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Understanding The Grounds Of Male – Child Preference And Women Empowerment In India: Trends In Uttar Pradesh

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The meaning of 'women empowerment' is to establish women's rights which are nothing but human rights. It is clear by the speech of Hillary Clinton, the first lady of the United States at that time, at the fourth world conference on women in year 1995. These rights are- right to live respectfully, right to choose or make choices, right to take decisions about their own life, right to speak, freedom of movement and so on, are crucial for giving rise the sense of self-worth, self- confidence and self-respect in women. In India, as a consequence of many prevailing socio-cultural norms, these rights are neglected. Slow-paced social changes although lower down the intensity of negligence nevertheless, male-child preference in most of the Indian states tells us the story of women's rights abuses.

Keywords: Women's rights, Male -child preference

Introduction: While empowerment literally means 'to invest with power', in the context of women's empowerment the term has come to denote women's increased control over their own lives, bodies and environment. (Sunita Kishor, Kamla Gupta, 2004).

The speech delivered by Hillary Clinton, first lady of United States of America at that time, in the Fourth world conference on women, Beijing, 1995, in which she stated that

"If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, it is that human rights are women's rightsAnd women's rights are human rights.

Let us not forget that among those rights are the right to speak freely. And the right to be heard.

Women must enjoy the right to participate fully in the social and political lives of their countries if we want freedom and democracy to thrive and endure."

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/world_Conference_on_Women,_1995 date: 29-07-2023 Time: 09:51Am

Thus, women empowerment means to treat women like 'Human' & to empower her with some basic rights like right to live, right to make choices, right to education, right to take decisions about their own life, freedom of movement and so on.

On the other hand, male -child preference is not only a barrier in controlling the ever – increasing population but also create hinderance in achieving women's rights as it brings female at subordination and her rights over resources which are important for their development, hinders.

Male -child preference is not only about the women subordination in society but also about the distortion in demography of that area. Further women subordination creates many social problems in society as domestic violence, physical and mental violence against female children, dowry killing and other issues related to dowry, early marriage of females and so on. Worsening male -female ratio, illiteracy and early school drop-outs among females, high reproduction rate as consequence of early

marriage of women are some factors of demographic distortion which are the result of male -child preference.

Objectives:

- To compare the picture of Uttar Pradesh with some other states in women empowerment indicators like education, health, decision- making power, workforce participation, property right and male-child preference by Child Sex Ratio and female infant mortality rate.
- To examine the change over time period in male-child preference which is happening with socio-economic development in Uttar Pradesh.

Methodology:

- Review of related literatures is done to understand the reasons of male -child preference and female subordination and status of Uttar Pradesh in socio-economic condition of women.
- Choropleth method, bar diagram, etc. statistical techniques are used to show comparison of Uttar Pradesh with some other states to show male- child preference and women empowerment status of Uttar Pradesh.

Data – Source:

- Census, 2011
- ASER Report ,2022
- Sample Registration System Bulletin, Office of the Registrar General, India, Volume 55, no.1(May,2022)
- NFHS -5(2019-21) report

Review Of Literature: In the chapter ‘Tracing Cross-regional diversities’ from the book ‘A field of one’s own’ author talks about that socio – cultural norms like village exogamy, formidability of close-kin marriage, purdah practices, low literacy rate, high fertility rates, low rural female labor force participation rate, prohibition of widow and divorcee re-marriages as tools to have control & monopoly of male on land /cultivable land from previous times because land is always treated as inadequate. She further said that these practices are/were followed mostly in north-western part of India along with Pakistan. Mostly North-Western states like Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh & Bihar fall in the category where these practices are more or less followed.

In his article “Sex roles and gender relations in North-India” writer talks about the social and physical seclusion by ‘purdah’ or veil and restriction of movement for females in north Indian society. Only insufficient- income families or urbanized population allowed freeness to some extent. Muslims are more rigid in social and physical seclusion of women because their religion imposed that. It is not that rigid in Hindu religion. He inferred that social seclusion is important to maintain ‘honour’ of the family specially of the male members of the family. ‘Izzat (honour) is mainly positive in connotation; it embraces what a man should do if he can. Purda is more negative, it covers what a women might do but should not.’(Mandelbaum,1986)

In the article ““Daughter only’ families in selected high and low son preference states in India: A Comparative Analysis” writers have done a comparative study between high son preference states (Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra) and low son preference states (Kerala, Tamil Nadu & West Bengal). He says that son preference is high in North and middle India and low in southern India & also high in underdeveloped or developing countries of world. But, in present time daughter- only families are increasing in both low and high son preference states specially in urban areas and in young age population in India.

