



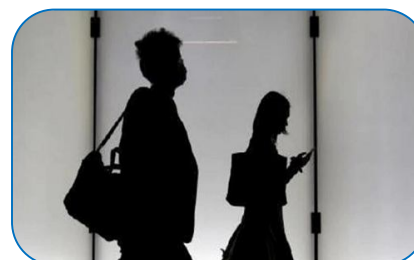
A STUDY ON GENDER GAP IN LITERACY

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ABSTRACT :

The gender gap is the difference between women and men as reflected in school, political, Educational, Intellectual, Cultural or economical attainments attitudes. So, the gender gap's present in every fields of society. This study examined gender gap in literacy. Literacy means- A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement in his every life. It is a descriptive study. This study based on official documents. The Conclusion made in the study was based on primary (Govt. Reports) and Secondary (Book and Journals) Sources. The results revealed that the disparities between male and female literacy rates in India before independence are still large but during the post independence period literacy rate among women has increased. This study shows us the gap that separate the state figure (WB) from the Indian average is narrowing down and also revealed that the literacy rates in Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe in India steadily increased especially the literacy rate of female has increased so, the gender gap between male and female is gradually decrease. The present study also revealed that women literacy is still lagging behind in rural area and there is a wide gap between women literacy in rural and urban area. In the present day, the male and female gap has narrowed but the gap between them in literacy still exists.



KEYWORDS : *Gender Gap, Literacy.*

1.INTRODUCTION :-

In his book, "On Education", Bertrand Russel Said "...the educational system we must aim at producing in the future is one which gives to every boy and girl an opportunity for the best that exist". According to the World Bank, 2003, 8 out of 10 of the world's children live in developing countries that are characterized by poor quality of human capital ad population pressures among a host of other problems. India being a developing country exhibits these characteristics and as such offers policy questions of huge relevance.

India witnessed her freedom in August 1947, and with the down of liberation and march towards modernity, people expected that all deep rooted conservative mind set & social irrational prejudices, among which gender discrimination occupies a major area, would slowly recede and eventually disappear, beginning a new era. It is needless to acknowledge that women's literacy & educational level help secure social equality & human development, higher economic productivity & to tolerant democratic society, which the National Policy on Education and Empowerment has identified as a challenge.

Equality and Equity in education is directly related to democratic development & the establishment of an egalitarian Society, where the purpose of education is to produce knowledge makers with the capacity

of making the most profitable use & dissemination of the acquired knowledge. As civil Society agents we have a define role to play promoting gender – Sensitive rather than gender blind policies and attitudes.

In India, the constitution has made provisions for free and compulsory education for children between the ages 6-14 years with special reference to the girl child's new of education, but much is left to be realized.

Table : 1 National Literacy Rates in India Since 1901-2011 Census

Census Year	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Gap (%)
1901	5.35	9.83	0.60	9.23
1911	5.92	10.56	1.05	9.51
1921	7.16	12.21	1.81	10.4
1931	9.50	15.59	2.93	12.66
1941	16.10	24.90	7.30	17.6
1951	16.67	24.95	9.45	15.5
1961	24.02	34.44	12.95	21.49
1971	29.45	39.45	18.69	20.76
1981	36.23	46.89	24.82	22.07
1991	42.84	52.74	32.17	20.57
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

Source: Census of India. 2011

The above picture showing literacy rates across years that since 1951 literacy great have increased gradually up to 2011 census. But while considering differences in literacy rates between male and female from 1951 to 2011, the picture is very pathetic as the gap in literacy percentages between male and female remain almost the same demonstrating the fact that the decennial growth in literacy rates do not proof equity in educational development.

1.1 Gender Gap :-

The gender gap is the difference between women and men as reflected in Social, political, Educational, intellectual, cultural, or economical attainments or attitudes.

The gender gap shows us how unequal access to opportunities maintains inequality between the sexes. So, gender gap means a difference between the way men and women are treated in society, or between what men and women do and achieve. So, the gap in education examples-men and women find themselves having gender differences when attaining their educational attainments. Although men and women can have the same level of education, it is more difficult for women to have higher management jobs, and future employment and financial worries can intensity.

