudra composed the Suktas in the Rigveda. Lopamudra was a great scholar of ancient India. She held an important place in knowledge, penance and literature. She was known as the wife of sage Agastya. In Vedic times, women had complete freedom to get education. Lopamudra is a great example of this. She was intelligent and inquisitive from childhood. She has shown a balance between knowledge, religion and married life.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN THE BUDDHIST AND JAIN ERAS

In the Buddhist and Jain eras, women also had the opportunity to get spiritual and intellectual education. Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, gave women the opportunity to acquire religion

and knowledge. Women had the opportunity to get education in the Bhikshuni Sangha established by Buddha for women. In the Bhikshuni Sangha, the language, religion, morality, meditation and philosophy were studied.

Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, accepted the equality of men and women. Women were given religious and moral education in the Jain era. In Jainism, women became nuns and studied Jain scriptures and teachings. During this time, women started becoming missionaries, teachers and writers.

REASONS FOR THE DECLINE IN WOMEN'S EDUCATION

After the Vedic era, women's education started to decline. In the medieval era, the practice of child marriage, patriarchal social system, religious restrictions, beliefs that limited women to household chores, and social insecurity led to a huge decline in female education.

DISCUSSION

It is clear from this research that women had an important place in the field of education in the Vedic era. In the Vedic era, women could advance in their favorite fields. Women could express their ideas without social or religious restrictions. With the change of time, women's education also gradually started declining. The social traditions and beliefs in the society were largely responsible for it. In which there was an attempt to limit the role of women somewhere. Due to which the level of female education decreased a lot in the medieval era. At present, the government is promoting female education through various girl child education schemes.

CONCLUSION

Women's education has been of great importance in ancient India. During the Vedic era, women made significant contributions in the field of education and knowledge. In ancient times, learned women like Gargi, Maitreyi and Lopamudra enriched Indian knowledge. But over time, women's education declined. In today's times, it is very important to promote women's education because educated women play an important role in the development of the entire society.

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