

THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN UTTAR PRADESH

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Abstract: *Men and women are very important part of society, and share the same space, but far and wide in the world, women are accorded a lower status than men. Uttar Pradesh is a growing state of India in terms of growth in per capita income. However, there is a perception that the status of women is lower in Uttar Pradesh in comparison with the status of women in all India average. In this study, an attempt has been made to inspect the status of women in Uttar Pradesh in comparison with all India average. It is found from the analysis that the status of women in the region is comparatively nice than the rest of the country only in some selected indicators. The indicators reveal that women have a very low degree of freedom of movement and low level of control over themselves in Uttar Pradesh.*

Key Words: *Uttar Pradesh, Status, Anemia, Women, Education.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

‘Status of Women’ refers to the situation and place of women in society in comparison to men. Although, geographically, men and women share the same space, yet they are not treated equally in the world. In reality, there exists disparity in women’s access to education, health care, physical and financial resources and women have fewer opportunities in the political, economic, social and cultural field.

Everywhere in the world, women are accorded a lower status than men. The status of women can be judged by some indicators. To measure the status of women a composite index is constructed by the Population Crisis Committee (PCC) and used by the World Bank and the United Nations which focuses on indicators measuring health, education, employment, marriage and childbearing and social equality.

2. REVIEW LITERATURE:

According to Sunitha Kishore & Kamla Gupta (2009), in her book title “Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in India” they discovered women's lower status is manifested in women's low wage rates than men in all occupational fields and industries, in their limited upward mobility, and in their greater family responsibilities due to divorce, abandonment, etc. in the developed countries. They have less decision making power in family issues. In the developing countries, women's lower status is reflected not only in their work being underpaid, unrecognized, but also in their limited access to productive resources and support services such as health and education.

In word of Mohiuddin (1995) status recognizing indicators, which have a poverty-bias and measure women's status in terms of structural change rather than in terms of their welfare vis-a-vis men. Therefore, he formulated an Alternative Composite Index (ACI) of the status of women, based on many more indicators reflecting women's issues in both developed and developing countries. The ACI is based on several indicators in eight sectors: health, schooling, adult education, and labor force participation, conditions of employment, domestic life, political representation and legal rights.

Rustogi (2004) tried to measure women’s status with the help of a diverse set of indicators. She selected some broad indicators across Indian states namely education, health, survival, participation in private/public decision making and safety/security to measure the status of women in the society.

3. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY:

In this study, an attempt has been made to examine the Status of Women in Uttar Pradesh in comparison with the all India average.

4. DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on secondary data. The data are mainly collected from the Census reports of the government, National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), Registrar of India etc.

The status of women in Uttar Pradesh in comparison with the rest of India is examined on the basis of different indicators, namely Female Literacy (FL), Female Workforce Participation Rate (FWPR), Gross Enrolment Ratio, Dropout Rates, Sex Ratio, Female Infant Mortality, Age at Marriage, and Women’s Participation in Decision making/Women Empowerment. Mostly, status is examined with the help of the method of ranking of states in different indicators. Rankings are assigned from the best to worst performing states. However, in case of the negative

indicators like dropout rates, infant mortality etc. (where high values are unfavorable for the society), rankings are given from worst to best performing states.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The status of women in UTTAR PRADESH is examined on the basis of the following indicators.

- **Female Literacy and Gender Gap**

The female literacy and the gender gap of UTTAR PRADESH along with the other states of the country are presented in Table 1. Ranking of the states in the table depicts the picture that women literacy rates are lower in UTTAR PRADESH as it stands 20th rank, while the gap in literacy rates between men and women is low in comparison to literacy rate, but still 18th rank. Both non-economic and economic factors are discussed in the literature to explain the prevalence of the gender gap in literacy rates.

