

A STUDY ON THE GENDER EQUALITY AND STATE -WISE FEMALE LITERACY RATE AMONG THE REGIONS IN INDIA

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(ABSTRACT)

Gender inequality is a problem felt by Indian society. Any step towards attaining gender equality must be in the line of inculcating and developing women entrepreneurship and thereby ensuring women empowerment. Women are a vital part of the nation's economy, constituting one third of the national labour force and a major contributor to the survival of the family. Many governments have made important strides in improving the status of girl's education. Successful government programmes in Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Kenya, and Mexico, for example, helped more girls gain access to education through scholarships and stipends that help poor families send their daughter to school. Guinea, Guatemala, Peru, Morocco likewise have successfully increased girls school enrolment rates. Despite these gains, however, much more needs to be done to remove gender barriers to learning and literacy for girls. The education gap for girls in developing countries and post-conflict societies remains collective global task. There is a need to continue to work together to lay the foundation for a more sustainable, secure world. The paper attempts to examine the trends of literacy rate, to analyse the gender gap in literacy rate and review the variation in literacy among the regions. The process of economic development in any country is dependent on the availability of human and natural resources. Particularly well educated, trained, qualitative human resources are essential or moreover, it is the key factor in the process of economic development. Education and educational facilities are critical for improving the quality of human resources. Education is the gradual process acquiring knowledge by learning and instruction. Education is a preparation for life which is a result of a good upbringing especially knowledge of correct social behaviour.

Keywords: Gender, Female, Literacy & Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Gender refers to the rules, norms, customs and practices by which biological differences between males and females are translated into socially constructed between men and women and boys and girls. Sustainable development requires an understanding of both men's and women's roles and responsibilities within the community and their relation to each other. Gender discrimination is widely observed in less developed countries through its degree varies among some countries. The gender disparity has quite naturally developed in the male-dominated societies since ancient times through different social customs and tradition as social process.

Education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills, and also something less tangible but more profound like the imparting of knowledge, good judgment and wisdom. Education has, as one of its fundamental goals, as the imparting of culture from generation to generation. Women's education is defined as a learning process and inclusive of access to information, literacy and processes of critical reflection that would enable women to critically reflect on their realities and challenge existing power of relations.

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OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the trends of literacy rate in India
2. To analyze the state-wise female literacy rate among the regions.

SOURCE OF DATA

The present study is based on secondary data. The information on different Census Reports and compiled from Social and Cultural Tables of Census of India report from 1971 to 2021. The present study divide six regions like Northern, North Eastern, Eastern, Western, Southern and Central States for the detailed analysis of the female literacy rate in the country.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The process of economic development in any country is dependent on the availability of human and natural resources. Particularly well educated, trained, qualitative human resources are essential or moreover, it is the key factor in the process of economic development. Education and educational facilities are critical for improving the quality of human resources. Education is the gradual process acquiring knowledge by learning and instruction. Education is a preparation for life which is a result of a good upbringing especially knowledge of correct social behaviour.

Table -1 Gender – Wise Literacy Rate Progress in India (1971-2021)

Year	Person	Male	Female	Gap
1971	28.3	40.4	15.35	25.05
1981	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1991	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
2001	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84

2011	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59
2021	74.04	84.14	65.46	16.68

Source: Compiled the Tables from the Census of India Reports from 1971 to 2021

The table -1 is explains that literacy rate progress (both male and female) in India over a period of fifty years (1971-2021), also literacy gap between them.

In 1971, the literacy rate it was 28.3 per cent and the same has been increased in 2021 it was 74.04 per cent. It shows the literacy rate has been increased almost three fold. The same period the male literacy rate it was 40.04 per cent and has been increased to in 2021 it was 82.14 per cent. It reveals that the male literacy rate has been increased more than doubled over the study period. In female literacy rate, In 1971 it was 15.35 per cent and it has been increased in 2021 it was 65.46 per cent. This shows that the female literacy rate has been increased more than four times over a study period.