1.2 Literacy:-

A person is deemed as literate if he/she can read and write with understanding in any language. A person who can merely read but cannot write is not a literate. Thus it cannot call a pure literacy and the so called literacy was not made functional and meaningful. Gradually, concept of literacy was regarded as the ability to perform some basic operations like reading a newspaper, writing a small and simple letter, keeping accounts in day to day life. Thus, knowledge of 3R's was considered as literacy. According to UNESCO "A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement in his every life.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:-

Katiyar. (2016), in their study **“Gender Disparity in Literacy in India”** is said that the India has the dubious distinction of having one of the world’s highest rates of adult illiteracy. According to the 2011 Census of India, the overall rate of literacy is 73 per cent. But breaking up the national average reveals that while the rate of literacy for men is 80.9 per cent, for women it is 64.6 per cent. This means that more than one-fourth of the country’s population is still illiterate. And within that figure, nearly one-fifth of males are illiterate compared with more than one-third of females. That there is a slow rate of growth of female literacy compared with male literacy is a matter of grave concern. Despite the number of efforts made at national and international levels, there exist a significant number of illiterate women in society, a disturbing factor for all development efforts. Female literacy is important as it is a force multiplier for the social development of a country. Illiteracy retards the development of an individual, society and the country. Literacy plays a significant role in reducing gender inequality. The purpose of the article is to map and analyse gender disparity in literacy across the states and union territories (UTs) of India and indicate future projections of levels of female literacy.

Islam & Mustaqin. (2015), in their study **“Gender Gap in Literacy: A Study of Indian Scenario”** is said that the gender gap in literacy is a major concern in contemporary world especially in India. Gender gap in literacy occurs when there are systematic differences in schooling level between men and women. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyze the spatial pattern of total literacy rates and gender gaps in literacy rates in India. The research work is entirely based on secondary data which are collected from different sources. Many statistical techniques have been used for analysis the data. The finding suggests that there are a certain differences in male and female literacy rates across the country. India is continuously improving in the total literacy rate which reflects the reduction of gender gaps in literacy. North Eastern states are much well condition in terms of male female literacy gaps along with Southern states of India while Middle Western parts of India are still facing the curse of gender gaps in literacy.

Rajendran & Sangeetha. (2014), in their study **“An analysis of state wise Gender Gap in Literacy Rates in India”** is said that the average Literacy rate of non-poor status for both the sexes are for better than poor states. Better and effective utilization of women power which is needed for faster and sustainable development is possible only if women are educated. Educated women can do wonders in the world. The major obstacles in their path of growth are the discriminatory attitude of the society. So steps should be taken to change this discriminatory attitude. In this connection there are eight broad heading in introduction, statement of problem, objectives, hypothesis, methodology, data analysis and conclusion.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY :-

The empowerment of girls and women through education is reflected in more than one of the six Dakar goals. These concerns have also been articulated in Indian educational policies and programmed for without addressing these, the Universalization of Elementary Education will remain an unfulfilled dream. There are many hindrances in the way of promoting girls and women education. The study will enable us to identify the hindrances or obstacles and on the basis of the information drawing out of the conclusion of the study. We would formulate or chalk out various plans and programme for the removal of those opposition in micro and macro level. Then the mission of education for all is achieved and our national dream will be materialized.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:-

The researcher has tried to find out the Gender gap in Literacy through the present study. Hence, the present researcher has selected the Title of the problem in the following manner:

“A study on Gender Gap in Literacy”

5.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:-

The main objectives of the study are:

- a) To examine the gender gap in literacy in respect of caste, locality.
- b) To analysis the importance of Female Literacy from Social and economical point of view.
- c) To examine the literacy status in India.
- d) To analysis the importance of girls and women education.

