



ANALYSIS OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR UNION TERRITORY

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Abstract

In this study attempt has been made to analysis the gender differences in education of Jammu and Kashmir empirically. Our study has made clear that literacy rate in 1961 was just 12.95 percent while as it reached to 55.52 percent in 2011. The decadal increment on average in the male literacy rate is about 10.88 percent which becomes clear from the equation of the trend line which is $Y = 10.88 X$.

However, the decadal increment in the combined literacy rate on average is about 13.44 percent which becomes clear from the equation of the trend line which is $Y = 13.44 X$.

Nevertheless, the slope of female literacy rate is lowest which is just 4.56 percent decadal

Therefore, there exists a huge gender disparity in literacy rates in Jammu & Kashmir on average 20 percentage points favourable to males as compared to females. There are number of reasons which are responsible for higher male literacy rates than female literacy rates in our study areas and our study tries to explore the possible main reasons responsible for it.

Introduction

Female literacy is a fundamental tool for empowering women and promoting gender equality in the society. As it is a well observed fact that literate women are more likely to assert their rights, participate in decision-making processes, and challenge traditional gender norms. Similarly, literate women tend to have better knowledge about health and hygiene practices. They are more likely to seek healthcare services for themselves and their families, therefore, leading to improved overall health and well-being of a family in particular and nation as a whole in general.

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Educated mothers are more likely to understand the importance of healthcare for their children and are better equipped to provide a nurturing environment. This, in turn, positively influences health and educational outcomes of their children. Likewise, literate women are more likely to be informed about family planning methods and reproductive health. This contributes to better family planning decisions and helps in controlling population growth which ultimately leads to rise in the standard of living of the people as their per capita income rises.

Female literacy is a catalyst for economic development. When women are educated, they are better positioned to enter the workforce, start businesses, and contribute to the economy. This, in turn, enhances the overall economic growth and development of a society.

Thus, Education provides women such skill sets and knowledge which are needed for employment and entrepreneurship and finally leads to increased economic opportunities. This can help lift families out of poverty, as educated women are better equipped to contribute financially to their households. Educated women also contribute to the social and cultural development of their communities. As they often play a crucial role in transmitting values, traditions, and knowledge to future generations.

Female literacy is linked to increased political participation. Educated women are more likely to be involved in civic activities, vote, and engage in political processes, contributing to a more inclusive and representative democracy.

Education can empower women to recognize and resist gender-based violence. It also raises awareness in communities about the negative impact of violence against women, fostering a more supportive and protective environment. Educated mothers are more likely to invest in the education of their children, creating a positive cycle of inter-generational educational advancement.

In summary, female literacy is a transformative force with wide-ranging benefits for individuals, families, and societies. It serves as a catalyst for social progress, economic development, and the promotion of human rights and equality. Efforts to improve female literacy should be seen as integral to broader initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable and inclusive development.

Objectives of our study

- 1. To examine the gender literacy gap in Jammu and Kashmir which is our study area*
- 2. To examine the comparative gender literacy gap status between rural and urban areas*

HYPOTHESES

- 1. There is no gender literacy gap in Jammu and Kashmir which is our study area*
- 2. There is no statistically significant gender literacy gap status between rural and urban areas*

ANALYSIS

Analysis of our study has made it clear that literacy rate in 1961 was just 12.95 percent while as it reached to 55.52 percent in 2011. The decadal increment on average in the male literacy rate is about 10.88 percent which becomes

clear from the equation of the trend line which is $Y = 10.88X$. The analysis also shows that there is not a single observation which shows decline so far as the total literacy rate is concerned right from 1961 to 2011.

Similarly, so far the male literacy rate is concerned it has also continuously been increasing right from 1961 to 2011, however, the slope of it is the highest among all the three literacy rates, i.e. male, female and total literacy rates. The decadal increment in the literacy rate on average is about 13.44 percent which becomes clear from the equation of the trend line which is $Y = 13.44X$. The analysis also shows that there is not a single observation which shows decline so far the male literacy rate is concerned right from 1961 to 2011.

Nevertheless, the female literacy rate has also witnessed the periods of upward slope and downward slopes both. However, the upward slopes are four out of six decades. In the same way the slope of female literacy rate is lowest which is just 4.56 percent decadal.

