

Academic Performance of Girls in Boards Examination: A Myth or Reality

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the present status of utilization of the available educational opportunities designed and available for the girls and their counterparts. First of all, to gather the information from the various secondary level sources, a table was designed. Therefore, the authority and the websites of the Census, CBSE, Delhi, ICSE, Delhi, and Allahabad Board, UP was contacted. After seeking their permission, the data was collected and compiled in the designed tables, so that it could fulfill the objectives of the undertaken research. Similarly, focused group discussions were also held with the parents and community members to identify the factors responsible for the girl's education. The findings of the study reveal that girls have been able to raise their academic status within the available educational opportunities.

Keywords: CBSE, Educational schemes of government of India and prejudiced community, Girls' performance in 10th and 12th board examination, ICSE, UP board.

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INTRODUCTION

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"

-Nelson Mandela

The aforementioned line is a precise and astute summary of exactly why every individual in this world has the basic right to education. To an educated person, everything in this world seems amenable. Education has been able to fulfill the dreams of millions of people since time unknown and continues to do so. It has proved to be a relief in dire channels and has pulled a countless number of people out of poverty and despairs. The education that a person receives changes him, while an educated person, in turn, has the power to change the world. However, we cannot help but notice the unambiguous difference between the literacy rate of males and females in several countries throughout the world. Census of India 2011 shows that the Indian women are educationally backward in comparison to men. When education is deemed to be such a powerful weapon, why is it being limited to only the men?

Since girls form a major part of the population, the importance of girls' education cannot be stressed enough. If girls are educated along with boys, it makes development even more meaningful since one of the most important determinants of human development is education. If equal opportunities are provided to girls, nothing can stop them from moving ahead and claiming the rights that have been denied to them since the beginning of time. Many girls have gained acknowledgment after developing as toppers in board examinations. They have fought against all odds

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and now serve as role models for other girls particularly staying in the rural area, and who are struggling under comparable environments. Although this is a small step towards establishing equality in society, we must always remember that the opening is always the most solid. India is positive about the future. After all, there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

Where do girls and women stand today? It has been widely accepted that there is a latent demand for education among the poor, especially women and girls. Almost all people working with poor rural and urban women say that women not only realize the value of education, they also want to send their daughters to school in order to give them the opportunity of a better life. They acknowledge the empowering role of education, especially in negotiating an unjust world from a position of strength. The ability to read is seen as a necessity to calculate wages and rates, to know what one is signing, to access information, and above all, to walk with one's head high. We have also seen that given the right environment, opportunity, and facilities, women and girls participate with great enthusiasm.

According to Bhog (2002), women's education is not seen as a goal, rather, it is seen as an end. Girls' experience in school gives them a feeling of otherness or inferiority *vis-à-vis* the boys. In India, women are confined to the traditional roles of mother, daughter, and sister. They are expected to have a strict set of rules, very different from those of the boys. If resources are limited, parents would prefer to educate their son instead of their daughter.

Girls' education is an immense prospect for India to be developed socially and economically. Educated girls are the tools that yield positive influence on Indian society through their involvement in home and professional fields. They are the reason for the upgraded economy in the country, as well as, society. Girls' education is one of the most effective ways of ending poverty in developing nations. The welfares of their education are seen by individuals, their families, and throughout society. These benefits include sinking the number of babies women have, lowering infant and child mortality rates, lower maternal mortality rates (Kumar & Sangeeta, 2013), protecting against HIV/AIDS infection (Latha, 2014), and improved number of women with jobs and higher earnings gives them a respectable status in their community. Girl's education helps to eradicate illiteracy, and improve self-esteem and self-confidence (Nanda *et al.*, 2013). Education for girls can have the benefit of postponing marriage and gravidity for young girls. Instead of a girl getting married before age 20, and often grieved, abused by her husband, girls who attend primary and secondary schools are more likely to have many types of unseen problems. Girls who attend school also can use more effective methods of family planning and therefore, have fewer and healthier babies. An educated girl and woman will have learned about HIV/AIDS, and know many different ways to protect herself from getting the virus. Every year of education assists a woman make better decisions for herself and her family (King & Winthrop, 2015). Women who attended school often have healthier families. These women are more likely to seek medical help from clinics or doctors. Since they can read, literate girls can

understand a doctor's detailed instructions, and follow up for help if needed.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the academic performance of girls, in comparison to boys in board examinations
- To identify the factors of continuance and non-continuance of girls' education

METHODOLOGY

First of all, a table was designed to gather information from the various secondary level sources. Therefore, the authority and the websites of the Census, CBSE Delhi, ICSE Delhi, and Allahabad Board, UP was contacted. After seeking their permission, the data was collected and compiled in the specifically designed tables so that it could fulfill the objectives of the undertaken research.

Table 1 shows that as per the census 2011, the literacy rate of males is higher in comparison to girls in India. Therefore, it reveals that males are over and above to the females. Several reasons underly behind the fact that they have more freedom to learn. Sometimes, parents also encourage their male children to learn.

Table 2 reveals that in 2018, overall pass% of class 10th CBSE board students, who appeared in the examination was 86.7%. The pass% of girls was 88.67%, and for boys, it was 85.32%. Girls performed better than the boys by 3.35%. In the ICSE board, girls are again leading boys. As far as UP board is concerned, the overall pass percentage is 75.16% with the pass percentage for boys being 72.27%, and girls having a substantial lead with 78.81%.

