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# **A Study on the Challenges Faced by the Rural Women in Accessing Education and What Government Schemes are Implemented for the Same**

**By: Gagandeep Kaur**

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**ABSTRACT**

The old African proverb “If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family (nation)<sup>1</sup>” indicates the importance of educating women when men predominated the educational opportunities. Today, we are living in the 21st century. Still, women are deprived of educational rights in some parts of the country, especially in rural areas and urban regions.

According to Article 14 of the Indian Constitution which states, Equal Rights means, “The state shall not deny any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India<sup>2</sup>.” As Article 15 (1) (a) of the Indian Constitution states, “the State to shall make any special provision in favor of women and children.” Further, Article 26 of the Indian Constitution provides the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “Everyone has the right to education. It shall be directed to the full development of human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights<sup>3</sup>.”

The purpose behind this study is to find out the various dimensions that contribute to the challenges faced by rural women for accessing primary education in rural areas, to draw a comparison between the rural and urban education, and also to observe what schemes and policies are brought forth by the Central as well as the State Government to encourage and uplift the educational standards among the rural women and girls and to analyze how far these schemes are successfully implemented critically. This study will also examine the **number of villages/towns by a range of literacy and sex from the census conducted from 2019 – 2021. Further**, this study focuses on women’s education and empowerment concerning the rural regions of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. There are four factors responsible for the lack of rural women education, Family problem, Personal problem, Infrastructure & Society Problem that contributes to 71.977 percent of the variation<sup>4</sup>.

**Rural Women Education and their Problems in India**

Education is the exercise of understanding and gaining knowledge, practicality, and morals. Educational techniques encompass educating, teaching, and giving proper expertise about

<sup>1</sup> Serrena Suen, *The education of women as a tool in development: Challenging the African maxim*; VOL 1 NO 2 (2003).

<sup>2</sup> EQUALITY RIGHTS (ARTICLE 14 – 18); ANNEXURE II

<sup>3</sup> Women Education and Media

<http://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/955/Women-Education-and-Media.html#:~:text=In%20general%2C%20States%20are%20obliged,education%2C%20but%20also%20compulsory%20education>

<sup>4</sup> *A Study on the Challenges Faced by Rural Women in Accessing Education*; Published by: **Journal of Scientific Research**; Volume 65, Issue 4, 2021



something<sup>5</sup>. Article 26 of the Indian Constitution gives equal 'Right to Education, as acknowledged by the government of few states and the United Nations. In India, everyone must acquire education till the age of 14 years. There is a stir for improving education facilities, specifically for evidence-driven programs with worldwide initiatives the Sustainable Development Goal, which encourages excellent and merit education for everyone. The position of women in India had been a topic of concern to the changes which had occurred in the stretch of the foregone Indian history. Since women don't have an equal right to education due to family problems, personal characteristics, Infrastructure, and social aspects. Most of the time, women in rural India are asked not to continue with their education after finishing the primary standard, since the parents think that educating males is more profitable as compared to females, there is one more stereotype in the Indian society that people feel that women or girls are not supposed to be literate for the fact that later they will be married and ultimately left with the only job of looking after the family, raising their children and satisfying her spouse.

Presently, the maximum population of the country is residing in remote areas, where it is exceptionally hard for the females, both girls, and women, to continue with their education further due to inadequate infrastructure or to get proper education in any way possible.

Even though the need for education is increasing, as per the state government records, the female literacy ratio is lower than the male literacy ratio. In remote/rural areas, only those have seen universal female literacy. As per the opinions of many intellectuals, the few girls seek to take admission in schools as compared to that of the boys, and this is the main reason behind girls continuing to be not so much literate, on the other hand, in the urban part of the country, girls are probably on the same level to that of boys for getting an education. As per the National Sample Survey Data of 1997, the states of Kerala and Mizoram are the only two states that have seen universal female literacy<sup>6</sup>.

The literacy rate of women in India is 39%, whereas 64% for men with less than 40% of the 330 women aged seven but above is literate. According to the 1991 census which shows 200 million women are illiterate in India<sup>7</sup>.

