

## Women Development in Rural India

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### Abstract

India is the Agricultural country because 70% population live in rural areas .Agriculture contibutes approx 14% of GDP because India is the Agriculture country. agriculture is the core sector of the world because human life depends on food, and in developing countries most of that food is produced by small farmers .in rural areas men and women have equal participation in farming so women development is important for rural india. In this way Education of women is a powerful tool for both the government and the civil society and development of rural women because educated women actively take part in the development of state which leads to development of nation. Empowered women will be able to face the challenges of society and could stand for right and wrong happenings so women education has great relation to women empowerment. A country could only run in development race if all states are running with development. The main purpose of the paper is to explain education is important tool for the development of the rural women and identify the problems of Women Development in Rural India.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, Education, women empowerment, rural development

### Introduction

*"India lives in its villages"*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

India is a vast country with a diverse population with different religions, cultures and languages .The latest census in 2001 reported a population of 1.03 billion in India, with over 70 percent of the population living in rural areas. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in sub urban and urban areas but there are some problem like poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure . Women and girls have ongoing development, in particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained and inclusive economic growth, in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, industry and services. Rural Development which is concerned with economic growth and improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential.

Amartya Sen states that when women participate in economic activities that will be lead to growth of the society. Women development enhanced the status of society and development of country. Yet, in rural India, most of the women are either illiterate or semi-literate and they have not a proper idea of self-esteem and self-respect. Women rarely have access to the resources that would make their work more productive and ease their heavy workload. Rural women have many roles, and they have responsibilities and knowledge that differs from those of men. As farmers, they plant, weed and harvest food crops and do hard work in the field. As caretakers, they look after children and relatives, prepare meals and manage the home.

### Literature Review

#### Women in India

The societal set up in India has been traditionally a male dominated one. Women are considered not only as stronger but

also as weaker because she is always to depend on men folk in their family and outside, throughout their life. In Indian culture decisions made by male members, in the basic family structure but now traditional set up of Indian society is changing in the modern era, in terms of increased educational status of women and varied aspirations for better living, a change in the life style of Indian women both in urban as well as in rural areas.

The Indian rural women are taking more responsibilities in bringing up children and maintaining a better home with love and affection and do hard work in the fields. At the family level, the task of coordinating various activities in a much effective manner, without the feeling of inconveniences .Thus, the Indian women have basic characters in themselves in the present sociological and cultural setup as follows.

1. Women in India are considered as Shakthi-meaning source of power.
2. Effectively use and coordinating the available resources.
3. Efficient execution of decisions imposed on them.
4. Clear vision and ambition on the improvement of family and children.
5. Patience and bearing the sufferings on behalf of others and
6. Ability to work physically more at any age.

#### The Ancient Indian Women

In ancient times Aryans mainly Brahmins were used to give the status of goddess to the women. At that time women enjoyed no less than status of Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) in the households. The women of ancient times had immense power that once a king accidentally killed the husband of a women and she had such power that she burnt the whole kingdom to ashes. Women in that time had place even superior to men. At that time Hindu Brahmins was supposed, religious ritual can't complete without the presence of the women. They had the right to choose their own life partners. This process also known as

*Swanyamvar*. For example In Mahabharata, Draupadi's father arranged for her *Swanyamvar* and Arjuna (a Pandava prince) successfully managed to fulfil the conditions and became eligible to marry her.

The status of women of Vedic era began to decline with time. Gender inequality started creeping into the society. Slowly women's status degraded to such an extent that they were not given the freedom, which was available to even Sudras (lowest caste of ancient Hindu society). They were not given the basic rights.

### **The Women in Medieval Era**

Medieval India was 'dark age' for Indian women. Medieval India saw many foreign conquests, which resulted in the decline in women's status. When foreign conquerors like Muslims invaded India they brought with them their own culture. They think that women are the sole property of her father, brother or husband and she does not have any will of her own. This type of thinking also stay into the minds of Indian people and they also began to treat their own women like this.

