

## Status of Education in India: Gender Gap and Trend from 1951

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### Abstract

*The state of education determines a nation's socio-economic prosperity and establishes the foundation for its future. Education plays a vital role in the development of countries worldwide. It has twofold effect. The first is to develop the person and the second is to play a significant role in fostering a country. The present paper tries to analyze the educational status in India and find the gender-wise trend in literacy rate in India since 1951. It has also an attempt to capture gender discrimination in education in India. Gender inequality in education remains a persistent issue in Indian society, particularly for girls from rural areas and disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. This paper examines gender discrimination in education in India by utilizing secondary data from sources such as the census, various rounds of the Women and Men in India report, and the World Population Review, among others. Literacy rates serve as a key indicator of a country's educational status. So, literacy rate is used as an indicator of education. The paper finds that gender discrimination in education persists in India since 1951 and gradually reducing over the period of time.*

**Keywords:** Education, gender, discrimination, literacy rate, trend

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### Introduction

Education is a never-ending learning process that shapes and reshapes an individual to develop beneficial qualities (Nayeem, 2016). Education is not only basic human right but also a stepping stone to the enjoyment of other rights and a driver of sustainable development (MoSPI, 2023). Education imparts skills and competencies that are central to human development and enhanced quality of life, bringing wide-ranging benefits to both individuals and societies (MoSPI, 2023). Education has long been acknowledged as a fundamental right, with profound implications

for human development and the advancement of society (MoSPI, Women and Men in India 2023, 2023). The right to education is proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various international covenants (MoSPI, 2023). However, the education provided by the teachers in schools is an institutionalized process that caters to the students (Nayeem, 2016). Education is the most important output for the development of an individual, society and nation (Thanavathi & Devaraj, 2019). The term 'Education' comes from Latin word 'educare' or 'educere'. The

former signifies ‘to bring up’, ‘to rear’ and later means ‘to lead out’ (Thanavathi & Devaraj, 2019). Education is the process through which a person is trained for the society in which he lives and at the same time learn to realize his individual potential (Thanavathi & Devaraj, 2019). The process lasts throughout life and emphasizes individual capacity and development (Thanavathi & Devaraj, 2019).

Gender inequality in education is a persistent problem in Indian society, especially for girls from rural areas and lower socioeconomic backgrounds (White, Ruther, & Kahn, 2015). During the past several decades, India has achieved success in moving toward universal school enrollment and in enacting policies to address educational inequalities such as those based on gender (White, Ruther, & Kahn, 2015). However, education gaps still exist in India (White, Ruther, & Kahn, 2015). Though gender discrimination is prevailing in many spheres in India but we will discuss mainly inequality in education.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” – **Nelson Mandela** (Mandela, 1990).

In the above statement, the former president of South Africa highlights the significance of education in human life. Education is very essential in every sphere of life of human being.

For growth and development of the society, educating its citizens is primary requirement (Annabi, Harvey, & Lan, 2007). A society can flourish only when education is being provided to all without any kind of discrimination. This statement means that for a society to truly thrive and progress, it is crucial to guarantee that everyone, irrespective of their background, has equal access to quality education, without facing any discrimination based on factors like race, gender, caste, or socioeconomic status; only then can a society reach its full potential (htt). The following quotations outline the significance of education –

“Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another” – **G.K. Chesterton**

Education has cumulative effect and can be transferred within generation and between the generations. It is the asset which cannot be stolen.

“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you” – **B. B. King**

By educating people, we convert them into human resources. Such human resources facilitate economic growth and development of a country.

