

**WOMEN LITERACY IN INDIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE: A STUDY ON DEBATABLE AFFINITIES AND DIVERGENCES**

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**Abstract:** At the global level, over fifty years ago, the UNESCO constitution identified “Education For All” (EFA) as a key aspiration for all the countries. The efforts of Indian Government towards Education For All, still, India has one of the lowest women literacy rates in Asia. In the Process of globalization, effects of economic reforms, India had different experiences in all fields including education sector in a greater way. A country which has higher women literacy rate always witness greater awareness about career opportunities among individuals and contribution from them in the economy. In our paper titled: “Women literacy in India After Independence” focuses on the comparative study of women literacy in these seven decades and a debate on affinities and divergences in increasing the percentage of women literacy in India. In the recent era, the Indian society has established a number of institutions for the educational development of women and girls. These educational institutions aim for immense help and are concerned with the development of women.

**Introduction:** Literacy is identified as one of the important requirements for attaining qualitative change in the life of any individual. It is a basic human right. India is committed towards the goal of universal constitution stating. “The state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years”. At the global level, over fifty years ago, the UNESCO constitution identified “Education For All” (EFA) as a key aspiration for all the countries. The efforts of Indian Government towards Education For All, still, India has one of the lowest women literacy rates in Asia. In the Process of globalization, effects of economic reforms, India had different experiences in all fields including education sector in a greater way. The changes spearheaded by economic liberalization have an impact on women education. In India education system is experiencing good as well as adverse effects simultaneously. Globalization made education system as profit motive business. Many Private Institutions have been established and backward women have been affected by the increasing individual cost and unable to buy the course. Beneficiaries are the affluent society people and the losers are the backward people, especially backward women.

**Need For The Study:** Literacy is instrumental in boosting the economic development of any country and India is no exception to this. A country which has

higher women literacy rate always witness greater awareness about career opportunities among individuals and contribution from them in the economy. They are more careful about healthcare needs and actively involved in the cultural upliftment of the society. In view of this women literacy in India assumes significance.

**Objectives Of The Study:** The following are the objectives of the study:

- To examine the gender wise literacy rate in India.
- To compare differences in Dropout rates.
- To observe the status Reasons for male female literacy.
- To suggest measures to improve literacy.

**Research Methodology:** For the present study the required data has been collected from Secondary sources comprising of National Centre for Education Statistics from 1951-2011 census and from the different websites related to the study. The collected data is processed and tabulated in a systematic manner.

**Women Literacy In India After Independence:** After Independence the Government has taken different measures for increasing women literacy. As a result women literacy rate has increased over the six decades (1951 census to 2001 census) and the growth rate of women literacy has in fact higher than that of male literacy rate. But the gender gap is still exists as the women literacy rate is less than the male literacy.\

<b>CensusYear</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Gap rate</b>
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.33	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	21.70
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68
Source: Census of India 1951-2011				

Table-I presents the male women literacy rates from 1951 to 2011 in India. The Male literacy has 82.14% and women literacy was 65.46% in 2011. Women literacy has improved from 54.16% in 2001 to 65.46% in 2011; Whereas the Male literacy rate has increased to 82.14% in 2011 from 27.16% in 1951. The Gap in male-women literacy vitiated from 26.62% in 1981 and

16.68% in 2011. With this it is concluded that there is a increasing trend in women literacy rate. But after the efforts of six decades India is not nearing to achieve this goal. Apart from this the status of women literacy is not equal to male literacy. There is wide range of various in this regard.

