

# GENDER BIAS IN EDUCATION: - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN INDIA

Jyoti

Assistant Prof in Eternal University Baru Sahib,  
Dept. of Economics (Himachal Pradesh)

**Abstract:** Education is being considered increasingly as an important means of or instrument for improving a nation's economic and social welfare. It contributes to the socio-economic development of the individuals by way of endowing them with the means of improving their knowledge, skill, capacity and capability for work and enriches the political and cultural life of the community. The main purpose of the study is to study the gender wise literacy ratio in India and to analysis the gender gap and gender ratio in rural and urban areas. The result of the study is an important dimension reflecting gender bias in education and gender ratio in literacy. In the year 1991, gender ratio on an average stood at 0.529 at the all India level, rose to 0.654 in the year 2001 and stood at 0.776 in the year 2011. In the year 1991, gender ratio was highest in Kerala (0.916) followed by Meghalaya (0.828) and Nagaland (0.794). On the contrary, it was lowest in Rajasthan (0.243) followed by Uttar Pradesh (0.365), Bihar (0.371). In the same year, there were 13 states where gender ratio stood above 0.600 and in the remaining states was stood less than this. In the year 2001 in 20 states gender ratio stood 0.700. In the year 2011, with spread of female literacy, gender ratio stood highest in Kerala (0.965) followed by Meghalaya (0.939) and Goa (0.889). On the other side Rajasthan again at the bottom with (0.554) followed by Jammu and Kashmir (0.632), Uttar Pradesh (0.635) and Bihar (0.635). (1)

**INTRODUCTION:** Economic growth, human capital and education are critically inter-connected variables in any politico-administrative set up. The nature and pace of economic growth have strong positive correlation with the supply of human capital. The countries which invested heavily in education realized higher growth than those which neglected it. Education has universally been recognized as the most important contributory factor in the production of human capital. Education is being considered increasingly as an important means of or instrument for improving a nation's economic and social welfare. It contributes to the socio-economic development of the individuals as well as society by enhancing their knowledge, skill, capacity and capability for work. It also enriches the political and cultural life of the community.

## Role of Education in Social-Economic Development

Education is a key factor in socio-economic development of every country. Each country develops its system of education to expand and promote its socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of time. It plays an important role in order to achieve the objective of improved human resource development and bringing about much needed change in social environment leading to overall progress through efficient use of resource. It is not only a mean to enhance human capital productivity and hence, the compensation to labor but, it is equally important to enable the process of assimilation and communication of information and knowledge, all of which augment a person's quality of life.

Education plays the key role to improve women's position in society, provided it encourages greater complementarity between men and women both in public and domestic life. It requires change in the existing educational arrangement.

Education deemed to be one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skill and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development progress.

In recent years, the focus of planning has shifted from equipping women from their traditional roles of house-wives and mother to recognizing their worth as producers making a major contribution to family and national income. Efforts have been made over the past three decades of planned development to move girls in school, to complete their education as long as possible and to provide **non-female** educational opportunities for women.

Free and compulsory education to children of age group 6-14, is now a fundamental right mandated by the Constitution of India. Girls are identified as a target group, requiring particular attention as 'their participation in primary education has been far from desirable; the frame work clearly states that there will be efforts to mainstream gender concerns into all of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan activities.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Basak (2013) conducted a field survey in two blocks of Malda in West Bengal and analyzed the difference in educational attainment across different economic and social categories. Literacy rate among rural ST female was alarming low in these blocks. As far as female literacy is concerned it is always lower to that of its counterparts but, the gender differential in education was found to be low for higher economic status in comparison to lower economic status. (2)

Arokiasamy (2013) observed that the millennium development goals accorded highest priorities for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Using National Family Health Survey (1998-99) data, this paper adopts a multiple indicators approach to study gender bias. The study observed huge inequalities among states with respect to gender bias.

Amirtham and Kundpuzhakkal (2013) conducted a study on Gender Issues and Dropout Rate in India. Conceptual approaches in gender education were discussed in this paper along with the major government policies for gender equality. This paper discusses the dropout rates of students in India at primary, elementary and secondary level schools during the period 1999-2000 to 2010-2011 and concluded that mindset of the society towards gender based discrimination should be changed.

