MEMBERS REFERENCE SERVICE
LARRDIS

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

REFERENCE NOTE

No.27/RN/Ref/July/2018

GIRLS EDUCATION IN INDIA

GIRLS EDUCATION IN INDIA

Introduction

Education is one of the most significant means for empowering an individual or community in general, and women and girls in particular. Level of educational attainment and literacy rate are indicators of general development of any society. Gender equality and empowerment of women are indispensable for achieving prosperity and sustainable development.

Since Independence, India has adopted many different paths and strategies for national, social, economic and political development. The overall situation and status of women also has improved.

Educational status of women in India

As per the 2011 Census, the total literacy rate in India stands at 74.00 per cent and the rate of literacy among women is 65.46 per cent. The percentage of female literacy in the country was 54.16 per cent in 2001. The literacy rate in the country has increased from 18.33 per cent in 1951 to 74.00 per cent as per 2011 census. The female literacy rate has also increased from 8.86 per cent in 1951 to 65.46 per cent in 2011. Female literacy rate during the period 1991-2001 increased by 14.87 per cent whereas male literacy rate rose by ll.72 per cent. The increase in female literacy rate was 3.15 per cent more compared to male literacy rate. In Table 1 contains statistics regarding general rate of literacy in all the states in India along with a break up of rate of literacy among males and females. Table 2 gives State-wise Literacy rate figures as per 2011 Census.

Table 1: Literacy Rate of India(Census 2011)

Census year	Total Population (per cent)	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)
1951	18.3	27.2	8.9
1961	28.3	40.4	15.4
1971	34.5	46.0	22.0
1981	43.6	56.4	29.8
1991	52.2	64.1	39.8
2001	64.8	75.3	53.7
2011	74.00	80.9	64.6

Table 2: Statewise Literacy Rate (Census 2011)

States/UT	Total literacy rate per cent	Male literacy rate per cent	Female literacy rate per cent
INDIA	**74.00**	**82.14**	65.46
J&K	68.74	78.26	58.01
Himachal Pradesh	83.78	90.83	76.60
Punjab	76.68	81.48	71.34
Chandigarh	86.43	90.54	81.38
Uttarakhand	79.63	88.33	70.70
Haryana	76.64	85.38	66.77
NCT of Delhi	86.34	91.03	80.93
Rajasthan	67.06	80.51	52.66
Uttar Pradesh	69.72	79.24	59.26
Bihar	63.82	73.39	53.33
Sikkim	82.20	87.29	76.43
Arunachal Pradesh	66.95	73.69	59.57
Nagaland	80.11	83.29	76.69
Manipur	79.85	86.49	73.17
Mizoram	91.58	93.72	89.40
Tripura	87.75	92.18	83.15
Meghalaya	75.48	77.17	73.78
Assam	73.18	78.81	67.27
West Bengal	77.08	82.67	71.16
Jharkhand	67.63	78.45	56.21
Odisha	73.45	82.40	64.36
Chhattisgarh	71.04	81.45	60.59
Madhya Pradesh	70.63	80.53	60.02

Gujarat	79.31	87.23	70.73
Daman & Diu	87.07	91.48	79.59
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	77.65	86.46	65.93
Maharashtra	82.91	89.82	75.48
Andhra Pradesh	67.66	75.56	59.74
Karnataka	75.60	8 2.85	68.13
Goa	87.40	92.81	81.84
Lakshadweep	92.28	96.11	88.25
Kerala	93.91	96.02	91.98
Tamil Nadu	80.33	86.81	73.86
Puducherry	86.55	92.12	81.22
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	86.27	90.11	81.84

At the all India level it can be seen that the gender gap in literacy has been reducing and female literacy rate has been increasing every decade. Nonetheless, the gap between the two genders exists. The data indicates that women have been lagging from the beginning in terms of literacy rate and educational achievements. Table 3 indicates male and female enrolment in educational institutions at various stages, from the primary level up to the higher education.