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest” – **Benjamin Franklin**

Literacy is a crucial factor in enhancing human capital, as it helps eliminate inequalities in nearly every aspect of society (Kumar, Kumar, & Rani, 2016). It is the essential building block and a crucial element for the development of a country (Kumar, Kumar, & Rani, 2016). Literacy can be defined as a person aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language (MoSPI, 2023). A person who can read but cannot write is considered illiterate (MoSPI, 2023). It is not necessary that to be treated as literate, a person should have received any formal education or passed any minimum educational standard (MoSPI, 2023). Literacy can also be acquired through adult education classes or other non-formal educational systems (MoSPI, 2023). People who are blind and can read in Braille were also treated as literates (MoSPI, 2023). All children of age 6 years or less were treated as illiterate by definition, irrespective of their status of school attendance and the capability to read and write (MoSPI, 2023). The importance of education can be explicitly seen in many indices made for measuring human development like Human Development Index (HDI), Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) (Ryadi & Sincihu, 2013), and Sustainable Development Goals etc. Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seeks

to provide inclusive and equitable quality education while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (UN, 2015; Khohliso, Bwire, Ngugi, Miima, & Babusa, 2024). This goal helps to reduce disparities and inequalities in education, addressing both access and quality. It recognizes the need to provide quality education for all, and most especially vulnerable populations, including poor children, children living in rural areas, persons with disabilities, indigenous people and refugee children (UN, 2015). Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations had quoted, "Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential." (Kumar, Kumar, & Rani, 2016; Louisville).

### Objective of the Study:

Based on the reviewed literature and the scope of the study, the following key objectives have been outlined-

To analyse status of education in India and it's states.

To investigate gender-wise status of education among the states of India.

To capture gender discrimination in education in India.

To analyze the trends in male and female literacy rates, as well as the gender gap in literacy rates in India.

### Data Source and Methodology:

The paper tries to explore educational status in India and gender discrimination in education attainment. The paper also aims to examine gender discrimination in education across the states of India (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). To achieve the objectives of this paper, secondary data has been utilized. The data has been collected from various sources, including different rounds of the (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023) Census of India from 1951 to 2011, Women and Men in India report 2016, and 2023, world population review, other sources,

### Result and Discussion:

Education is one of the significant factors instrumental to the development of a country (Solanki, 2019; Mulla & Pujar, 2019). It

websites, and so on have also been used. To obtain accurate results, relevant statistical tools and techniques, such as tabulation, chart, and trend analysis etc. have been used on these data which have collected from various sources (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). The standard trend line equation is-

$$Y = a + bx$$

Where y is dependent variable, x is independent variable showing time periods, a&b are constants (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023), b = slope of trend line or rate of change in dependent variable, and a = y- intercept. Education is a vital factor and equally important for both men and women (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). However, the current situation contradicts this notion, highlighting gender discrimination in various areas, including education (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). While there are several indicators to assess gender discrimination in education, due to certain limitations and to meet the objectives of this paper, only the literacy rate has been considered (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). Literacy rates represent the most telling indicator of a country's educational status (Chowdhury, 1995).

should be transformed to the needs of the time and changing scenario of the world (Solanki, 2019; Mulla & Pujar, 2019). It provides an opportunity to critically reflect upon the social,

economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity (Solanki, 2019). Literacy levels and educational attainment are crucial indicators of development in a developing country like India, as they serve as key measures of progress (MoSPI, 2015). These factors reflect the quality of life, awareness, and the skill levels of individuals within society (MoSPI, 2015). Better literacy and educational level definitely have a positive impact on the health parameters (MoSPI, 2015).

Gender disparity is a pervasive issue in India, affecting various sectors but most notably education and health (Singh S. , 2022). Despite significant economic progress and social reforms, the inequalities between men and women remain deeply entrenched (Singh S. , 2022). Although education is very important for all the people, but unfortunately, gender disparity in education exists in India (Tripathi & Gupta, A Study of Gender Discrimination in Health in Uttar Pradesh, 2023; Singh, Singh, & Komaraiah, 2023). Indian women are facing challenges of discrimination in many spheres of their lives (Tripathi & Gupta, A Study of Gender Discrimination in Health in Uttar Pradesh, 2023). Education is one of them. Not only in India but also the world's average shows the gender gap in education. Census