### **Literacy and Level of Women Education and Empowerment in India: Reference to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh**

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<sup>5</sup> *A Study on the Challenges Faced by Rural Women in Accessing Education*; Published by: **Journal of Scientific Research**; Volume 65, Issue 4, 2021

<sup>6</sup> *A Study on the Challenges Faced by Rural Women in Accessing Education*; Published by: **Journal of Scientific Research**; Volume 65, Issue 4, 2021

<sup>7</sup> SHUBHI AGGARWAL, *RURAL WOMEN EDUCATION AND THEIR PROBLEMS IN INDIA*  
<https://www.sociologygroup.com/female-education/>



Literacy and level of education are the primary indicators of the level of development achieved by a society. Literacy is an essential input in an individual's overall development, enabling them to comprehend their social, political, and cultural environment and respond appropriately. Higher levels of education and literacy lead to greater awareness and improve economic and social conditions, as it acts as a catalyst for social upliftment in many aspects.

According to the 2001 census, as many as 560,687,797 persons are literate. Of these 336,533,716 are males and 224, 154,081 are females. In percentage count, the male literacy rate is 75.3%, and that for females is 53.7%, which makes up the total of 64.8% of the overall literacy rate, showing a gap of 21.6% between the two sexes at the national level. As per the study, it is evident that the gap is more in rural areas than that of the urban areas due to a higher literacy rate that has been recorded both for males and females, and the difference among the sexes is lower than 13%<sup>8</sup>.

Another census conducted in 2011 showed a straight ten years (2001-2011) survey of the literacy growth rate of about 9.2%, which is slower than the rise witnessed in the course of the preceding decadal. There is an extensive gender discrepancy rate foreseen in the country's literacy rate. Hence, this survey proves that the literacy ratio is less for women than men; the literacy percentage of women is about 60.6%, and for men, it is about 81.3%<sup>9</sup>.

#### Indicating Literacy Rates among Men & Women<sup>10</sup>:

Census Year	% increase in the literacy rate among men	% increase in the literacy rate among women	Gender gap % in literacy rate
1951	27.8	8.86	18.30
1961	40.4	15.35	25.05
1971	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	82.14	65.5	16.68

Source: National Population Commission, GOI

<sup>8</sup> SHUBHI AGGARWAL, *RURAL WOMEN EDUCATION AND THEIR PROBLEMS IN INDIA*  
<https://www.sociologygroup.com/female-education/>

<sup>9</sup> *A Study on the Challenges Faced by Rural Women in Accessing Education*; Published by: **Journal of Scientific Research**; Volume 65, Issue 4, 2021

<sup>10</sup> ResearchGate; *Women Education and Empowerment in India with Reference to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh*  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325907927\\_WOMEN\\_EDUCATION\\_AND\\_EMPOWERMENT\\_IN\\_INDIA\\_WITH\\_REFERENCE\\_TO\\_TELANGANA\\_AND\\_ANDHRA\\_PRADESH](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325907927_WOMEN_EDUCATION_AND_EMPOWERMENT_IN_INDIA_WITH_REFERENCE_TO_TELANGANA_AND_ANDHRA_PRADESH)



According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data on literacy, 15.4 percent more males are literate than females in Telangana - the highest gender gap in southern states. As per the report, there is also a massive difference in the literacy rate of women in urban and rural areas. Only 4.2 percent of women in the State are graduates in rural areas, compared to 21.2 percent in urban areas<sup>11</sup>.

Telangana has the fourth-lowest literacy rate at 66.46%. This is the lowest among all other south Indian states and the second-lowest literacy rate among rural women at 53.7% among all large states in the country<sup>12</sup> The numbers presented in this report highlight various issues pertaining to literacy and education. Whereas Andhra Pradesh currently stands at 67.35%, the national rate is 72.98%<sup>13</sup>.

Article 42 states that “the states shall promote the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to prevent them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation” that is why some of the Schemes and Policies of the Central Government are implemented for Shaping Female Education for both Girl/Women in Rural/Remote Areas and further preventing this section of the society from injustice and exploitation:

In India, the sex ratio at birth is 896 females for every 1000 males; such a significant difference between male and female ratio is not normal; instead, it is a result of a patriarchal system in power which is still evident in some parts of the country, both in developed and remote areas. Still, the difference is that it is more in rural India than the Urban settings. This is why women are deprived of their rights, especially to the right to equality and education.

