



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN ANANTHAPURAM: A MICRO SURVEY ON RURAL WOMEN IN ITUKALAPALLI

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Abstract:

An attempt is made in this paper to study the educational attainment of rural women in Ananthapuram (a micro survey on rural women in Itukalapalli). The study revealed that there have been concerted efforts to encourage girls to attend schools, which would lead to higher literacy in future. The study also revealed that there are several infrastructural barriers to women education in India. The study calls for focused approach towards increasing women centred educational infrastructure so as to reduce the women drop-out rates and to improve female literacy levels in India.

Key words: Education, Economy, Population, Rural women

Introduction

Women constitute almost half of the population of the world. Education for women is the best way to improve the health, nutrition and economic status of a household that constitute a micro unit of a nation economy. In this context, it can be argued that lack of woman education can be an impediment to the country's economic development. In India, women achieve far less education that of men.

Methodology

The sample comprised only 52 rural women aged 15 to 45 years who had children. The sample was selected by following a multistage random sampling procedure at the village levels, resulting in the selection of one single village. A list of married women between the ages of 18

to 45 years was prepared and data was collected from them.

Objectives of the Study:

- To examine the socio economic profile of the rural women;
- To present the level of educational attainments of rural women;
- To examine the status of rural women;
- To measure the values, attitudes, abilities and aspirations of rural women;

Analysis

Literacy status

Literacy rate in India is just 74.04% in 2011. 82.14 males per 100 male are literate, and only 65.46 out of 100 females



are literate. Literacy in rural areas are worse than urban India. 7 out of first 10 districts according to literacy rate are in Kerala state. Kerala has a literacy rate of 93.91%. Least Literate state in India is Bihar with a literacy rate of only 63.82%

As per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2012, 96.5% of all rural children between the ages of 6-14 were enrolled in school. This is the fourth annual survey to report enrolment above 96%. Another report from 2013 stated that there were 229 million students enrolled in different accredited urban and rural schools of India, from Class I to XII, representing an increase of 2.3 million students over 2002 total enrolment, and a 19% increase in girl's enrolment. While quantitatively India is inching closer to universal education, the quality of its education has been questioned particularly in its government run school system. Some of the reasons for the poor quality include absence of around 25 percent of teacher's every day. States of India have introduced tests and education assessment system to identify and improve such schools. The 2001 statistics also indicated that the total number of 'absolute non-literates' in the country was 304 million.

Rural education

The government continued to view rural education as an agenda that could be relatively free from bureaucratic backlog and general stagnation. However, in some cases lack of financing balanced

the gains made by rural education institutes of India. Some ideas failed to find acceptability among India's poor and investments made by the government sometimes yielded little results. Today, government rural schools remain poorly funded and understaffed. Several foundations, such as the Rural Development Foundation (Hyderabad), actively build high-quality rural schools, but the number of students served is small.

Education in rural areas is valued differently from in an urban setting, with lower rates of completion. An imbalanced sex ratio exists within schools with eighteen percent of males earning a high school diploma compared with only ten percent of females. The estimated number of children who have never attended school in India is near 100 million which reflects the low completion levels.

In this backdrop, the paper examined the trends in women education in Itukalapalli. The last section provides the summary of the findings and conclusions. Though there has been a steady upward trend in both the rural and urban female literacy rates, it is observed that the rural female literacy is increasing much faster than that of urban. This fact is clearly evident from the index numbers, revealing that the disparity between rural and urban literacy rates is narrowing down in recent years.



Case study results

Respondents by Caste

Table1: Distribution of Respondents by Caste

Caste	Frequency	Percent
SC	10	19.2
ST	1	1.9
BC	35	67.3
OC	6	11.5
Total	52	100.0

The study reveals that the rural women of different castes were found in Itukalapalli. In these castes Backward Caste women tops the list with 67.30 per cent, followed by Scheduled caste women with 19.20 percent, other caste women with 11.50 per cent and Scheduled tribe women with 1.90 per cent respectively.

Respondents by Age

Table .2 Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-25	16	30.8
26-35	25	48.1
36-45	11	21.2
Total	52	100.0

As per the study reveals that, large number of SHG beneficiaries hail from 26-45 years age group. It is considered as the important productive age group. To be precise, 48.10 per cent and 21.20 per cent are in the age groups of 26-35 years and 36-45 years respectively. None of the rural women have below 18 years of age. It means that minor girls are not taking economic responsibilities due to their age factor. About 30.80 percent of rural

women were in the age group of 18-25 years. The study reveals that in rural areas the middle age group rural women were actively taking part in economic activities.

Table .3 Respondents by Educational Qualification

Education	Frequency	Percent
Primary levels	21	40.4
High school	5	9.6
Inter	14	26.9
Degree	6	11.5
PG	6	11.5
Total	52	100.0

The data reveals that, among the selected rural women, 40.40 per cent of rural women have completed primary education followed by 9.60 per cent of sample rural women have access to high school level and 26.90 per cent of rural women have intermediate levels of education. About 11.50 per cent of sample rural women respondents entered in to colleges i.e., Degree and P.G. level of education.

