

Gender Inequality in Education: Access and Barriers

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Abstract—India is the second most populous country in the world. Women touched the zenith of all sphere of the globe from political to socio-economic as well as cultural. For the overall development of a country, education is like oxygen, without it, it is difficult to achieve developmental goals of a nation and also education is the only means to bring gender equality in all spheres of life. Education is the key which uncover the negative attitudes of parents towards women's education and also promotes the gender equality in education. But women/girls suffered various obstacles to obtaining the education. The first objective of this paper is to examine the gap in literacy rate of female with male in district of Bareilly, U.P, along with the discussion of dropout rate India. The second objective of the study is to explore the gender gap in literacy rate by areas and sexes in the district of Bareilly by using the district census handbook and third objective of this present paper is to highlights the gender gap on the bases of caste (SC&ST) of district Bareilly. This paper is based on qualitative and analytical research method. This paper is based on secondary data which obtained from various reliable sources.

Keywords: gender equality, gap in literacy rate, women's education, dropout out rate.

1. INTRODUCTION

The social and economic development of any country only depends on the development and growth of education. Education plays an important role in the every community, society, and country. It is the most important for socio-economic and cultural development. It is important to note that a nation's elevation is based on quality of population rather than on quantity. In the millennium, the prosperity, ability, and intellectuality of all country will be determined by today's school going population and their ability to solve the problems that face them, their families, communities, and country. However, with regard to growth and development of literacy and education, India's achievement in education is far from satisfactory.¹ During the past decades, India has achieved success in moving and progressing toward universal school enrolment and in enacting policies to address educational inequalities such as those based on gender. However, the female education is lower rather the male education.² Education is the intrinsic and fundamental right of all citizens

of a country.³ The United Nations committee on economic, social and cultural rights affirms: "education is both a human right in itself and indispensable means of realizing other human rights" Education empowers individual to raise themselves out of poverty and advance their socio-economic status.

The right to education is enumerated in UDHR Article 26:

1. "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basic of merit".

Article 26 focus on the importance of free education in at least the foundational and elementary stages, and that it should be compulsory.⁴

2. .CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of male and female which is created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity).⁵ Primarily, sex is biological term: whereas 'gender' is a psychological and cultural one.⁶ Gender is a 'social relationship, historically varying, and encompassing elements of labour power, emotion and language; it crosses individual subjectivities, institutions, culture and language' (Orloff, 2009). Gender is a socially constructed concept, referring to women and as well as men's different roles and responsibilities determined by social, economic, political and cultural factors. These are interpreted differently in different societies and cultures, but in many contexts they translate into inequality in resources, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints, especially for women (Pearson et al., 1984; Razavi and Miller, 1995). Feminist theory and practice have sought to explain and

change systems of differences whereby 'women' and 'men' are socially constituted and positioned in relation of hierarchy. However, this is a complex endeavour.⁷ The concept of sex and gender have been clear therefore according to Indian feminists like Dr. Altikar, Krishnamurthy and D. Chaturvedi (in their book, *Gender Biase in India*, 1990). Sex is concerned with biological or physical characteristics of man and woman whereas gender is concerned with social, cultural dissimilarities of man and woman. (books.google.co.in/books?isbn=1136237380).⁸

Gender inequality: Gender inequality is a global phenomena and one of the primary markers of social and economic differentiation and, as a result, of exclusion too. Regardless of one's socio-economic class, there are systematic gender differences and the degree of inequality varies across countries. The inequality on gender based, exists due to inbuilt, inherent differences perceived by society members due to certain biological differences. These gender differences are primarily based on biology and later on reinforced through the mechanism of socialization in family, school and other institutions like religion, caste, class, tribe, ethnicity etc. Due to this inequality, in any country males, on average, are better positioned in the social, economic, and political hierarchies.⁹ In other words, gender inequality concerned with wide range of conditions through which women have been disadvantaged and discriminated including their economic opportunities, political standing, legal status, personal freedom, familial obligations, access to education, and cultural representation. Thus, gender inequality refers to the obvious or hidden disparity between individuals due to gender.¹⁰

Sociologists define gender inequality as the differences in the class, status, power and prestige of the women and men have in groups, collectivities and societies. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, inequality is a system of unequal rewards or opportunities for different individuals within a group or groups inside a society. Gender inequality can also be defined as a system of gender discrimination by singling out women, both individually and as a group, for unequal and inferior treatment, as regards opportunities in the familial, social, economic and political field when such opportunities are available to the men (because of gender) and by refusing female participation in the decision-making process, leading ultimately to a system of deprivation of women.