Data in Table 4 presents number of girls enrolled at every stage per 100 boys. The statistics in a way reveals skewed sex-ratio and preference for a male child by families in India that has also led to evils like female infanticide or feticide. The gap between number of boys and girls continues through years and in different stages. It is only in the last couple of years that the gap between number of girls per 100 boys has become narrow.

Factors inhibiting Female Literacy

A variety of factors have been found to be responsible for poor female literate rate, viz.

- Gender based inequality.
- Social discrimination and economic exploitation
- Occupation of girl child in domestic chores
- Low enrolment of girls in schools
- Low retention rate and high dropout rate1

Girls Enrolment

Data provided in Table 3 indicates a steady decline in the number of girls enrolling for education as they move up from primary to secondary and then at the level of higher education. A clear-cut decline in the numbers can be noticed as we move from undergraduate to post graduate level particularly.

Table 3: Level-wise Enrolment in School & Higher Education

Level	All Categories (in '000')		
	Male	Female	Total
Primary (I-V)	67223	62769	129992
Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	33746	32035	65780
Elementary (I-VIII)	100969	94804	195773
Secondary (IX-X)	19484	17477	36961
I-X	120453	112281	232734
Senior Secondary (XI-XII)	11747	10406	22153
I-XII	132199	122688	25662
Under Graduate	12723	10815	23538
Post Graduate	1744	1631	3374
MPhil	16	19	35
Ph.D	50	34	84
PG Diploma	164	51	215
Diploma	1500	624	2124
Certificate	81	95	176
Integrated	51	32	83
Higher Education- Total	16329	13301	29629

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance 2014

Table 4: Number of Girls per hundred Boys enrolled by stages of education

Level/Year	Primary (I-V)	Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	Secondary (IX-X)	Senior Secondary (XI-XII)	Higher Education
1950-51	39	19	NA	15	13
1960-61	48	31	NA	26	21
1970-71	60	41	NA	33	28
1980-81	63	49	NA	45	36
1990-91	71	58	NA	49	46
2000-01	78	69	63	62	58
2005-06	87	81	73	72	62
2006-07	88	83	73	74	62
2007-08	91	84	77	76	63
2008-09	92	86	79	77	65
2009-10	92	88	82	80	67
2010-11	92	89	82	79	78
2011-12	93	90	84	81	80
2012-13 (p)	94	95	89	87	81
2013-14 (p)	93	95	90	89	NA

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance 2014.

Girls' Drop-Out Rate

Statistics in Table 5 indicate the rate of drop outs among girls and boys in early stages of schooling for all categories of students including SC and STs. Some of the commonly mentioned reasons for drop-out in the primary and middle school level as reported by a NSSO Survey are:

- Not interested in studies
- Costs too much
- Required for household work (which applies primarily to girls)
- Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind (this applies primarily to young boys in the family)
- Required for work on family farm/family business
- Marriage at an early age

.

Apart from these reasons, a substantial percentage of girls quit because of non-availability of educational institutions in the close vicinity and lack of regular and safe means of travel. Lack of proper toilets/ means of sanitation and hygiene is also mentioned as one of the important reasons for not sending young girls to the school .

Table 5: Drop-Out Rates in School Education (in per cent)

