

Present Statues of Education and Gender Gap in Uttar Pradesh and India**Dr. Atika Khatoun***

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Since Independence significant improvement has taken place in the field of education in India as well as in UP in terms of indicators like literacy, enrolments, number of schools, colleges and universities. However, still we do not find the total picture of achievement fully satisfactory. Still major challenges lie ahead in educational sector in the state. In this chapter we have discussed the progress and current status of education in UP with focus of primary education and identified the major issues which need attention in the coming years.

Literacy Rates

There has been a significant jump in the literacy rates in UP in the last two decades. Literacy rates in UP showed a big jump of 14.7 percentage points in 1991-2001 as compared a jump of 10.2 percentage points during 1981-1991 (Table 2). Inspite of this impressive improvement, literacy rates U.P. is lagging behind the national average not to talk of the situation in the socially developed states like Kerala. Female literacy has shown a faster increase as compared to male literacy in the recent decades, but the gender gap still remains large. It is a matter of serious concern that over half of the women in U.P. were illiterate in 2001.

Table 2: Literacy Rates in UP and India (Percent)

Year	U.P.			India		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1951	17.3	3.6	10.8	25.0	7.9	16.7
1961	27.3	7.0	17.7	34.5	12.9	24.0
1971	36.7	12.5	25.4	39.5	18.7	29.5
1981	44.5	16.3	31.4	56.5	29.9	43.7
1991	55.7	25.3	41.6	64.1	39.3	52.2
2001	68.8	42.2	56.3	75.3	53.7	64.8
2011	79.24	59.26	69.2	82.14	65.46	74.04

Source: *Census of India* 2001 and 2011.

There are equally glaring differences in literacy levels in the urban and the rural areas. Thus, literacy rate in the rural areas in 2001 was only 53.6 per cent as compared to the literacy rate of 70.8 per cent in the urban areas (Table 3). Only 37.7 percent of rural females were literate as compared to 62.2 percent urban females. Corresponding figures for male literacy were 68.0 percent and 78.3 percent.

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Table 3: Literacy in UP by Rural and Urban Area (Percent)

Type	2001			2011		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Total	56.3	68.8	42.2	67.68	77.3	57.2
Rural	53.6	68.0	37.7	65.46	76.33	48.48
Urban	70.8	78.3	62.2	75.14	80.45	60.96

Source: *Census of India 2011*

The 61st NSS round revealed that about two fifth of the urban females were illiterate in 2004-05 as compared to one fifth of the urban males. Still about 36 per cent of rural males and 70 per cent of rural females are illiterate. Only 15 per cent of rural persons and 37 per cent of urban persons had received education up to secondary level or above. About 14 per cent of the urban people and only 2.8 per cent of the rural people had received education up to graduate level or above. These figures are indicative of the poor level of educational development in the state and the challenges that lie ahead in this direction.

Gender Gap in Literacy Rates

Gender gap in literacy remains very high in U.P. especially in the rural areas (30.3 percent) as compared to the urban areas (16.1 percent). Kanpur Nagar shows the lowest gender literacy gap (12.8 percent) while Sant Ravidas Nagar has the highest gender gap of 37.4 percent. In as many as 20 districts gender gap in literacy is more than 30 percent. These districts are spread over all the four regions of the state.

State government has been making special efforts to promote girls' education during the recent years. Tuition fee for girls has been made free for girls up to higher education level. Fifty per cent of the seats in pre-service training institutions for primary school teachers have been reserved for girls so as to make way to recruit more women teachers at the primary level. In 488 un-served blocks, the state government has opened 100 high schools on its own. It has also proposed to open 100 girls High Schools/Inter colleges with the help of voluntary agencies. The state government has motivated these agencies / societies by sanctioning a grant of Rs.10 lakh for the building, furniture etc. A discount of 50 percent is given in Stamp Duty for land

registration while opening schools for girls at block level. Under SSA, *Meena Manch* have been established and activated in 30000 upper primary schools. The objective is to build confidence and leadership among girls, provide girls child friendly environment, and impart life skills among girls 11-14 years. As a result of these concerted efforts enrolment of girls has increased and gender gap at primary level is less than 5%. However, gender gap at upper primary level is still there. The emphasis is now on reducing gender gap at upper primary level.

