



Literacy and Women Development in India

B. Padmaja.

M.A., M.Edn, Asst.Professor, H&B.S Dept., Aditya Engineering College, Surampalem, East Godavari Dt., Andhrapradesh

ABSTRACT

Women Literacy in India is a leading issue from the post Independent time, unfortunately practically least achieved goal in our country. Women are high in population but poor in their destination, development, health and hygiene. Today we find countless crimes against women are taking part in our country. For any kind of issues, women literacy is the key to get rid of these problems. In my opinion women literacy should be a continual process of Co-operation between women- government-society – media which helps in achieving a permanent solution for this chronic issue. It should not end with one or two programmes and left. "A woman is an inbuilt leader" and she supposed to lead her family, society and a nation with a vision, motto and a purpose.

KEYWORDS :

Literacy definition:

Literacy, as defined in Census operations, "is the ability to read and write with understanding in any language. A person who can merely read but cannot write is not classified as literate. Any formal education or minimum educational standard is not necessary to be considered literate".

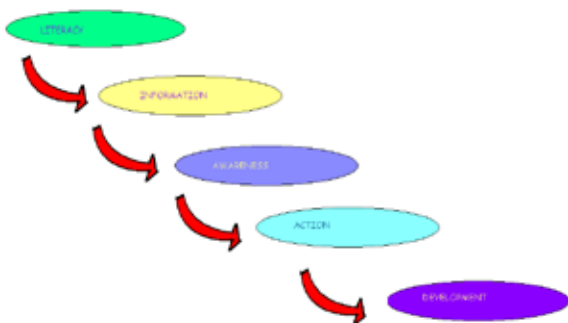
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has drafted a definition of literacy as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society."

The National Literacy Mission defines literacy as "acquiring the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and the ability to apply them to one's day-to-day life. The achievement of functional literacy implies

- (i) self-reliance in 3 R's,
- (ii) awareness of the causes of deprivation and the ability to move towards amelioration of their condition by participating in the process of development,
- (iii) acquiring skills to improve economic status and general well being, and
- (iv) imbibing values such as national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality, observance of small family norms.

Many people may ask a question that how could only reading and writing activity lead a person to development?

I want to state that Literacy is a very important helping tool to access the information of any matter. Through this information we get awareness which leads to action on that issue. That action leads to change, change in a particular field leads to Development. So literacy can achieve a big tasks like development of a nation with its foundational work. So that we say "Literacy is the Foundation for development of people nothing but nation."



A nations' development can also be measured by Literacy according

to a famous economist Dr. Amartyasen, a nobler from our country. Development is a continuous process in which Women's role is remarkable. Women are the key role players in any country's development. They are the good, qualified, responsible human resources of a country. But less prioritized in literacy developmental matters.

Let us go through the literacy rate definition, how male and female literacy changes are occurred in our country, what are the reasons behind this gender bias in literacy rates, what are the consequences of these differences and also the solutions for the above problem.

By improving people's ability to acquire and use information, education deepens their understanding of themselves and the world, enriches their minds by broadening their experiences, and improves the choices they make as consumers, producers and citizens. Education strengthens their ability to meet their wants and those of their family by increasing their productivity and their potential to achieve a higher standard of living. By improving people's confidence and their ability to create and innovate, it multiplies their opportunities for personal and social achievement. Japan's rapid industrialization after the Meiji Restoration was fuelled by its aggressive accumulation of technical skills, which in turn was based on the already high level of literacy and a strong commitment to education, especially the training of engineers.

In the field of Development Economics, literacy holds an important place as a parameter to measure development. It has been recognized that the "Human Development Index" (HDI) developed by UN is a measure of the overall development of the country. One of the three components used in the calculation of HDI is "Literacy" as it is a cumulative measure of several factors that contribute to human development.

What is Literacy Rate

If an individual has the ability to read, write, understand, identify, interpret and communicate, he is considered as literate. According to the census of India since 1991, literacy rate can be defined as, "The total percentage of the population of an area at a particular time aged seven years or above, who can read and write with understanding, upon the population aged seven years or more as denominator." In India, right to education is also considered as a fundamental right. To highlight and show the prominence of literacy, the **world celebrates Literacy Day on September 8**, each year.

The literacy rate in India has a huge difference when it comes to gender. Considering the population with age of 7 years and above in 2011 census, the literacy rate for men was 82.14% and for women was 65.46%.

As per Population Census of India 2011, the **Literacy rate of India** has shown as improvement of almost 9 percent. It has gone up to 74.04% in 2011 from 65.38% in 2001, thus showing an increase of 9 percent in the last 10 years. It consists of male literacy rate 82.14% and female literacy rate is 65.46%. Kerala with 93.9% literacy rate is

the top state in India. Lakshadweep and Mizoram are at second and third position with 92.3% and 91.06% literacy rate respectively, Bihar with 63.08% literacy rate is the last in terms of literacy rate in India.