Table 1. Female Literacy and Gender Gap in Literacy Rates (GLR)

State	Rank in female Literacy	Rank in GLR	State	Rank in Female Literacy	Rank in GLR
Kerala	1	2	Assam	13	9
Mizoram	2	3	India	14	15
Lakshadweep	3	5	Orissa	15	17
Tripura	4	7	Chhattisgarh	16	22
A & N Islands	5	6	Madhya Pradesh	17	20
Goa	6	8	Andhra Pradesh	18	13
Nagaland	7	4	Arunachal Pradesh	19	11
Maharashtra	8	12	Uttar Pradesh	20	18
Meghalaya	9	1	Jammu & Kashmir	21	19
Manipur	10	10	Jharkhand	22	23
Uttarakhand	11	16	Bihar	23	24
Gujarat	12	14			

Source: Census of India (Provisional Data), 2011

Gross Enrolment Ratio

The gross enrolment ratio of the states of UTTAR PRADESH with the other states of India is presented in Table 2. When the enrolment rates of Class I-VIII of Schools for General Education in different states of India are compared, it is seen that the enrolment rates are comparatively very low in UTTAR PRADESH like some states of the rest of India like Bihar, Goa and Chandigarh.

Table 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Class I-VIII of Schools for General Education

States/UTs	Classes I-VIII (6-13 years)			States/UTs	Classes I-VIII (6-13 years)		
	Girls	Boys	Total		Girls	Boys	Total
Andhra Pradesh	90.11	90.18	90.15	Orissa	104.68	105.62	105.16
Arunachal Pradesh	138.1	146.31	142.26	Punjab	100.6	102.84	101.83
Assam	84.9	82.21	83.54	Rajasthan	98.71	109.97	104.63
Bihar	86.03	100.79	93.72	Sikkim	123.37	118.82	121.08
Goa	86.13	88.75	87.5	Tamil Nadu	114.07	114.32	114.2
Gujarat	106.04	108.88	107.56	Tripura	121.74	123.56	122.66
Haryana	87.58	84.31	85.79	Uttar Pradesh	96.27	94.65	95.42
Himachal Pradesh	109.38	110.37	109.9	West Bengal	110.74	107.16	108.92
Jammu & Kashmir	104.27	104.67	104.48	A&N Islands	73.04	75.62	74.34
Karnataka	97.66	99.81	98.76	Chandigarh	64.71	62.62	63.55
Kerala	97.11	98.58	97.86	D&N Haveli	101.98	105.24	103.69
Madhya Pradesh	130.18	133.32	131.81	Daman & Diu	83.48	72.35	77.1
Maharashtra	96.4	99.82	98.18	Delhi	116.35	116.31	116.33
Manipur	147.73	155.44	151.64	Lakshadweep	75.68	73.99	74.83
Meghalaya	141.86	135.15	138.49	Puducherry	100.39	95.6	97.87
Mizoram	133.58	142.98	138.33	India	101.09	103.75	102.47

Nagaland	83.45	83.2	83.32	
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Source: Government of India (2012), Data for use of Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, 10 April.

Female Work Participation Rate

The female workforce participation rate of the states of UTTAR PRADESH in comparison with the rest of India is very pathetic. The table reveals the fact that female work participation rates (FWPR) are tending to lowest in UTTAR PRADESH as it is not even in list of top 23. And this has highest gender disparities in terms of work participation. Lowest FWPR can be partially explained by the fact that community don't take women worker or prefer because of lowest literacy rate and less decision making power.

Table 3: Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR)

States/Uts	Rank	FWPR	States/Uts	Rank	FWPR
Chattisgarh	1	62.7	Madhya Pradesh	13	41.1
Himachal Pradesh	2	58.8	Jharkhand	14	39.8
Nagaland	3	56.5	Jammu and Kashmir	15	38.4
Andhra Pradesh	4	52.7	Gujarat	16	37.9
Meghalaya	5	51.4	Orissa	17	37.8
Rajasthan	6	46.2	Uttarkhand	18	36.6
Mizoram	7	45.4	India		35.6
Arunachal Pradesh	8	45.1	Manipur	19	31.5
Karnataka	9	43	Kerala	20	27.3
Maharashtra	10	42.9	Punjab	21	26.3
Sikkim	11	41.2	Assam	22	20.8
Tamil Nadu	12	41.1	Tripura	23	15.6

Source: Based on calculations from NSSO (2010)

Anemia among Women

Anemia among women in different states of India is presented in Table 4. The majority of women in India are anemic. Iron deficiency is particularly pronounced among women inhabiting in the eastern India and in UTTAR PRADESH. Uttar Pradesh rank 20th this is relatively higher.