Years	Primary (I-V)			Upper Primary (VI-VIII)			Elementary (I-VIII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	60.6	24.8	42.6	20.6	4.6	12.7	46.2	17.7	32.1
1960-61	82.6	41.4	62.4	33.2	11.3	22.5	65.2	30.9	48.7
1970-71	95.5	60.5	78.6	46.5	20.8	33.4	75.5	44.4	61.9
1980-81	95.8	64.1	80.5	54.3	28.6	41.9	82.2	52.1	67.5
1990-91	114.0	85.5	100.1	76.6	47.0	62.1	100.0	70.8	86.0
1991-92	112.8	86.9	100.2	75.1	49.6	61.4	101.2	73.2	87.7
1992-93	95.0	73.5	84.6	72.5	48.9	67.5	87.7	65.7	77.2
1993-94	90.0	73.1	81.9	62.1	45.4	54.2	80.2	63.7	72.3
1994-95	96.6	78.2	87.7	68.9	50.0	60.0	87.2	68.8	78.4
1995-96	97.1	79.4	88.6	67.8	49.8	59.3	86.9	69.4	78.5
1996-97	98.7	81.9	90.6	70.9	52.8	62.4	88.9	71.8	80.7
1997-98	97.7	81.2	89.7	66.5	49.5	58.5	86.4	70.0	78.6
1998-99	100.9	82.9	92.1	65.3	49.1	57.6	87.6	70.6	79.4
1999-00	104.1	85.2	94.9	67.2	49.7	58.8	90.1	72.0	81.3
2000-01	104.9	85.9	95.7	66.7	49.9	58.6	90.3	72.4	81.6
2001-11	110.5	92.5	101.2	72.6	58.6	66.6	93.2	75.4	84.3

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics

The economic structure of rural areas is such that children, especially girls, are required to help in household work and perform their chores. Young girls have to look after their younger brothers and sisters have to get water from the well, have to carry food to father in the field, etc. The financial position of the poor farmer is so limited that he does not have anything to spare for the education of his children. If they have money they first spend it for sending School to their male. Since they cannot see any direct relationship between education and economic betterment, they have very little motivation to send their children to school. Table-II reveals that the

enrolment ratio for girls is increasing from 1950-51 to 2001-2011 in all levels of education but it is less than the boys enrolment ratio. At the primary level Girls enrolment ratio is 24.8% where as the boys enrolment ratio is 60.6% in 1951 and it has increased to 110.5 % and 92.5% in 2011 of girls and boys respectively. At the upper primary level it has increased to 72.6% (2011) from 20.6%(1951) for male and for the female is 58.6% in 2011 which is 4.6% in 1951. At elementary level it has increased to 93.2% and 75.4% in 2011 to 46.2% and 17.7% in 1951 for boys and girls respectively.

Class	Boys (In millions)	Girls (In millions)	Total (In millions)
CLASS-I	17.1	13.4	30.5
CLASS-II	13.4	10.4	23.8
CLASS-III	12.2	9.6	21.8
CLASS-IV	11.0	8.6	19.6
CLASS-V	10.2	7.8	18.0
CLASS-VI	9.4	6.6	16.0
CLASS-VII	8.3	5.9	14.2
CLASS-VIII	7.6	5.0	12.6

CLASS-IX	6.2	4.0	10.2
CLASS-X	5.4	3.4	8.8
CLASS-XI	2.4	1.6	4.0
CLASS-XII	2.1	1.4	3.5

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics

Statistics indicate that, the performance of children seems to be progressing in the primary classes in fact on account of the policy of non-detention. Table-III, showing the dropping enrolment scenario, is a

pointer to the low learning taking place, as most children are not completing the grades for which they are enrolled.

Sl.No	Reasons for Drop-Out	Rural			Urban		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1.	Child not interested in studies	37.2	33.1	31.3	37.4	38.0	36.6
2.	Parents not interested in studies	12.5	7.8	17.4	8.8	6.9	11.0
3.	Unable to cope	16.4	1.7	8.1	13.7	13.0	14.5
4.	To work for wage/salary	2.5	1.0	1.0	4.6	5.6	3.3
5.	Participation in other economic activities	6.1	7.2	5.0	5.3	7.6	2.7
6.	Attend to domestic duties	3.7	0.8	6.7	3.9	1.8	6.3
7.	Financial constrains	11.2	12.0	10.4	15.8	15.7	16.0
8.	Other reasons	7.9	0.9	9.8	7.4	8.7	6.0

Source: Educational Statistics-Annual Report, Ministry of Human Development.

Table-IV reveals the reasons for the drop out of the students of 5-14 years. Out of the total population the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of male and women of both rural and urban are not interested in studies. Further, the data reveals that nearly 17.4 percent women’s are dropped because of parents not interested in their studies in rural areas. Nearly, 15 percent of males and women’s have dropped from school because they were unable to cope up with the system of education. Further, as per the data of the table financial constraint is also important reason for dropout.