Classes/Year	Classes (I-V)			Classes (I-VIII)			Classes (I-X)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1960-61	61.7	70.9	64.9	75.0	85.0	78.3	NA	NA	NA
1970-71	64.5	70.9	67.0	74.6	83.4	77.9	NA	NA	NA
1980-81	56.2	62.5	58.7	68.0	79.4	72.7	79.8	86.6	82.5
1990-91	40.1	46.0	42.6	59.1	65.1	60.9	67.5	76.6	71.3
2000-01	39.7	42.9	40.7	50.3	57.7	53.7	66.4	71.5	68.6
2005-06	28.7	21.8	25.7	48.7	49.0	48.8	60.1	63.6	61.6
2006-07	24.6	26.8	25.6	46.4	45.2	45.9	58.6	61.5	59.9
2007-08	25.7	24.4	25.1	43.7	41.3	42.7	56.6	57.3	56.7
2008-09	29.6	25.8	27.8	41.1	36.9	39.3	54.0	54.4	54.2
2009-10	31.8	28.5	30.3	41.1	44.2	42.5	53.3	51.8	52.7
2010-11	29.0	25.4	27.4	40.6	41.2	40.8	50.2	47.7	49.2
2011-12	23.4	21.0	22.3	41.5	40.0	40.8	48.6	52.2	50.3
2012-13(p)	23.0	19.4	21.3	41.8	35.7	39.0	50.4	50.3	50.4
2013-14(p)	21.2	18.3	19.8	39.2	32.9	36.3	48.1	46.7	47.4

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance 2014

Government Schemes for improvement in Girls Education

The expansion of education among girls/women has been an integral part of educational policies and programmes. Ministry of Human Resource Development has taken a number of initiatives for expansion of girls' school and higher education, details of which are as under:

School Education

- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya** - This scheme was launched in July, 2004, to provide education to girls at primary level. It is primarily for the underprivileged and rural areas where literacy level for girls is very low. The schools that were set up have 100% reservation: 75% for backward class and 25% for BPL (below Poverty line) girls.
- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** - This is newly announced Scheme of the Govt. of India for enhancing girls' education in India.
- **UDAAN** - Giving wings to Girl Students - The Scheme is dedicated to the development of girl child education, so as to promote the admission of girl students. The aim is to address the teaching gap between school education and engineering entrance examinations. It seeks to enhance the enrolment of girl students in prestigious technical education institutions through incentives & academic support.
- **Mahila Samakhya- Mahila Samakhya (MS)** is an ongoing scheme for women's empowerment that was initiated in 1989 to translate the goals of the National Policy on Education into a concrete programme for the education and empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly those from socially and economically marginalized groups.
- **Saakshar Bharat**: The National Literacy Mission was recast with its new variant, Saakshar Bharat launched in 2009. It aims to accelerate adult education, especially for women's (in the age group of 15 years and above) who have no access to formal education, targeted female literacy as a critical instrument for women's empowerment.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme**: The gender gap in school participation tends to narrow, as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme helps erode the barriers that prevent

girls from going to school. Mid-Day Meal Scheme also provides a useful source of employment for women and helps liberate working women from the burden of cooking at home during the day. In these and other ways, women and girl children have a special stake in Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

Higher Education

- Higher education of women through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Mode
- Post School Diploma (Polytechnics etc.) : To provide financial assistance for the construction of women hostel in the existing polytechnics.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched a number of schemes to encourage the enrolment and promotion of girls in Higher Education.
- Day Care Centres in Universities and Colleges
- Post Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child for Pursuing
- Higher and Technical Education. Construction of Women's Hostels for Colleges
- Development of Women's Studies in Universities and Colleges
- Scheme of Capacity Building of Women Managers in Higher Education
- Post-Doctoral Fellowships for Women

Conclusion

Empowerment of girls and women is essential for achieving sustainable development. The new strategies and initiatives must include various tools of social empowerment of women such as right and access to education, health care, adequate nutrition, right to property and access to equal opportunities, legal and institutional mechanism to help women in need, access to media and finally dispute redressal mechanism. Socio-cultural practices that work as barriers to empowerment of women and girls need to be removed at the earliest.

Sources Consulted:

1) Census 2011*(https://www.census2011.co.in/)*

2) Educational Statistics at a Glance: 2014

   (http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/EAG2014_0.pdf)

3) Kurushetra December 2016 *(https://afeias.com/knowledge-centre/magazines/kurukshetra-december-2016-girl-child-educate-to-empower/)*

4) N.S.S.O Survey: 2014

   (http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/National-Survey-Estimation-School-Children-Draft-Report.pdf)