Children Not Attending Schools

There has been substantial improvement in enrolment ratios since the launch of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Still many children do not attend school. The NSS 61st Round (2004-05) reveals that 20.6 per cent of urban children and 22.9 per cent of rural children in the age of 5-14 in UP were not attending school (Table 4). The proportion of children and youth attending educational institutions drops sharply as one goes from lower to higher levels of education. Thus, only 50.9 per cent of urban youth and 42.6 per cent of rural youth in the age group 15-19 are attending any educational institution. This proportion drops sharply to 16.8 per cent and 8.3 per cent in urban and rural areas respectively in case of age group 20-24. Attendance rate is found to be higher in urban areas and lower in rural areas for all age groups. It is also higher for males for all age groups and much lower for females in rural areas. In urban areas, however, the attendance of females is better than that of males for all age groups except age group 20-24.

Table 4: Age Wise Attendance Rates in Educational Institutions, 2004-05 (%)

Age Groups	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
5-14 years	80.6	73.0	77.1	78.9	80.3	79.6
15-19 years	50.5	33.6	42.6	50.3	51.7	50.9
20-24 years	13.2	3.8	8.3	19.9	13.2	16.8
0-29 years	46.3	36.4	41.5	44.4	46.2	45.3

Source: NSS 61st Round, Report Number 516

The Problem of Drop-Out

The access to primary education is often jeopardized due to heavy dropout rates. The drop-out rate at the primary and upper primary (Class 1 to 8) level was about 65 percent in 1992-93, which came down to 43 percent in 2001-02. This rate has come down to 24.74 percent in 2006-07. Many promotional schemes of the government have contributed to this decline including the efforts under SSA and the mid day meal scheme.

Table 5 shows enrollment levels in class I to VIII in 2004-5 and 2008-09. The table reveals that a large number of students enrolled in class I are unable to pursue schooling beyond 2-3 years. A small number of children go beyond lower primary level. Enrollment in class VI was only 62 percent of enrollment in Class V and enrollment in class VIII was only 43 percent of enrollment in Class I in 2008-09. The drop out level at higher level is more or less same both for girls and boys (Table 5). However, the dropout rate is much lower in private schools (40.1 %) as compared to government schools (67.2 %). This reflects the better quality of education in private schools as compared to government schools.

Table 5: Decline in Enrollment Over Previous Class in Government and Private Schools, 2008-09 (Percent)

Grade	Govt Schools			Private Schools		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
II	-7.14	-9.24	-8.20	11.14	11.19	11.16
III	2.35	-2.49	-0.11	6.95	6.30	6.66
IV	11.02	10.26	10.62	6.12	5.90	6.02
V	11.61	12.03	11.83	4.58	5.69	5.08
VI	51.35	50.54	50.93	15.30	10.05	12.93
VII	6.15	7.18	6.69	3.58	4.98	4.23
VIII	15.02	16.93	16.02	2.48	3.44	2.92
Dropout in Class VIII over Class I	68.07	66.29	67.17	41.01	39.04	40.12

Source: Directorate of Education, UP

The problem of drop out is more severe in Western and Eastern regions as compared to Central and Bundelkhand regions. Dropout rate was reported more than 40 percent in the following districts: Aligarh, Baghpat, Etah, Ghaziabad, Agra and Moradabad in Western region; Barabanki in Central region; and Deoria, GB Nagar, Faizabad, Gonda, Sidharthnagar, Maharajnagar, Kaushambi, Kushinagar and Balrampur in Eastern region. Special efforts are needed to deal with the problem of dropouts in these districts.

Table 6 shows the expenditure on education by level of education, while Table 18 shows the percent distribution of expenditure by level of education. The share of primary education in

total public expenditure on education has gone up from around 58 per cent in 2002-03 to over 63 percent in 2008-09. The share of secondary education has declined from 32 percent to 28 percent over the same period. Higher education accounts for about 7-8 percent of educational expenditure. Less than 2 percent of educational expenditure is on technical education. The broad pattern of allocation of funds is in keeping with the requirements of a developing economy, where primary education has to be given topmost priority. However, technical education is not receiving adequate attention in allocation of financial resources.