There exists a huge gender disparity in literacy rates in Jammu & Kashmir on average 20 percentage favourable to males as compared to females. There are number of reasons which are responsible for higher male literacy rates than female literacy rates. Our study tries to point out significant causes of it, as given below:

- **Cultural Norms and Traditions**

- Long-standing cultural norms and traditions is one of the important reasons responsible for higher male literacy rates as compared female literacy rates. As in our study area it is general opinion of the people that education for males is more essential, while females are expected to fulfill domestic roles mainly.

- **Economic Consideration**

- Families facing economic constraints may prioritize the education of male children over females in our study area. Generally people in our study area have perception that investing in the education of males will yield higher economic returns, either through employment opportunities or as future providers for the family as compared to its counter part.

- **Early Marriage and Parenthood**

- Early marriage and childbearing can be significant obstacles to female education in our study area. Since in our study area the early marriage is still prevalent in pockets of our study area specially in rural areas which finally becomes a main cause of a higher dropout rate among girls.

- **Lack of Female Role Models**

- The absence of female role models in educational and professional spheres can impact girls' aspirations. If girls don't see women pursuing education and successful careers, they may be less likely to prioritize their own education.

- **Gender- Based Discrimination**

- Gender-based discrimination within educational institutions can discourage girls from attending school. This discrimination can manifest in various forms, including biased teaching practices, stereotyping, and unequal resource allocation.

- **Social Expectations**

- Societal expectations may influence perceptions of the value of education for boys versus girls. If education is seen as a means for upward mobility and success primarily for males, families might invest more in the education of their male children.

- **Lack of Awareness**

- Limited awareness about the importance of female education and its long-term benefits can contribute to lower enrollment and retention rates for girls.