### Objective of the study:-

The main objectives of the study are following

- To study the gender wise literacy ratio in India.
- To analysis the gender gap and gender ratio in rural and urban areas.

### Methodology:

The study based on the secondary data and the data collected from different newspapers, magazines, Census reports etc. The result is derived on the basis of simple percentage. However, gender gap, gender ratio and gender parity index has been calculated to ascertain the gender bias in education. Gender gap is defined as the difference between the percentage of male literacy and female literacy. Gender ratio is defined as the ratio of percentage of female literacy to percentage to male literacy ratio. In order to ascertain inter- state disparities in literacy, gender gap and gender ratio coefficient is also calculated. The formula used for coefficient of variation is divide the standard deviation by the mean and multiply by 100 as follows:

$$\frac{\sigma}{\bar{x}} \times 100$$

### Need of The study:

Education is a social process leading to overall growth. Education is not a preparation for life rather education is life itself.

Education is the single most important mean for individual to improve personal endowment, build

Capability levels, overcome constraints and personal endowment and enlarge their available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement in well- being. It is necessary both for men and women. The education of the women will usher in an era of **complete rationalism** and equality which will help in recognizing their dignity and worth as human being in social structure. Education will help in achieving equality in their right, opportunities and responsibilities.

Without education, the status of women can never change. It is education only which is key to all positive changes in a society. However, there are various studies which point out that there is gender bias in education. In this background, it is important to know that whether it is really so or not? Does gender bias in education exist? Whether it has tended to decline/increase over a period of time are a few questions which need to be **thoroughly probed.** (3)

There is one more logic to go for this study. India is a vast country having various social groups. Therefore a study of gender bias in education is needed at the state level. An inter-state analysis can reveal the actual grey areas of gender bias in education.

Hence, in view of all these issues in mind, it is essential that a study of this kind should be attempted.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Basak (2013) conducted a field survey in two blocks of Malda in West Bengal and analyzed difference in educational attainment across different economic and social categories. Literacy rate among rural ST female was alarming low in these blocks. As far as female literacy is concerned it is always lower to that of male but, the gender differential in education was found to be low for higher economic status in comparison to lower economic status.

Arokiasamy (2013) observed that the millennium development goals accorded highest priorities for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Using National Family Health Survey (1998-99) data, this paper adopts a multiple indicators approach to study gender bias. The study observed huge inequalities among states with respect to gender bias

Amirtham and Kundpuzhakkal (2013) conducted a study on Gender Issues and Dropout Rate in India. Conceptual approaches in gender education were discussed in this paper along with the major government policies for gender equality. This paper discusses the dropout rates of students in India at primary, elementary and secondary level schools during the period 1999-2000 to 2010-2011 and concluded that mindset of the society towards gender based discrimination should be changed.

**Result and Discussion:-****Table 1.1 Literacy Ratios in India**

Census Year	Persons	Males	Females
1951	18.3	27.2	8.9
1961	28.3	40.4	15.4
1971	34.5	46.06	22.0
1981	43.6	56.4	29.8
1991	52.2	64.1	39.3
2001	64.8	75.3	53.7
2011	73.0	80.9	64.6

Source: Population Census of India.

In table 1.1 gender wise growth of literacy rate at the all India level is exhibited .As per 1951 Population Census only 27.2 males and 8.9 per cent of females were literate in the country. In contrast, the extent of male and female literacy was 80.9 per cent and 64.9 per cent in the year 2011. Meaning thereby, that whereas in the year 1951, the male literacy was 18.3 points more than the female literacy , in the year 2011 also the position did not change much and male literacy still stood 16.3 points more than female literacy .There is a big scope to improve overall female literacy in the country.