Table 4: Women Suffering from Anemia in India

States	Pregnant women age 15-49 who are anaemic (%)	Ranking	States	Pregnant women age 15-49 who are anaemic (%)	Ranking
Assam	72.0	1	Madhya Pradesh	57.9	14
Haryana	69.7	2	Maharashtra	57.8	15
Jharkhand	68.4	3	Tripura	57.6	16
Jammu & Kashmir	68.3	4	Tamil Nadu	54.6	17
Orissa	68.1	5	Arunachal Pradesh	51.8	18
Chhattisgarh	63.1	6	Mizoram	51.7	19
West Bengal	62.6	7	Uttar Pradesh	51.6	20
Sikkim	62.1	8	Uttaranchal	50.8	21
Rajasthan	61.7	9	Punjab	41.6	22
Gujarat	60.8	10	Nagaland	n.a	
Karnataka	60.4	11	Himachal Pradesh	39.2	23
Bihar	60.2	12	Goa	36.9	24
Meghalaya	60.2	12	Manipur	36.4	25
Andhra Pradesh	58.2	13	Kerala	33.8	26
India	57.9		Delhi	29.9	27

Source: NFHS-3

The Female Infant Mortality Rate

Generally, male infants are known to be more susceptible to death than females due to biological and genetic reasons. However, in India, the female infant mortality rate surpasses that of males, which reflects socio-cultural influences on mortality (Rustogi, 2004).

The female infant mortality rate of the states of India is presented and ranking is done in Table 5. Although the position of UTTAR PRADESH regarding IMRF is worst, Uttar Pradesh stands first, this is not a good symptom.

Table 5: Infant Mortality Rates (per 1000 live births) among Females (IMRF)

States	IMRF	Rank	States	IMRF	Rank
Kerala	14	21	Jharkhand	44	11
Goa	15	20	J & K	45	10
Manipur	16	19	Gujarat	47	9
Tamil Nadu	24	18	Andhra Pradesh	47	9
Nagaland	28	17	Himachal Pradesh	47	9
Tripura	29	16	India	49	
Maharashtra	29	16	Haryana	49	8
Delhi	31	15	Bihar	50	7
West Bengal	32	14	Chattisgarh	54	6
Arunachal Pradesh	32	14	Meghalaya	56	5
Sikkim	32	14	Rajasthan	57	4
Punjab	35	13	Assam	60	3
Mizoram	39	12	Orissa	61	2
Karnataka	39	12	Uttar Pradesh	63	1

Source: Sample Registration System (SRS), 2012

Women’s Participation in Decision-making/Women Empowerment

As reported by Rustogi (2004) in the last eight general elections from 1977 to 1999, 51 to 59 per cent of women have participated as voters. Of the few contestants among women, the winning rate is higher than that of men. Therefore, women’s participation in public decision making is gradually improving. The percentage of currently married women who usually

Participate in household decisions is less in UTTAR PRADESH than the National average. However, the percentage of women who are allowed to go alone to three places (market, health facility, and outside the community) is less and they need a guardian in most of places to take decision. Similarly, the percentage of women having a bank or savings account that they themselves use is less than the national average, but still have good percentage with respect to some states.

Table 6: Women’s Participation in Decision Making

States	Currently married women who usually participate in household decisions (%)	Women of age 15-49 who are allowed to go alone to three places (market, health facility, and outside the community) (%)	A bank or savings account that they themselves use (%)	States	Currentl y married women who usually participa te in household decisions (%)	Women of age 15-49 who are allowed to go alone to three places (market, health facility, and outside the community) (%)	A bank or savings account that they themselves use (%)