As polygamy was a norm for these invaders they picked up any women they wanted and kept her in their harems. In order to protect them Indian women started using *Purdah*, (a veil), which covers body. Due to this reason their freedom also became affected. At that time, people think that boy child is better than girl child because they consider a girl as misery and burden, needs extra care Whereas a boy child will not need such extra care and instead will be helpful as an earning hand Some new evils such as Child Marriage, purdah pratha, *Sati*, *Jauhar* and restriction on girl education.

### **The Women in Modern India**

The status of women in modern India is much better than past. A woman in modern India is a sort of a paradox. If on one hand she is at the peak of ladder of success, on the other hand she is mutely suffering the violence afflicted on her by her own family members for example dowery As compared with past women in modern times have achieved a lot but in reality they have to still travel a long way. There are many problems which women in India have to go through daily. Some problems are poor health, Maternal Mortality, overworked, lack of education, lack of power.

### **Objective of the study**

- 1- To identify the problems of Women Development in Rural India
- 2- To define state wise male and female literacy rate of india
- 3- To define number of villages/towns by range of literacy rate & sex, india, 2001
- 4- To identify number and percent literates by level of education

### **Problems of Women Development in Rural India**

There are a number of problems regarding women development in India, these problem relating to social aspects, economic life, skill problems, problems of family support, courage etc.

### **Poor Degree of Financial Freedom**

In Indian families, the financial freedom for women is very poor, especially in lower educated families and rural families. In these families women can't take any entrepreneurial decision

without the consideration of the family members as well as considering social ethics and traditions.

### **Absence of Definite Agenda of Life**

In rural India, most of the women are either illiterate or semi-literate and they have not a proper idea of self-esteem and self-respect. Therefore, the problem that arises is how they can try to get self-respect and have a definite agenda in order to acquire good positions in society.

### **Absence of Balance between Family and Career Obligations**

As Indians, most of the women are very serious about family obligations but they do not equally focus on career obligations (Cf. Mathur 2011; Singh N.P. 1986). Indian women devote their lives to take care of their family members but they are not concerned with their self-development.

### **No Awareness about Capacities**

An individual's capacities important for increasing level of education but unfortunately, our educational system has not succeeded in creating awareness about woman's capacities and their hidden powers to handle economic activities. Enhancement the education level of women creates social awareness as to the women play important role in society, but this is not a widely acceptable truth because it applies only in urban India and not in rural India too.

### **Lack of Self-Confidence**

Indian women prefer a protected life to the development of their self-confidence. They are neither mentally nor economically self-reliant. Therefore, we should try to develop their confidence through moral support from society and family members.

### **Lack of Education**

In the rural areas, education standard is very low because there are many problems like that poverty, institutions, infrastructure etc. In a country like India, literacy is the main foundation for social and economic growth.

The female literacy levels according to the Literacy Rate 2011 census are 65.46% and the problem of illiteracy in rural areas is still at large.

The 15th official census in India was calculated in the year 2011. When the British rule ended in India in the year 1947 the literacy rate was just 12%. Over the years, India has changed socially, economically, and globally. After the 2011 census, literacy rate India 2011 was found to be 74.04, it is still a matter of concern that still so many people in India cannot even read and write. The numbers of children who do not get education especially in the rural areas are still high. Though the government has made a law that every child under the age of 14 should get free education, the problem of illiteracy is still at large.

Now, if we consider female literacy rate in India, then it is lower than the male literacy rate as many parents do not allow their female children to go to schools. They get married off at a young age instead. Many families, especially in rural areas believe that having a male child is better than having a baby girl. So the male child gets all the benefits. Today, the female literacy levels according to the Literacy Rate 2011 census are 65.46% where the male literacy rate is over 80%.

Here are some facts about different states literacy rate, Kerala is the only state in India to have 100% literacy rate. It is followed by Goa, Tripura, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra, Sikkim. The lowest literacy rate in India is seen in the state of Bihar. We also need to think why is the literacy

rate is low here in India compared to other developed countries. Basically the population in India is very high. Being the 7th largest country its population stands 2nd in the world after China. There are over 1 billion people in India. The number of schools and educational centres especially in rural areas is less.

