

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON “PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS LITERACY IN INDIA”

Himanshi Prajapati¹, Dhiya Chauhan², Priyanshu Ratandhariya³

¹Assistant Professor, ²Student, ³Student

^{1,2,3}B.K School Of Professional and Management Studies (DPPG), Gujarat University, Ahmedabad Gujarat (India)

Email: ¹himanshiprajapati1323@gmail.com, ²dhiyachauhan8@gmail.com, ³priyanshu.r.r.18@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Purposes: India is currently confronted with significant economic issues. Illiteracy, Unemployment, poverty, and unequal income distribution are only a few of the concerns that are influenced by India's literacy rate, either directly or indirectly. Researcher's aim is to know if India's literacy rate is increasing at a slow or fast rate, especially after the passage of the Right to Education Act in 2009. This report is a small-scale survey containing data from people all throughout the country, asking a few key questions to get a better understanding of the situation. The purpose is to determine whether or not certain factors contribute to India's literacy rate.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study investigates the present state of education in India by gathering primary data using a questionnaire and analyzing it. The author applied Frequency Distribution and Chi-Square Tables methodology to operationalize variables and evaluate the paper's hypothesis.

Originality/Values: Prior studies have only looked at different aspects of education. This research offers a more thorough perspective by learning if people are aware about the Mid- Day Meal Scheme, what aspects should be considered while working to enhance the government's education policy, and how awareness can be raised to educate every child in India.

Keywords: Literacy in India, Literacy Rate, Right to Education, Perspective, Government, Education Policy, Awareness, Methodology.

INTRODUCTION

If we walk down the street, we will encounter many different interpretations of literacy; yet, if we interpret it in a straightforward way, through literacy communication gaps can be bridged. A person aged seven and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language, is treated as literate (Census of India, 1991) But literacy encompasses not just the ability to write, read, and talk, but also the ability to understand & be understood. Literacy reflects a nation's, ethnic groups, or community's socioeconomic and cultural composition. Literacy is necessary not just for eradicating poverty, but also for reducing mental isolation, creating peaceful and pleasant international relations, and allowing demographic processes to run their course. Literacy has been considered one of the most important attributes for social development. It is seen as a prerequisite for economic growth, social mobility & political stability.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the Human Development Index, which includes three indicators: longevity, education, and standard of living. It demonstrates that rising income is not the only key factor in human growth; education and literacy are also crucial for nation and society development. Literacy establishes the conditions for energizing efforts and human engagement in the creation of projects that act on, affect the world, and define the purposes and objectives of genuine human growth. Therefore, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, recognized literacy as the basic human right and committed to education for all. Indian planners, too, have recognized this role of education in shaping social and economic development of the country. At the time of independence, India inherited a legacy of large-scale illiteracy and lack of proper provision for education, and since then, literacy has been considered as one of the priority areas of focus for development.

LITERACY IN INDIA

The ability to read and write is referred to as literacy. It is a developing idea that encompasses not only the capability to understand printed language but also the ability to adapt to visual entities and technology awareness. It is a multi-dimensional concept that continues to grow in terms of new parameters as a result of the changes that are occurring

in a globalized world.

Literacy, in today's context, refers to more than just writing and reading skills. Now it has a broader meaning. It claims to help people become more aware of the need for change in order to obtain a better way of life. Individual empowerment requires a high level of literacy. It is linked to a wide range of advantages. Individuals, families, and communities get benefits from increased access to health, educational, economic, political, and cultural opportunities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- The study's aim is to see if there is a link between gender and areas where more effort needs to be done in the Education Sector.
- The study's aim is to examine the "gender-effect" relationship in order to determine whether India's Education Policy needs to be improved.
- To determine the growth rate of India's Literacy Rate.
- To define the value of literacy in a country's economy, society, and economics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literacy involves a continuum of learning enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. (UNESCO, 2004) Assessment of educational achievement of any kind, that is, literacy in the current context, need not merely be based on expansion of opportunities. Given that every older generation experience lower literacy prevalence than its younger counterparts at any point of time, the aggregate literacy rate tends to improve even without any explicit advantage of greater educational potential of the population in coming years. While it is necessary that analysis of literacy progress should inform about the expansion in educational opportunities, it can alternatively be captured by contrasting the likelihood of being literate among the younger generation vis-à-vis the older ones. Its significance arises from the fact that every young age cohort enjoyed better educational opportunities than older ones as a result of expansion in educational opportunities over the years. (Shukla Vachaspati & Mishra Udaya, 2019)