Sylvia walby, patriarchy is a system of social structure and practice in which men dominated, oppressed and exploited women. According to functionalist sociological theory, gender inequality is the natural outcome of the sexual division of labour and gender role differentiation is important for society to be in a state of equilibrium, order stability. Functionalist theory based on social order, social system, and stability of society

According to the theory of gender socialization and learning approaches, gender inequalities result because men and women are socialized into different roles.¹¹

2.1. Sociological Approach on Gender Inequality

The sociological approach also offered an account of the creation of gender inequality on the basis of social behaviour, functions, kinship, relationships and women's role in socialization. M. Harlambos and R. M. Herald, in their book *sociology: themes and perspectives*, have quoted some anthropologists and sociologists such as Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox, G.P.Murdock, Talcott Parsons, John Bowlby, etc. All of them have emphasized women's traditional role in childbearing and child-rearing and their roles in socialization as the chief reasons for gender inequality and the subjugation of women. Tiger and Fox have considered male supremacy as 'sex-linked characteristics'.

According to Murdock, the biological differences between male and female have been suggestive of their gender role differentiation dictated by society and expressed and indoctrinated through social norms, institutions and behaviours. In the view of Kingsley Davis and Willbert Moore (1945), stratification is a functional necessity. As a result, gender inequality emerged and the domination of man over woman was established. Flowing Levi Strauss, Mitchell also said that:

"Women are like signs whose sole purpose is exchange. To her, at his oedipal stage the children learns that he is forbidden and the law of the father to desire the mother. A child by abiding the law of the father enters into the symbolic order or the order of culture. Since the symbolic order is Phallogocentric, culture itself is oppressive to women".

Another sociologist, G. Rubin, argued that 'women's oppression lies in the way humans have arranged their biological sex-gender system via the kinship structure that rests universally on the exchange of women'.¹²

Liberal feminism the most popular form of feminism is liberal feminism which is also called the 'first wave' movement of feminism. Liberal feminism is basically based on the liberal democratic values and practices influenced by the democratic traditions of UK and the US. This tradition argues for equal rights for women, women participation in public life, finding solutions to problem of working women, equal opportunities for women in education and in employment, legal protection in public and private life and the complete abolition of gender inequality. Liberal feminism opines that law and legal reforms can change the fate of women expressively and noticeably.¹³ The major contribution of liberal feminism has been the 'suffragette' movement for the voting rights of the women. Liberals adhere formally to the values of rationalism, equality, freedom, individualism, and

the power of education, representative democracy and the possibility of rational legal reform.

The primary objective of liberalism feminism is to bring women into the full rights of democratic citizenship.¹⁴

Radical feminism: this theory argues for the free existence of women.¹⁵ Women will work without any dependence on men or without sharing any complementary relationship with men. Radical feminism wants to identify patriarchy as the chief agent of such oppression of women and patriarchy works the major source me of all forms of gender discrimination.¹⁶

Marxian feminism: Marxian feminists argue that everything related to gender inequality is determined by the economic base of society and capitalism offers such an economic base to promote and strengthen gender inequality in society.¹⁷

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Bina Agarwal has listed these types of characteristics which are discussed below:

1. Gender inequality exists not only outside the household but also centrally within it.
2. Gender inequality stems not only from pre-existing differences in economic endowments (wealth, income, etc.) between male and female, but also from pre-existing general social norms and social perceptions, i.e., the inequalities are also ideologically embedded; and
3. Gender inequalities not only pre-exist in the noted forms, but they can also arise from newly defined rules and procedures that structure the functioning of the government institution itself. For instance, the rules that guide the governance of CPR (common pool resources) 20 institutions can explicitly or implicitly exclude particular sections of the community, such as women, from its decisions making bodies, or its benefits.