Table 3 depicts the class 12th results for the same year, the overall pass percentage of CBSE board students is 83.01%; girls with 87.5% and boys with just 78%. ICSE board is also showing the same trend with girls' pass percentage being 97.63, and boys trailing with 94.96%. UP board is also not an exception. Here, the pass percentage of boys is 72.27%,

Table 1: Literacy rates as per gender

Census year	Literacy rate	Boys	Girls
2011	74.04	80%	65.46%

Table 2: Results of the year 2018 of 10th (ICSE, CBSE, and UP board)

Year of exams	Board of exams	10th overall pass rate (%)	Girls passing rate (%)	Boys passing rate (%)
2018	CBSE	86.7	88.67	85.32
	ICSE	98.51	98.95	98.15
	UP board	75.16	78.81	72.27

Table 3: Results of the year 2018 of 12th (ICSE, CBSE, and UP board)

Year of exam	Board of exams	12th overall pass rate (%)	Girls passing rate (%)	Boys passing rate (%)
2018	CBSE	83.01	87.5	78
	ICSE	96.21	97.63	94.96
	UP board	72.43	78.81	72.27



Table 4: Results of the year 2019 of 10th (ICSE, CBSE, and UP board)

Year of exams	Board of exams	10th overall pass rate (%)	Girls passing rate (%)	Boys passing rate (%)
2019	CBSE	91.1	92.45	90.14
	ICSE	98.54	98.95	98.15
	UP board	80.07	83.98	76.66

Table 5: Results of the year 2019 of 12th (ICSE, CBSE, and UP board)

Year of exam	Board of exams	12th overall pass rate (%)	Girls passing rate (%)	Boys passing rate (%)
2019	CBSE	83.4	88	79.4
	ICSE	96.52	97.84	95.4
	UP board	70.06	76.46	64.4

and that of the girls is 78.81%, making girls lead the boys with a margin of 6.54%. The total pass percentage of students who had appeared in the examination this year is 72.43%.

Table 4 reveals that CBSE class 10th result was a flash. Girls gave a tough fight to their male counterparts. This year 13 students shared the top position by scoring 499 marks out of 500. Out of these 13 toppers, 7 are boys and the rest are girls. The total pass percentage this year is 91.1%; as far as the total pass percentage is concerned, girls are again leading with 92.45%, the boys following with 90.14%, and making the girls ahead of the boys by 2.31%. In the ICSE board, boys were very close to the girls with 98.15 pass percentage, whereas girls had a pass percentage of 98.95%. The total pass percentage was 98.54%. UP board repeated the same trend with girls moving ahead of the boys with a big margin of 7.32%, and the total pass percentage this year is 80.07%.

Table 5 shows that story was not much different in the year 2019. The girls came up with a bang. Hansika Shukla and Karishma Arora emerged the class 12 CBSE toppers, both with scores of 499 out of 500. The icing decoration on the cake was that the second position was also secured by three more girls, i.e., Gaurangi Chawla, Aishwarya, and Bhavya. The pass percentage of girls was 88%, while the pass percentage of boys was 79.4%.

In 2019 ICSE results, girls secured an 88.7 pass percentage. Dewang Kumar was not the only topper who secured 100% marks this year, but Vibha Swaminathan from Bengaluru gave a tough fight to him by also securing 100% marks. The second position was secured by eight students, out of which only two are boys, while the rest are girls. As far as the total pass percentage is concerned, girls left boys behind by 2.44%, as the boys' pass percentage was 95.4%, which is 9% points more than that of boys.

DISCUSSION

After looking at the data, one can deduce whether it was 2018 or 2019, every time the girls outshone their male counterparts in academic performance, irrespective of the board they belong to (CBSE/ICSE/UP). Yet their literacy rate remains consistently low in comparison to boys.

Although government has initiated many programmes, policies, and schemes to enhance educational development of girls, we just need to create awareness amongst the community about the benefits of women education. Until then, these programs would not bring about the desired results. In order to harness women power for nation building, we will have to ensure that each girl is able to contribute to her full potential. There are still marked non-enrolled girls and boys in Nuh in Mewat district of Haryana (Nayar, 1994; Tyagi, 2019). Therefore, the first felt need is to identify the families of each community, particularly those who are not sending their children to the schools. After that, we have to involve the community leaders in the enrolment campaigns drive.

CONCLUSION

India is constantly committed towards the fulfillment of the goal of universalization of education by introducing the various schemes, like sarva shiksha abhiyan (SSA) for elementary education, rashtriya madhyamic shiksha abhiyan (RMSA) for secondary and senior secondary education, and also, rashtriya uchw shiksha abhiyan (RUSA) for higher education. But the goal of SSA, which was to be achieved several years before still seems to be a distant dream. This may be due to a lack of will power and prejudice underlying in the community and society. Merely making free and compulsory education will not be able to enroll every child until society takes interest in enrolling their children in the schools. It has been observed that the provision of financial support to the community, brings quality education to the lower socioeconomic families, as well as, explaining the importance of education of girls made a real difference. Amitasha and Atulasha, two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that run under the umbrella of Amity Humanity Foundation, are the examples in providing quality education in NCR Delhi. Similarly, another agency, like Azim Premji Foundation, is also doing the quality work for the needy people.

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