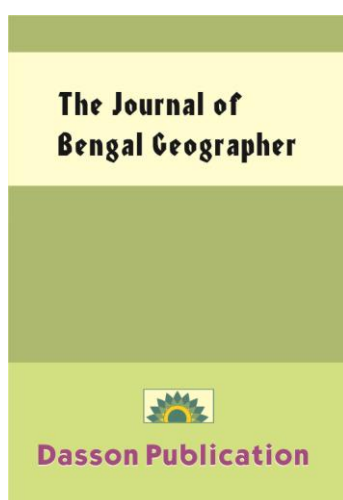


The Journal of Bengal Geographer



Dason Publication
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An overview of women education in India

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Abstract

Female literacy is considered a key factor for the rapid development of a country. An educated woman is important for decision making in relation health seeking, family planning, nutrition and economic issues etc. She not only helps in the development of human resources, but in improving the quality of life. There is a disparity in literacy between men and women in India. At present status and awareness of women that entrepreneurship opens up new fields for them and they can achieve their cherished profession which has independent and self support.

Keywords : 1. Disparity index, 2. Education, 3. Female literacy.

Introduction

Education is a key factor for the rapid development of a country and literacy is the basis of education. It is necessary for a person to be literate before he becomes educated. **A higher level of education provides dynamism to society and helps in social upliftment (Khullar, 2010).** The literacy is essential for eradicating poverty and mental insolation for cultivating peaceful and friendly international relation. The women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. In the changed scenario, awareness has motivated women to start their own enterprise.

The concept of literacy that varies from country to country generally refers to the minimum level of literacy skills. The Population Commission of United Nations considers **“the ability, to both read and write a simple message with understanding in any language, a sufficient basis for classifying a person as literate.”** The **Census of India** adopted this definition.

Aims and objectives of the study:

The present study has undertaken the following objectives:

- To analyse the importance of women education.
- To find out the present picture of female literacy in our country.
- To find out the causes of barriers to women education in India.

Methodology

The study is based on mainly secondary data on the census of India and some data are collected from different journals, books etc. Methodology applied in the study are totally depends on statistical analysis by tables, charts, index marks and interpretation.

Importance of women literacy

“Nation’s progress is impossible without trained and educated mothers, if the women of my country are not educated, about half of the people will be ignorant”- Napoleon answered this about the development of France.

A woman was to play three roles in the course of her life. The first duty of woman is to be a good mother. Education teaches a woman what she would be. An educated lady is a good friend, a cleaver nurse and useful adviser to her husband. So, she is true help mate. She can get her husbands’ affection and love and regard. An educated lady is always able to show her sorrows. Education helps balanced personality development by giving due weight to various aspects of personality. Education also plays an important role in teaching her expression of feeling or through effective communication which can solve disputes and adjustment problems of any level. An educated woman is a guiding light for the children, family members, society and nation. She knows how to have a happy family and balanced and health relation with others. **As it is rightly said, “there is a woman behind the success of every man” (Hossain and saha, 2013).**

For improvement of literacy the status of women in India has been subjected to many great changes the past few millennia. From the equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of legal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. **In modern India, women have adorned high offices including that of the President, Prime-Minister, and Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Leader of the opposition. According to the Indian constitution, women are guaranteed equal rights with men (Kaur, 2013).**

Literacy of women in india

Female literacy is considered to be a more sensitive index of social development compared to overall literacy rates. Female literacy is negatively related with fertility rates, population growth rates ,infant and child mortality rates and shows a positive association with female age at marriage, life expectancy ,participation in modern sectors of the economy and above all with female enrolments (Usha Nayar,2004).

Literacy in pre-independence in india

This period usually called the colonial period of India. It was the most important period of educational development in our country. In the British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. During this period, various socio religious movements led by eminent persons like **Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Periyar were leaders of the lower castes in India who took various initiatives to make education available to the women of India (Kumar & Sangeeta, 2013).** In India and in many developing countries formal education is not the only source of acquisition of knowledge (Bhaimali, 2004). Due to social and economic bottlenecks women literacy only 0.6 %, who could read and write in 1901. It slightly improved to 2.93% in 1931 and in 1941 the women literacy was just 7.30%. The women literacy in pre-independence period is shown in table-1.

Table-1
Literacy in pre-independence in india

Census year	Persons (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
1901	5.35	9.83	0.60
1911	5.92	10.56	1.05
1921	7.16	12.21	1.81
1931	9.50	15.59	2.93
1941	16.10	24.60	7.30

Source: Different census issues of india.