**Table 1.17:** State-wise Distribution of Population by Age-group (Rural/Urban) (Per Cent) (2011)

	State	Literacy rate (2001 Census) (In %)		
		Persons	Males	Females
	INDIA	65.38	75.96	54.28
1	Kerala	90.92	94.2	87.86
2	Mizoram	88.49	90.69	86.13
3	Lakshadweep *	87.52	93.15	81.56
4	Chandigarh*	81.76	85.65	76.65
5	Goa	82.32	88.88	75.51
6	Andaman & Nicobar Is.*	81.18	86.07	75.29
7	Delhi*	81.82	87.37	75
8	Pondicherry*	81.49	88.89	74.13
9	Daman & Diu*	81.09	88.4	70.37
10	Himachal Pradesh	77.13	86.02	68.08
11	Maharashtra	77.27	86.27	67.51
12	Tripura	73.66	81.47	65.41
13	Tamil Nadu	73.47	82.33	64.55
14	Punjab	69.95	75.63	63.55
15	Nagaland	67.11	71.77	61.92
16	Sikkim	69.68	76.73	61.46
17	Meghalaya	63.31	66.14	60.41
18	Uttaranchal	72.28	84.01	60.26
19	West Bengal	69.22	77.58	60.22
20	Manipur	68.87	77.87	59.7
21	Gujarat	69.97	80.5	58.6
22	Karnataka	67.04	76.29	57.45
23	Haryana	68.59	79.25	56.31
24	Assam	64.28	71.93	56.03
25	Chhattisgarh	65.18	77.86	52.4
26	Andhra Pradesh	61.11	70.85	51.17
27	Orissa	63.61	75.95	50.97
28	Madhya Pradesh	64.11	76.8	50.28
29	Rajasthan	61.03	76.46	44.34
30	Arunachal Pradesh	54.74	64.07	44.24
31	Dadra & Nagar Haveli*	60.03	73.32	42.99
32	Uttar Pradesh	57.36	70.23	42.98
33	Jammu & Kashmir	54.46	65.75	41.82
34	Jharkhand	54.13	67.94	39.38
35	Bihar	47.53	60.32	33.57

**Source:** Provisional Population Totals: India, Census of India 2001, paper 1 of 2001

Literacy and level of education are basic indicators of the development of society. Literacy is generally associated with important traits of modern civilization such as modernization, urbanization, industrialization, communication and commerce. Literacy forms an important input in overall development of individuals and forms social, political and cultural environment. Higher levels of education and literacy lead to a greater awareness and also contributes in improvement of economic and social conditions. It acts as a catalyst for social upliftment enhancing the returns on investment made in almost every aspect of development effort.

According to the Census 2001, as many as 560,687,797 persons in the country are literate. Of these 336,533,716 are males and 224, 154,081 are females. While the overall literacy rate works

out to be 64.8 %, the male literacy rate is 75.3% and that for females is 53.7%, showing a gap of 21.6 percentage points between the sexes at the national level. The gap is more in the rural areas. In the urban areas, higher literacy rate has been recorded both for males and females and the difference among the sexes is lower (13 percentage points). Kerala, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Goa and Chandigarh occupy the top five positions in literacy while Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar, are at bottom.

The literacy rates for rural population are the highest in Kerala, followed by Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Goa, and Delhi. Fourteen (14) States / Uts have recorded less than 60 percent rural Literacy rate.

**Table 1:** Number of Villages/Towns by Range Of Literacy Rate & Sex, India, 2001.

	Persons		Males		Females	
	No. of Villages	No. of UAs/Towns	No. of Villages	No. of UAs/Towns	No. of Villages	No. of UAs/Towns
Nil	3,077	0	3,546	0	9,899	0
Less than 10	8,664	0	4,516	0	28,412	0
10-25	31,494	0	14,410	0	90,198	17
25-50	162,727	122	72,057	33	244,760	475
50-75	294,596	1,740	237,381	624	186,245	2,638
75 or above	93,055	2,516	261,630	3,721	33,029	1,248
Total*	593,613	4,378	593,540	4,378	592,543	4,378

**Source:** Primary Census Abstract, Census of India 2001 *Note:* \*Excludes villages/UA/Towns with no Male/Female population.



