



LITERACY STATUS OF WOMEN IN BLOCKS OF SHRAVASTI: A CRITICAL OVERVIEW

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1. ABSTRACT

Literacy skills of the population of any region bear on how well the region performs economically. Moreover, the literacy status of women plays a significant role in improving the living status and standards of the region contributing positively to the making of a strong nation. The present study is conducted to explore the literacy status of women in different blocks of the Shravasti district of the Uttar Pradesh Region. The female literacy rates of the blocks have been categorized under three titles: POOR, VERY POOR, and WORST. A very high regional variation has been observed during the study of all the blocks.

Keywords: female literacy, literacy trend, the significance of female literacy

2. INTRODUCTION

“You educate a man; you educate a man.

You educate a woman; you educate a generation.”

The topic of education for women has always been a controversial and debatable one as there were times when we have great women scholars and times when we didn't have anyone. Even in the times when women were given equal opportunities in education as men, not all were very well literate and were mostly busy with housekeeping things and with the upbringing of children. Our society has very clearly demarcated the things as do's and don'ts for men and women in which men are given the responsibility of taking care of the finances of the family for which education has always been the key and women were given the responsibility of taking care of the house and its members in which it was thought that education doesn't play many roles and for very sure this was the point where our Indian society lagged. Education plays a major role in framing a society's values and morals, which ultimately becomes a culture. A culture, that may result in the progress or downgrade of the society. As a woman is the primary nurturer of a family and hence can be regarded as the primary nurturer of society.

According to the census 2011, “A person aged seven and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language is treated as literate. A person who can only read but cannot write is not literate”.

Education is directly responsible for the economic upliftment of a region and with a humongous population, India is the world's second most populated country and is soon going to jump to first place becoming one of the fastest

growing economies in the world. Also, a highly educated population will give its optimum contribution to the process of nation-building.

The literacy rate of Shravasti district is 46.74%, in which male and female literacy rates are 46.59% and 28.01% respectively(www.censusindia.co.in). The female literacy rate is significantly poor in the district which needs serious concern. The female literacy situation in Uttar Pradesh is dismal at 42.98% as compared to the male literacy ratio which is 70.23% and is far better. The overall literacy rate is still poor at 67.68% and is much lower than all India's average of 74.04%. The literacy rate of females in India is 65.46% and that of males is 82.14%. The State Government has taken several steps to make the population completely literate for which it has started many projects in collaboration with several NGOs like "Mission Prerna", "Nipun Bharat", "Sharda", and many more.

The education of women plays a significant role in improving the standards of any region. A higher literacy rate among the women population improves the quality and living standards of life in all aspects whether its health, economy, or literacy of the family which in return contributes to the well-being of the society.

3. RATIONALE

The topic related to the female literacy rate is taken here because females contribute a major role in framing society. A society full of literate women can contribute to the progress of whole humankind as compared to a society that lags behind the optimum number of literate women.

Shravasti is one of the most underdeveloped districts of not only Uttar Pradesh but also India in which very low women's literacy plays a key role in its backwardness. It contributes to the highest number of adolescent girls being married impacting their studies and quality of life.

When a girl or woman is not properly literate, it is not only she who suffers but the entire family has to bear the consequences. It has been found that illiterate woman faces more difficulties in life as compared to that of literate women. Illiterate women contribute to a high fertility rate as well as the mortality rate, they suffer from many health issues. In one of the surveys, it has been found that the mother's literacy is directly proportional to the infant mortality rate. These kinds of situations hamper the progress of a region ultimately hampering the progress of the State as well as the nation.

Lack of literacy means a lack of awareness. Illiterate women don't even know about their fundamental rights and several policies running for them for their betterment which contributes to the increment in their difficulties and harassment by their own family members and society despite several efforts of government and international institutions.

The work participation rate in the district of Shravasti is very poor with a percentage of 41.35 as compared to the States average of 63%. Substantial low literacy rate and work participation rate are two important features of the backwardness of the district, which needs serious challenges for the development of the district.

It is ironic that Shravasti district has its historical background mainly related to the life of Lord Buddha, the preacher of enlightenment who stayed for a maximum period after his enlightenment and spread knowledge.

4. OBJECTIVES

The present research paper aims at:

- 4.1. Studying female literacy in various blocks of Shravasti district of Uttar Pradesh.
- 4.2. Finding out the blocks with high and low female literacy in the district.
- 4.3. Finding the pattern of female literacy in the district of Shravasti.