4. DIFFERENT FACETS OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender inequality has many distinct and dissimilar faces. Amarty Sen (2001) has opined that gender inequality exists in most of part of the world, from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekistan to United States. Yet inequality between men and women is not everywhere the same. It can take many different forms. Gender inequality is not one homogeneous phenomenon, but a collection of different and interlinked problems. Further, he has identified seven types of gender inequalities viz;

1. Mortality inequality
2. Natality inequality,
3. Basic facility inequality,
- 4 Special opportunity inequalities,

5. Professional inequality,
6. Ownership inequality and
7. Household inequality.¹⁸

5. .DISPARITIES IN WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

Even though, the education has been considered as the most important for women by various scholars, women even today, encountering various hurdles and discrimination. They are not given equal opportunities to reap benefits of education and literacy. Education structures were inadequate and insensitive to women's needs and irrelevant to their daily lives (UNESCO; 2001).

Our society is male dominated. The freedom and liberty of social life mostly enjoyed by men because, India is a male dominated society. There are unequal treatment and behaviours between boy and girl, sons are preferred by every parents every. Girls and daughters are discouraged to pursue education. Girls have much lower access to education than boys do. The reasons for this are many. The overall picture of girls and women's education is one of limited opportunity. It is a reflection of their position in society; their subordination status and their lack of control are even the simplest aspects of their own lives. Education of girls has treated as a wasteful expenditure. She will be at her parental house till marriage, after the marriage, she will become the member of her husband's family. As a result, most of the Indian women are facing the problem of basic literacy.¹⁹ The literacy of India in 2011 is 74.4%. The Male literacy rate is 82.14% and female literacy rate is 65.46%, according to census 2011. The female is less literate in comparison of male. The female literacy rate is lower from male literacy rate of India. The gap of literacy rate between male and female is 16.68%.²⁰ Gender is a primary marker of social and economic stratification and, as a result, of exclusion. Regardless of one's socio-economic class, there are systematic gender difference in material well being, although the degree of in equality varies across countries and overtime. As a result, gender in equality is a characteristic of most societies, with males on average better positioned in socio-economic and hierarchies.²¹

6. ISSUES AND OBSTACLES FOR DROPOUT RATE IN INDIA

The women of India have suffered neglect in the matter of education throughout the ages, seriously affecting their intellectual development and social status in all period of life.²² there are some miserable problems are discussed below:

6.1. Facilities in Rural and Urban Areas

In rural areas, the facilities in schools are not balanced to the urban schools. Rural and urban differences have also been found to be significant in accessing the resources and the facilities provided by the state. For example, children in rural

areas have less access to schooling because the schools are either not available or physically and/or socially inaccessible. There is less educational institution in rural areas. The number of school at some places specially tribal and rural areas. There are no sufficient qualified teachers who work among the tribes with total dedication. Girl's hostel and separate toilet facilities are expected from parents. If the find, there are any difficulties in accessing these than they stop schooling. The distance of the school after elementary level is also a big issue in rural areas which affect girl's education.

Gender

6.2. Poverty

The main reason of dropout at all level of school education irrespective of the locality is poverty. Poor SC/ST **parents** are unable to send their children to 'fee's school because of costs other than the tuition fee and of forgone income from children's work (tilak, 1996). Even those who can meet the expenditure of the education of their children, spend less on the schooling of their daughters than the sons (Tilak, 1996: Chanana, 1996).

6.3. Social Status of the Society

Social status begins from the caste system in India. In many communities, girls are married at the very young age. This is the main reason for dropout at secondary level. Educationist Abhyankar has said that in cities like Mumbai too, certain communities refuse to allow their daughters to pursue higher education after a point. "They believe marrying at the 'right' age is more important than studying. Many find higher education is unaffordable. If they o have money, they prefer only sending their sons to colleges.