2011 reveals the fact that male literacy rate in India is 80.9% and female literacy rate is 64.6% while overall literacy rate in India is 73% (MoSPI, 2023). It shows that gender gap in literacy rate in India stands at 16.3%. In order to discuss about world literacy rate i.e., adult literacy rate, we see that over all literacy rate of the world is almost 86.3% (WPR, 2024). World literacy is defined as the ability of individuals aged 15 and above to read and write. The adult literacy rate, as defined by UNESCO, is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on his/her everyday life (Chandra, 2019). By the above criterion, male aged 15 and above have a literacy rate of 90% while female aged 15 and above have a literacy rate of 82.7%. The gender gap in literacy is 7.3% which is less than that of India (WPR, 2024). The overall literacy rate in developed nations is 99.2%. It is nearly complete literacy rate in such nations (WPR, 2024). The majority of illiterate adults reside in South Asia, West Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa (WPR, 2024). Out of all illiterate adult in the world, nearly two - third are female (WPR, 2024). This shows the very huge gender gap in education in all over the world (Mohanty, 2003). It is said that if a man is educated, only one man

educated but if a woman is educated, our society is educated (Karmakar & Mete, 2019). This well-known African Proverb has long been motivating people around the world to strive for education for all (Kadri, 2008). Thus, we can say that educating woman is very essential for our society. But unfortunately, the gender gap is prevailing in our society (Singh S. , 2022). Gender inequality in education is a persistent problem in Indian society, especially for girls from rural areas and lower. It is evident in the following table-

socioeconomic backgrounds (White, Ruther, & Kahn, 2015). In recent decades, India has made significant progress in achieving universal school enrollment and implementing policies aimed at addressing educational inequalities, including those related to gender (White, Ruther, & Kahn, 2015). However, education gaps still exist (White, Ruther, & Kahn, 2015). There is gender gap in our country and states too. Almost all Indian states show gender gap in literacy (Mohanty, 2003).

**Table 1: State wise literacy rate in India**

Sr. No.	State	Literacy rate (%)			Gender Gap in Education	Per capita Income (in Rs.) *
		Total	Male	Female		
1	India	73	80.9	64.6	16.3	63462
2	Kerala	94.0	96.1	92.1	4	97912
3	Lakshadweep	91.8	95.6	89.3	6.3	NA
4	Mizoram	91.3	93.3	89.3	4	57654
<b>5</b>	<b>Goa</b>	88.7	92.6	84.7	7.9	<b>259444</b>
6	Tripura	87.2	91.5	82.7	8.8	47155
7	Daman & Diu	87.1	91.5	79.5	12	NA
8	Puducherry	85.8	91.3	80.7	10.6	119649
9	Chandigarh	86.0	90.0	81.2	8.8	158967
10	Delhi	86.2	90.9	80.8	10.1	185001
11	Andaman & Nicobar	86.6	90.3	82.4	7.9	88177
12	Himanchal Pradesh	82.8	89.5	75.9	13.6	87721
13	Maharashtra	82.03	88.4	75.9	12.5	99597
14	Sikkim	81.4	86.6	75.6	11	158667
15	Tamil Nadu	80.1	86.8	73.4	13.4	93112

16	Nagaland	79.6	82.8	76.1	6.7	53010
17	Manipur	79.2	86.1	72.4	13.7	39762
18	Uttarakhand	78.8	87.4	70.0	17.4	100305
19	Gujrat	78.0	85.8	69.7	16.1	87481
20	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	76.2	85.2	64.3	20.9	NA
21	West Bengal	76.3	81.7	70.5	11.2	51543
22	Punjab	75.8	80.4	70.7	9.7	85577
23	Haryana	75.6	84.1	65.9	18.2	106085
24	Karnataka	75.4	82.5	68.1	14.4	90263
25	Meghalaya	74.4	76.0	72.9	<b>3.1</b>	60013
26	Odisha	72.9	81.6	64.0	17.6	48499
27	Assam	72.2	77.8	66.3	11.5	41142
28	Chhattisgarh	70.3	80.3	60.2	20.1	55177
29	Madhya Pradesh	69.3	78.7	59.2	19.5	38497
30	Uttar Pradesh	67.7	77.3	57.2	20.1	32002
31	Jammu & Kashmir	67.2	76.8	56.4	20.4	53173
32	Andhra Pradesh	67.0	74.9	59.1	15.8	69000
33	Jharkhand	66.4	76.8	55.4	21.4	41254
34	Rajasthan	66.1	79.2	52.1	<b>27.1</b>	<b>57192</b>
35	Arunachal Pradesh	65.4	72.6	57.7	14.9	73068
36	Bihar	61.8	71.2	51.5	19.7	<b>21750</b>