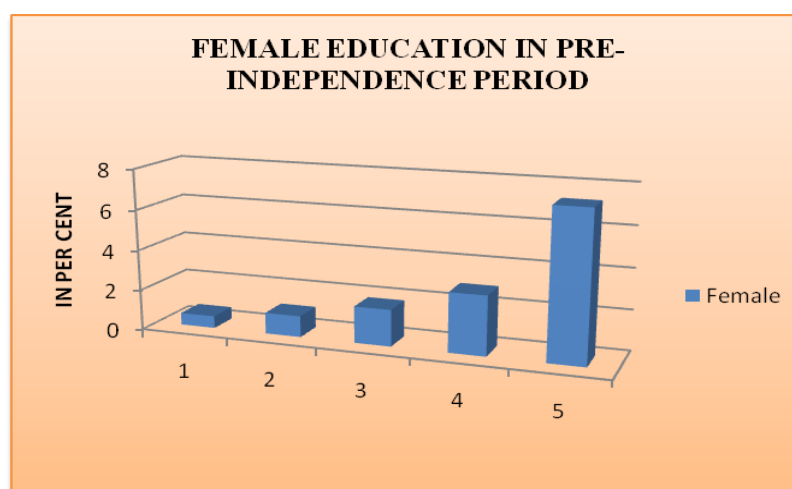


Fig-1; female education rate in pre-Independence period.

The figure-1 shows the scope of education was limited to a few. A large majority of the rural population had not enjoyed the right to education before independence. The situation did not change much even after India attained freedom from foreign rulers in 1947 (Bhujimali, 2004).

Literacy of women in post independent in india

Women literacy rate in India was very low at the time of independence. Post independent India has witnessed divergent process of social change. Different central and state Government policy improve the women literacy in our country today. Now-a-days women's literacy giving equal rights to women in every sphere, including education.

Table-2
Literacy in post-independent in india

Census year	Persons	Male	Female
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35
1971	34.45	45.96	21.79
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29
2001	64.84	75.26	53.67
2011	73.00	80.89	64.64

Source: Different census issues of india.

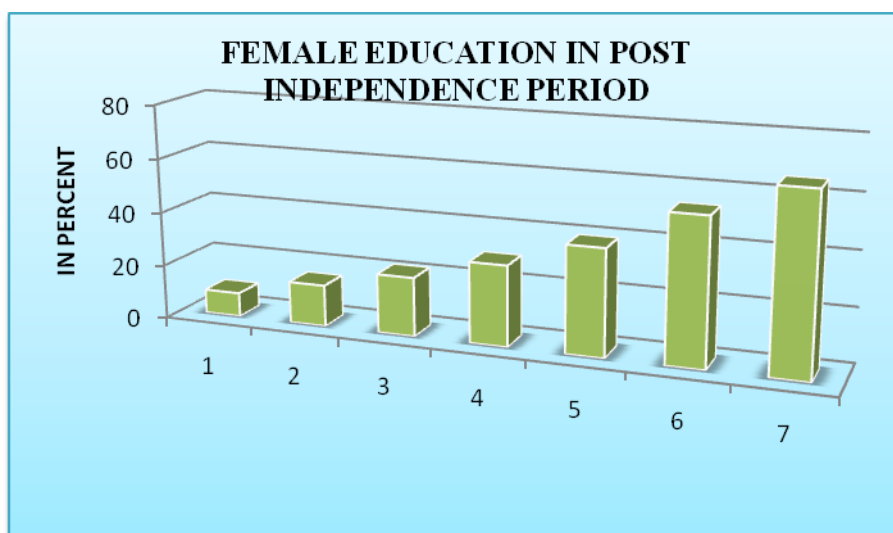


Fig-2, female education in post independence period

Table-2, Show the female literacy in 1951 was 8.86% which improved 39.29% in 1991. It has been found that where as 53.67% female literacy in 2001 and it increased 64.64% in 2011 (fig-2)

Table-3
Growth of literacy in india, 1901 to 2011 and women-men disparity index

Census year	Men	women	Women-men disparity index
1901	9.83	0.60	6.10
1911	10.56	1.05	9.94
1921	12.21	1.81	14.82
1931	15.59	2.93	18.79
1941	24.60	7.30	29.67
1951	27.16	8.86	32.62
1961	40.40	15.35	38.00
1971	45.96	21.79	47.41
1981	56.38	29.76	52.78
1991	64.13	39.29	61.27
2001	75.26	53.67	71.31
2011	80.89	64.64	79.91

Source : Census of india.2011,

Male-Female gap in literacy rate is an important indicator of literacy (Khullar, 2010).It increased from 9.23% in 1901 to 17.30% in 1941, but declined thereafter. It decreased from 25.05% in 1961 to 16.68% in 2011. Table-3 show the women-men disparity index.