6.RESEARCH QUESTIONS:-

The investigator has conducted the study on the basis of the following research q The investigator has conducted the study on the basis of the following research questions –

- a) Is there any improvement in women’s literacy rate since 1901 to 2011 in India?
- b) Is there any improvement in Literacy Rates in West Bengal Since 1951 to 2011?
- c) Is there any improvement in Literacy Rates of Schedule casts and Schedule tribes in India since casts and schedule tribes in India since 1961 to 2011?
- d) Whether there is any gender disparity in Growth Literacy?
- e) Why education is important for girls and women’s?

7.METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY :-

It is a descriptive study. It is based on official documents. The conclusion made in the study was based on primary and secondary sources. The primary Sources were government reports and books. The Secondary sources were different books and journals published by different writers and scholars.

8. DISCUSSION:-

Literacy provide basic knowledge and skills for effective citizens basic need and condition for improving the capabilities & empowering an individual and for leading a meaningful life.

8.1 The Importance of Female Literacy from Social and Economical point of views:**a. Female Literacy contributes to Economic Growth:-**

Investing in the education of girls is one of the most effective ways of reducing poverty. By one estimate, Countries that do not meet the MDG target of gender parity in education are at risk of fore going 0.1 to 0.3 percentage points annually in per capital economic growth.

b. Female Literacy Contributes to Economic Growth:-

As better educated women participate in paid employment, families enjoy higher income and overall productivity increases. In rural economics, the education of women and girls may translate into higher agriculture production.

c. Literate mothers increase human capital through their influence in the health, education and nutrition of their children:-

A mother’s education translate into higher immunization rates and better nutrition for her children both of which increase enrollment and improve school performance.

Female literacy is relatively related with fertility rates, population growth, in front and child mortality rates and shows a positive association with female age at marriage, life expectancy participation in modern sectors of the coming and above all female enrollment.

8.2 Literacy Status :-**a. Literacy Rates in India before Independence:-**

Before independence, the educational system is totally controlled by British Government. In those times education was bounded in some cities.

Table : 2 Literacy Rates in India before Independence

Census Year	Female Literacy Rates (%)	Male Literacy Rates (%)
1901	0.60	9.83
1911	1.05	10.56
1921	10.81	12.1
1931	2.93	15.59
1941	7.30	24.90

Source: Census of India, 2011

The disparities between male and female literacy rates are still large.

b. Literacy Rates in India after Independence:-

During the post independence period the main strategy adopted to achieve equalization of educational opportunities has to make school accessible to every child.

Table : 3 Literacy Rates in India (1951 – 2011)

Census Year	Literacy Rates (%)	
	Female	Male
1951	7.93	24.95
1961	12.95	34.4
1971	18.69	39.45
1981	29.85	56.50
1991	39.29	64.13
2001	54.16	75.85
2011	65.46	82.14

Source: Census of India, 2011

It is seen from the above table shows that the literacy rates of women in 1951 was 7.93 percent and it increased to 65.46 percent by 2011. The above table shows that a literacy rate among women has increased.

8.3 Literacy Rates of West Bengal:-

The State West Bengal is located in the eastern part of India. The total population of West Bengal as per 2011 census is 91,276,115 of which male and female are 46,809,027 and 44,467,088 respectively.

Table : 4 Literacy Rates in West Bengal (1951-2011)

Census Year	Literacy Rates (%)	
	India	West Bengal
1951	18.33	24.61
1961	28.3	34.46
1971	34.45	38.86
1981	43.57	48.65
1991	52.21	57.70
2001	64.83	68.84
2011	74.04	77.08

Source: Census of India, office of Registrar General, India.

West Bengal appears to have followed the trend of all India in growth of literacy during last Sixteen years. Percentage of literate in the State has no doubt been a little above the all India average all along. But the gap that separates the state figure from the Indian average is narrowing down.

8.4 Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes Literacy Rate in India:-

The Literacy Rates in SC/ST in India has shown a steady increased.

