

LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND WORK PARTICIPATION OF FEMALES & THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS OF BIRTH CONTROL

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to study the levels of education and work participation of the females of India and Uttar Pradesh and their consciousness of birth control by obtaining the general fertility rate of females in the year 2001. The entire study is based upon the district level secondary data obtained from Census of India, 2001 and the State Planning Institute, Lucknow. From the results it can be visualised that literacy rate of females in India is 45.15 per cent, whereas, in Uttar Pradesh it is only 34.11 per cent. Meaning there by that less than half of the total population of females is literate whether it is state or country. It is clear from the results that general fertility rate decreases with increase in the level of education of females both in the nation as well as in the state. It is also evident from the results that work participation rate of females is low both at national level (25.60 per cent) as well as the state level (16.50 per cent). Apart from this, main workers show lower general fertility rate than the marginal workers both in India as well as in Uttar Pradesh.

Keyword: Levels of Education, Work Participation Rate, Birth Control, Occupational Structure, General Fertility Rate.

INTRODUCTION:

Literacy forms an important demographic element and is a vital measure of human progress towards modernization. As per definition of census of India 2001, a person who can both read and write with understanding in any language is considered, literate. All children below the age of 7 years have been treated as illiterate, however, in the 1961 and 1971 census, children below the age of 5 years were treated as illiterate. The relation between education and work participation has remained a subject of study and research in many fields like Demography, Economics, Sociology, Education and Population Geography. Growth and spread of literacy level, its distribution, causes and historical consequences have been studied in the context of demographic, social and economic situation of Uttar Pradesh (Siddiqui, 1977; Singh, 1979, Nigam, 1980). Most of the studies on educational status have been attempted with references to literacy by sex and residence. (Gosal, 1979, Gupta and Kothari 1990). Some of the studies also deal with such correlates as working population and the results of these have been found to be inversely related to each other (Acharya, 1984; Singh, 1986; Tripathi, 1993). The educational disparity in India is linked with socio-economic conditions (Raza and Aggarwal, 1986; Nuna, 1989; Pcione, 1997). The interstate disparities in educational development in India have also been analysed. (Tilak, 1979), (Redy, 1985), (Zaidi, 1986), (Mehta, 1990) and (Malhotra, 1999). The study of inter-district inequalities in terms of literacy and educational development has been attempted by Saradamoni, (1981) and Dash, (1993) and Dougall, (2000) has studied educational attainment by gender.

Coming to the specificities of women's educational attainment and fertility behavior, selected findings from India and abroad are highlighted here. The Population Council Working Paper on the Primary Education and Fertility Reduction by Jain & Nag, (1985) has taken an analytical exercise to understand how women's education can be endowed as one of the most powerful indicators of fertility decline, both at national and at the regional level. In an econometric analysis of fertility in Delhi metropolis, Gupta has delineated 34 variables, among other factors, women's education and work participation have been suggested as determining the fertility behavior and the choice of family size in the long run, particularly in the age group of 25-29 years.

Vidyanathan, (1989) in his Indian case study of status of women and family planning has suggested that women's education along with an increased age at marriage and women's work participation has the strongest relationship to the adoption of family planning.

But perhaps there is no comparative study available on the cumulative effect of women education and work participation on her consciousness to the birth control in India and the state of Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, an attempt has been made to study the levels of education and work participation of females and their consciousness of birth control in the country as well as in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Levels of Female Education in India and Uttar Pradesh, 2001:

Women account for roughly half the world's population, perform two third of the hours worked and receive one-tenth of the world's income (Momasen, 1991). Though equality for women is guaranteed in constitution yet women (constituting more than 50 per cent of the population) are lagging behind the males as far as levels of educational attainment is concerned. Although free and compulsory education has now been made a fundamental right of all children from the age of 6 to 14 years and in article 45 of the Indian constitution, provision has been made for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years. But these declaration are not sufficient to combat with age old gender biased mind set of male dominated Indian society. The need of the hour, indeed is the change of patriarchal mindset so as to make all such provisions meaningful.