Women-men disparity index represented by following formula:

$$\text{Women-men Disparity Index} = \frac{\text{Per cent literates in women}}{\text{Per cent literates in men}} \times 100$$

The above index measures the performance of women in literacy to men. The index shows that literacy in women is low relative to men. Thus the index has a low value showing its value less than 100. The index shows that over year women literacy rises relative to men. **If the**

value reaches to 100, then there will be no variation in literacy among women and men. Any deviation from 100 is the measure of disparity between women and men literacy (Bhuimali, 2004). The table-3 showing the literacy of men and women is rising. And it is clear that the women literacy is faster than the men literacy indicating reduced disparity over a period of time.

The women literacy was worse than men. After independence the literacy position both men and women considerably improved. The progress of women literacy is not even throughout the country. **Women literacy in rural areas continues to lower that in urban areas (fig-3)**. The causes of such flow down growth rate are mans. But the **most important and immediate cause is the massive poverty and less job opportunity in rural India (Bhuimali, 2004)**. The table-4 & 5 shows the rural and urban female in India on different censuses.

Table-4
Rural women literacy

Sl. no.	Year	Rural women literacy
1	1961	9.1
2	1971	13.0
3	1981	17.9
4	1991	24.6
5	2001	46.1
6	2011	57.9

Source: Different census issues of india.

Table-5
Urban women literacy

Sl.no.	Year	Urban women literacy
1	1961	37.4
2	1971	42.0
3	1981	47.8
4	1991	53.7
5	2001	72.8
6	2011	79.1

Source: Different census issues of india.

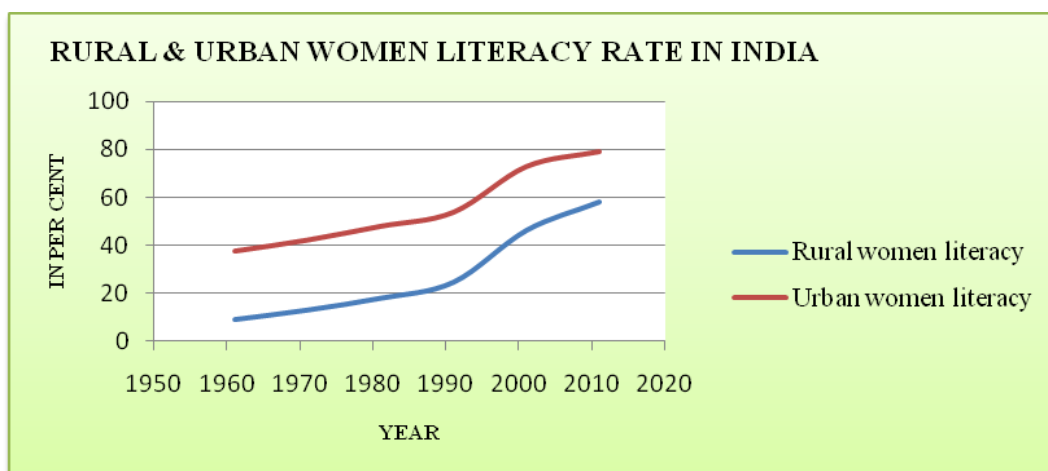


Fig-3, Rural and urban literacy in india

State-Wise female literacy in india as per 2011 census:**Table-6 State/UT-WISE Literacy**

Sl. No	Name of the State/UT	Female Literacy in %
1	Andhra Pradesh	59.1
2	Arunachal Pradesh	57.7
3	Assam	66.3
4	Bihar	51.5
5	Chattisgarh	60.2
6	Delhi	80.8
7	Goa	84.7
8	Gujarat	69.7
9	Haryana	65.9
10	Himachal Pradesh	79.9
11	Jammu and Kashmir	56.4
12	Jharkhand	55.4
13	Karnataka	68.1
14	Kerala	92.1
15	Madhya Pradesh	59.2
16	Maharashtra	75.9
17	Manipur	72.4
18	Meghalaya	72.9
19	Mizoram	89.3
20	Nagaland	76.1
21	Odhisha	64.0
22	Punjab	70.7
23	Rajasthan	52.1
24	Sikkim	75.6
25	Tamil Nadu	73.4
26	Tripura	82.7
27	Uttar Pradesh	57.2
28	Uttarakhand	70.0
29	West Bengal	70.5
30	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	82.4
31	Chandigarh	81.2
32	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	64.3
33	Daman & Diu	79.5
34	Lakshadweep	87.9
35	Poducherry	80.7
	All India	64.6