Government of India has taken several measures to improve the literacy rate in villages and towns of India. State Governments has been directed to ensure and improve literacy rate in districts and villages where people are very poor. There has been a good improvement in literacy rate of India in last 10 years but there is still a long way to go.



Ranking of States in India by Literacy Rate

S.No	State	Literacy Rate (2011 Census)	Male Literacy Rate (2011 Census)	Female Literacy Rate (2011 Census)
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	86.3%	90.1%	81.8%
2	Andhra Pradesh	67.7%	75.6%	59.7%
3	Arunachal Pradesh	67.0%	73.7%	59.6%
4	Assam	73.2%	78.8%	67.3%
5	Bihar	63.8%	73.5%	53.3%
6	Chandigarh	86.4%	90.5%	81.4%
7	Chattisgarh	71.0%	81.5%	60.6%
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	77.7%	86.5%	65.9%
9	Daman & Diu	87.1%	91.5%	79.6%
10	Delhi	86.3%	91.0%	80.9%
11	Goa	87.4%	92.8%	81.8%
12	Gujarat	79.3%	87.2%	70.7%
13	Haryana	76.6%	85.4%	66.8%
14	Himachal Pradesh	83.8%	90.8%	76.6%
15	Jammu and Kashmir	68.7%	78.3%	58.0%
16	Jharkhand	67.6%	78.5%	56.2%
17	Karnataka	75.6%	82.8%	68.1%
18	Kerala	93.9%	96.0%	92.0%
19	Lakshadweep	92.3%	96.1%	88.2%
20	Madhya Pradesh	70.6%	80.5%	60.0%
21	Maharashtra	82.9%	89.8%	75.5%
22	Manipur	79.8%	86.5%	73.2%
23	Meghalaya	75.5%	77.2%	73.8%
24	Mizoram	91.6%	93.7%	89.4%
25	Nagaland	80.1%	83.3%	76.7%
26	Orissa	73.5%	82.4%	64.4%
27	Puducherry	86.5%	92.1%	81.2%
28	Punjab	76.7%	81.5%	71.3%
29	Rajasthan	67.1%	80.5%	52.7%
30	Sikkim	82.2%	87.3%	76.4%
31	Tamil Nadu	80.3%	86.8%	73.9%

32	Tripura	87.8%	92.2%	83.1%
33	Uttar Pradesh	69.7%	79.2%	59.3%
34	Uttarakhand	79.6%	88.3%	70.7%
35	West Bengal	77.1%	82.7%	71.2%
-	INDIA	74.04%	82.14%	65.46%

Female literacy rate in India

Efforts to stabilize population and family planning has a dramatic negative impact due to low literacy rate of women. According to several studies, married literate women understand the usage of contraceptives in order to have a proper family planning.

The issues like inequality on gender-basis, lesser girls enrolling in schools, high school dropouts and girl child forces to perform domestic chores have caused poor literacy rate of females in India. However, observing a census decade of 2001-2011, it was understood that female literacy growth was considerably faster at 11.8% than male literacy rate at 6.9%. This indicates that the gender gap might slowly narrow. However, out of 100 women, only 65.46% are literate in 2011.

Male literacy rate in India

In 2011, out of 100 males, 82.14% are literate. Male literacy was seen higher in states like Puducherry (92.1%), Mizoram (93.7%) and Kerala (96%), whereas, male literacy was seen significantly lower in states like Andhra Pradesh (75.6%), Bihar (73.3%), Arunachal Pradesh (73.7%) and Meghalaya (77.2%).

Consequences of women illiteracy

- *Uncontrolled population growth
- *Unawareness on health and hygiene
- *financial insecurity
- *child labour
- * Social Insecurity

List of Steps taken by Government of India to improve Literacy Rate in India:

- Free education programs to poor people living in villages and towns.
- Setting up of new school and colleges at district and state levels.
- Several committees have been formed to ensure proper utilization of funds allotted to improve literacy rate.

Strategies adopted by the Government for increasing Female Literacy in the Country

The main strategies adopted by the Government for increasing female literacy in the country include:

1. National Literacy Mission for imparting functional literacy
2. Universalization for Elementary Education
3. Non-Formal Education

CONTRIBUTION OF LITERACY CAMPAIGNS TO FEMALE LITERACY

The provision of educational opportunities for women has been an important part of the national endeavor in the field of education since India's Independence. Though these endeavors did yield significant results, gender disparity persists with uncompromising tenacity, more so in the rural areas and among the disadvantaged communities. This is not only a matter of national anxiety and concern but also a matter of national conscience. It is with this concern that the Government of India launched the National Literacy Mission in 1988 for eradication of adult illiteracy. Since women account for an overwhelming percentage of the total number of illiterates, the National Literacy Mission is for all practical purposes a Mission of imparting functional literacy to women. Total literacy campaigns launched since 1988 under the aegis of the National emphasis on making efforts to: -

- Create an environment where women demand knowledge and information, empowering themselves to change their lives.
- Inculcate in women the confidence that change is possible, if women work collectively.
- Spread the message that education of women is a pre-condition for fighting against their oppression.
- Highlight the plight of the girl child and stress the need for Uni-

versalization of elementary education as a way of addressing the issue.