However, the foregoing analysis clearly indicated that the last two decades the female literacy rate has been increased more than 10 per cent. Furthermore, the Government and privatization of education had played a pivotal role to increase the female literacy rate in India.

Table -2 State – Wise Female Literacy Rate of Northern States (1971-2021)

Northern States	State-wise female literacy rate in India (Literacy rate Excluding 0.4 age group)					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Haryana	*	17.77	26.93	40.47	56.31	66.77
Himachal Pradesh	7.36	23.67	36.10	52.26	68.08	76.60
Jammu & Kashmir	5.16	10.94	18.36	*	41.82	58.01
Punjab	17.07	29.91	39.70	50.41	63.55	71.34
Rajasthan	7.00	10.06	13.15	20.44	44.34	52.66
Chandigarh	*	63.15	68.15	72.34	76.65	81.38
Delhi	51.54	55.56	61.01	66.99	75.00	80.93
India	28.03	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.83	74.04

Source: Compiled the Tables from the Census of India Reports from 1971 to 2021

In India, the female literacy rate was 28.3 per cent in 1971 and the same gradually increased in 43.57 per cent in 1991; 52.21 per cent in 2001; 64.83 per cent in 2011 and 74.04 per cent in 2021.

Among the states in Northern region, except the Delhi (51.44 per cent) state and the rest of all states in northern states the female literacy rate Himachal Pradesh (7.16 per cent); Jammu & Kashmir (6.16 per cent); Rajasthan (7.00 per cent) and Punjab (17.07 per cent) was less than the Indian Literacy Rate was 28.3 per cent in 1971. The same trend was continued next three decades namely till 2001.

In 2001, the Indian literacy rate was 52.21 per cent, among the states, Chandigarh (72.34 per cent); Delhi (66.99 per cent) and Himachal Pradesh (52.26 per cent); the Indian

literacy rate was increasing 64.83 per cent in 2011 and the state-wise, Chandigarh (76.65 per cent); Delhi (75.00 per cent) and Himachal Pradesh (68.08 per cent) and further the Indian literacy rate was increasing 74.04 per cent in 2011 and the state-wise, Chandigarh (81.38 per cent); Delhi (80.93 per cent) and Himachal Pradesh (76.60 per cent). It is inferred here that, these states the female literacy rate was higher than the literacy rate in India in the liberalization era.

Among the states in Northern region, Rajasthan state found that the female literacy rate far below the Indian literacy rate over a study period. Therefore, there is need special focus to improve the female literacy in India are very much need of the hour.

Table -3 State – Wise Female Literacy Rate of North-Eastern States (1971-2021)

North-Eastern States	State-wise female literacy rate in India (Literacy rate Excluding 0.4 age group)					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Arunachal Pradesh	NA	4.43	13.39	26.69	44.24	59.57
Assam	20.09	23.52	*	43.03	56.03	56.03
Manipur	19.21	22.87	33.39	47.60	59.70	73.17
Meghalaya	*	29.31	35.40	44.85	60.41	73.78
Mizoram	*	*	64.53	78.60	86.13	89.40
Nagaland	13.58	51.56	38.76	54.75	61.92	76.69
Tripura	12.50	24.84	36.27	49.65	65.41	83.15
India	28.03	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.83	74.04

Source: Compiled the Tables from the Census of India Reports from 1971 to 2021

In 1971, the literacy rate in India was 28.03 per cent and the female literacy rate was less than literacy found in all the North- Eastern States in India. In 1981, the literacy rate in India was 34.45 per cent and the same period the female literacy rate in Nagaland was 51.56 per cent which was the highest among all other states in this region and more than the Indian literacy rate.