The table-V reveals the interstate variations exists in women literacy rate. The highest women literacy rate can be found in Kerala for both the decades i.e. 2001 and 2011 and the lowest literacy is recorded in Bihar in 2001 i.e.33.12 percent and in 2011 Rajasthan comes to bottom with literacy rate 52.7 percent followed by Bihar (53.3 percent) and Jharkhand (56.2 percent).22 states/Union Territories are with the women literacy above the national average, while 13 states/Union Territories are with the women literacy which is below the national average in 2001. While 24 states/Union Territories are with the women literacy above the national average, while 11 states/Union Territories are with the women literacy which is below the national average in 2011.

The male women difference persists in all the states/Union Territories in both the decades. The

gender gap is highest in Rajasthan(31.8 percent in 2001 and 27.8 percent in 2011) for both the decades followed by Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. The lowest gender gap can be found in Mizoram 3.97 percent in 2001 while, it is lowest in Meghalaya 3.4 percent in 2011 followed by Kerala and Mizoram. Where as the women literacy in Andhra Pradesh is increased from 50.43 percent 2001 to 59.6 percent 2011 representing a gap of 19.89 percent.

It also shows the decadal (2001-2011) growth of women literacy. The growth in the women literacy is highest in Dadra & Nagar Haveli (25.67 percent) followed by Bihar (20.18 percent), Tripura (18.19 percent), Jharkhand (17.33 percent), Uttar Pradesh (17.08 percent) from 2001-2011. The states/Union Territories recorded with lowest growth during 2001-2011 are Mizoram (2.65 percent), Kerala (4.28 percent), Chandigarh (4.93 percent), Delhi (6.9 percent). It clearly shows that the states with highest literacy rate showed a lowest growth rate during the 2001-2011 decade.

It is a positive sign that the states lagging behind in regard of literacy showed a highest growth rate in the recent census period from this. It can be hoped in near future they may over come from their lowest position

TABLE-V STATE-WISE LITERACY RATE IN 2001& 2011										
S.NO	STATE/UTs	LITERACY RATE (2011 Census)				LITERACY RATE (2001 Census)				Growth in Female Literacy during 2001-11
		Persons	Male	Female	Gender	Persons	Male	Female	Gender gap	
1.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	86.3	90.1	81.8	8.3	81.30	86.33	74.24	12.09	7.56
2.	Andhra Pradesh	67.7	75.6	59.7	15.9	60.47	70.32	50.43	19.89	9.27
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	67.0	73.7	59.6	14.1	54.34	63.83	43.53	20.3	16.07
4.	Assam	73.2	78.8	67.3	11.5	63.25	71.28	54.61	16.67	12.69
5.	Bihar	63.8	73.5	53.3	20.2	47.0	59.68	33.12	26.56	20.18
6.	Chandigarh	86.4	90.5	81.4	9.1	81.94	86.14	76.47	9.67	4.93
7.	Chattigarh	71.0	81.5	60.6	20.9	64.66	77.38	51.85	25.53	8.75
8.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	77.7	86.5	65.9	20.6	57.63	71.18	40.23	30.95	25.67
9.	Daman & Diu	87.1	91.5	79.6	11.9	78.18	86.76	65.61	21.15	13.99
10.	Delhi	86.3	91.0	80.9	10.1	81.67	87.33	74.71	12.62	6.19
11.	Goa	87.4	92.8	81.8	11.0	82.01	88.42	75.37	13.05	6.43
12.	Gujarat	79.3	87.2	70.7	16.5	69.14	79.66	57.80	21.86	12.9
13.	Haryana	76.6	85.4	66.8	18.6	67.91	78.49	55.73	22.76	11.07
14.	Himachal Pradesh	83.8	90.8	76.6	14.2	76.48	85.35	67.42	17.93	9.18
15.	Jammu & Kashmir	68.7	78.3	58.0	20.3	55.52	66.60	43.0	23.6	15.00
16.	Jharkhand	67.6	78.5	56.2	22.3	53.56	67.30	38.87	28.43	17.33
17.	Karnataka	75.6	82.8	68.1	14.7	66.64	76.10	56.87	19.23	11.23
18.	Kerala	93.9	96.0	92.0	4	90.86	94.24	87.72	6.52	4.28
19.	Lakshadweep	92.3	96.1	88.2	7.9	86.66	92.53	80.47	12.06	7.73
20.	Madhya Pradesh	70.6	80.5	60.0	20.5	63.74	76.06	50.29	25.77	9.71
21.	Maharashtra	82.9	89.8	75.5	14.3	76.88	85.97	67.03	18.94	8.47
22.	Manipur	79.8	86.5	73.21	13.3	70.53	80.33	60.53	19.8	12.67
23.	Meghalaya	75.5	77.2	73.8	3.4	62.56	65.43	59.61	5.82	14.19
24.	Mizoram	91.6	93.7	89.4	4.3	88.80	90.72	86.75	3.97	2.65
25.	Nagaland	80.1	83.3	76.7	6.6	66.59	71.16	61.46	9.7	15.24
26.	Orissa	73.5	82.4	64.4	18	63.08	75.35	50.51	24.82	13.89
27.	Puducherry	86.5	92.1	81.2	10.9	81.24	88.62	73.90	14.72	7.3

