

# Education in the District of Purulia: A study on Literacy Among the Female

**Nabanita Dutta**

Principal, Santaldih College, Purulia, West Bengal

## Abstract

Education is the mirror of the society and is the seeds as well as future flower of the socio-economic development which is contributed to the sustainable growth of the country in lifelong process. It transforms human beings from ignorance to enlightenment, from shades of social backwardness to light of social amelioration and a nation from underdevelopment to faster social and economic development. Education is a dynamic process that's starts from the age of 3 years. A child grown up by parents and with other siblings surrounded in the society. Education, economic conditions, physical and social infrastructure play an important role in rural development.

## Introduction

Education is the mirror of the society and is the seeds as well as future flower of the socio-economic development which is contributed to the sustainable growth of the country in lifelong process. It transforms human beings from ignorance to enlightenment, from shades of social backwardness to light of social amelioration and a nation from underdevelopment to faster social and economic development. Education is a dynamic process that's starts from the age of 3 years. A child grown up by parents and with other siblings surrounded in the society. Education, economic conditions, physical and social infrastructure play an important role in rural development. Rural livelihood is the major role player for basic education; to educate rural people basic need of the society is good communication, basic school, as well as basic infrastructure for socio-economic development.

By rural development we mean the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural Purulia, a district of West Bengal in India. Purulia is one of the under developed district situated in the west of the state of West Bengal which is surrounded by the famous industrial area, such as Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Bokaro, Ranchi and Asansol. While surrounding regions of the district is developing so fast, the steps of Purulia is growing slow but not steady and in planned manner. Many more villages have not good communication, undulated road, distant school and college, lack of opportunities of vocational and Value based practical hand to hand training which is belongs to lifelong education for youth. Therefore literacy and education are the key variables for economic development especially for rural areas. In this paper we focused on the female education. If educated a women we can educated whole family, society as well as country too. Because a child very much attached to the mother at least up to the age of 13 years when a child gathered basic ethical and behavior education from an educated mother; if mother is illiterate, then its direct negative impact shown her children and family. Literate female had great impact on the rural health parameters, high productivity, higher income, freedom of women, increased participations of the community life.

### **Education for Women till Independence**

In ancient India, women were highly educated and perfect scholars of the Vedas. This has been very clearly mentioned in Shatpatha Brahman. Gargi was a scholarly lady and so was Maitreyi who could easily speak in the assembly of one thousand scholars who were well versed in Vedas. All the illustrations above very clearly indicate that women, in the ancient times were educated and well versed in old Vedas. One could also observe that there were women scholars who remained unmarried for long time devoted themselves to higher studies. There were also eight learned women who composed Mantras for the Vedas.

During the period 200 B.C. to 1200 A.D. women education received great setback due to the deterioration of the studies of women and the lowering of the marriage age. The girls gradually lost privilege of Upanayana, the Vedic initiation and were not considered fit to recite Vedic mantras or perform Vedic sacrifices. However, rich girls from aristocratic and royal families continued to receive a fairly good education. Besides, the study of Sanskrit and Prakrit, they could learn domestic arts, fine arts like music, painting etc. Educated ladies in cultured families contributed to the enrichment of the literature.

During the period 1200-1800 A.D. percentage of literacy among women went down very rapidly especially during the Muslim rule. Society as a whole became prejudiced towards female education. The pardah system stood in the way of girls beyond a certain age being sent to schools, though, very young girls had some schooling wherever possible. Daughters of some Rajput Chiefs and some Bengali Zamindars were able to read and write. Some British people like David Hare and D. W. Bethune did considerable progress for the education of the girls.

During the period 1800-1947 A.D. impressed by work done by missionaries and English men, several great Bengalis supported the opening of girl's schools and breaking down the popular resistances against women education. Among them, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar played a very important role. Bethune School in 1849 by D. W. Bethune was first started girl's school in Calcutta and it was the pioneer of the women education in Bengal Presidency. First women to get the degrees of an Indian University were two students Kadambari Basu and Bidhumukhi Basu of Bethune's School, now a college, who graduated themselves from the Calcutta University in 1882A.D. One significant development during this period was the starting of a career in medicine for women. There were 76 women in medical colleges and 166 in medical school in India during of 20th century. Lady Dufferin Fund was created for the medical education.