Although the research article ‘Religion, Population Growth, Fertility and family planning practices in India’ is about the difference in population growth, Fertility and use of Contraception practices in Hindus & Muslims even than it says about the expansion of the area of women’s rights with increment in schooling years and in family income. Writer takes some indicators like percentage of currently married women, using any method of contraception by education in Hindus and Muslims in India and inter-spouse communication on family planning religion-wise over time are convey the importance of decisions of women in family planning.

In the article 'Population, the status of women and rural development' writer put forward the thinking that socio-physical seclusion of female and women labor force participation rate fluctuates in rural areas with demands of female to work on land and with technical enhancement in agriculture.

Data Analysis:

News from the Sambhal district, Uttar Pradesh dated: 05-07-2023, Wednesday

अवैध अल्ट्रासाउंड सेंटर सील, एमबीबीएस डॉक्टर के नाम से किए जा रहे थे हस्ताक्षर

एमबीबीएस डॉक्टर के फर्जी हस्ताक्षर से बनी रिपोर्ट मिली, धोखाधड़ी के तहत होगी कार्रवाई

संवाद न्यूज एजेंसी

संभल। मोहम्मदपुर टांडा गांव में बिना रजिस्ट्रेशन चल रहा अल्ट्रासाउंड सेंटर को प्रशासन और स्वास्थ्य विभाग की संयुक्त टीम ने सील कर दिया है। मंगलवार को सूचना मिलने पर डिप्टी कलेक्टर पराग महेश्वरी के नेतृत्व में स्वास्थ्य विभाग की टीम मौके पर पहुंची थी। सुबह 11.20 बजे से जांच पड़ताल शुरू की गई, जो दोपहर में 3.30 बजे समाप्त हुई। जांच 4 घंटे 50 मिनट तक चली।

जिला सर्विलांस अधिकारी डॉ. मनोज कुमार ने बताया कि डिप्टी कलेक्टर पराग महेश्वरी, अपर मुख्य चिकित्सा अधिकारी डॉ. पंकज विश्वा, चिकित्सा अधीक्षक डॉ. मनीष अरोड़ा, एआरओ राशिद, संजीव कुमार के साथ मोहम्मदपुर टांडा में स्थित दिव्या डायग्नोस्टिक सेंटर पर पहुंची थी। यह दो दुकानों में संचालित किया जा रहा था। श्योराज सिंह द्वारा अल्ट्रासाउंड किया जा रहा था और उसके द्वारा ही रिपोर्ट पर डॉ. पी कुमार के नाम से कूटरचित हस्ताक्षर किए जा रहे थे। श्योराज सिंह ने बताया कि सेंटर का संचालन अशोक कुमार राणा द्वारा किया जा रहा है।

उन्हें वेतन मिल रहा है। इस पर अशोक कुमार राणा को बुलाने का प्रयास किया गया पर वह मौके पर नहीं पहुंचा। जिसके बाद अल्ट्रासाउंड करने वाली मशीनों को कब्जे में लेकर सील कर दिया गया। अन्य दस्तावेज भी सील किए गए हैं। कोतवाल ओमकार सिंह ने बताया कि रिपोर्ट दर्ज की जा रही है।