In poor households, they argue that enrolment and attendance is not only determined by economic situation but also by the social status of groups and society. In case/gendered segmentation of the labour market women are disproportionately found in agricultural/rural labour, traditional domestic, low skilled, low status, or caste related sweeping-scavenging) services in rural sectors. In urban sectors, poor women are located in lowly **unskilled**, low status feminized service sectors in urban informal economy. Educational careers of most dalit girls are shaped by this structure (Padma Velaskar, 2005).

The attitude and prejudice of teachers and children regarding social and community identities of marginal groups in the school also play an important role in defining educational outcomes for the latter (Vimala Ramachandran, 2003).

In earlier period the dropout rate among Muslim female and also male were high but in the recent years the situation has come down. In context of Muslim girls too, recent research has revealed that contrary to prevalent stereotypes about forces of conservatism being the cause for low level of

literacy rate, financial constraints seem to outweigh parental opposition as women's chief hindrances to continuing educational studies. In the north zone, financial constraints are much more important for Muslim than they are for Hindus, underlining one again the poverty of Muslim households in this part of the country, and this provides the most powerful explanation for the poor levels of Muslim women's education in the north India (Zoya, Hasan and Ritu, Menon, 2004).²³

Shah (1983) discussed lot of social factors such as early marriage, practice of Purdah, poverty, restricted lives within four walls of the house and superstitions etc. Due to which Muslim women and girls in India suffered from various form of Inequity. Such inequalities disallowed them from satisfying their needs individually and play their part effectively in the family, in civil life, in the community and at work. He argued that superstitious belief and restrictions on women is the main reason of educational backwardness of Muslim girls. The purdah system confined Muslim women inside the house and made their education enormously complicated. Even where both the sexes i.e. boys as well as girls were allowed to go to school, the ratio of drop-out among girls was very high at very early age.²⁴

7. METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on qualitative and analytical research method and based on secondary data which obtained from various reliable sources. The data in this analysis has been taken from the district census handbook Bareilly which has retrieved from the website of ministry of home affairs, government of India.

8. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

More specifically, the present study has been undertaken with following objectives:-

1. To examine the gap in literacy rate of female with male of district Bareilly of Uttar Pradesh, along with the discussion of dropout rate in India.
2. To explore the gender gap in literacy rate by areas and sexes in the district of Bareilly by using the district census handbook.
3. To highlights the gender gap on the bases of caste (SC&ST) of district Bareilly.

9. DESCRIPTION ABOUT THE DISTRICT OF BAREILLY OF UTTAR PRADESH

District Bareilly is famous for 'Surma'. it is very old industry in the district of Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India. This 'surma' is known as 'hashmi surma'. Barreilly district, with an area of 4120 Sq. Kms, forms part of the western region of Uttar Pradesh which is the most developed part of the state. The district is divided into 6 tehsils, 15 blocks and 1865 inhabited villages. The total population of district Bareilly is 4,448,359 in which male and female is 2,357,665 and 2,090,694. It is to

be recorded that Bareilly District is fast emerging as a hub of technical, medical and managerial education in Uttar Pradesh. There were 2 Engineering Colleges, Medical Colleges, 2 polytechnic and 4 industrial Training Institutes (IITs) in Bareilly district during 2005-06.

10. LITERACY AND GENDER GAP IN DISTRICT BAREILLY, UTTAR PRADESH 2011

It is evident from the table 1 that the gap in male and female literacy rates of 19.2 percentage points in 2011. The district of Bareilly ranks 65th in literacy with 58.5 percent, which is lower than the state average 67.7.percent.

The total literacy rate of district Bareilly, U.P. is 58.5 percentages during 2011. It is observed from the below table that the literacy rate of female 48.3 % which is less than the male literacy rate of the district of Bareilly.

Table 1: The Gap in Literacy Rate of Female of District Bareilly, (U.P.)