The above analysis indicates the brief history of the Empowerment of Women especially with regard to education from the Vedic times till independence i.e.1947. One can observe that women occupied higher place in the society during the ancient period. Slowly, underwent the change due to the political, economic and social factors resulting in the rising of illiteracy and again making efforts to improve the education for women in the society and also give those equal rights.

### **Spread of Education since Independence**

The post-independence period had improvement in providing facilities for the education of women. Twentieth Century also witnessed the social, political, economic improvement, gender of justice, gender equality, women's rights, human rights voluntary action, social legislation, custodian justice etc. All these are very important issues which will be discussed in this project. Education gives women self-respect and self-reliance. It is open the economic world to the women. Economic strength is the essential

for the every woman. It is source of the liberty of them, so education of the mother or a woman is very important because an educated mother educate her every children as compared male education.

The Gazetteer of the Manbhum District (1911) written by Coupland is mentioned that “In 1871-72 there was 84 primary schools in the district and one of them girls school only.”<sup>1</sup> After 1939 primary schools were arisen 1125 only for the boys, but girls were not allowed to entered in these schools. After independence of India, before the foundation of Purulia district up to 1955-56 there is only co-education system in all the schools in the Manbhum district, but there is no girl’s schools. The details are here under:

**Primary Schools in 1955-56**

Type of School	Co-education	Girl’s School
Primary	1681	96
Secondary	317	14
Total	1998	110

It is mentioned that co-education schools were dominated by the boys and girls were nominal amount only. Within 1971 A.D. about 2202 schools were found in the district and total students were 1, 66,479 out of them 40,870 girls only. When Purulia merged in West Bengal as a new district the literacy rate of the district at that time was male 31.06% and female 05.04% only and total literacy rate was 17.79%. It was arisen in 1971 by 3.29%, total rate 21.5%, in which men rates 34.27% and women 08.25%. We can show that in 1961 total schools and colleges as here under in the district:

**Institutions in the District in 1961**

Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	College
73	25	12	3

In 1966 the ‘District School Council’ was to spread the literacy in the district. After that numbers of primary schools were founded in all over the district. This is clear from this table shows here under:

**Total Schools and Colleges in 1975**

Primary	Junior Basic	Basic	Total
1383	141	2524	4048

Schools	Girls	Boys	Total
Secondary	7	91	98
High	7	58	65
Higher Secondary	4	33	37
Total	18	182	200
College	1	6	7

**The Literacy rates (%) In the District, 1961-2011**

Year	Total (%)	Male %	Female %
1961	17.79	31.06	05.04
1971	21.50	34.27	08.25
1981	29.69	45.41	13.25

1991	43.29	62.17	23.24
2001	56.14	74.18	37.15
2011	65.38	77.86	50.52

### Development of Changes of literacy rate year wise 2001-2011

In 1981-1991 the literacy rates in the West Bengal 16.76%, where as 13.60% in the Purulia and literacy rates in the womenfolk was very poor. In 1991 literacy rate in the state of women was 46.56% where as women rate in Purulia district was 23.24%, half of the state.

Education and economic independence is creating an atmosphere of self-confidence among women. Women's contribution can be seen in the promotion of economic development in different capacities namely, housewife, mother, labourer, officer, scientist etc. women contribute in the production of the nation by their work in fields and factories.

The status of women is ultimately connected with their economic position which depends on opportunities for participation in economic status of women is an indicator of social development. Education along with participation of women in workforce has been universally recognized as an important element in the adoption of small family norms which is essential for family planning. Enhancing female participation in the economic activities will reduce birth rates regardless of its demographic consequences.

By literacy as well as education we mean that they should not only be in a position to read and write but also understand the various issues of the country and get themselves acquainted with the problems and also help in problem solving exercises. Another important problem concerning the empowerment of women is the poverty. The poverty line is divided into the poor and the antyoday. Basic minimum things required are proper consumption levels of food, clothing, shelter, fuel and health care etc. It is notable that where 30% to 40% of women living below the poverty line, then it is very difficult to bring them into equality or empowerment.

Lack of imparting value education, it is pertinent to mention that value education is an integral part of our education system that we offer to both boys and girls. The essence of education is service to one's fellowmen. There is no greater occupation than service to society. Human values are not things to be implanted from outside. They are within each individual. They need to be manifested from within.