Table : 5 Literacy Rates of SC/ST (1961-2011)

Year	Scheduled Castes			Scheduled Tribe		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1961	16.96	3.29	10.27	13.83	3.16	8.53
1971	22.36	6.44	14.67	17.63	4.85	11.30
1981	31.12	10.93	21.38	24.52	8.04	16.35
1991	49.91	23.76	37.41	40.65	18.19	29.60
2001	54.69	41.90	34.76	59.17	34.76	47.10
2011	75.20	56.50	66.10	68.53	49.35	58.96

Source: Census of India, office of Registrar General, India.

It is seen from the above table shows that the SC literacy rates of female was 3.29 percent and it increases to 56.50 percent by 2011. In 1961 the ST literacy rates of female was 3.16 percent and it increased to 49.35 percent by 2011.

8.5 Gender Disparity in Growth Literacy:-

According to the census of India, 2011, literacy rate of the age group 7 and above population was 74 percent. Increase in the literacy rate of the country during the decade 2001-2011 has been extremely encouraging.

Table – 6: Rural – Urban Female Literacy Rates (1951 – 2011)

Year	Literacy Rates (%)		
	Rural	Urban	Change
1951	4.87	22.33	17.46
1961	10.10	40.50	30.4
1971	15.50	48.80	33.3
1981	21.70	56.30	34.6
1991	30.60	64.00	33.4
2001	46.13	72.86	26.73
2011	58.75	79.92	21.17

Source: Census of India, 2011

It is seen from the above table is that in 1951 the rural female literacy rates was 4.87 percent as against 22.33 percent in urban areas. So the gap was 17.46 percent. From the above table it is also seen that through the rural female literacy rate grows to 58.75 percent by 2011, they still lag behind the urban folk. This proves that rural urban divide is large among female themselves but the gap between rural – urban female literacy rates gradually decreased.

Table : 7 Literacy Rates of West Bengal with Male – Female break up 1901-2011

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1901	9.83	17.86	1.21
1911	0.82	19.12	1.69
1921	12.28	20.99	2.48
1931	21.5	20.41	3.75
1941	19.72	29.33	8.29
1951	24.42	34.14	12.74
1961	34.46	48.57	20.27
1971	38.86	49.57	26.56
1981	48.65	59.93	36.56
1991	57.70	61.81	46.56
2001	69.22	77.58	60.22
2011	80.56	82.67	71.16

Source: Census of India, 2011

It is seen from the above table is that not only was the literacy in West Bengal at a very low level the growth of literacy in the state has also been too slow until 1941, the rate having gone up by a more 3 percentage points from 9.83 in 1901 to 12.65 in 1931.

It was only in 1941 the literacy percentage reached a modest level in 19.72; the decadal increase between 1931-1941 was of the order of 7% points. No doubt the rate of literacy has reached 38.86 in 1971, but this is by no means remarkable compared to the achievement of states like Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Gujarat. But according to the census, a 2011 literacy rate in West Bengal is gradually grown up.

9. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:-

From the on-going discussion the following findings can be made –

- a. Before Independence the disparities of male and female literacy rates were still large. The gap between the literacy rates of male and females has been persisting Since 1901 when the female literacy rates were 0.06 percent against 9.83 percent among male and 7.30 percent in female and 24.09 percent in 1941. The decadal percentage of literacy was is low.
- b. After Independence, due to Govt. effort the literacy rote of women both in W.B and India had tremendously increased. In 1951, the literacy rate of women was 7.93% and in increased to 65.46% by 2011. After independence these was rapidly increased.
- c. The rural female are less literate almost all districts in comparison to the total. In the state the margin are very thin in Purulia, Bankura, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling etc.
- d. Women literacy among SC is still lagging behind in rural area specially and there in a wide gap between women literacy in rural and urban area.

10. CONCLUSION:-

The literacy rate has increased from 0.60 percent in 1901 to 7.93 percent in 1951 and 39.29 percent in 1991 which has been raised to 65.46 percent in 2011. The male – female gap has narrowed but still in 2011 female literacy rate is lower than male literacy rate.

Through rural educational condition for women is improving still it is for behind from urban female literacy rate. It was 58.75 percent in rural areas and 79.92 percent in urban areas in 2011. So in rural areas much emphasis is needed in this direction.

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