According to district census handbook, 2011 (in percentage)	
Total	58.5
Male	67.5
Female	48.3

Data Source: Office of the Registrar General & Census commissioner, India, Government of Home Affairs, Government of India. <http://censusindia.gov.in/>

11. GENDER GAP IN LITERACY RATE OF BAREILLY (U.P.) ON THE BASES OF AREAS

The literacy rate of female and male in rural as well as urban areas is given in table 1. According to census 2001-11, the literacy rate of female in rural areas is 43.6% whereas, the literacy rate of males in rural areas is 66.7%. In rural areas, the female literacy rate is less in comparison to male. Male female gap in literacy rate can also be seen in both rural and urban areas. The gap of literacy rate between female and male of rural areas is 23.1%. It shows vulnerable condition of female because of the gender inequalities in literacy rate.

On the other hand, form table1; it is observed that the literacy rate of male and female in urban areas was 69.0 and 56.4. In urban areas too, female is less literate than male. There is a gap of literacy rate in male and female 12.5%. The urban female's literacy rate is higher than rural female. The gender gap in literacy rate is higher in urban areas in 2001-11. It may be because of availability of educational institutes, awareness of the parents, and educational level of the parents, etc.

Table 2: Literacy Rate in Bareilly by Sex and Area from 2011(In Percentage)

Area	male	female	Gap in literacy rate
Rural	66.7	43.6	23.1

Urban	69.0	56.4	12.5
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Data Source: Office of the Registrar General & Census commissioner, India, Government of Home Affairs, Government of India. <http://censusindia.gov.in/>

12. GENDER GAP IN LITERACY RATE ON THE BASIS OF CASTE (SC&SC) 2011(IN PERCENTAGE)

The total literacy rate among SCs (59.0%) is slightly higher than ST's total literacy rate (58.7%). It is observed that the male and female literacy rate among schedule caste was 69.0 and 47.7% in 2011. The literacy rate of schedule castes female was deplorable because of the literacy rate of males is higher in comparison of the female literacy rate. The gender gap in literacy rate among male and female of SCs are 21.3 (percentage). On the bases of table 2, it has been observed that literacy rate among schedule caste female is lower than male.

The schedule tribe male's literacy rate has higher than female. The gender gap among schedule tribe is 7.45%.

Table 3. Gap in Literacy Rate on the Basis of Caste

	2011
Literacy rate for SC total	59.0
Literacy rate for SC (Male)	69.0
Literacy rate for SC (female)	47.7
Gender Gap	21.3
Literacy rate for ST total	58.7
Literacy rate for ST (Male)	62.2
Literacy rate for ST (Female)	54.8
Gender Gap	7.4

Data Source: Office of the Registrar General & Census commissioner, India, Government of Home Affairs, Government of India. <http://censusindia.gov.in/>

13. CONCLUSION

Article 15 of the constitution provides for prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex also apart from other grounds such as religion, caste, or place of birth.²⁶ Education is a crucial input in human resource development and is essential for the country's socio-economic development. Therefore, education has been central significance to the development of human society, not only of individual knowledge, information and awareness, but also a holistic strategy for development and change.²⁷ Literacy and education are termed as same thing but literacy has got indirect relation with education. Literacy mainly revolves around acquiring the ability to read and write whereas education is about overall development of person. Literacy comes from acquiring education.²⁸ First step of education is literacy without achieving literacy; no one can educate in any level of education. At the time of census data collecting, all educated person comes in the list of literate person. According to census 2011, women literacy rate in all states is low. Women always face to achieve the education. Due to some hindrances, issues,

negative attitudes of parents, orthodox mind of communities, lack of economic and education facilities, women are disadvantage as well as less educated from men. In the district of Bareilly, the women in rural and urban areas are less literate.

The gap is also high in the literacy rate of women. Female literacy is at 48.3 as against 67.5% of male literacy in the district of Bareilly. This gap indicates a wide gender disparity that the Bareilly district of U.P. does not give enough importance to the education of girls. The female enrolment in primary to higher education less from male's enrolment in education. There is gap in gender inequalities in education. Mostly parents give priority to male education. Women are discriminated on the grounds of all levels of education.

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