The age cohort aspect of literacy progress remains largely unexplored. In the absence of a standard international definition of literacy that captures all its facets, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 1978) adopted the concept of "functional literacy." A person is functionally literate when they can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning within their group and community, and also for enabling them to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for their own and the community's development. Therefore, literacy refers to a context-bound continuum of reading, writing, and numeracy skills, acquired and developed through process of learning and application, in school and in other settings appropriate to youth and adults. (Shukla Vachaspati & Mishra Udaya, 2019) Sharma and Mishra (1978) observed a negative relation between literacy and marital fertility and a decrease in fertility with rising educational status of the mother. The investigators concluded fertility decline would be induced by increasing literacy and educational attainment, higher age at marriage and acceptance of family planning.

In India, the general perception about literacy is the census definition, the ability to read and write any one language. Literacy rate is defined as the proportion of literate in the population of age seven years and above. Based on this definition, literacy rate in India has shown significant improvement over the years, that is, 34.5% in 1971 to 74.0% in 2011. According to the estimate based on Census 2011 data, literacy rate in India varies from lowest in Bihar (63.8%) to highest in Kerala (93.9%). Thus, ensuring universal literacy for the new entrants will benefit the adult illiterates through positive externality. However, this is not going to solve the problem of literacy deprivation for the illiterate. (Shukla Vachaspati & Mishra Udaya, 2019)

According to Census 2011, India managed to achieve a literacy rate of 74.04% as opposed to 64.80% in 2001. This notable shift also highlights an increase in female literacy over the years. While the female literacy rate in India as per Census 2001 was 53.7%, Census 2011 recorded it at 65.5%. Though not radical but some progress has been made in improving literacy in India especially after the implementation of free education in rural areas for both men and women. (Census of India.)

India was a signatory participant in the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in 1990 at Jomtien and the World Education Forum held in 2000 at Dakar. In this respect India has committed to resultant Declarations particularly Education for All and achieving six goals set in the declaration. Of the six goals, the fourth-one is about achieving improvement in adult literacy rate 50% better by 2015 over the base in 2000. But the current progress in

literacy rate in India particularly during the last one decade indicates meeting the fourth goal is very difficult, if not impossible. Owing to increasing investment in elementary education and corresponding policy initiatives that improved school participation rates, further accretion into the pool of adult illiterates may recede. **(Venkatanarayana Motkuri, 2014)**

Financial regulators in India such as RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, PFDR, etc. have created a joint charter called National Strategy For Financial Education (NSFE), detailing initiatives taken by them for financial literacy in India. Also, other market participants like banks, stock exchanges, broking houses, mutual funds, and insurance companies are actively involved in it. The National Centre For Financial Education (NCFE) in consultation with relevant financial sector regulators and stakeholders has prepared the revised NSFE(2020-2025) **(Wikipedia)** Even as India has its fundamentals in place, the country must ensure that the younger generation is able to benefit from digitisation and not suffer its costs. In order to make youth employable and train them for jobs that have not even been created yet, digital literacy must become a priority. **(Tanushree Chandra, 2019)**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN: This research has Exploratory Research Design, as Low Literacy Rate has been seen as a problem and to put more lights and to open new sights on this problem this research has been done.

SOURCE OF DATA: The research is based on primary data that was gathered using a structured questionnaire created with the help of Google Forms.

SAMPLING AREA: Gujarat, India.