**Source:** Census of India 2011

*\*per capita income data is taken from economic survey statistical appendix 2011-12.*

While the country has made significant progress in improving literacy over the years, it continues to be home to 313 million illiterate people; 59 percent of them are women (Chandra, 2019). The table above displays the

literacy rates across Indian states (Karmakar & Debbarma, 2018). It is evident that all states are grappling with the challenge of a gender gap in both education and literacy rates. The highest literacy rate amongst all Indian states

is of Kerala. However, gender discrimination in education is also prevalent, as evidenced by the 4% gender gap in literacy rates (Mohanty, 2003). Delhi, the capital city of India, is also in the same row (Kundu, Pandey, & Sharma, 2019). The gender gap in the literacy rate in Delhi stands at 10.1%. This highlights the presence of gender disparity in literacy even in the state that houses the capital city of India, a major metropolitan area. The table above indicates that 11 states and union territories, out of the 35 in India, have a gender gap in literacy rates greater than the national average of 16.3%. It means gender discrimination prevailing in the above states is in severe condition. The above table also depicts that there are 24 states and union territories out of

There exists significant positive relationship between PCI (per capita income) and literacy rate (Rahman, 2013). The above table shows Per Capita Income of India by state in year 2011. The table shows that per capita income of India was Rs 63462. It is very clear that the state with the highest per capita income in India is Goa i.e., Rs 259444 and per capita income of Bihar is lowest amongst all Indian states i.e., Rs. 21750. After reviewing the above table, the fact is revealed that the states with the highest gender gap in literacy rate and the state with the

35 states and union territories (Shukla & Mishra, 2014) have The gender gap in literacy rates exists in double digits. It shows that societies are not doing best in reducing gender discrimination prevailing in the societies. Only 11 states and union territories have single digit gender gap in literacy rate in which only 3 states have gender gap in literacy bellow 5. These states are Meghalaya, having lowest gender gap in literacy rates across all states and UTs, 3.1% Kerala and Mizoram both having literacy rate of 4%. From the above mentioned three states Mizoram and Meghalaya are hilly states and their population is very low. Thus, only one state i.e., Kerala has gender gap in literacy rate less than 5.