**(4) Table 1.2 GENDER -WISE LITERACY IN INDIAN STATES**

States	2001			2011		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kerala	94.2	87.86	90.92	96.11	92.07	94.0
Mizoram	90.69	86.13	88.49	93.35	89.27	92.33
Goa	88.88	75.51	82.32	92.65	84.66	88.70
Tripura	81.47	65.41	73.66	91.53	82.73	87.22
Himachal Pradesh	84.57	67.08	75.91	89.53	75.93	82.80
Maharashtra	86.27	67.51	77.27	88.38	75.87	82.34
Sikkim	76.73	61.46	69.68	86.55	75.61	81.42
Tamil Nadu	82.33	64.55	73.47	86.77	73.44	80.09
Nagaland	71.77	61.92	67.11	82.75	76.11	79.55
Uttarakhand	84.01	60.26	72.28	87.40	70.01	78.82
Gujarat	76.46	51.61	66.43	85.75	69.68	78.03
Manipur	77.87	59.70	68.87	83.58	70.26	76.94
West Bengal	77.58	60.22	69.22	81.69	70.54	76.26
Punjab	75.63	63.55	69.95	80.44	70.73	75.84
Haryana	79.25	56.31	68.59	84.06	65.94	75.55
Karnataka	76.29	57.45	67.04	82.47	68.08	75.36
Meghalaya	66.14	60.41	63.31	75.95	72.89	74.43
Orissa	75.95	50.97	63.61	81.59	64.01	72.87
Assam	71.93	56.03	64.28	77.85	66.27	72.19
Chhattisgarh	77.86	52.28	65.12	80.27	60.24	70.28
Madhya Pradesh	76.5	50.55	64.08	78.73	59.24	69.32
Uttar Pradesh	70.23	42.97	57.36	77.28	57.18	67.68
Jammu & Kashmir	65.75	41.82	54.46	76.75	56.43	67.16
Andhra Pradesh	70.85	51.17	61.11	74.88	59.15	67.06
Jharkhand	67.94	39.38	54.13	76.84	55.42	66.41
Rajasthan	76.46	44.34	61.03	79.19	52.42	66.11
Arunachal Pradesh	64.07	44.24	54.74	72.55	57.70	65.38
Bihar	60.32	33.57	47.53	71.20	51.50	61.80
All India	75.64	54.03	65.20	82.14	65.46	74.04
CV ( %)	10.4	21.05	14.38	7.65	15.26	10.68

Source: Govt. of India 2002, National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, New Delhi, Population Census of India, 2011. (5)

In table 1.2 level of literacy in Indian states is shown. Average female literacy rate has throughout continued to be very less vis-a-vis the male literacy at the all India level. However, the difference between the male-female literacy rate exhibited continuous falling trend. In the year 1991, the difference between male and female literacy rate was 24 points which decline to 21 and 16 in the year 2001 and 2011 respectively. State wise analysis of literacy rate revealed that throughout the period under study (1991-2011), Kerala followed by Mizoram and Goa exhibited highest female literacy rate in the country. In the year 1991 as many as 16 states, the level of female literacy stood less than 50 per cent. In the year 2001, there were only 6 states having literacy rate less than 50 per cent. The situation improved to such an extent that in year 2011, there was not even a single state having female literacy less than 50 per cent.

However, in Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand and in Arunachal Pradesh as compared to most of other states of the country, female literacy continued to be miserably low.

The most remarkable progress made with respect to female literacy is the story of Tripura, Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh. Though Rajasthan (from 20.44 per cent in 1991 to 52 per cent in 2011), Bihar (from 22.89 per cent in 1991 to 54.5 per cent in 2011), Arunachal Pradesh (from 29.69 per cent in 1991 to 57 per cent in 2011) also made some improvements with respect to female literacy, yet, these states have long way to go to achieve 100 per cent female literacy rate. Further it is important to mention that in all the states of the country, female literacy has continued to be less than that of their male counterparts. The value of coefficient of variation revealed that there exists very nominal inter-state disparities with respect to both male-female literacy rates in India. The inter-state disparities with respect to both male and female literacy exhibited a continuous decline over a period of time. Further, the inter-state variations are throughout less with respect to male literacy vis-a-vis female literacy.