Table 6: Composition of Educational Expenditure By Level of Education (Percent)

Year	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Technical	Total
2002-03	58.18	32.32	8.15	1.35	100.00
2003-04	57.96	32.69	8.19	1.17	100.00
2004-05	58.03	32.21	8.11	1.65	100.00
2005-06	59.62	30.55	8.88	0.95	100.00
2006-07	60.15	31.23	7.63	0.99	100.00
2007-08	66.19	26.11	6.41	1.29	100.00
2008-09 (RE)	63.23	27.61	7.40	1.76	100.00
2009-10 (BE)	63.08	28.01	6.97	1.94	100.00

Source: Calculated from the budget documents of U.P. Government.

Expenditure on Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to increase elementary education

The Central Government has been playing an important role in promotion of education especially at the primary level through the CSS. The major Central scheme is the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which was launched to attain the objective of universalisation of elementary education and to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. The SSA scheme is being implemented in Uttar Pradesh since 2000-2001 and gets financial support from the Central and State Governments on 65:35 per cent basis.

Table 6 shows the funds received and utilized by UP Government under SSA. It may be observed from the table that in the initial years, there was miss-match between sanctioned budget and the money actually released for the SSA in U.P. This gap was particularly large during 2001-02 and 2002-03. There has been marked improvement after that. The state was able to spend over

90 percent of funds received during the years 2003-04 to 2006-07. But, during 2007-08 and 2008-09 utilization level slipped down to 86.52 percent and 88.96 percent respectively. Thus, the state could not utilize all the money received by it for the SSA scheme in any of the years. Efforts must be made to use entire money received for the scheme.

State Initiatives in Education

The Eleventh Plan of U.P. has identified the following as the main thrust areas of the Eleventh Plan to improve the quality of primary education in the state and improve educational infrastructure:

1. Universalization of the elementary education (class 1 to 8) by the end of 2012.
2. To bring the teacher-pupil ratio to 1:40.
3. Provision of 5 rooms and 5 teachers/ Shiksha Mitras in each primary school.
4. Provision of 4 rooms, 5 teachers and one laboratory in the upper primary school.
5. Focus on quality improvement.
6. Provision of one additional hand pump in every primary school.
7. To achieve the 85% literacy level in the State.
8. To reduce the present gender gap in literacy from 26.40 per cent to 10 per cent.
9. To bring down the drop-out rate in primary level to 5 percent.

Apart from ensuring expansion of schools in un-served areas the state government has been taking steps for quality enhancement. Accordingly, text books have been revised according to the National Curriculum Framework 2005 and were distributed free of cost to all the children. Specified teaching learning material has been painted on the classroom walls of classes 1 and 2 in each primary school. Specific materials in this regard have been developed and distributed to all the primary and upper primary schools.

Sex ratio: India and Uttar Pradesh 2011 crore

State and india	Population			Sex Ratio		Child Sex Ratio	
	2001	2011	Growth 2001 to 2011 %	2001	2011	2001	2011
Uttar Pradesh	16.62	19.98	20.23	898	912	916	902
India	102.87	121.08	17.7	933	940	927	919

Source: Census 2011

From the above table it can be concluded that the child sex ratio in India has declined between 2001 and 2011. In India, the child sex ratio at birth is 927 females for every 1000 males. The big difference in the number of girls is not a normal occurrence, even when antenatal sex determination is banned in India. One of the main reasons behind this menace is the preference of the society for the male child instead of a girl. Some other reason as sons will look after in old age, exorbitant dowry demand and men are the bread earner etc To encourage the parents to give their daughter an honorable upbringing, in India and state government have come up with several schemes. With the goal of advancing the social attitude towards the girl children in India and enlightening their social status.

Government Girl Child Schemes in India

- Benefits of the Government Girl Child Schemes in India.
- Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.
- Balika Saridhhi Yojana.
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana.
- Ladli Scheme and the Kanya Kosh Scheme.
- National Scheme of Incentive for the Girls of Secondary Education.
- Dhanalakshmi Scheme
- Kishori shakti yojna

Reference:

1. <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/pradhan-mantri-vidya-lakshmi-karyakram-towards-bright-future>
2. <https://wcd.nic.in/>
3. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation>