

# Women's Education in Rural Bihar: Issues and Challenges

Yagbala Kapil\* Shubham Agrahari\*\* Shivani Mishra\*\*\*

\*Yagbala Kapil Research Scholar, Amity Business School, Amity University Noida,

\*\*Shubham Agrahari, Management Student, IMS UC Campus, Ghaziabad,

\*\*\*Shivani Mishra, Management Student, IMS UC Campus, Ghaziabad.

## Abstract

Education plays a very important role for socioeconomic development of country. It brings well-being to the society. Educating women is essential not only for social justice but for accelerating the social transformation. There is a huge difference between being literate and being educated. Educating women in rural India is itself a big challenge. The last decade in Bihar (2004-14) has seen an exceptional development in education. The improvement of Female Literacy Rate in Bihar during 2001-11 was the highest, achieved by any state in India during that period. However, education rate in Bihar is characterized by wide gaps between the urban and rural woman (Urban female literacy is 72.6% & Rural female literacy is 49.6%). The purpose of this paper is to focus on the current status of women education level of rural Bihar and this paper will also highlight the various issues and challenges associated with. This paper is based on secondary data collected through various sources magazine, newspapers, census data survey (2011), journals and research articles.

**Key Words-Women Education, Female Literacy, Social Development.**

## Objectives of research

- 1) To know the education system in rural Bihar.
- 2) To study the contribution of women in economic development of country.
- 3) To increase the awareness on importance of women education and its social implication.
- 4) To study various issues and challenges in educating women.
- 5) To analyse and interpret the current scenario on women's education and how one can take necessary steps to promote the girl's education in society with special reference to Bihar.

## Research Methodology

This study is based on the secondary data collected from various sources viz. Magazines, Economic and Political Weekly, UNDP's Reports, Review of Literature and Analysis of secondary sources, Government Documents, Census Reports, Authorized Information, research papers, Monographs and record sources and other unpublished work such as unpublished thesis and Websites etc. This paper is an effort to highlight the education of women in rural sector with special reference to Bihar. In the light of the present scenario, the purpose of this study is to highlight the current status of women education in Bihar, causes and the possible remedies of such problems. This study is exploratory in nature and for this purpose an in-depth analysis has been conducted by referring the available secondary sources.

## Literature Review

Paper Name	Author Name	Publish	Literature
Girls Education at School level in India: opportunities and challenges	Balbir Kumar	Gyan jyoti e-journal, volume3, Issue4(oct- Dec 2013)	Eliminating gender disparities is the biggest challenge in the world and focus should be on girls education.

<b>Women's education: A case study of female Education in Rural Areas of district budgam in J&amp;K</b>	Naseema Akhter, Dr.Shobha kulshrestha	J A Social Sci Humanities,2016	Women education is a major concern in rural areas, there is proper use of funds which is provided by govt. and due to corruption in the whole system it is not being utilised the way it need to be.
<b>Girls Education in India: Status and challenges</b>	Sanjukta Sahoo	International Journal of Research economics and Social Sciences (2016)	Society's thinking is changing day by day towards girls education
<b>A Study on women education in India</b>	A. Subangini devi	International Journal of Science, Technology and Humanities (2014)	In every sector there are many opportunities for girls they just have to grab them.

### Introduction

Education in India is a key for social and economic progress. Education of girls is vital not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation. Level of literacy and educational attainment are important indicators of development of any given society and we cannot exclude women in the development of any society as they contribute about half of the human race. Reflecting into the "Vedas Purana" of Indian culture, women are being worshiped such as LAXMI MAA,

goddess of wealth; SARSWATI MAA, for wisdom; DURGA MAA for power. According to census 2011, India's female literacy rate is 65.46% and world average of 79.7%. and Bihar has 53% female literacy rate and in rural areas of Bihar it is 45%. It is essential as their thought and their value systems lead the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation. The best way of empowerment of women is perhaps through empowering women with knowledge, skills and abilities. Education is the only way for actual empowerment of women in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Problem Statement

- The negative attitude of parents towards girls education.
- Poverty is major problem in Bihar
- Lack of female teachers, as Bihar is the gender segregated society.
- Lack of awareness and beliefs in educating a girl's child.