Table 4: Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Non-agrllabours	16	30.7
Domestic help	18	34.6
Employee	9	17.3
Business	9	17.3
Total	52	100.0



It is evident from the data show that 30.70 percent of the rural women are depending on Non-agricultural wages followed by 34.60 per cent of respondents have Domestic Help and 17.30 percent of rural women have employees and business related activities in the mandal.

Table.5 Respondents by Importance of education

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Highly important	35	67.3
Important	12	23.1
Indifferent	2	3.8
Less Important	3	5.8
Total	52	100.0

It is evident from the data shows that, 96.20 percent of rural women expressed less to highly important their education to secure a good job. Among them 67.30 percent expressed highly important, 23.10 percent reported important and 5.80 percent reported less important. Indifferent was expressed by 3.80 percent of total selected rural women.

Table. 6: Respondents opinion on inter caste marriage

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Highly approve	10	19.2
Approve	17	32.7
Indifferent	3	5.8
Disapprove	9	17.3
Highly disapprove	13	25.0
Total	52	100.0

The study reveals that, 51.90 percent of rural women expressed approved to highly approve with inter-caste marriage, 42.30 percent of rural women expressed disapprove to highly disapprove with inter-caste marriage and 5.80 percent of rural women expressed in different opinion on inter-caste marriage,

Table 7: Awareness on various facilities given by government

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
DWCRA	13	25.0
Reservation	26	50.0
Scholarship	12	23.1
Hostel facilities	1	1.9
Total	52	100.0

The study reveals that 100 percent of sample rural women expressed awareness of various facilities given to women by the government. Among them 50.00 percent of rural women expressed awareness of reservations, 25.00 per cent of rural women reported to an idea on Self-Help Groups, 23.10 per cent of women reported to scholarships and 1.90 per cent of rural women reported to hostel facilities for their children education.

Table.8: Respondents by status of women

Status of Women	Frequency	Percent
No change	7	13.5
Little change	3	5.8
Moderate	2	3.8
Significant	40	76.90
Change for Worse	0	0.00
Total	52	100.0



The study reveals that 86.50 percent of sample rural women reported some amount of change in their status. Among them 76.90 percent expressed significant change, 3.80 percent reported moderate changes and 5.80 percent reported little change. No change was reported by 13.50 percent of total selected rural women. None of the respondents reported change for worse.

Major Findings:

- Backward Caste women tops the list with 67.30 per cent;
- The study reveals that in rural areas the middle age group rural women are actively taking part in economic activities. (48.1%);
- The data reveals that, among the selected rural women, 40.40 per cent of rural women have completed primary education;
- The data show that 30.70 percent of the rural women are depending on Non-agricultural wages;
- The study reveals that as many as 76.90 percent of the rural women have nuclear families;
- 78.80 percent of the rural women reported that their present education was less than adequate;
- The data reveals that most of the selected rural women (88.50 per cent) had arranged marriage;
- 76.90 percent of sample respondents reported that their parents took their opinion in fixing their marriage;
- The study reveals that, 53.80 percent of sample respondents paid dowry at the time of their marriage and 46.20 per cent of rural women did not to pay dowry at the time of their marriage;
- 65.40 percent of rural women expressed idea about social legislations relating to age at marriage;
- 51.90 percent of rural women highly approved with inter-caste marriage,
- 50.00 percent of rural women respondents highly agreed with marriages outside their caste to improve their social status,
- 63.50 per cent of rural women are availing various facilities given to women by the government;
- Only 50.00 per cent of selected rural women reported satisfaction with the programmes and polices of government;
- 63.50 per cent of selected rural women expressed awareness of women reservations in government and private enterprises;
- 86.50 percent of the respondents (rural women) assumed that lot of significant change in their status.

Conclusion

This paper examined the trends in women education, the investments on education and infrastructural supports in India. The study revealed that there had been significant progress in the performance of women education



revealed from female literacy levels and its change over time. It was also observed that the gaps between rural and urban female literacy rates are narrowing down.

To explore the influence of certain variables of interest such as rural poverty, urbanization and drop-out rate on the educational attainment of women, a multiple regression equation was estimated. It was observed that rural poverty acts as a push factors for women's education rather than as an obstacle to women's education. The significant influence of urbanization on women's education implied that urbanization had been playing a beneficial role in the attainment of women's education in India. At the same time, the drop-out rate had a negative effect on women's education. It revealed that that reduction of girl's drop-out rates is necessary for achieving women's education.

The initiatives of the government through investment and infrastructure in developing education in India were examined. With regard to facilities in schools, it had improved significantly, but a lot more need to be done.

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