#### **Most prevalent Central Government schemes for empowering female education:**

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled this scheme in Panipat, Haryana, on January 22, 2015. The primary objective of this scheme/program is to protect the girl child from the social problem, challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender equality such as gender-based abortions, and most importantly, encourage girl child education throughout the world. This scheme’s holistic initiative is to solve the country’s worsening child sex ratio and related issues of women empowerment. This is a central government scheme focused on providing 100% financial

<sup>11</sup>The Indian Express; *Telangana literacy rate fourth lowest among big cities*

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/telangana/2020/sep/08/telangana-literacy-rate-fourth-lowest-among-big-states-2193812.html#:~:text=HYDERABAD%3A%20Telangana%20has%20the%20fourth,large%20states%20in%20the%20country>

<sup>12</sup> The Indian Express; *Telangana literacy rate fourth lowest among big cities*

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/telangana/2020/sep/08/telangana-literacy-rate-fourth-lowest-among-big-states-2193812.html#:~:text=HYDERABAD%3A%20Telangana%20has%20the%20fourth,large%20states%20in%20the%20country>

<sup>13</sup> The Times of India; *Andhra Pradesh’s literacy rate lower than national average: Socio-economic survey*

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/andhra-pradeshs-literacy-rate-lower-than-national-average-socio-economic-survey/articleshow/82787997.cms?from=mdr>



assistance to the district level. Further, this scheme initiates to provide a safe environment to girls, supporting female property rights so on and so forth.

**CBSE Udaan Scheme:** This scheme is initiated by the Central Board of Secondary Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India. As this scheme is exclusively designed for girls, the primary objective is to increase the number of girls enrolled in prestigious engineering and technical colleges across India.

**Balika Samridhhi Yojana:** This yojana is a scholarship initiative as it provides financial support to young girls and their families who live in poverty. The three main objectives of this scheme are to raise the girls' social status increase girl's enrolment for school studies.

This program is for both urban and rural settings. The scholarship for girl children ranges from 300/- to 1000/-

**Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana:** Sukanya Samriddhi Account (women child prosperity account) is a government-sponsored savings program. This program helps parents save money for future savings of their girl child, especially for paying dowry and spending money on the marriage of their girl child.

This scheme is very effective as, to date, there are about 1.26 crore schemes registered under this program. Hence, this scheme has become a ranging hit in less than three years.

**National Scheme of Incentive for the Girls of Secondary Education:** The scheme is primarily intended to help girls from lower/deprived sections of society, enabling them to complete their secondary education. And this scheme also provides a scholarship of 3000/-, which will be deposited in their fixed deposit account, but this scheme applies to the most deserving girls<sup>14</sup>.

**Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Yojana:** The primary objective of this program is to promote girl education. There are approximately 3,500 Kasturba Balika Vidyalaya's, out of which 3.6 lac girls are studying. These schools also have a hostel facility for 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup><sup>15</sup>.

**Mahila Sangha:** This scheme allows rural women to meet and discuss issues, ask questions, make informed choices. It is implemented in ten states<sup>16</sup>.

### **Most prevalent State Government schemes for empowering female education:**

**Andhra Pradesh & Telangana – Girl Child Protection Scheme:** This scheme promotes a girl child's

<sup>14</sup> Top 10 Government Girl Child Schemes in India

<https://groww.in/p/savings-schemes/top-10-government-girl-child-schemes-in-india>

<sup>15</sup> ResearchGate; *Women Education and Empowerment in India with Reference to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh*

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325907927\\_WOMEN\\_EDUCATION\\_AND\\_EMPOWERMENT\\_IN\\_INDIA\\_WITH\\_REFERENCE\\_TO\\_TELANGANA\\_AND\\_ANDHRA\\_PRADESH](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325907927_WOMEN_EDUCATION_AND_EMPOWERMENT_IN_INDIA_WITH_REFERENCE_TO_TELANGANA_AND_ANDHRA_PRADESH)

<sup>16</sup> ResearchGate; *Women Education and Empowerment in India with Reference to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh*

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education to a minimum up to an Intermediate level while preventing early marriages and empowering girls from an early age. The system also provides financial benefits to girl children in need. Families with more than two children comprising two or at least one daughter are eligible<sup>17</sup>.