**Table:- 1.3 Gender Gap and Gender Ratio in Rural Areas**

States	2001 Gender Gap	Gender Ratio	2011 Gender Gap	Gender Ratio
Andhra Pradesh	21.77	0.67	18.09	0.739
Arunachal Pradesh	20.53	0.646	18.3	0.728
Assam	16.77	0.757	15.35	0.796
Bihar	27.67	0.520	25.37	0.635
Chhatisgarh	27.17	0.635	21.83	0.716
Goa	16.14	0.815	9.91	0.889
Gujarat	24.96	0.647	23.83	0.708
Haryana	26.36	0.653	29.96	0.637
Himachal Pradesh	18.35	0.78	15.63	0.824
Jammu & Kashmir	25.25	0.581	27.76	0.623
Jharkhand	31.24	0.492	26.24	0.639
Karnataka	22.13	0.686	19.29	0.751
Kerala	6.75	0.927	3.38	0.965
Madhya Pradesh	29.14	0.595	26.25	0.649
Maharashtra	23.05	0.719	20.35	0.761
Manipur	18.62	0.75	13.95	0.826
Meghalaya	5.88	0.901	7.31	0.939
Mizoram	8.21	0.902	12.93	0.853
Nagaland	8.86	0.869	12.46	0.842
Orissa	26.36	0.641	19.7	0.752
Punjab	13.79	0.807	17.63	0.769
Rajasthan	35.22	0.517	33.96	0.554
Sikkim	16.02	0.786	21.65	0.744
Tamil Nadu	21.63	0.72	17.49	0.787
Tripura	17.84	0.77	14.65	0.837
Uttar Pradesh	30.27	0.554	27.84	0.635
Uttarakhand	27.22	0.971	19.69	0.772
West Bengal	19.93	0.731	16.98	0.790
India	24.6	0.654	17.74	0.776
CV( in %)	42.45	25.29	67.98	12.58

Govt. of India 2002, National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, New Delhi, Population Census of India, 2011.

An important dimension reflecting gender bias in education is gender ratio in literacy. In the year 1991, gender ratio on an average stood at 0.529 at the all India level, rose to 0.654 in the year 2001 and stood at 0.776 in the year 2011. In the year 1991, gender ratio was highest in Kerala (0.916) followed by Meghalaya (0.828) and Nagaland (0.794). On the contrary, it was lowest in Rajasthan (0.243) followed by Uttar Pradesh (0.365), Bihar (0.371). In the same year, there were 13 states where gender ratio stood above 0.600 and in the remaining states was stood less than this. In the year 2001 in 20 states gender ratio stood 0.700.

In the year 2011, with spread of female literacy, gender ratio stood highest in Kerala (0.965) followed by Meghalaya (0.939) and Goa (0.889). On the contrary it stood lowest in Rajasthan (0.554) followed by Jammu and Kashmir (0.632), Uttar Pradesh (0.635) and Bihar (0.635).

The values of co-efficient of variation reveal that inter- state disparity in literacy with respect to rural areas has declined over a period of time. In the year 2011, the value of co-efficient of variation with respect to gender gap stood at 67.98 per cent.

**Table 1.4 Gender Gap and Gender Ratio in Urban Areas**

States	2001 Gender Gap	Gender Ratio	2011 Gender Gap	Gender Ratio
Andhra Pradesh	13.87	0.883	10.48	0.878
Arunachal Pradesh	15.01	0.824	11.31	0.872
Assam	8.85	0.901	7.96	0.913
Bihar	17.5	0.783	9.61	0.883
Chhatisgarh	18.24	0.797	12.19	0.865
Goa	10.14	0.884	7.14	0.923
Gujarat	13.23	0.845	7.14	0.923
Haryana	14.53	0.832	9.65	0.891
Himachal Pradesh	6.58	0.928	4.17	0.955
Jammu & Kashmir	18.08	0.774	12.27	0.854
Jharkhand	17.02	0.805	10.68	0.879
Karnataka	11.98	0.862	9.07	0.899
Kerala	5.20	0.945	1.96	0.979
Madhya Pradesh	17.16	0.804	12.2	0.862
Maharashtra	12.17	0.866	7.37	0.919
Manipur	17.30	0.805	12.37	0.865
Meghalaya	5.60	0.937	3.22	0.965
Mizoram	1.28	0.986	0.96	0.990
Nagaland	6.92	0.922	4.32	0.953
Orissa	15.64	0.822	10.43	0.885
Punjab	8.34	0.899	6.38	0.926
Rajasthan	21.68	0.751	16.8	0.816
Sikkim	8.42	0.904	7.72	0.916
Tamil Nadu	12.76	0.855	9.55	0.896
Tripura	8.15	0.912	3.81	0.960
Uttar Pradesh	16.08	0.794	9.49	0.882
Uttarakhand	12.44	0.847	11.09	0.875
West Bengal	10.35	0.880	8.36	0.905
India	13.5	0.844	9.75	0.891
CV( in %)	39.50	7.69	43.71	5.72

Govt of India 2002, National Human Development Report 2001, Planning Commission, New Delhi, Population Census of India, 2011.