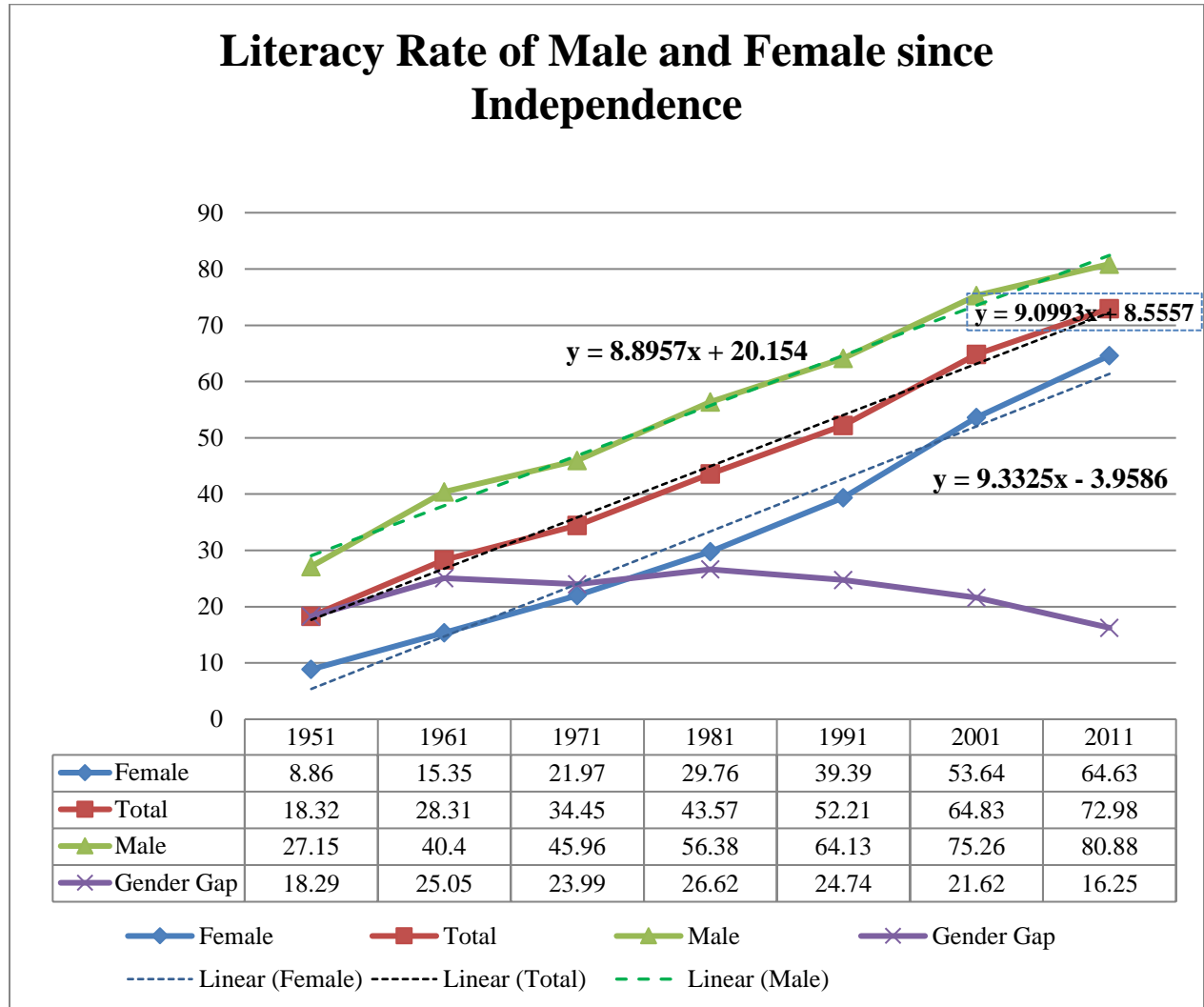
lowest per capita income are different. Per capita income of Bihar is lowest while gender gap in literacy rate of Rajasthan is highest amongst all the Indian states (Karmakar & Debbarma, 2018). The above table shows that only 18 state and UTs out of 35 are above or equal to national level of per capita income. There are 7 states & UTs which per capita income (PCI) is greater than Rs 1 lakh. Out of these 7 states and UTs 5 states and UTs show double digit disparity in literacy rates between genders. This fact shows that only PCI is not



the determinant of women education. PCI of Haryana is Rs 106085 but gender gap in literacy rate is 18.2%. It shows that there are some other social factors affecting women education. Historically, educational opportunities for women have been limited due to socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, and institutional shortcomings (Mir & Swaroopa, 2024). Traditional gender roles, early marriage, and caste-based discrimination continue to restrict girls' access to education, especially in rural and marginalized communities (Mir & Swaroopa, 2024). Institutional and structural barriers, such as inadequate infrastructure, poor quality of education, and safety concerns, also play a crucial role in hindering educational progress (Mir & Swaroopa, 2024). Legal and policy challenges, including inconsistent implementation of educational policies and inadequate enforcement of laws related to child marriage and compulsory education, contribute to the persistence of these barriers (Mir & Swaroopa, 2024). The above table reveals the fact that all states having PCI greater than that of national level have disparity in literacy rates between genders is lower than that of national level except 3 states and UTs i.e., Uttarakhand, Haryana and Dadra & Nagar Haveli (Biswas &