Andhra Pradesh	40.4	37.3	18	Manipur	69.4	53.5	8
Arunachal Pradesh	53.5	40.2	19	Meghalaya	77.3	28.1	16.9
Assam	60.9	35.3	11.7	Mizoram	70.4	75.4	8.1
Bihar	32.7	25.2	8.2	Nagaland	73.1	25.4	7.4
Chhattisgarh	26.8	17.9	8.1	Orissa	41.8	18.7	9.8
Delhi	52	36.6	30.4	Punjab	37.4	39	14.6
Goa	47	56.8	42.4	Rajasthan	22.8	31.6	7.6
Gujarat	36.6	47.3	19.9	Sikkim	58.7	50.9	20.9
Haryana	41.7	40.7	12.4	Tamil Nadu	48.8	54.2	15.9
Himachal Pradesh	39.2	60.4	22.2	Uttar Pradesh	33.7	23.4	13.2
Jammu & Kashmir	25.2	51	21.9	West Bengal	23.9	32.3	14.1
Karnataka	35.2	30.6	22.1	India	36.7	36.8	16.2
Kerala	47.2	34.7	27	Tripura	30.2	36.8	18.7
Madhya Pradesh	29.4	25.7	8.9	Uttaranchal	36	42.8	20.1
Maharashtra	45.4	40.2	20.3	Jharkhand	41.8	36.6	14.4

Sex Ratios

A decline in the proportion of women in the populations of many countries in the world has been witnessed over the years. Researchers have linked many factors like son preference to gender bias against girls in healthcare, nutrition, food allocation etc. to explain the declining sex ratio. The Census, 2011(provisional) data reveals the low proportion of girls in the states of Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh have 22nd rank which shows worst condition.

Table 5. Child Sex Ratio among the States of India

Serial Nos.	States	2011	Rank	Serial Nos.	States	2011	Rank
1	Andhra Pradesh	992	3	15	Maharashtra	925	18
2	Arunachal Pradesh	920	19	16	Manipur	987	6
3	Assam	954	14	17	Meghalaya	986	5
4	Bihar	916	21	18	Mizoram	975	8
5	Chhattisgarh	991	4	19	Nagaland	931	16
6	Goa	968	10	20	Orissa	978	7
7	Gujarat	918	20	21	Punjab	893	23
8	Haryana	877	26	22	Rajasthan	926	17
9	Himachal Pradesh	974	9	23	Sikkim	889	24
10	Jammu & Kashmir	883	25	24	Tamil Nadu	995	2
11	Jharkhand	947	15	25	Tripura	961	13
12	Karnataka	968	11	26	Uttar Pradesh	908	22
13	Kerala	1084	1	27	Uttarakhand	963	12
14	Madhya Pradesh	930	17	28	West Bengal	947	15

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Provisional data).

6. CONCLUSION:

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the status of women in the states of UTTAR PRADESH is not good in some indicators than the status of women in rest of India. However, puzzling contradictions occur within each state. For example, the sex ratio is less in UTTAR PRADESH implying fewer females in the state.

Workforce participation is only one of the variables to empower the women in the society. High female employment rate may satisfy 'Practical Gender Needs' (e.g provision of water, healthcare, employment etc.) only not the 'Strategic Gender Needs' (e.g power and control, protection from domestic violence, equal wage, and control over own body etc.). The decision on what to cook, about their own healthcare, and staying with their parents/siblings, the extent of mobility and women's ability to make these choices to go to the market or visit friends/relatives without seeking permission are also important.

Many indicators reveal that women have a very low degree of freedom of movement and low level of control over themselves and ability to make change in UTTAR PRADESH. Economic development does not guarantee gender equality. In informal sector the status of women is more vulnerable. Only gender aware policies of the policy makers and change of the mindset of the people can help in this regard.

The other study reflects more actualization of the female employment in the states in both rural and urban areas which needs serious concern. There is a criticism that only highly qualified people are getting dignified jobs after economic reform in this competitive world and the people of the rural sector are lagging far behind. A rise in the share of regular wage employment could signify an improvement in the quality of female employment only if this rise is faster than the rise in the share of other two categories namely, self-employed and casual worker (Sethuraman, 1998).

Therefore, it requires state specific own individual policy to achieve gender development and gender equality within its borders. A detailed examination of women's status even at the district level is necessary to have the right information for effective planning and implementation of government policy.

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