Gender gap is the difference between male Literacy and female Literacy in urban areas across various states on an average stood at 12.94 per cent in the year 1991. Gender gap in the year 2001 declined further to 10.35 and stood at 8.36 per cent in the year 2011. Gender gap in literacy in urban areas in the year 1991 stood highest in Rajasthan (28.86%), followed by Madhya Pradesh (22.49%) and Bihar (21.78%). There were states in 1991 which exhibited gender gap more than 15 per cent. In the year 1991, gender gap more than 15 per cent. In the year 1991, gender gap was lowest in Mizoram (3.54%), followed by Kerala (6.52%) and Nagaland (6.84%). However, gender gap in 2011 was highest in Rajasthan (16.1%), followed by Manipur (12.37%) and Jammu and Kashmir (12.27%).

An important dimension reflecting gender bias in education is gender ratio in literacy. Higher in the ration, better it is. In the year 1991, gender ratio on an average stood at 0.840 at the all India level rose to 0.880 in the year 2001 and at 0.905 in the year 2011. In the year 1991, gender ratio was highest in Mizoram (0.920). On the contrary, it was lowest in Rajasthan (0.640) followed by Manipur (0.714) and Bihar (0.719). In the year 1991, there were 14 states where gender ratio stood above 0.8. In all the remaining states it stood less than this.

The overall situation with respect to gender gap made a big change over a period of time is clear from the fact that whereas in the year 2011, there were as many as 18 states which recorded gender gap less than 10 per cent. However in the year 2011, with the spread of female literacy it improved to an extent that in 12 states it stood more than 0.900 and in the remaining states gender ratio stood between 0.8 and 0.9.

The value of co-efficient of variation reveals that inter-state disparity with respect to gender gap in urban literacy has increased from 39.65 per cent in the year 1991 to 43.71 per cent in the year 2011. **In contrast, the inter- State disparity in case of gender ratio has declined from 9.67 per cent in 1991 to 5.72 per cent in the year 2011.**

#### CONCLUSION:-

India began its journey towards the goal of universal and free basic education little more than 50 years ago. The constitution of the country made it obligatory for the state to provide basic education for all the age of 14. Overall position of literacy in India is improving gradually. But overall female literacy in the country is still lower than male literacy. However, the difference between the male -female literacy rates exhibited continuous falling trend .In the state -wise literacy rate, Kerala exhibited highest female literacy rate followed by Mizoram and Goa throughout the period 1991 to 2011. In the year 1991, in 16 states, the level of female literacy stood less than 50 per cent. The situation improved to such an extent that in the year 2011, there was not even a single state having female literacy less 50 per cent. Even in the rural areas of the country, literacy rate has improved. Female literacy has also improved to such an extent that whereas in the year 1991 only 4 states having rural female literacy rate more than 50 per cent, the number of these states rose to 20 during the year 2011. An analysis of inter-state disparities reveals that the variation with respect to both male and female rural literacy has declined over a period of time. In urban areas, there exist very nominal inter- state disparities with respect to female literacy in the country. The gender bias in education in the country has improved however still miles have to go to achieve the desired target.

#### References

- 1.Gill, Angrej Singh and Brar ,Jaswinder Singh (2009). Public spending on Higher Education in Northern States (India): Post Reform and Trends.Journal of Educational Planning and Administration, Vol.XXIII,No.1, January 2009,pp.49-66
2. Dua,Radha (1997). Discrimination against Women in Education in India. The Journal of Educational Planning and Administration, Vol.VIII, No.9, September, pp.25-28
3. Vaughan, Rosie and Mohan, Nitya (2008). National and the Education of the Female Citizen in India.New York, NY: Routledge.
4. Basak, Uma (2013). Inequalities in Educational Level:Class, caste and Gender Perception in Rural West Bengal. Indian Journal of Economics, January, Vol.XIC,PP-651-668
5. Arokiasamy (2013). Gender bias against Female Children in India:Regional differences and their Implications for MDGs.
- 6.NethiyaAmirtham S, SaidalaviKundupuzhakkal (2013). Gender Issues and dropout Rate in India: Major Barriers in Providing Education for all. Indian Economic Journal, Vol.2, NO.4, April , pp.226-232. (9)