Source: Census of india, 2011

State-Wise female literacy in india as per 2011 census

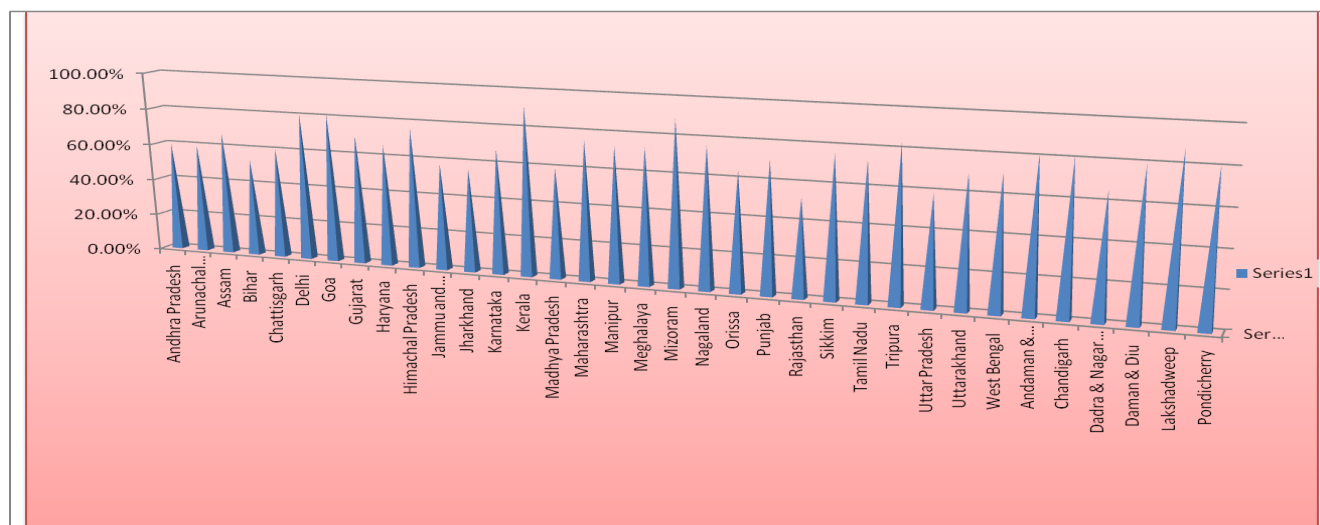


FIG-4; State-Wise female literacy in india, 2011 Census

From the figure-4 it is clear that the total literacy rate in India during the year 1901 was 5.35% which increased in 73.00% by 2011. One important thing is that in all the years, male literacy rates were higher than that of female literacy rates. In the 2001, the male literacy rate was 75.26% while the same year for female literacy was 53.67%. In the year 2011, the male literacy rate has reached to 80.9% and female literacy rates in 64.6%. In the table-6, we have been found that the highest female literacy is found in the state of Kerala (92.10%) and lowest in Bihar (51.5%). And in Union Territories the highest female literacy observed in Lakshadweep (87.9%) and lowest in Dadra & Nagar Haveli (64.3 %).

Barriers to women education:

There are several reasons for the low levels of literacy in India. The reasons for not sending girls to school are both economic and social. Although school attendance is free, the costs of books, uniforms, and transportation to school can be much for poor families. Poor families are also more likely to keep girls at home for work in family enterprises. Parents also do not see the value of educating especially a daughter who would get married and remain a housewife. If a family has to choose between educating a son or a daughter because of financial restrictions, typically the son will be chosen. Negative parental attitudes towards educating daughters can also be a barrier to girls' education.

Another barrier to education in India is the lack of adequate school facilities. Many states simply do not have enough class rooms to accommodate all of the school age children. There are another important problems such as sanitary and water supply in the schools.

Lack of female teachers is another potential barrier to girls' education. Girls are more likely to attend school and have higher academic achievement if they have female teachers. These particularly true highly gender-segregated societies such as India (Victoria A. Velkoff, 1998).

Steps taken by government of india to improve female literacy rate in india

- India has the second largest educational system in the world after China. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the newest effort of the Government of India to universalise elementary education in mission mode. Literally meaning Education for All campaign. The SSA aims to provide useful quality education to all children age-group 6 to 14 years by the year 2010.

- Free education program to poor people's family those who are living in villages and towns.
- Setting up of new school and college at district and state level.
- The Government start different scholarship for girls for improved their education.
- Several committees have been formed to ensure proper utilization of funds allotted to improve the female literacy rate.

Conclusion

In conclusion we can say easily the women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. For necessary of women education **the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Neheru said, "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women"**. This is absolutely true. Women of any nation are the mirror of its civilization. If a woman enjoys good status it shows that the society has reached a level of maturity and sense of responsibility (Aggrawal, Kotwal & Sharma, 2012). So we have needed the development of women literacy in our country.

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