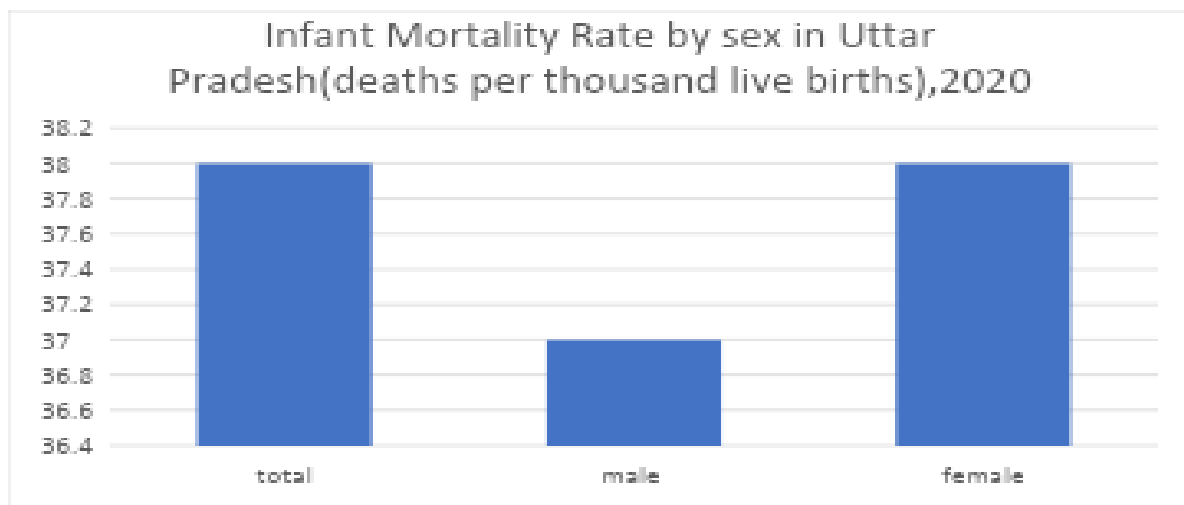
धड़ल्ले से संचालित हो रहे अवैध अल्ट्रासाउंड सेंटर जिले के ग्रामीण इलाके में धड़ल्ले से अवैध अल्ट्रासाउंड सेंटर का संचालन किया जा रहा है। लिंग परीक्षण के भी मामले प्रकाश में आए हैं। गौर करने वाली बात यह है कि जो लिंग परीक्षण के मामले पकड़े गए हैं। वह हरियाणा के स्वास्थ्य विभाग की टीम ने पकड़े हैं। जिला स्तर पर कोई कार्रवाई नहीं हुई है। अवैध अल्ट्रासाउंड सेंटर पर फर्जी डिग्री धारी चिकित्सकों के बोर्ड लगा दिए जाते हैं या डिग्री के आधार पर पंजीकरण करा लिया जाता है। उसके बाद अल्ट्रासाउंड किए जाते हैं। यह अवैध धंधा जिले में तेजी से चल रहा है। स्वास्थ्य विभाग इसको लेकर गंभीर नहीं है। संवाद



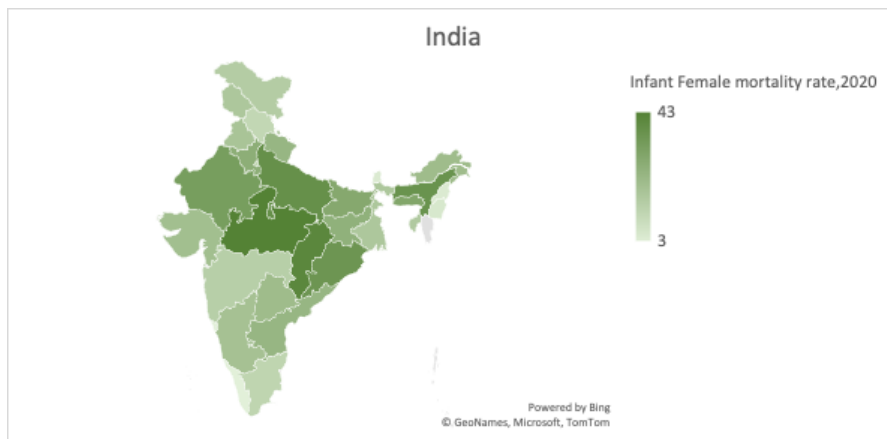
अवैध तरीके से संचालित अल्ट्रासाउंड सेंटर। संवाद

North – Eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh are having the highest child sex- ratio (female /1000 male) as per the Census 2011. Child sex – ratio is minimum in the districts located in the western part of Uttar Pradesh and these districts are sharing the boundaries with the nearby states of Haryana, Rajasthan, and NCT of Delhi. Baghpat is reported to have a minimum child sex ratio which is 841 female / 1000 male.

According to NFHS-5 (2019-2021) 19 out of 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh are having child sex ratio more than 1000 which is showing a healthy sign towards women empowerment.



