

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EDUCATION AMONG RURAL AND URBAN WOMEN AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

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Abstract: The aim of this comparative study is to compare the educational achievement, awareness of social rights, and employment status of rural and urban women in Jharkhand state, India, to highlight the role these variables play in the shaping of society. The research brings into light significant variations using a descriptive research methodology involving a sample population of 200 women (100 rural and 100 urban). The research illustrates that rural women are less educated, have a lower knowledge of legal and social rights, and have fewer job opportunities compared to their urban counterparts. Not only do only 5% of rural women possess qualifications equal to a high school diploma, but only 30% of urban women do. In the same vein, 15% of rural women claim to have a good grasp of social rights, while 60% of urban women claim to have a good understanding. There is also a wide gap in employment rates, with 45% of urban women employed and just 18% of rural women employed. The report emphasizes the importance of particular policies that seek to enhance rural education, knowledge on rights, and job opportunities as a means to close the urban-rural development gap and to enable women to be active social and economic actors.

Keywords: *Rural-urban disparity, women's education, social rights awareness, female employment, gender empowerment, Jharkhand, socio-economic development, inclusive education, rural women, urban women.*

I. INTRODUCTION:

Education is one of the most powerful ways to empower individuals and transform society. It has major effects on individuals' socioeconomic status, health, and overall well-being, particularly for women. Nevertheless, owing to various sociocultural, economic, and infrastructural factors, women in rural areas and women in urban areas have very contrasting educational opportunities and achievements. Especially among India, rural women face impediments that hinder their development in terms of education, such as early marriages, gender discrimination, limited availability of quality education, and economic limitations. The women in metropolitan areas, though, have better access to educational opportunities, facilities, and resources, which results in higher education and more participation in society. Paying attention to the implications in their role within society, the comparative study endeavors to examine differences in the employment status, awareness, and education level of urban and rural women.

There are far-reaching implications both at the level of individual empowerment as well as in terms of social development overall for rural and urban educational inequality amongst women. Well-educated women generally have greater social status, better health conditions, and better economic opportunities. They are well placed to make highly educated family and community-level decisions, improving the stability and development of society. Conversely, rural women's illiteracy bars them from accessing rights and opportunities, reduces their participation in economic activities, and locks them into poverty and social exclusion cycles. The purpose of this study is to emphasize the barriers that rural women encounter in their quest for an education and give solutions to overcoming the educational gap by comparing

educational histories, social rights awareness, and work status among rural and urban women. The study will also address the implications on the social fabric in general and on rural and urban women's personal growth.

Better-educated women tend to act as agents of social change by promoting social cohesiveness, economic productivity, and health gains. Such contributions are nevertheless limited in rural settings due to women's low educational levels, which stifle communal advancement and general development. This study hopes to uncover rural women's structural obstacles and resolve the equal accessibility to education and empowerment opportunities through comparing rural and urban women's educational experience and achievement. At the end of it all, the research results can be used to inform evidence-based targeted programming, guide legislation, and shape social change for social justice and gender equity.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Khan et al. (2024) assessed Jharkhand higher education access determinants and identified major socio-economic impediments such as budgetary constraints, gender imbalances, and geographical remoteness as some of the most significant obstacles. According to their findings, women, particularly from rural and marginalized communities, face added difficulties when attempting to gain access to a place at higher education. Lack of institutional support and social norms valuing female education less than male education is some of the challenges. From the findings, it was clear that there is a pressing need for legislative reforms and non-discriminative policies in an attempt to fill such access gaps.

Kumar and Reshmi (2018) investigated the effect that urbanization has on development in a number of the Empowered

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Action Group (EAG) member countries, one of which was Jharkhand of such countries. According to their study, cities, as opposed to rural regions, had seen significant improvement as regards both educational and infrastructural development. Since there is an imbalance in the development gains, the study highlighted the heightened inequalities which exist between the rural and urban regions, particularly in regards to the access of women to opportunities for work and education.

Kumar and Raj (2024) conducted a study into the patterns and trends of Jharkhand migration, and we found that most of the migration was caused by the unavailability of job and education opportunities in rural regions. From the findings of the study, it was determined that educated people, particularly females from urban areas, had greater opportunities of being given good opportunities. Rural women, however, were left behind because of a lack of opportunities for education. According to the research, there is a discernible correlation between education inequality and socioeconomic migration.

Moitra (2024) carried out a realist assessment with particular focus on the opportunities for livelihood and higher education in the state of Jharkhand, particularly through the lenses of the Adivasi individuals. As per the survey results, the Adivasi women still encounter challenges regarding accessing the opportunities of livelihood and being able to pursue further studies. The study by Moitra shed light on the importance of recognizing indigenous agency and the socio-cultural determinants that affect women's educational attainment in Jharkhand, both rural and semi-urban areas.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research explores and compares the educational history, awareness of social rights, and employment status of rural and urban women in Jharkhand through a comparative descriptive research strategy. The research involved an in-person interview of a sample of 200 women (100 rural and 100 urban) using structured questionnaires to collect data. For the purpose of illuminating the socioeconomic empowerment between the two groups, the analysis focused on identifying variations between them through descriptive statistics.