Some of the significant ways in which the literacy campaigns have contributed to the women are

Current Literacy Programs

1. Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP)
2. State Adult Education Program (SAEP)
3. Adult Education through Voluntary Agencies
4. Involvement of students and youth in Adult Education Programs
5. Nehru Yuvak Kendras
6. Non-Formal Education for Women and Girls
7. Shramik Vidyapeeths
8. Central Board for Workers Education
9. Functional Literacy for Adult Women
10. Incentives Awards Scheme for Female Adult Literacy
11. Post-Literacy and Follow-up Program

The listed activities reflect India's determination to make the entire population literate by involving the other Government agencies related to development as well Universities and Voluntary Organization in literary activities. The responsibility for planning and financing these activities, however, rests with the Central and State Governments.

In my view Women literacy can be achieved by:

Even though these many Programmes are planned and practiced we are unable to reach our destination at due rate. I expect the following measures may help to eradicate women illiteracy by practicing from the root level of our society.

Mobile Schools:

Which will travel through the villages, finding them near fields or a specific places where all can gather, teach them, by supplying slates and books for their practice. These schools will adopt certain villages and conduct a survey on women illiterates. Taking a sufficient literary materials and make them to practice in their free time. And they can also have practice of letters through " Rangoli" which is a special art of every women in India. After their minimal level of Education finishes, they will be encouraged to go through Open School system to attempt their next step of Development.

Student Teachers:

We should also take the information of illiterate women in villages by collecting data from the students itself. Children are the truth holders and they reveal everything about their parents literacy status. Here their children only their teachers. Generally teachers at schools gives different works to home to do. They should also anchorage the children to complete their home works before their parents. Loud reading of native language poems and stories will be heard by their parents too and slowly they will also understand the importance of literacy.

So, women literacy should be one of the topic on all classes syllabus in their native languages. So that a child who can go through their lessons will educate his mother also.

I would say " *Children are the best teachers and most responsible future citizens*" of a country.

Farm Schools:

As we all know , new agricultural methods are been implement and taught to many no. of farmers by farm schools. I expect their services can also be extended to farmers men/women workers to grab more knowledge on their own field books and other stationary. Our scientist can also anchorage our farmers / women workers to learn how to

read and write , so that they mayn't be deceived by any one due to illiteracy.

Print media Role:

Government should advertise the importance of the women literacy through various means of print media/radio/fm/mobile ring tones etc., can also prepare ads/programmes in T.V for the literacy importance in which the practical witness of different pre-learned women are included, will reach to millions of people in the country and so that they are also get inspired by them.

Role of DWACRA :

Many state governments have introduced DWACRAs, a self help groups to improve the standard of living of village womenfolk's. We can also use these groups to improve literacy rate in rural/urban areas, by not only anchorage them for their savings but also their literacy.

Youth power:

Even though We are involving youth in many Programmes still the power of youth in any (action) field work is just like a "un triggered missile ". We can find many graduated youth in our population according to census 2011. Employing them for this projects by at least a girl graduate can make 5 women literates. Encouraging by giving them certain amounts as free lance tutors.

Youth @ 60's:

Generally we neglect the people of age above 60. They spend their leisure time in Libraries, Parks, Temples ect., to have their open discussions. Government, NGO's and other voluntary organisations can avail them for such kind of Literary Programmes in which they will actively participate with more zeal and enthusiasm. Certainly they are the best resource persons and accountable in this mission.

Colleges/organizations in Urban areas:

Even though the no. of illiterate in urban area are less than that of rural, it is not a negligible area of our sights. Voluntarily these organizations should work for the women literacy. Identification is only the problem in urban areas. But they can depend upon their students/ employs/self surveys in search of such women near by their area. Every day 1 hr time can be spent to this program with service motive and government can also anchorage them with certifications/mentos.

Discharging Postal Material :

Discharging Postal Material through Post offices for identified illiterate house , so that the women will receive simple, student friendly material and they can take any educated ones help nearby. This can be made as a follow up programme by local post office personal, who would be encouraged by cash award of each educated person.

Conclusion :

Finally as a women I feel what India can possess it could not because of many reasons, specially in women illiteracy issues. In my vision, complete literacy can be achieved by a holistic developmental approach, a right attitude towards its goal and a dedicated teamwork.

We should also use *Audio Visual Aids* while teaching to illiterates and make them attracted towards learning process. In this connection non-voluntary literates be given importance by offering *appropriate remuneration*, and be given *consideration while offering employment*, so that they serve the illiterates with full pledged commitment towards enhancing the women literacy rate. In addition to the Government measures in literacy improvement programmes the above mentioned measures be included for effective implementation to get the expected results.