In 2001, the literacy rate in India was 52.21 per cent and the female literacy rate in Mizoram was (78.60 per cent) and Nagaland was (54.75 per cent) which was higher than the literacy rates in India. Among the other states, the female literacy rate was increasing gradually. Further, the literacy rate was 64.83 per cent in 2011 and the female literacy rate was in Mizoram (86.13 per cent); Tripura (65.41 per cent) which was higher than the literacy rate in India. Furthermore, the literacy rate was 74.04 per cent in 2021 and the female literacy rate was in Mizoram (89.40 per cent); Tripura (83.15 per cent); Nagaland (76.69 per cent) which was higher than the literacy rate in India. Even the states like Meghalaya (73.78 per cent) and Manipur (73.17 per cent) which was very close to the literacy rate in India was 74.04 per cent.

However, the female literacy rates in states like Assam and Arunachal Pradesh was also increasing over the period. But, the literacy rate was less than the literacy rate in India over the study period.

The above analysis clearly shows that the performance of achievements of female literacy rates in North-eastern states are remarkable, commendable and appreciable one over the study period.

Table – 4 State – Wise Female Literacy Rate of Eastern States (1971-2021)

Eastern States	State-wise female literacy rate in India (Literacy rate Excluding 0.4 age group)					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Bihar	8.33	10.24	15.80	21.99	33.57	53.33
Orissa	10.28	16.29	25.14	34.68	50.97	64.36
Sikkim	5.18	10.31	26.16	46.67	61.46	76.43
West Bengal	20.79	26.56	34.42	46.56	60.22	71.16
A & N islands	24.99	38.29	50.51	65.46	75.29	81.84
India	28.03	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.83	74.04

Source: Compiled the Tables from the Census of India Reports from 1971 to 2021

In 1971, the literacy rate in India was 28.03 per cent which was less than the female literacy rate found in all the eastern states of India. The same trend was found almost four decades from 1971 to 2011 except Andaman & Nicobar Islands female literacy rate was higher than the Literacy rate in India.

In 2021, the literacy rate in India was 74.04 per cent and the female literacy rate in Andaman & Nicobar Islands (81.84 percent) and Sikkim (76.43 per cent) was higher than the literacy rate in India. Whereas, the female literacy rate in West Bengal (71.16 per cent); Orissa (71.16 per cent) and Bihar (53.33 per cent) was less than the literacy rate in India. However these states, the female literacy rate have been increased manifold over the study period of fifty years. Further, the female literacy rate has been increased over the past two decades (2001-2021) which was found in all the eastern states of India.

The above analysis clearly shows the female literacy rate has been increased recent decades in all the states which were noteworthy in the study period.

Table -5 State – Wise Female Literacy Rate of Western States (1971-2021)

Western States	State-wise female literacy rate in India (Literacy rate Excluding 0.4 age group)					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Goa	NA	40.27	52.93	67.09	75.51	81.84
Gujarat	23.10	29.00	36.93	48.82	58.60	70.73
Maharashtra	20.07	31.00	40.26	52.32	67.51	75.48
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	5.04	9.50	19.69	26.98	42.99	65.93
Daman & Diu	NA	*	*	59.40	70.37	79.59
India	28.03	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.83	74.04

Source: Compiled the Tables from the Census of India Reports from 1971 to 2021

In 1971, the literacy rate in India was 28.03 per cent; the female literacy rate was far below in all the Western States of India. In 1981, the literacy rate in India was 34.45 per cent; the female literacy rate was in Goa (40.27 per cent) which was the higher than

literacy rate in India also among the states which was the highest female literacy rate found in the study area. The literacy rate in India was 52.21 per cent (2001) and 64.83 per cent (2011); the female literacy rate was in Goa (67.09 per cent) and (75.51 per cent); Daman & Diu (59.40 per cent) and (70.37 per cent) and Maharashtra (52.32 per cent) and (67.51 per cent) respectively which was found higher than the literacy rate in India.