**Ladli Laxmi Yojana of Madhya Pradesh:** The primary aim of this scheme is to eradicate the malpractice of child marriage and female foeticides. The MP government will also provide families with more than one daughter and must attend the Anganwadi schools. In addition, Rs 6,000 worth of National Saving Certificates (NSC) will be purchased annually for five years in the girl child's name<sup>18</sup>.

**Haryana – Ladli Scheme:** As per this scheme, the government of Haryana offers 5000/- per year up to the next five years to the families owning two girl children, and it will be released once the beneficiary, i.e., girl child, attains the maximum age (adulthood)<sup>19</sup>.

**Odisha – Kishori Sakti Yojana:** The Odisha government schemes to provide nutritional, educational, and financial support to adolescent girls, ages ranging between 11-18 years<sup>20</sup>.

**Rajasthan – Rajshree Yojana:** This scheme provides total financial assistance of up to Rs 50,000 to a girl child's family for her educational, health, and other expenses up to class XII<sup>21</sup>.

**West Bengal – Kanyashree Prakalpa:** This scheme offers an annual scholarship of 750/- to girls between the ages of 13 and 18 and a one-time grant of 25,000/- for girls between 18 and 19 years<sup>22</sup>.

**Analysis or a Comparison to be drawn between both the Central as well as State Government Schemes, to see how effectively these schemes are implemented on both the levels:**

The Right to Education Act, 2009 has been successful to some extent as it fulfills its aim of providing free and compulsory education for children aged between 6-14 years as per “Article 21(A) of the Indian Constitution, and it also keeps a check on all neighborhoods through conducting regular surveys. The parliament of India brought this act to resolve the problems of Education challenges prevalent both at the center and on the state level for many years in India. The RTE Act, 2009 gives responsibilities to the State, center, and local bodies to rectify gaps in their educational systems by implementing schemes to improve, enhance and scale up the level of education in the

<sup>17</sup> [Girl child protection scheme](#); Vikaspedia

<sup>18</sup> Education to Health: 14 Government Schemes for Daughters You Need to Know  
<https://www.thebetterindia.com/199634/india-government-schemes-girl-child-women-eligibility-format-rules/>

<sup>19</sup> *Haryana Ladli Scheme*; Vikaspedia

<https://vikaspedia.in/education>

<sup>20</sup> [Kishori Shakti Yojana](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Rajshree Yojna](#)

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.wbkanyashree.gov.in/kp\\_4.0/index.php](https://www.wbkanyashree.gov.in/kp_4.0/index.php)



country<sup>23</sup>. This Act focuses on so many aspects of promoting and strengthening education among both rural and urban children.

The Right to Education (RTE) Forum's Report of 2014 suggested that across the country, there are only 10% of schools comply with all the norms and standards of the Rights to Education Act, while the enactment of the RTE Act, 2009 triggered significant improvement and concerns regarding the privatization of education Act that offers the first step towards an inclusive education system in India.

This Act also mandates all the private schools to reserve 25% of their seats for all those children who belong to the socially disadvantaged and economically weaker sections of the society, as the primary aim of this act is to "boost the social inclusion to provide just and equal rights to all the citizens of the nation, especially to that of both male and female in terms of better-quality education and requests for the same.

The UNICEF data records showed that the primary net enrolment rate for 2014-2015 was 91 and 90 for girls. There are about 31 million girls across the globe not having proper access to primary education. This is because of sexism in education and medical rights of the girls and women in the rural areas, which is a widespread mentality of Indians. In India, Young girls are often forced to or voluntarily drop out of school since they either have to look after their younger siblings or contribute to the household chores. These community-based organizations also offer vocational courses like English speaking and stitching, BPO service that calls for the girls to be economically dependent. Education will help girls in many ways like, they can contribute equally to economic development, thus reducing gender imbalances in terms of education which enhances human capital formation. An extensive study on "the human capital theory" suggests that education plays a significant role in increasing the economy's productivity by increasing the factor output per worker. The lack of safety and security also leads to girls discontinuing school. Morning school for girl students is followed by afternoon school for boys. Many girls had dropped out of school because their parents believed it was no longer safe to send their daughters to school. The problem persists despite continuous complaints to both the police and SMC members, the problem persists. The NCPCR has introduced new guidelines for students' health, hygiene, safety, and security in private and government schools. The new guidelines point out that girls must be taught about menstrual hygiene and be supported not to miss school. They also state that schools should ensure zero