Banu, 2021). These three states and UTs having PCI above the national level show gender gap in literacy above the national level. 14 states and UTs out of 35 states and UTs have PCI less than national level. 8 states & UTs having PCI lower than that of national level have Gender disparity in literacy rate more than national level. This means that more than half of these states and UTs have a gender gap in literacy rates higher than the national average. In other words, a higher per capita income (PCI) than the national average is almost negatively correlated with the gender gap in literacy rates compared to the national level (Kapur, 2015). In states with high per capita income, gender inequality tends to be lower, while in states with low per capita income, gender inequality is higher. Thus, there is negative relationship between per capita income (PCI) and gender inequality (Arora, 2012). An interesting fact is pointed out from the above table that the states and UTs having highest and lowest gender gap in literacy rate have PCI lower than that of national level. It means literacy rate is affected by many socio-economic factors including PCI. Now we are going to discuss trend of literacy rate since independence.

**Chart 1: Gender-wise literacy rate in India since 1951**



**Source of Data:** Women men in India 2016 Report

\*Chart is prepared by the author himself

Notes: 1. Literacy rates for 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged 5 years and above whereas literacy rates for 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 relate to the population aged 7 years and above.

2. The 1981 literacy rates exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted.

3. The 1991 literacy rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir where the 1991 Census could not be conducted due to disturbed conditions.

*4. The 2001 literacy rates exclude Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul Sub-divisions of Senapat district of Manipur.*

From the above chart it is revealed that literacy rate of the nation is increased from 18.32% in 1951 to almost 73% in 2011 (Negi, Sharma, & Chanjta, 2023). While the country has made significant progress in improving literacy over the years, it continues to be home to 313 million illiterate people; 59 percent of them are women (Chandra, 2019). It means number of literate people in India is increasing continuously since 1951 and so far. Literacy rate of India is continuously increasing since 1951 onwards. Literacy rate of India has been increasing continuously since independence and so far. The equation for trend line of literacy rate in India i.e. illustrated in the chart 1 is given below-

$$y = 9.0993x + 8.5557$$

The above trend line equation of overall literacy rate in India shows positive and increasing trend over the period of time (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). The slope of trend line shows rate of change in dependent variable (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023) w.r.t. (with respect to) dependent variable. It has positive slope with the magnitude of 9.0993. It portrays that the literacy rate in India is growing at a rate of 9.0993% per decade over the period of 1951 to

2011. It reflects improved educational condition in the country which helped to reduce illiteracy and increase literacy rate in the country. It is a good indication at educational front in India which will ultimately improve educational status and development of India (Thanavathi & Devaraj, 2019).

Female literacy rate is also increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 64.63% in 2011 (Roy, 2025). Growth in female literacy rate is continuous since 1951 till date (Roy, 2025). It means literate female population is increasing in India since 1951. We can also find the fact that male literacy rate is also increased from 27.15% in 1951 to almost 80.9% in 2011 (Roy, 2025). It denotes that share of male literate population in total population is increasing. The chart shows continuous increasing trend of male-literacy rate in India since 1951. The equation of trend line for male literacy rate in India i.e. illustrated in the chart 1 - is given below-

$$y = 8.8957x + 20.154$$

The above trend line equation of male literacy rate has positive slope with the magnitude of 8.8957. It indicates that literacy rate of is growing with the rate of 8.8957% per decade over the period of 1951 to 2011. It reflects