Data Source: Sample Registration System Bulletin, Office of the Registrar General, India, Volume 55, no.1(May,2022)

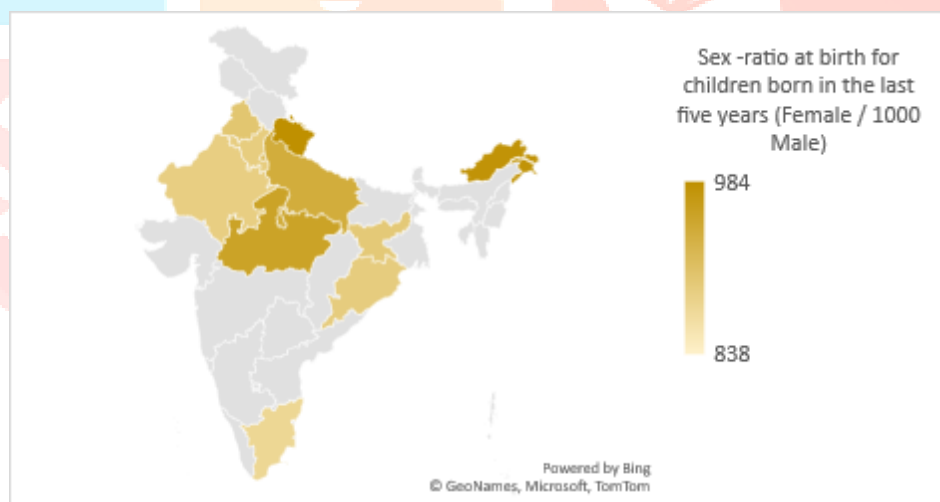


Data Source: Sample Registration System Bulletin, Office of the Registrar General, India, Volume 55, no.1(May,2022)

The value of infant female mortality rate in the state of Uttar Pradesh which is 38 / 1000 of female children, which is better than the state of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and the rest of India is better than the state of Uttar Pradesh.

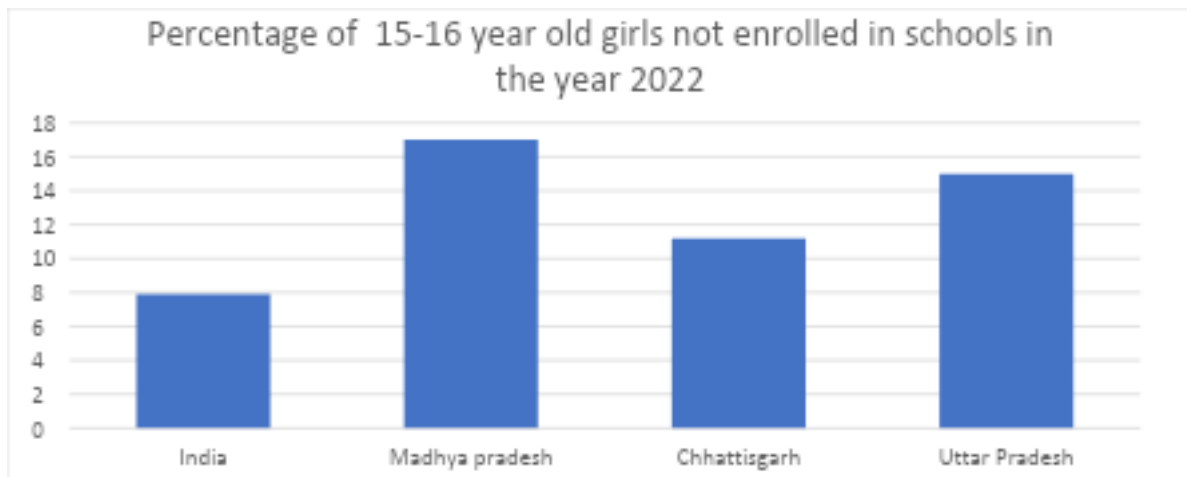
Because of the male- child preference, the health of female infants is also compromised and infant female mortality is more in the states where male child preference is high.

“The son preference is high in Northern and Central regions of India while low in southern India including Goa” (Mutharayappa et al, 1997). Source: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973703020948467> date 29-07-2023.