Although education is essential for everyone but in case of women it is particularly significant. Educating a girl child is one of the most effective means to counter gender discrimination and enhance status of women; and literacy of women would surely contribute much more effectively in abolishing gender inequality. Education helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them. Apart from it educated women can recognize the importance of health care of the family. They can help in producing better citizens by educating their children properly. Moreover, educational attainment of women is said to be enhancing the women's earning capabilities, development of taste for modern consumption standards and also their reproductive career of women.

While economic benefits of educating girls are similar to the economic benefits of educating boys, recent findings suggest that the social benefits from investing in female education are far greater than those from investing in male education. Specifically, female education has powerful effects on total fertility rate (and hence on population growth), the infant mortality rate, the female disadvantage in child survival, and on child health and nutrition. Kingdon, G. G. (1997). Therefore, it is important to study the condition of female education in India. As India is a country of great diversity of various dimensions and with respect to education too, one finds great variation in different states. Hence it would be interesting to analyse the comparative disparities between India and the most populous state of the Country i.e., Uttar Pradesh. In such a highly populous state like Uttar

Pradesh, (where human resource is so massive) these low figures of female literacy the status of women education at secondary and higher level puts in the state of deep concern. How can we think of development with such a poor condition of female education? No body can deny the fact that education has a strong bond with health, family care, well being and employment of children and youth and it is education of mother which has greater role to play.

Table 1 Levels of Female Education in India and Uttar Pradesh, 2001

| Levels of Female Education | | | | | Female Population Groups |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Literates | Primary literate | Secondary literate | Graduate and above | Illiterates | |
| 45.15 | 32.47 | 8.49 | 2.44 | 54.85 | Total, India |
| 38.33 | 30.53 | 5.33 | 0.73 | 61.67 | Rural, India |
| 63.32 | 37.61 | 16.89 | 7.00 | 36.68 | Urban, India |
| 34.11 | 25.17 | 5.51 | 1.76 | 65.89 | Total, Uttar Pradesh |
| 29.47 | 23.87 | 3.47 | 0.48 | 70.53 | Rural, Uttar Pradesh |
| 52.06 | 30.17 | 13.42 | 6.70 | 47.94 | Urban, Uttar Pradesh |

Source: Computed by Author from Census of India,2001 Tab F 11

From the table 1 it is clear that literacy rate of females in India is 45.15 per cent, whereas, in Uttar Pradesh it is only 34.11 per cent. Meaning there by that less than half of the total population of females is literate whether it is state or country. While comparing the rural-urban data, it is seen that there is a large gap (24.99 per cent) of literacy between rural and urban female population of India. However, this gap is only 22.59 per cent in case of Uttar Pradesh. Moving deep in this statistical analysis it is found that a greater majority of literates in India and in Uttar Pradesh i.e., 32.47 per cent and 25.17 per cent are the primary literates. Secondary female literates are only 8.49 per cent in India and 5.51 per cent in Uttar Pradesh with only negligible per cent of females with higher qualification in the country (2.44 per cent) and (1.76 per cent) in the state.

Table 2: General Fertility Rates of Female Population With Different Levels of Education in India and Uttar Pradesh, 2001

| General Fertility Rates | | | | | Population Groups |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Total Female Population | Illiterate Female Population | Female Primary Literates | Female Secondary Literates | Females With Higher Education | |
| 61.70 | 64.15 | 61.99 | 56.25 | 54.85 | Total, India |
| 68.35 | 67.24 | 69.51 | 68.04 | 78.18 | Rural, India |
| 45.51 | 48.97 | 44.23 | 42.85 | 48.35 | Urban, India |
| 76.44 | 82.57 | 72.25 | 59.78 | 54.68 | Total, Uttar Pradesh |
| 83.18 | 85.59 | 78.88 | 72.21 | 83.42 | Rural, Uttar Pradesh |
| 52.38 | 63.94 | 51.43 | 40.93 | 46.70 | Urban, Uttar Pradesh |

Source: Computed by Author from Census of India,2001 Tab F 11

It can be visualized from the table 2 that general fertility of total female population of India is 61.70 per cent. However, its rural-urban figures for the country are 68.35 per cent and 45.51 per cent respectively and 83.18 per cent and 52.38 per cent for the female population of Uttar Pradesh. The trajectory of the general fertility rate of female population is such that it moves down step by step with an increase in the levels of education of the female in all the cases as considered above.