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<sup>23</sup> Times of India; *What is Right to Education Act (RTE Act)?*

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/igoravsharma/what-is-right-to-education-act-rte-act-32034/>



tolerance on any matter related to sexual abuse of a child, and stringent action shall be taken against the perpetrators of law<sup>24</sup>. An educated girl also understands the importance of education for her future generations and can create a better lifestyle and provide better healthcare to her children. Besides, educating a girl child will directly reduce infant and maternal mortality rates, child marriages, domestic and sexual violence in families. An educated girl is also more likely to participate in political discussions, meetings, and decision-making leading to the formation of a more representative and democratic government.

#### Indicating % of School Dropouts since 1961<sup>25</sup>

Year	Class (I – V)			Class (V – VIII)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1960 - 1961	61.7	70.9	64.9	75	85	78.3
1970 - 1971	64.5	70.9	67	74.9	83.4	77.9
1980 - 1981	56.2	62.5	58.7	68	79.4	72.7
1990 - 1991	40.1	46	42.6	59.1	65.1	60.9
2000- 2001	39.7	41.9	40.7	50.3	57.7	53.7
2010 – 2011	-	-	27.4	-	-	40.8

Source: www.indiastat.com

Note: The gross drop-out rate represents the percentage of pupils who drop out from a given grade or cycle or level of education in a given school year.

### Conclusion:

Investing in girls' education helps transform the community, countries, and the world. Girls who receive proper education earn higher incomes, participate in decision-making, are independent, and give themselves and their families a better future. Girls' education can contribute a lot in strengthening the country's economy and changing the status from developing to a developed

<sup>24</sup> Times of India; *What is Right to Education Act (RTE Act)?*

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/igoravsharma/what-is-right-to-education-act-rte-act-32034/>

<sup>25</sup> Times of India; *What is Right to Education Act (RTE Act)?*

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/igoravsharma/what-is-right-to-education-act-rte-act-32034/>



nation. It will also prove to be a significant step in reducing inequality<sup>26</sup>. And also, as per Article 51 (A) [e] “entitles women to attain not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in every panchayat,” as an educated girl is more likely to be participating in political discussions, meetings, and decision-making, which further leads to the formation of a more representative and democratic government.

To promote effective and good quality proper education in rural India, some developmental programs/schemes need to be launched over the years to achieve these all-encompassing objectives, so there are some schemes prevailed by the government like ‘Beti Bachao Beti Padhao’ though, this scheme does not prove to be so relevant if the community does not cooperate. This is why an alternative is required in people's minds to bring about a social change. Then only these schemes will progress depending on the awareness spread and the implementation of the plan, which requires the active participation of both the citizens and the government<sup>27</sup>.

To bring transformative developmental strategies for promoting girls’ education, specific steps have to be readily taken, and they are as follows:

- By tackling discriminatory gender norms and harmful practices that deny girls access to school and quality learning.
- By supporting both centers and state government to ensure that gender-responsive plans and policies are implemented to prioritize gender equality.
- Helping Schools and governments refrain from teaching all those materials that gender gaps/gender stereotypes in learning.
- To promote social protection measures.
- Village Panchayat should strictly keep track of the girl enrollment ratio to avoid/reduce girl drop-outs.
- Parents should be thoroughly counseled about the girls’ education and its further implications.

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<sup>26</sup> Unicef for every child 75; *Girls’ Education, Gender equality in education benefits every child*  
<https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education>

<sup>27</sup> *Rural Women Education and their Problems in India*  
<https://www.sociologygroup.com/female-education/>



- Article 46 states that proper nutrition should be provided to the school children (especially for rural children) as part of the mid-day meals program.
- Scholarship and other financial aids should be increased significantly for girls who want to pursue higher education later in life.
- Computer and other technical education should be imparted to a girl.
- Girls and women hostels should be provided with tight security for every two to three villages so that parents can ensure the safety of their wards and can send them for higher education without any stress or tension.

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