Data Source: NFHS-5(2019-21) Report

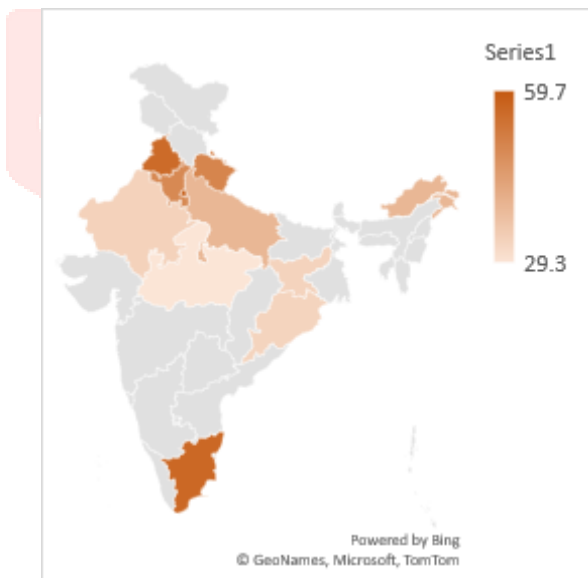
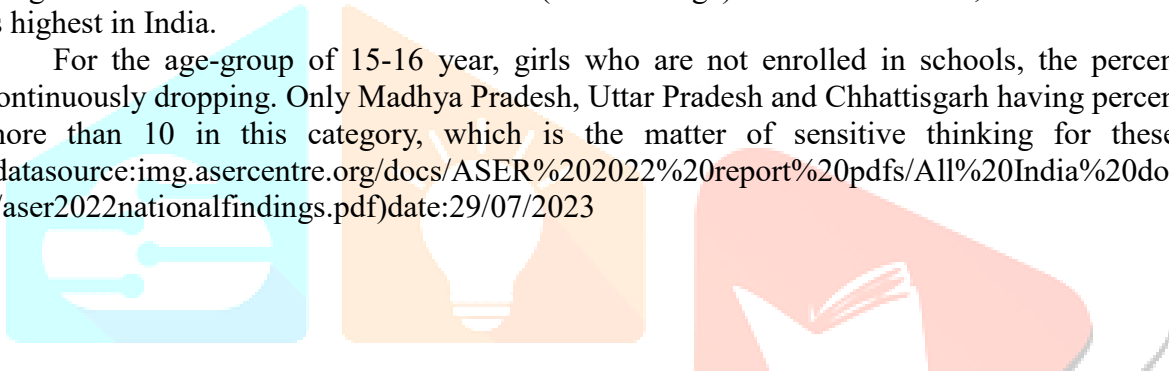
According to NFHS-5 (Year 2019-2021) child sex ratio in Uttar Pradesh is 941 Female / 1000 Male) which indicates the prevailing male-child preference in U.P.



Data Source: ASER Report, 2022

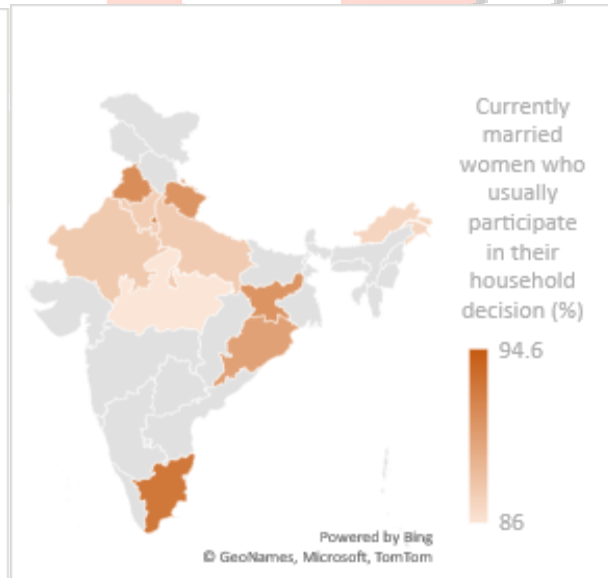
Education is a key indicator of women empowerment which opens news horizons for everyone to develop themselves. Article 21-A in the Constitution of India provides free and compulsory education of all children in the 6-14 years age-group. But till now, in the year 2022, percentage of 11-14 year old girls who are not enrolled in schools is 2 (India average). For Uttar Pradesh, it is around 4% which is highest in India.