5. STUDY AREA

Shravasti District is one of the districts of the Uttar Pradesh state of India and Bhinga town is district headquarter. Shravasti district is a part of Devipatan Division. Shravasti shares its border with district Balrampur, Gonda and Bahraich. Bhinga, the District Headquarter of Shravasti, is approximately 175 kilometres away from approximately the state capital, Lucknow. Shravasti, the northeastern district of Uttar Pradesh, is located near River Rapti. It is closely associated with the life of Lord Buddha. It is one of the main sites for Buddhist pilgrimage as well as Jain Pilgrimage. It

is said that the mythological king Sravast founded this town. Shravasti was the capital of the Kosala Kingdom from 6th century BC to 6th century AD.

At a Glance

Area: 1,948.20 Sq. Km.	Population: 11,14,615
Language: Hindi	Village: 536
Male: 5,94,318	Female: 5,20,297

Shravasti district

District of Uttar Pradesh



Location of Shravasti district in Uttar Pradesh

Country	<u>India</u>
<u>State</u>	<u>Uttar Pradesh</u>
<u>Division</u>	<u>Devipatan</u>
Headquarters	<u>Bhinga</u>
<u>Tehsils</u>	Ikauna, Bhinga Jamunaha
Government	
• <u>Lok Sabha constituencies</u>	<u>Shravasti</u>
• <u>Vidhan Sabha constituencies</u>	Shravasti and Bhinga
Area	
• Total	1,640 km ² (630 sq mi)

Population (2011)	
• Total	1,117,361
• Density	680/km ² (1,800/sq mi)
Demographics	
• Literacy	46.74 per cent
• Sex ratio	881
Time zone	UTC+05:30 (IST)
Major highways	up state highway 26, SH-96A

There is 5 blocks in **Shravasti** district.

SN	Name of Block
1	Hariharpur Rani
2	Sirsiya
3	Jamunaha
4	Ikauna
5	Gilaula

6. METHODOLOGY

Present study aims to enquire into the expansion of female literacy rate in various tehsils of Shravasti district of Uttar Pradesh. Secondary statistical data pertaining to female literacy according to the census of 2011, obtained from the 'official website of Shravasti district', is mainly used in this study. The raw data was obtained analyzed and summarized to obtain meaningful information from it.

The raw data regarding total number of female literates of all 5 blocks of shravasti district was converted into their corresponding literacy rates using the given formula:

$$\text{FEMALE LITERACY RATE} = (\sum Lt / \sum Pt) * 100$$

Where,

$\sum Lt$ = total number of female literates excluding age group 0-6

$\sum Pt$ = total number of female population excluding age group 0-6

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

During the tabulation of data two blocks were observed with highest and lowest female literacy rates of 33.18% and 8.00% respectively and on its basis a categorization of total female literacy was made by dividing into three categories of Poor, Very Poor and Worst.

- Poor (Above 30%)
- Very Poor (15-30%)
- Worst (Below 15%)

Block wise female Literacy Rate (in %)

SHRAVASTI	46.74
HARIHARPUR RANI	28.93
SIRSIYA	17.10
JAMUNAHA	8.00
IKAUNA	31.92
GILAULA	33.18

7.1. Poor Literacy Rate

There are two blocks: Ikauna and Gilaula which falls under this category with the literacy rates of 31.92% and 33.18% respectively. These blocks are poor in their female literacy rate yet higher among the others. The reason may be related to its distance from Bahraich which is closest from the other blocks as the block nearest to Lucknow is Gilaula and the nearest one is Ikauna.

7.2. Very Poor Literacy Rate

Hariharpur Rani block falls under this category with the percentage of women literacy of 28.93. The reason may be related to the fact that most of the administrative buildings and important institution are being developed in this region also it is the third block closest to Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh.

7.3. Worst Literacy Rate

Sirsiya and Jamunah are the two blocks falling under this category with the percentage of women literacy of a bare minimum of 17.10 and 8.00 respectively. The most striking reason for this situation comes out to be the fact that these regions are the International border region of India and Nepal where resources and infrastructures are not up to the mark.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

8.1. Mean literacy rate of all 5 blocks of shravasti district of Uttar Pradesh is 28.826

8.2. The block having highest literacy rate among all is Gilaula.

8.3. The block having lowest literacy rate among all is Jamunaha.

9. CONCLUSION

One of the many reasons behind the underdevelopment of the district is that it is the border region between India and Nepal and is a newly created district which was separated from Bahraich district. A slight positive growth has been noticed since its division and special attention by the State of Uttar Pradesh has been given to applying several policies and appointing highly able government officials coming from different regions of the State. Several International Organizations are also coming up with a helping hand from the upliftment of the women and the whole population of the district. One such organization is UNICEF.

10. REFERENCES

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