improved educational environment in India for male. The chart also depicts the continuous increasing trend in female literacy rate, total literacy rate and male literacy rate in India since 1951 and so far (Katiyar, 2016). The trend line equation for female literacy rate i.e. illustrated in the chart-1 is given below-

$$y = 9.3325x - 3.9586$$

The above trend line equation of female literacy rate has positive slope with the magnitude of 9.3325. It discloses the fact that the female-literacy rate is rising at a rate of 9.3325% per decade over the period of 1951 to 2011. After analysing the trend line equation for male and female in India, it is found that slope of trend line for female is greater than that of male in India. It indicates that literacy rate of female is increasing more rapidly than that of male over the period of 1951 to 2011 in India (MoSPI, 2022). It is a good symptom for female

The above chart reveals the pattern of the gender gap in literacy rates in India. It shows irregular declining pattern of gender discrimination in literacy rate. The above chart shows that gap in literacy rate between men and women were 18.269% in the year 1951. It shows literacy rate of men was greater than that of women by 18.29% in the year 1951 (Midya & Islam, 2022). The chart reflects that

education and reducing gender gap in education in India. The chart indicates that gender discrimination in education persists in India. We can see that gender gap in literacy was not continuous since 1951 to 1981. In 1950s decadal gender gap in literacy was 18.29% which increased in next decade and reach at 25.05% in 1961. Further it was reduced to 23.99% in next decade i.e., 1971. In next decade, it was again increased to 26.62% in 1981. But after that, it is showing decreasing trend so far. The gender gap in literacy was 24.74%, 21.62%, and 16.25% in 1991, 2001, and 2011, respectively (Mohanty, 2003). The declining trend in the gender gap in literacy is a positive sign for India and a hopeful indicator of progress towards gender parity in literacy (Mohanty, 2003). The following chart illustrates this trend in the gender discrimination in literacy rates -

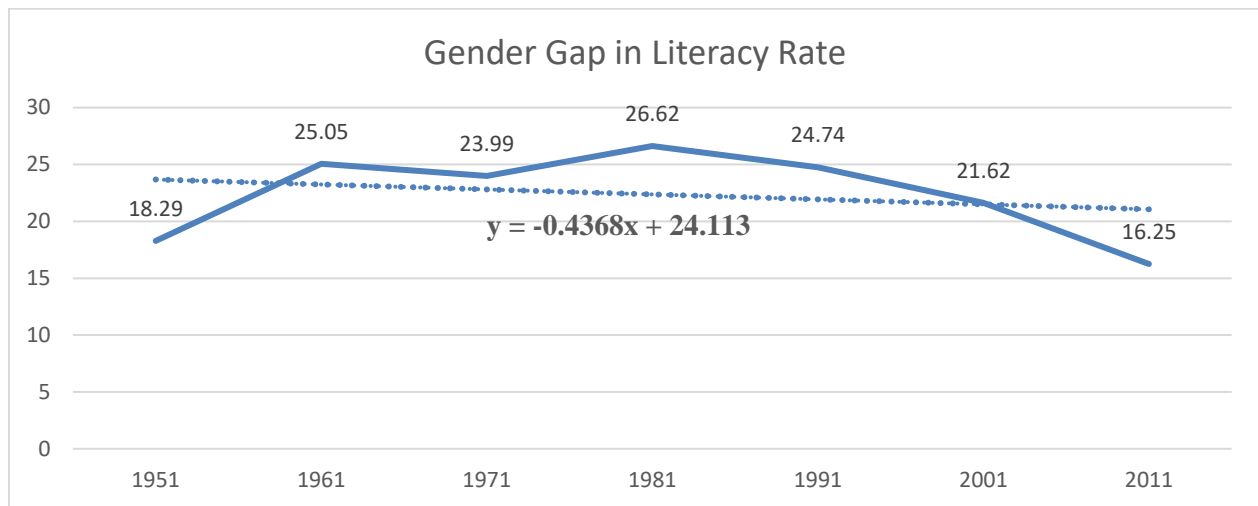
the gender gap in literacy rates was at its highest in 1981. It denotes that the male literacy rate exceeded the female literacy rate by 26.62%. in the year 1981. After 1980s gender gap in literacy rate was started to decline continuously. It was a good indication regarding women education and gender discrimination front in India.

