

Girls Raise the Academic Bar despite Limited Educational Opportunities

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Abstract

The following research paper proves that if equal educational opportunities are given to girls, they can outshine their male counterparts in all probability. One cannot underestimate the potential of females based on the literacy rate revealed by the Census of 2011. This paper is a proof of how women raised the academic bar despite the insufficient educational opportunities provided to them. There is an urgent need to recognize the importance of women otherwise this country might be leading itself into an abyss of sheer ignorance.

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 each and every individual in this world has the basic right to education. To an educated person, everything in this world seems tractable. Education has fulfilled millions of dreams since time unknown and continues to do so. It has proved to be a relief in dire straits and has pulled countless number of people out of poverty. 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 stark difference between the literacy rate of males and females in a number of 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 handed over only to the men?

According to the Bhog (2002), women 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 a 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.

According to the Census 2011, the literacy rates of the two genders are:

Table-1: Literacy rates as per census 2011

Census	Literacy rate	Boys	Girls
2011	74.04	80%	65.46%

We cannot deny the truth these data are revealing. However these data are just a statistic which does not depict the real worthiness of women.

If we analyze the results of the year 2018-19 of 10th and 12th (ICSE, CBSE and UP Board), it depicts a different story.

Table-2 Results of year 2018 of 10th (ICSE, CBSE and UP Board)

Board	Year	10 th Overall Pass Rate (in %)	Girls Passing Rate (in %)	Boys Passing Rate (in %)
CBSE	2018	86.70	88.67	85.32
ICSE	2018	98.51	98.95	98.15
UP	2018	75.16	78.81	72.27

In 2018 overall pass % of class 10th CBSE board students who appeared in the

Examination was 86.70 % . The pass % of girls was 88.67%, and for boys it was 85.32 % . Girls performed better than boys by 3.35 % . In 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: Results of the year 2018 of 12th (ICSE, CBSE and UP Board)

Board	Year	12 th Overall Pass Rate (in %)	Girls Passing Rate (in %)	Boys Passing Rate (in %)
CBSE	2018	83.01	87.50	78.00
ICSE	2018	96.21	97.63	94.96
UP	2018	72.43	78.81	72.27

According to Class 12th results for the same year, the overall pass percentage of CBSE Board students is 83.01 percent; girls with 87.50 percent and boys with just 78 percent. ICSE Board is also showing the same trend with girls' pass percentage being 97.63 and boys trailing with 94.96 percent. UP Board is also not an exception. Here the pass percentage of boys is 72.27 percent and that of girls is 78.81 percent, making girls lead the boys with a margin of 6.54 percent. Total pass percentage of students who had appeared in the examination this year is 72.43 percent.

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

Board	Year	10 th Overall Pass Rate (in %)	Girls Passing Rate (in %)	Boys Passing Rate (in %)
CBSE	2019	91.1	92.45	90.14
ICSE	2019	98.54	98.95	98.15
UP	2019	80.07	83.98	76.66

CBSE Class 10th result was a blast. 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 rest are girls. Total pass percentage this year is 91.1 percent, as far as the total pass percent is concerned, girls are again leading with 92.45 percent, boys following with 90.14 percent, making the girls ahead of the boys by 2.31%. In ICSE Board, boys were very close to the girls with 98.15 pass percentage, whereas girls had a pass percentage of 98.95 percent. The total pass percentage was 98.54 percent. UP Board repeated the same trend with girls moving ahead of the boys with a big margin of 7.32 percent, the total pass percentage this year being 80.07 percent.

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

Board	Year	12 th Overall Pass Rate (in %)	Girls Passing Rate (in %)	Boys Passing Rate (in %)
CBSE	2019	83.4	88.00	79.4
ICSE	2019	96.52	97.84	95.40
UP	2019	70.06	76.46	64.40

The story was not much different in the year 2019. Girl 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 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 88.70 pass percentage. Dewang Kumar was not the only topper who secured 100 percent marks this year, but Vibha Swaminathan from

Bengaluru gave a tough fight to him by also securing 100 percent marks. The second position was secured by 8 students, out of which only 2 are boys, while the rest are girls. As far as total pass percentage is concerned, girls left boys behind by 2.44 percent as boys' pass percentage was 95.40 percent which is 9% points more than that of boys.

Conclusion

After looking at the data, one can deduce that whether it was 2018 or 2019, each and 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. So what they need is more educational opportunities. 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 been denied to them since the beginning of time. Many girls have gained recognition after emerging as toppers in board examinations. They have fought against all odds and now serve as role models for other girls who are struggling under similar circumstances. Although this is a small step towards establishing equality in the society, we must always remember that the beginning is always the hardest. India is optimistic about the future. After all, there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

References

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