SAMPLING SIZE: Sample Size of the study was 150 respondents.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE: To obtain primary data, an online questionnaire was circulated throughout Gujarat using Google Forms. Furthermore, respondents who are of 21 years or above were allowed to participate in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Table Showing Frequency Distribution of Gender based Attributes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	61	40.7	40.7	40.7
	Female	89	59.3	59.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

- As from Table 1, the female respondents are more than male respondents.
- 40.7% of 150 respondents are male and rest that is 59.3% are female.
- In numbers, there are 61 male and 89 female respondents.

Table 2: Table Showing Frequency Distribution of Age based Attributes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21 - 30	133	88.7	88.7	88.7
	31 - 40	12	8.0	8.0	96.7
	41 - 50	5	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

- According to Table 2, 133 respondents are from the range of 21-30 years of age. 12 are from 31-40 years of age and 5 are from 41-50.
- That means most of the respondents i.e., 88.7% belong to youth.

Table 3: Table Showing Frequency Distribution of Education Qualification of respondents

			Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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		Frequency	Percent		
Valid	Graduate	95	63.3	63.3	63.3
	Post-Graduate	39	26.0	26.0	89.3
	Non-Graduate	13	8.7	8.7	98.0
	Other	3	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation:

- In Table 3, it is clearly visible that 63.3% of 150 respondents that is 95 respondents are Graduated.
- 39 respondents that is 26% of 150 respondents are Post Graduated. 13 are non-Graduated and 3 are others.

TEST-1

Table: 5 Table Shows Result of Chi-Square Testing

		In what area there is a need to work on Education Sector?			Total
		Rural	Urban	Both	
Gender	Male	19	10	32	61
	Female	31	17	41	89
Total		50	27	73	150

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.599 ^a	2	.741
Likelihood Ratio	.599	2	.741
Linear-by-Linear Association	.458	1	.498
N of Valid Cases	150		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.98.

Interpretation:

- Because the calculated value (P-Value) is more than the degree of freedom, which is 0.05.
- The test was designed to determine whether or not there is a link between gender and the work done in the Education Sector.
- The hypothesis indicates that H₀ was accepted, indicating that there is no relationship between these two factors and there is no need to put more efforts on Education sector because of Gender.
- ❖ **For proving objective:** To examine the "gender-effect" relationship in order to determine whether India's Education Policy needs to be improved.

TEST-2

Table : 6 Table Shows Result Of Chi-Square Testing

Chi-square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.537 ^a	2	.464
Likelihood Ratio	1.541	2	.463

Linear-by- Linear Association	.830	1	.362
N of Valid Cases	150		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.63.

Interpretation:

- As can be seen from the above table, the calculated value (P-value) in this test is more than the degree of freedom, i.e. 0.05.
- The test was established to determine whether India's Education Policy needs to be improved because of Gender effect or not. However, because the H₀ is accepted, there is no need to change its educational policy due to gender. It is developed with the needs of different genders in mind.
- In conclusion, the authors can state that these two variables have no relationship.

FINDINGS

According to the findings of this study, the majority of people are aware of the RTE Act of 2019, yet almost everyone participates in the policy and send their children to school to get better education. The researchers learned from the Chi-Square tests that there are no connections between gender and the other factors tested.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this study, India has not only made tremendous literacy development, but has also improved gender parity in literacy achievement. India is on track to achieve universal literacy among children and youth, but ensuring that government schools' function efficiently requires a sense of accountability. Being under scrutiny, will force the teachers to do their duty sincerely and also improve the facilities such as labs and classrooms in government schools. Furthermore, the youth must lead substantial research efforts in the field of literacy, not just children but also for women, because an educated woman has a huge impact not only on herself but also on her child. As India transforms into a knowledge-based economy in the twenty-first century, the concept of literacy must expand to meet society's evolving needs. Rather than being limited to the basic, foundational abilities of reading and writing, literacy must be linked to broader ideas of financial, digital, civic, and multicultural literacy.

The data and findings suggest neither a slow nor a rapid increase in India's Literacy Rate. According to the researchers, India's literacy rate is steadily increasing in the right direction, neither lower nor higher.

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