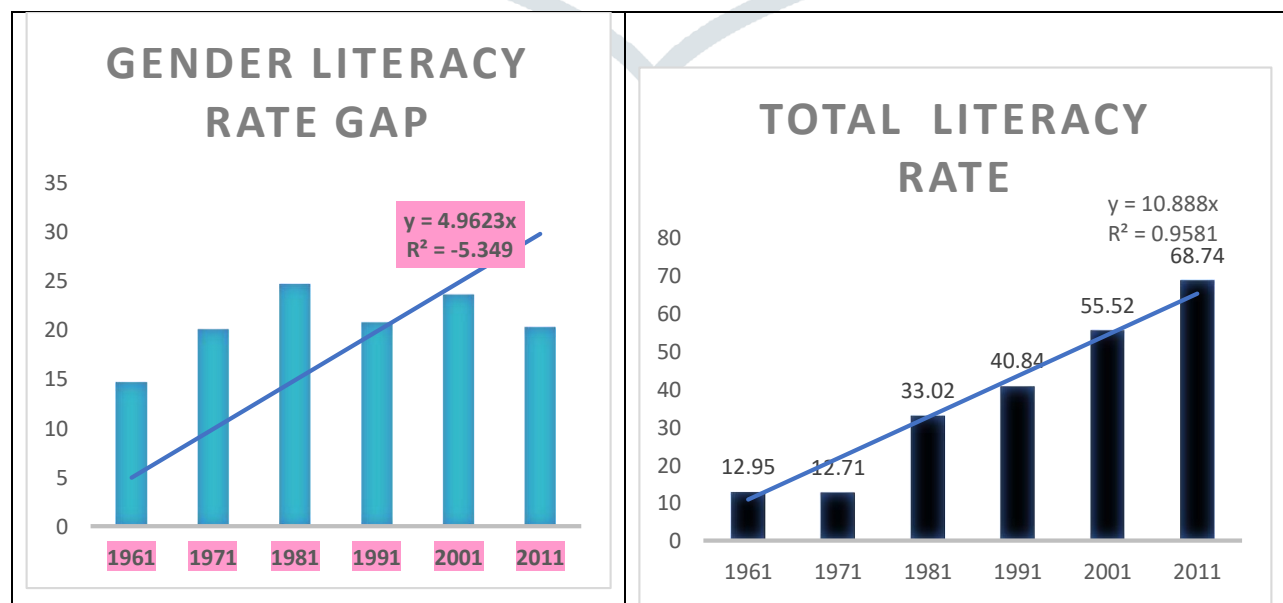
- **Poverty**

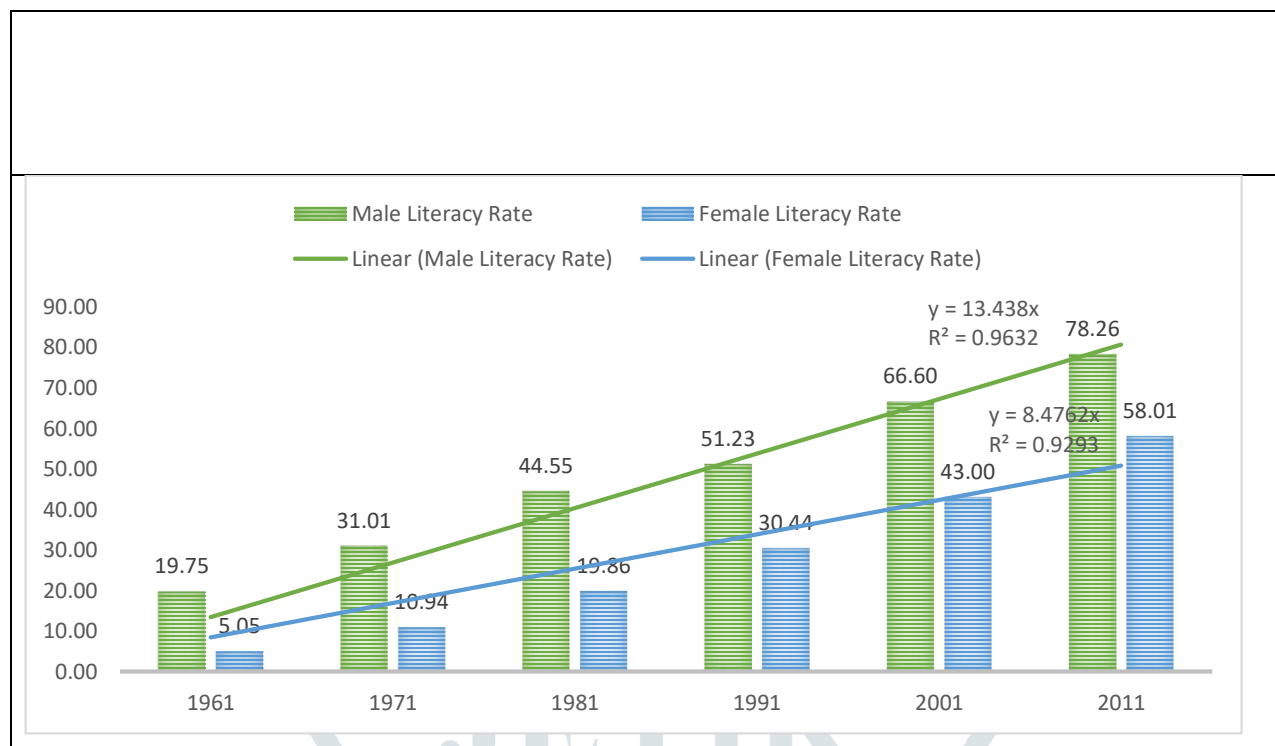
- Families in poverty may face difficult choices regarding which children to send to school. Economic hardships might lead families to prioritize the education of boys over girls.

TABLE-1: VARIOUS LITERACY RATES IN OUR STUDY AREA JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Years	Male Literacy Rate	Female Literacy Rate	Total Literacy Rate	Gender Literacy Rate Gap
1961	19.75	5.05	12.95	14.7
1971	31.01	10.94	12.71	20.07
1981	44.55	19.86	33.02	24.69
1991	51.23	30.44	40.84	20.79
2001	66.60	43.00	55.52	23.6
2011	78.26	58.01	68.74	20.25
Average	48.57	27.88	37.30	20.68

Sources: Census of India (Various Issues)





Sources: Based on Table-1

Conclusion

To conclude we can say that gender disparities in literacy can be minimized by adopting various comprehensive efforts, including policy changes, community awareness programs, and initiatives to promote equal access to education for all. Empowering women and challenging gender norms are crucial steps towards achieving gender parity in literacy rates.

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