For the age-group of 15-16 year, girls who are not enrolled in schools, the percentage is continuously dropping. Only Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh having percentage of more than 10 in this category, which is the matter of sensitive thinking for these state. (datasource:img.asercentre.org/docs/ASER%202022%20report%20pdfs/All%20India%20documents/aser2022nationalfindings.pdf)date:29/07/2023



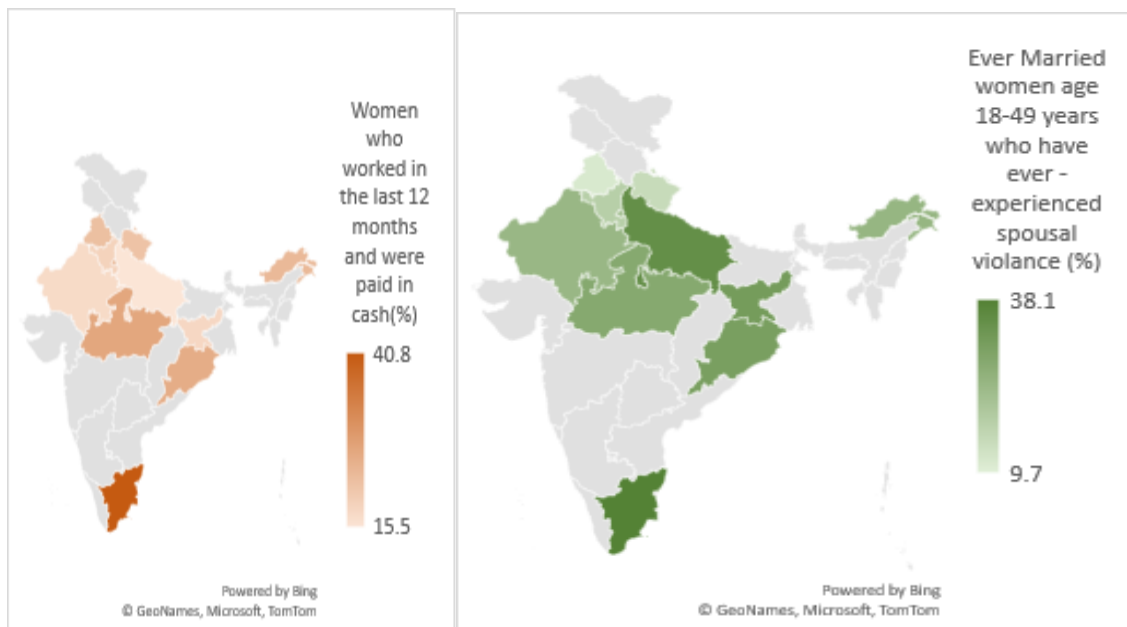
Graph: Women of 10 or More Years of Schooling in %

Data Source: NFHS-5(2019-21) Report



Currently Married Women who usually participate in their household decision %

Data Source: NFHS-5(2019-21) Report



Data Source: NFHS-5(2019-21) Report

Data Source: NFHS-5(2019-21) Report

CONCLUSION:

In Uttar Pradesh, male-child preference is high as child sex ratio continuously show low trends back from some decades till 2011. According to NFHS-5 report, 19 districts out of 75 have more than 1000 female per thousand male. It is a positive and soothing information because low child sex ratio indicates prevailing female foeticide. According to census, 2011 there was a trend in child sex ratio which going low in west too high in eastern districts but any trend of that type is not existing now. With ever increasing population, resources are becoming scarce and more and more people are now thinking economically so they manipulate the numbers and sex of their child, because investment on girls does not give much economic return, boys are those who take care of family property and make increment in that, because of the patriarchal structure of society boys are there for taking care of their parents in old age etc, male child preference is prevailing in society. 56 district of UP with low sex ratio give evidence in this direction.

Women empowerment is not a miracle which will come suddenly but by increasing of opportunities for women, a nation will get it. Education is one such right by getting which, women get capacity to take their own decisions, get freedom of movement by some extent and also get opportunity to see things with more broad attitude along with the opportunity of employment. These things make them more rational, more aware about their rights and give power to think positive about themselves.

In UP, low female enrolment in schools and lack of ethical and moral education in schools and more importantly in homes and mindset of female subordination in society tells about the usage of resources in biased manner at homes.

In Uttar Pradesh, land is the resource which is consider as the resource of men only and inadequate always. Land greed is always there. Very few women own property although legally they can have right. If some women own property, it is very shallow because they cannot take decisions about the land. according to NHFS-5 report, 51.9% women are owning immovable property. It may be because, as per registry rules of Uttar Pradesh government, there is significantly reduced stamp duty to be required if the land owner is a female.

Social and physical seclusion of female somewhere create a big hurdle, specially in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, to get self-dependence and other rights like freedom of movement, right to get education and right to own property. Because of physical seclusion and lack of freedom of movement, women workforce participation rate is very low although females are doing much more work on fields with their male family members and in houses with veil and without any returns, in terms of money, in hands.

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