It is evident from the table 3 that work participation rate of females is low both at national level (25.60 per cent) as well as the state level (16.50 per cent). Similar results are observed by Ahmad and Nayak, 1984. This figure is discouraging in its urban counterpart. While going into finer details of workers it is observed that percentage of marginal workers is same at both national level (10.95 per cent) and the state level (10.18 per cent). However, main workers are 14.65 per cent in India, whereas, this figure is only 6.32 per cent in case of Uttar Pradesh. When these figures are seen residence wise, then it is noticed that a large gap is seen between the main and marginal female worker participation rate of rural-urban population of the state and the nation.

Table 3: Occupational Structure of Female Workers in India and Uttar Pradesh, 2001

| Category of Female Workers | | | | | | | Female Population Groups |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Per cent Of Female Workers | | | | | | Non Workers | |
| Main Workers | | | | | Marginal Workers | | |
| Total Main Workers | Cultivators | Agricultural Labourers | Manual Workers | Non Manual Workers | | | |
| 14.65 | 5.11 | 4.51 | 3.5 | 1.53 | 10.95 | 74.4 | Total, India |
| 16.67 | 6.9 | 5.93 | 3.05 | 0.74 | 14.14 | 69.23 | Rural, India |
| 9.40 | 0.34 | 0.73 | 4.7 | 3.63 | 2.46 | 88.14 | Urban, India |
| 6.32 | 2.74 | 1.45 | 1.63 | 0.51 | 10.18 | 83.5 | Total, Uttar Pradesh |
| 7.78 | 3.39 | 1.78 | 1.39 | 0.23 | 12.22 | 80.98 | Rural, Uttar Pradesh |
| 4.50 | 0.2 | 0.18 | 2.52 | 1.6 | 2.27 | 93.23 | Urban, Uttar Pradesh |

Source: Computed by Author from Census of India, 2001, Tab F 12

These gaps are 11.68 per cent in case of India and 9.15 per cent in case of Uttar Pradesh. Among the main workers, cultivators and agricultural labourer are more in rural female population group and other main workers are more in urban female population group. This trend is common for both nation and the state.

Table 4 General Fertility Rates of Female Workers in India and Uttar Pradesh, 2001

| General Fertility Rates | | | | | | | Female Population Group |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Total Main Workers | Cultivators | Agricultural Labourers | Manual Workers | Non Manual Workers | Marginal Workers | Non Workers | |
| 63 | 74 | 68 | 52 | 35 | 81 | 56 | Total, India |
| 69 | 75 | 69 | 63 | 47 | 83 | 62 | Rural, India |
| 33 | 50 | 43 | 35 | 28 | 51 | 47 | Urban, India |
| 79 | 77 | 97 | 81 | 37 | 96 | 72 | Total, Uttar Pradesh |
| 86 | 77 | 98 | 96 | 57 | 98 | 78 | Rural, Uttar Pradesh |
| 42 | 52 | 72 | 49 | 26 | 70 | 52 | Urban, Uttar Pradesh |

Source: Computed by Author from Census of India, 2001, Tab F 12

It is clear from the above table that marginal workers are showing higher fertility rate and it is followed by main workers and then non workers in case of rural population of both the country and the state. However, general fertility rate of urban population group of marginal workers is followed by non workers and than main workers. Here in the table lower general fertility rate among the female main workers than the female marginal workers suggest that main workers being involved in the work through out the year get lesser time to look after their children and thus showing lower birth rate and in turn showing lower general fertility rate than the female marginal workers who are partially engaged in the economic struggle. It is also clear from the table that females involved in agricultural activities are showing higher fertility rate than the females involved in other economic activities in all the population groups.

Conclusions:

It is evident from the table 1 that less than half of the total population of the females in India as well as in the state is literate. Majority of literates in India and in Uttar Pradesh are only primary literates. The general fertility rate shows a decreasing trend with increase in the levels of education of females in all the considered group of population. It is also evident from the results that work participation rate of females is low both at national level as well as the state level. Apart from it main workers show lower general fertility rate than the marginal workers both in India as well as in Uttar Pradesh. Thus it can be safely said that females with better education and better working status are showing lower general fertility rates or in other words they are more conscious to the birth control.

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