Jammu & Kashmir, Dadra & Nagar Haveli Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand & Bihar with less than 50 percent literacy rate are at the bottom of the table.

In urban population, the literacy rate is 79.9 % at the national level. Many States/Uts have achieved literacy rate higher than the national average. These are Kerala, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Goa, and Delhi, which have achieved literacy rate in the range of 88 % to 96 %. Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh rank in the last five states.

The number of villages or UAs/Towns has been grouped in different ranges of literacy rate in Table 1. This helps to evolve specific intervention strategies. Among the UAs/Towns, 2,516 out of 4,378 UAs/Towns fall in the literacy range 75.0 percent or above. More than 294 thousands villages come under the literacy range of 50-75 %. There are still as many as 3,077 villages in the country, which do not have a single literate. Out of them, 341 villages have population of at least 100 persons. The number of villages not having a single female literate in



9,899 out of which 2,351 villages have population of at least 100 persons. Out of 561 million literates in the country, 145 million literates are educated only up to 'Below Primary' level and another 147 million up to 'Primary' level. Number of literates educated up to these two levels account for 52 % of the total literates in the

country. 79 million (or 14.1%) of literates have attained Matric/Secondary level. There are 37 million persons in the country who are 'Graduates & above' which also include 12 million females. The category wise break up is given in the table below:

**Table 2:** Number and Percent Literates By Level Of Education: India 2001#

Level of education	Absolute Numbers (000')			Percent to Literate		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Literate	560,688	336,534	224,154	100.0	100.0	100.0
Literate without educational level \$	20,023	11,361	8,662	3.6	3.4	3.9
Below Primary	144,831	81,148	63,683	25.8	24.1	28.4
Primary	146,740	83,525	63,215	26.2	24.8	28.2
Middle	90,227	55,940	34,286	16.1	16.6	15.3
Matriculation/Secondary	79,230	51,202	28,028	14.1	15.2	12.5
High secondary/ Intermediate/PreUnivercity/ Senior Secondary	37,816	24,596	13,220	6.7	7.3	5.9
Non technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree	386	259	128	0.1	0.1	0.1
Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree	3,667	2,901	766	0.7	0.9	0.3
Graduate and above	37,670	25,533	12,137	6.7	7.6	5.4

#India figures excludes Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district in Manipur state as census state as census results were cancelled due to administrative and technical reasons.

**Source:** <http://www.census2011.co.in> dated :8 may 2014 at 6: 35 PM

The latest statistics from the 2011 Census showed a positive development in female literacy. More number of females has become literate compared to males in the decade 2001-2011. Any person aged 7 and above is considered literate, if he or she can read and write, with understanding, in any language. The largest increase in literacy rate was noticed in Dadra & Nagar Haveli by 18.6 points - significant growth from 57.6 per cent in 2001 to 76.2 per cent in 2011 and Bihar by 14.8 points - from 47.0 per cent in last census in 2001 to 61.8 per cent in 2011.

### Conclusion

Education is actually a key means of empowering women in the rural areas and is in itself a human right. Educated girls lead better lives. Education is especially central to women's empowerment in so far as it enables women to become more productive both inside and outside the household. Investments in women's general education, including literacy is considered one of the most important elements for rural women. Therefore that is the big problem for women development.

"The gap between the literacy rate in urban and rural areas is steadily declining in every census. In Census 2011, the gap stands at 16.3 points. As per latest statistics, the literacy rate among urban population is 84.1 per cent while it is 67.8 for rural population," RGI census data stated. Analysing the census data since 1961, the report suggested that the three-fourth of the population of age 7 years and above is literate in the country. Four out of five males and two out of every three females in the country are literate. The total population of literate females in the country was 224.2 million and in the past one decade it increased to 328.8 million, showing a significant addition of 104.6 million literate females in the country.

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