### To know the education system in rural areas of Bihar

Bihar is the third largest state of India by population, close to 85% of population lives in rural areas. There has been a major centre of learning from ancient universities like university of Nalanda (estd.450CE) and others also. The current scenario of education system in rural Bihar is lack of infrastructure and well educated teachers in schools and college and there is 37% less teachers than required in elementary schools and among these teachers are mostly absent and take

their full salary from the government and there is lack of management to manage all these things now the things are changing the government take strict actions on education sector they put biometric on every govt. schools and colleges for taking the attendance of teachers and made good and eco-friendly infrastructure in schools and colleges.

**To study the contribution of women in economic Development:** The number of rural girls attending schools is rising, still; illiteracy and access to quality education is the major concern in rural Bihar. A recent study has revealed that the population of Bihar has gone up by 25 per cent in the past decade. This is an alarming rate. All development work and GDP growth rate will come to a naught if it has not been controlled.

#### **To increase the awareness on matters, social, legal, economical and political pertaining to all aspects of life**

Education increases the awareness among people in various sectors of rural areas when women get education then they aware about what is going on their surroundings and they about their fundamental rights. There are various aspects of life like in social areas they will about the culture and what's trending in now a days, in legal factor they will know what is wrong and what is right, in economical areas they will know about the condition of their house and their country and in politics education is very necessary to take a right decision that who will work for them in future.

#### **To know the social implications of educate women**

Educating women has a wide ranging impact on the society and has a more positive effect are as follows-

- 1) It enhance the economic development with their knowledge and skills.
- 2) Educate girls who becme mothers are more easily to teach their children
- 3) When women are educated then they can nourish their children easily.
- 4) Women who have been educated are less likely to die during childbirth because they have better knowledge of all of these.
- 5) Educate women give their contribution to increase the gross domestic product of India.
- 6) If women are educated then poverty should be decreased.
- 7) An educate women will protect their children from various disease and exploitative and trafficking.

Education in this point plays a vital role in helping establish the population as well. Bihar witnessed a growth of 16.3% in literacy levels from 2001-2011 (Census, India). The last decade in Bihar (2004-14) has seen an unprecedented development in education. Efforts by the Government of Bihar to increase accessibility to 2001-2015 educational facilities in the state are showing signs of positive change. The literacy rate in Bihar has improved from 47.0% in 2001 to 61.8% in 2011 to 63.82% in 2015. Bihar's improvement in Female Literacy Rate during 2001-11 was the highest ever achieved by any state in India during that period. The overall dropout rate and number of out-of-school children have also declined. On the other hand, education rate in Bihar is characterized by wide gaps between the male and female population. These can be illustrated with the following facts.



**Issues and Challenges with****Female Literacy of Rural Bihar:**

Although the rural women are playing a crucial role in the advancement of agriculture and economy and largely to the society, a number of challenges are being faced by the rural women of our society due to various reasons like- the gender discrimination, inadequate access to the health care etc. They are also having light access to the medical services, less income, limited inheritance and land rights. The females of rural area are deprived of job security. Injustice, violence and insecurity are the major issues that persist in the rural society. The ultimate reason behind all these issues is lack of having quality education for the women of rural Bihar. There are other burning social issues such as child marriage and gender inequality which are reasons for several social problems. These too can be tackled through girls' education. The Bihar Government has expressed a strong commitment towards education for all, however the state still has one of the lowest rural female literacy rates in Asia. This low level of literacy not only has a negative impact on rural women's lives but also on their families' lives and on their country's economic development.

**The following are the some of the important factors which could affect the low literacy rate of women of rural Bihar-**

- **Poor school environment for girls-** In general, the school environment for girls in rural Bihar is not really interesting and encouraging. There are still many schools with poor basic amenities such as drinking water, and toilet facilities, improper building and inadequate number of teachers especially female teachers preferable for any parents for safety of their girl children from different types of exploitation and abuse.
- **The lower enrolment due to family responsibilities-** The major educational problem faced by girls, especially girls from rural areas, is that although they may be enrolled at the beginning at the year, they do not always remain in school. Girls are often taken out of school to share the family responsibilities. Children belonging to low caste families are forced to learn skills and work and not encouraged to go to school due to various factors in the sphere of strict instruction from high caste communities for their selfish motives of keeping them as domestic servants. The data on school attendance collected by the World Bank shows the proportion of girls attending school decreases with age while for boys it remains stable.