Human values are the need of our society not only in educational Institutions but in every walk of life and throughout the country. We cannot change the nature of the persons by mere preaching. Indian culture has given a great impetus to the value system. If values are inculcated right from the beginning in the minds of all, the nature of the society will change automatically. Values always refer to the human needs. They can be classified as: a) instrumental values which act as means such as food, water, shelter, books etc. b)intrinsic values which act as ends in themselves such as cultivating virtues, honesty, speaking the truth, dharma, good will etc. People generally seek material values such as wealth, money, property, name, fame etc. In fact, these values need to be given less priority than the intrinsic values which are necessary for one and all. Similarly moral and social values will help to lead the person a good life. Same is true of cultural and spiritual values.

Integral education indicates cultivation of both secular and spiritual values which make the students good citizens with a sense of social and moral responsibility thereby supporting the dictum 'education is for life, not for mere living'. Primary education was not considering education a basic security, but now the women do consider education as a necessity for their children. However, for the women just primary

education for their children, i.e. just being literate, does not fulfill their need for education. They want their children to have enough education that they can get access to better employment opportunities, but they do face major constraints, the most important of which is the lack of schools and the type of education provided.

## Conclusion

For purposes of this project marginalized groups refers to those that have been marginalized from basic education as evident from their performance on basic education indicators. It is not surprising that this to the commonly acknowledged socially and economically marginalized categories of the scheduled caste (SC); scheduled tribes (ST); minorities; girls and the poor. As the India Human Development Survey Report (2001), has revealed the stark social disparity in education, starting off with the difference in enrolment rates but continuing with the difference in dropout rates and learning levels. Dalit, adivasi and muslim children, it found, are far less likely to enroll in school and slightly more likely to dropout than others in the district. It is notable that majority peoples are belongs to SC and ST in this district. As the above survey report 'while 94% of children from the forward caste and 96% of other religious groups were enrolled, the figures for dalit, adivasi and muslim children were found to be 83%, 77% and 76% respectively' in India.

Further in this district a stage-wise examination of drop outs revealed that the discontinuation rates for SC and ST are also considerably higher than that for forward castes. The levels of learning of these children consequently follow a similar pattern. Among higher caste Hindus and other religious groups, more than 70% of children are able to read and write properly. This figure is only 40% for tribal and lower group children. In the district 50% children are malnourished and 38% people have access to clean drinking water. Hunger, missing meals, eating less, is still a common phenomenon among informal sector women and their children. Spending hours

collecting water, drinking contaminated water and fights and violence over water are still common in the roadside area. Housing also is more of a need for women. In the rural Purulia infrastructural major problem is water and sanitation. During a crisis, a vulnerable family tends to go into the downward spiral of poverty. The question here is – what can be the main form of social insurance for these workers.

In addition to these recognized groups of the socially marginalized, the project will also make reference to some of the newer categories of marginalization, such as the street and homeless children, the children of migrant families, children with special needs and those suffering from HIV-AIDS. However, hard facts on these groups are not available and this neglect is one of the points being not made due to the unavailability of documents. Here is the main problem of the schools and colleges are dropouts before the completion of education. This problem basically faced by the girl child and girls teenagers who are not able to complete the school education due to the poverty, family burden, mostly to take care younger brother or sister, early marriage or unwillingness to education, which is known from the village survey, interview with the village girls and women, its happened mainly with the socially and economically backward group who were not able to take opportunity from the government policies. In reality highly irregular children must also be included in the list of out-of school as they are virtually out and potential dropouts. Lack of verification of information, compiled solely by teachers, without a process of community participation, has raised serious doubts about the veracity of district information system for education data.

The Right to Education is in recognition of the fact that every child has ‘merit’ and that given the right opportunities every child can flourish. The idea of creating separate and ‘more special’ spaces of so-called more deserving children is contrary to this notion of equality and thus expunged from the Right to Education Act. Some interventions for girls, such as the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV- one in this district) which is residential school for girls in educationally backward blocks, have also proved very effective in enabling girls to continue with education, away from the responsibilities of domestic chores. Similarly SC, ST hostels for deprived class, which have also proved to be enabling conditions for the children targeted.

The inability or unwillingness to gather information on the social aspects of exclusion, discrimination and marginalization has also affected the policymakers’ ability to address the causes of marginalization and tackle them systematically. Hence, children from excluded sections, who have access to schools, still find themselves excluded sections, which have access to schools, still find themselves excluded in the system as classroom practices continue to keep them out and in many instances force them to drop out. What is needed is to see that the entire population is involved in creating the sense of awareness about values and about the need to empower women through quality education including value education. One has to watch and see the progress of the country in all spheres.

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