Chart 1 clearly shows that both male and female literacy rates have increased over time. The chart above indicates a decreasing trend in the gender gap in literacy rates in India. The

standard equation for trend line of gender gap in literacy rate in India is given below (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023) -

$$Y = a + bx$$

**Chart 2:** Trends in the Gender Gap in Literacy in India



Source: self-created chart by scholar

In this equation, y is the dependent variable representing the gender gap in literacy rates in India (Mohanty, 2003) while x is the independent variable representing time periods. The constants a and b are included, where b signifies the rate of change in the gender gap in literacy rates, and a represents the y-intercept. The chart illustrates a negative slope in the trend line of the gender gap in literacy rates in India over time (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). The slope of the trend line reflects the growth rate of the dependent variable across the given period (Tripathi &

Gupta, 2023). In the current study, the slope of the trend line represents the growth rate of the gender gap in literacy rates in India over time (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). The trend line equation for the gender gap in literacy rates, as shown in Chart 2, is:

$$y = -0.4368x + 24.113$$

The equation shows that the slope of trend line is -0.4368 which indicates that gender gap in literacy rate is decreasing with the rate of 0.4368% per decade over the period of time (Tripathi & Gupta, 2023). The declining trend in the gender gap in literacy rates is a positive

sign for women's educational attainment. Gender disparity has long been a significant challenge in India's efforts to achieve the goal of universal elementary education. In order to overcome the problems faced by girls, several measures have been initiated across the country (Bandyopadhyay & Subrahmanian, 2008). The Constitution of India enshrined the right to education, and various policies and programs were introduced to promote gender equality in education (Mir & Swaroopa, 2024). Initiatives such as the National Policy on Education (1968), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)<sup>1</sup>, the National Education Policy (1986), and the more recent Right to Education Act (2009)<sup>2</sup> and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao aimed to improve access to education for all, including women (Mir & Swaroopa, 2024). These initiatives have been resulted in reducing the gender gap in literacy rates in India from 1951 to 2011.

### **Conclusion and Policy Recommendation:**

Education and health are considered twin merit goods, essential for both individuals and the nation. This study has analyzed the state of education in India and examined the gender

gap in education since 1951. The findings show a positive and increasing trend in the literacy rates of both males and females in India between 1951 and 2011. The study also found a positive correlation between literacy rates and per capita income among Indian states. However, it revealed that literacy rates are not solely influenced by monetary factors, as other social factors also impact per capita income across Indian states. Additionally, the study highlighted a negative and declining trend in the gender gap in literacy rates over time. Although the gender gap has significantly decreased, it remains in double digits, which calls for greater attention from both the government and society. To improve the educational status and reduce the gender gap in education, the following measures should be implemented:

Literacy rate of India has increased significantly since independence but it is still much lower than global level. So, Government should try to increase it by implementing its policies properly.

Since per capita income and literacy rate are positively correlated, so Government should

<sup>1</sup> The SSA is a flagship program aimed at universalizing elementary education. It includes provisions for girls' education and efforts to address gender disparities in education, focusing on both enrollment and retention (Mir & Swaroopa, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> The RTE Act guarantees free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 years. The Act aims to improve enrollment rates and ensure quality education, but challenges in implementation and enforcement persist.

try to increase PCI of India so that literacy rate can be increased up to the mark.

It is clear from this study that gender gap in education in the country is not only depend on PCI but also on various socio-cultural practice. So, Government and society should work with

coordination to eradicate social evil and mal-practices of society so that gender gap in education can be reduced in the country.

Social awareness programmes should be operated in the country to reduce gender discrimination in literacy rate in the country.

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