- **Dowry system-** In rural Bihar, dowry refers to the durable goods, cash and real or movable property that the bride's family gives to the bridegroom, his parents or his relatives as a condition of the marriage. The dowry system is thought to put great financial burden on the bride's family. Dowry system and other social act as main causes of the neglect of the girl child and discrimination against girl child including the deprivation of right to education. In some cases, the dowry system leads to the crime against women ranging from emotional abuse, injury to even deaths.

- **Early marriage-** Early or child marriage in India, according to Indian law, is a marriage where either the woman is below age 18 or the man is below age 21. Most child marriage involves underage women, many of whom are in poor socio-economic conditions. Bihar is the state amongst the highest child marriage rates in India. Rural rates of early marriages were three times higher than urban India rates in 2009 and still it is on the higher side. There is high association of female literacy with female age at marriage. By and large the female age at marriage of 18 as prescribed by various legislations not at all followed in India. It is very much ignored and neglected by the families of parents with low literacy.

- **Priority to son's education compared to daughter's education-** Many parents view educating sons as an investment because the sons will be responsible for caring for aging parents. On the other hand, parents may see the education of daughter a waste of money as daughter will eventually live with their husband's families and the parents will not benefit directly from their education.

- **Poverty-** Poverty happens to be the single biggest cause of illiteracy in rural Bihar and a precursor to all other effects. Rural women are found to be economically very poor all over the state. A few women are engaged in services and other activities. So, they need economic power to stand on their own legs on par with men. In a poor family, girls are the main victims; they are malnourished and are denied the opportunity of better education and other facility. If poverty were not a concern, then the girl child will be able to follow her dreams without concerns of sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and any education or work.

**Lack of adequate number of Female teachers -**

Another barrier to female education is the lack of female teachers. As India is a gender segregated society, it is a very important factor in the low female literacy rate. It is one of the barriers to girls' education. Girls are more likely to attend school and have higher academic achievement if they have female teachers. This is particularly true in highly gender segregated societies such as India.

**Caste disparities**

Severe caste disparities also exist. Specifically, it is on the higher side in the rural part of Bihar. Discrimination of lower castes has resulted in high dropout rates and low enrollment rates.

But in spite of all reasons, women must understand and realize that education can actually end the vivacious cycle of poverty, their misfortune, so that they can live a life with pride. In case of any misfortune in life, it is education that would help her, not anything else. The government should really work towards the number, distance and quality of schools in rural as well as urban India. We

should encourage the girl child in getting education to create a balanced and an educated society.

**Collaborative Efforts and Incentives for the betterment of rural women education:**

The cause for female education has attracted the efforts of many organizations and governments, and different initiatives have proven the importance of financial incentives, non-formal training, the hiring of women in the education sector, and community engagement. Financial incentives have been used both to encourage educators to enter the field of girls' education and specially enabling the rural girls to come into the main flow of development.

Following are some of the major initiatives taken by the Government time to time for the betterment of women education of rural Bihar-

**Educational Schemes by Government of Bihar**

- Fund Released under Maulana Azad National Fellowship for Students Belonging to Minority Communities in Bihar (2011-2012 to 2014-2015-upto 24.02.2015).
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) Operational and Girls Enrollment in Bihar (20112012 to 2014-2015)
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) (1987-2016)

It is an Indian programmed aimed at the universalisation of elementary education "in a time bound manner", as mandated by the 86th Amendment to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory education to children between the ages of 6 to 14 a fundamental right. The program was pioneered by former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

- Balika Poshak Yojana

A scheme to provide school uniforms to girls in middle school, it gives girl students from Class VI to VIII Rs 700 every year for purchasing two pairs of uniforms under the Balika Poshak Yojana.

- Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana

According to the Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana, all girls are to be given bicycles free of cost by the State Government after getting admission to Class IX. The scheme mandates a cash transfer of Rs 2,000 per girl child to purchase a bicycle within a stipulated time.

- Mukhya Mantri Akshar Anchal Yojana

This adult literacy programme was launched by the government of Bihar in September 2009 to address high levels of illiteracy among women. With an allocation of Rs 52.6 crores it aimed to make 40 lakh illiterate women in the age group of 15–35 years' literate within a period of 6 months.

It was found that many women in the survey villages participated in this adult literacy programme. The Akshar Aanchal Yojana was popular with illiterate women in poor communities. The classes were usually held at the local school after school hours.

- Mahila Akshar Anchal Yojana

It has shown very good results and of the 40 lakh women covered under the scheme, more than 35 lakh have already been made literate. This helped increase the decadal literacy growth in the state more than any other state.