In 2021, the literacy rate in India was 74.04 per cent; the female literacy rate was Goa (81.84 per cent); Daman & Diu (79.59 per cent); and Maharashtra (75.48 per cent) which was higher than the literacy rate in India. In Western States, over the study period the female literacy rate was increasing Gujarat and Dadra & Nagar Haveli also but at the same time the literacy was less than literacy rate in India.

The above analysis clearly shows that the all the Western States, the female literacy rate was increased over the study period which was found gradual growth any other regions in India.

Table -6 State – Wise Female Literacy Rate of Southern States (1971-2021)

Southern States	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Andhra Pradesh	14.25	18.32	23.25	32.72	51.17	59.74
Karnataka	17.12	24.55	31.68	44.34	57.45	68.13
Kerala	45.98	62.53	73.35	86.17	87.86	91.98
Tamil Nadu	18.02	26.09	35.00	51.33	64.55	73.86
Pondicherry	28.80	40.14	51.90	65.63	74.16	81.22
India	28.03	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.83	74.04

Source: Compiled the Tables from the Census of India Reports from 1971 to 2021

In 1971, the literacy rate in India was 28.03 per cent; the female literacy rate was higher than the State of Kerala (45.98 per cent) and Pondicherry (28.80 per cent) and the rest of other states of Tamil Nadu (18.02 per cent); Karnataka (17.12 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (14.25 per cent) were less than the literacy rate in India. The same trend continues over the study period of fifty years. However, the female literacy rate was increased more than ten per cent in past two decades (2001 to 2021) all the states in Southern Region except in Kerala

In 2021 the state wise, the female literacy rate was in Kerala (91.98 per cent) and Pondicherry (81.22 per cent) higher than the literacy rate in India. The female literacy rate in Tamil Nadu was (73.86 per cent) more or less equal to literacy rate in India. The female literacy rate was in Karnataka (68.13 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (59.74 per cent) less than the literacy rate in India.

The foregoing above analysis clearly evidences the Southern States performing better than other states and other regions especially in female literacy rate.

Table -7 State – Wise Female Literacy Rate of Central States (1971-2021)

Central States	State-wise female literacy rate in India (Literacy rate Excluding 0.4 age group)					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Madhya Pradesh	8.21	13.08	22.62	29.35	50.28	60.02

Uttar Pradesh	8.43	12.46	16.33	25.37	42.98	59.26
India	28.03	34.45	43.57	52.21	64.83	74.04

Source: Compiled the Tables from the Census of India Reports from 1971 to 2021

In 1971, the literacy rate in India was 28.03 per cent; the female literacy rate in Uttar Pradesh (8.43 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (8.21 per cent) which was far below the literacy rate in India. The same trend continues over the study period. However, the female literacy rate was higher in Madhya Pradesh than the Uttar Pradesh from 1981 to 2021. These results show that the female literacy rate was growing faster than the Uttar Pradesh.

The above analysis clearly shows these states in Central Region of India have a long way to go for improving higher female literacy. Therefore, there is need a special care for these states to improve the female literacy rate as suggested.

CONCLUSION

One of the Millennium Development Goals of the UN is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Education is prime factor for Women's development and empowerment. Through education it is possible to improve Women's participation in the various fields of life. The relationship between educational attainments and awareness of hygiene, improvement in family health, child health, girl's education and general family welfare is well established formal education delays marriage, kindles a desire for a small family, increases the chances of survival of children and thus a positive effect on fertility reduction. It increases a woman's earning capacity and the potential for empowerment. Therefore, the nexus between female literacy rate and women empowerment is very important. Hence, in the light of discussion placed in this section.

Educational processes of women are very much necessary in developing country like India that too having half of the population. The study found that the performance of female literacy rate increased much better in the post liberalization era. The various initiative/schemes implemented by both the Central and State Government. However, the gender disparity in literacy rate in India is not the uniform. There is mixed female literacy rate performance in regions. Moreover, there is need to create the awareness the importance of female literacy rate. The Study concludes that, there is need of hour the programmes/schemes/initiative based performance of female literacy rate is suggested.

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