28.	Punjab	76.7	81.5	71.3	10.2	69.65	75.23	63.36	11.87	7.94
29.	Rajasthan	67.1	80.5	52.7	27.8	60.41	75.70	43.85	31.85	8.85
30.	Sikkim	82.2	87.3	76.4	10.9	68.81	76.04	60.40	15.64	16.0
31.	Tamil Nadu	80.3	86.8	73.9	10.2	60.41	75.70	43.85	18.09	9.57
32.	Tripura	87.8	92.2	83.1	9.1	73.19	81.02	64.91	16.11	18.19
33.	Uttar Pradesh	69.7	79.2	59.3	19.9	56.27	68.82	42.22	26.61	17.08
34.	Uttarakhand	79.6	88.3	70.7	17.6	71.62	83.28	59.63	23.65	11.07
35.	West Bengal	77.1	82.7	71.2	11.5	68.64	77.02	59.61	17.41	11.59
	Whole INDIA	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68	64.84	75.26	53.67	21.59	11.79

**Source:** 2001 & 2011 Census of India.

**Conclusion:** Education in India has been one of the major issues of concern of the Government of India as well as the society at large. It is because of the fact that today the educated women play a very significant role in overall development and progress of the country. Women hold a prominent position in the Indian society as well as all Over the world. However, since the prehistoric times women were denied opportunities and had to suffer for the hegemonic masculine ideology. Thus, this unjustifiable oppression had resulted into a movement that fought to achieve the equal status of women all over the world. Women Education in India is the consequence of such progress and this led to the tremendous improvement of women's condition throughout the world. Nevertheless eradication of female illiteracy is considered as a major concern today. In the recent era, the Indian society has established a number of institutions for the educational development of women and girls. These educational institutions aim for immense help and are concerned with the development of women.

**Suggestions:**

1. To improve accessibility to educational institutions, medical centers-arrange special buses or other transport facility.
2. Provide: Text Books and other study materials, mid-day meals in colleges, (at least till intermediate course level), including sanitary and drinking water facilities.
3. Conduct the following special classes at free of cost:
  - a) Spoken English and Computer classes for quality education.
  - b) Martial arts, classes for self protection/self confidence.
  - c) Stitching, fabric painting, embroidery, other arts and agriculture related courses for livelihood in rural areas.
4. Establishment of a 'Guidance Cell' in every Mandal to give proper guidance, in relation to problems faced by girls in pursuing their education, employment, sources of livelihood available.
5. Employment chances for merit rural, poor students at degree level.
6. Incentives for parents of a girl. There is a Scheme of State Girl Child Protection Programme, specially meant for to prevent child marriage and infanticide. But it is less known and funds released there under are sinfully inadequate.
7. Conduct awareness programs

**Reference:**

1. NCES-National Center for Educational Statistics.
2. Population census 1951 to 2011.