Source-Extracted from- <http://www.biharstat.com/education>

## 6.Findings

In the north Indian state of Bihar, education has been improving faster than in the rest of the country. But as this column reminds us, Bihar is starting from the bottom.

- 1) *Poverty is drawback. Government schools are not as good and private schools are expensive.*
- 2) *Every village is not provided with school which means that students have to go to another village to get education. Owing to this parents usually do not send their daughters to school, leading to a failure in achieving rural education in Bihar*
- 3) *Security is very important issue for girls*
- 4) *Total population of rural area is 88.7% of total Bihar and female population in rural areas is 48.52%*
- 5) *In rural areas male literacy rate is 69.67% and female literacy rate is 44.30% which is very less in comparison of male literacy*
- 6) *Awareness is increasing in parents having girl child regarding their education*

## 7.Conclusion:

Not only the government but every literate citizen should contribute in battling with the evil spirit of illiteracy. Our motto should be “each one teach one”, If we are to become a developed state. It's now turn of the youth to step up and take the

responsibility on their shoulders to take the rural women of this state towards the light of literacy.

There is need to redefine the status and role of rural women. There is a need to formulate reducing feminized poverty, promoting education of women, and prevention and elimination of violence against women, specifically the rural part of our society.

The government as well as NGOs has been working on solving this problem of how we can eradicate illiteracy in rural Bihar for both children and female. In a way to achieve the ultimate goal of quality education and reach of education the following measures can be helpful-

1. Creating better schooling programs.
2. Creating better health care more accessible in the rural part of the state.
3. The son preference that has resulted in sex imbalances and excess mortality among girls needs to be addressed.
4. Achieve appropriate student-teacher ratio with quality of teaching.
5. Bring back the drop out children.
6. Proper monitoring to discover corruption in welfare schemes implemented by the Government time to time.

7. Providing sufficient number of schools and educational facilities so that girls don't have to travel for long distance.
8. Emphasize vocational education in the rural part of the state as well.
9. Promoting career oriented approach in education.
10. Motivate the girls to opt the field of their choice.
11. To remove the present imbalances, extend access by supporting existing institutions, establishing new institutions, supporting government and non-government organizations, civil society to supplement public efforts.
12. Promote the quality of higher education by investing in infrastructure and faculty, promoting academic reforms, improving governance and institutional restructuring towards the inclusion of the yet deprived communities.

Other than the above mentioned methods, the method of communication and media can facilitate development by encouraging dialogue and debate. Furthermore, they can give a voice to rural women, thus enabling them to articulate their own development

6. King, Elizabeth M. 1990. *Educating Girls and Women: Investing in Development*, Washington, DC.
7. Lagemann, E. C. 1979. *A Generation of Women: Education in the Lives of Progressive Reformers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
8. Marshal A 2002. *Organizing Across the Divide; Local Feminist Activism, Everyday Life and the Election of Women to Public Office*. Soc. Sci. Q. 83(3), pp. 707-725.
9. Nussbaum, M. C. 2000. *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities*

agendas. Similarly, by fostering the exchange of knowledge and information, communication can stimulate women's awareness and motivation, allowing them to take informed decisions on the crucial issues affecting their lives and education is one of such important decisions.

### References:

1. Ballara, M. 1992. *Women and Literacy*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books.
2. Baruah, B. 2013. *Role of Electronic Media in Empowering Rural Women Education of N.E. India*. ABHIBYAKTI: Annual Journal, 1, pp. 23-26.
3. Chen, M. 2005. *Progress of the Worlds' Women 2005: Women, Work and Poverty*. UNIFEM New York, pp.75-83.
4. Go swami, L. 2013. *Education for Women Empowerment*. ABHIBYAKTI: Annual Journal, 1, pp. 17-18.
5. Kadam, R. N. 2012. *Empowerment of Women in India- An Attempt to Fill the Gender Gap*. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 2(6), pp.11-13.
6. *Approach*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
10. Nagaraja, B. 2013. *Empowerment of Women in India: A Critical Analysis*. Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), 9(2), pp. 45-52. Available on- URL <http://www.Iosrjournals.Org/empowerment.html>.
11. Vinze, Medha Dubashi, 1987, *Women Empowerment of Indian: A Socio Economic study of Delhi*. Mittal Publication