Research Design

Comparative descriptive research methodology is employed in this research to study and compare the educational background, awareness about social rights, and employment status of rural and urban women of the state of Jharkhand. The approach attempts to compare and contrast rural and urban women in terms of their consciousness, education, and working prospects, with a focus on understanding the reasons behind such differences and their implications for society. This design enables one to thoroughly analyze the data from multiple perspectives, including employment, awareness of rights, and education.

Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was employed to collect data for this research from women in rural and urban districts of Jharkhand. Questions on employment status, awareness of social rights, and

educational background were all part of the survey. To ensure credible responses, data was collected through survey methods and face-to-face interviews. To get an overall idea about the educational qualification, social right awareness, and work experience of the participants, the survey was designed to fetch both quantitative as well as qualitative data.

Sample Size

The study included a total of 200 women, 100 of rural, and 100 of metropolitan areas. For the sake of ensuring an equal representation from the rural and urban populations, this sample size was used. To reduce bias and ensure that the findings can be extended to a larger group of women in Jharkhand, the recruitment process was done randomly. Urban and rural volunteers from different state districts were selected based on their work, social, and educational background.

Research Area

The study was conducted in the state of Jharkhand, focusing on the state's rural and urban regions. Jharkhand offers a unique setting for the study of the differences between rural and urban women due to its diverse topography and socioeconomic challenges. While urban centers were selected from districts with relatively higher access to education, employment opportunities, and social awareness resources, rural regions were selected from districts with limited access to educational facilities and employment avenues. This allowed for a comparison of the two groups' educational level, social rights awareness, and employment status in a meaningful manner.

Data Analysis

The information gathered was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentage, and comparative analysis. The information was presented in tables and graphs to give a clear visual image of the results. The analysis aimed to highlight the differences and similarities between rural and urban women in the study variables, illuminating the role of education and awareness on their social and economic empowerment.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 depicts the comparative distribution of educational qualification levels for rural and urban women in a sample size of 200, divided equally between the two groups (100 each).

The data shows a distinct difference in educational qualification. Out of rural women, 28% have no education, but only 5% of urban women do not have any education. The highest number among rural women (32%) have managed only up to primary education, as compared to 10% of the urban women. 30% of the urban women, in comparison, have gone through graduation or higher, an entirely contrasting picture to the 5% rural women within this bracket. In like fashion, 25% of urban women have finished higher secondary level of schooling, while a mere 10% of rural women have. The urban category also tops in secondary schooling at 30%, as against 25% of rural respondents.

Table 1: Educational Qualification Levels

Education Level	Rural Women (%)	Urban Women (%)
No Formal Education	28%	5%
Primary Education	32%	10%
Secondary Education	25%	30%
Higher Secondary	10%	25%
Graduation & above	5%	30%

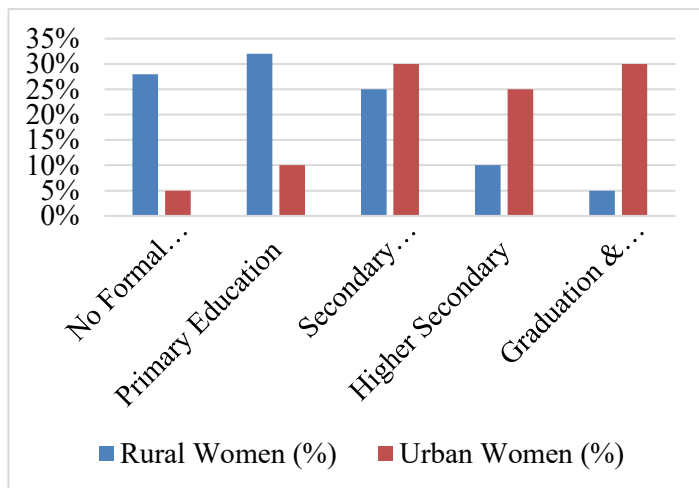


Figure 1: Graphical representation of Educational Qualification Levels

The information reveals a vast educational divide between rural and urban women. More rural women are low or non-literates as compared to their urban counterparts due to reasons including limited access to quality education, poverty, patriarchal attitudes towards gender roles, and child marriage in rural communities. On the other hand, women from urban areas are availed of improved educational facilities, increased exposure, and higher realization of the need for female education, as seen from their higher percentages of attendance in secondary, higher secondary, and graduate education. This educational gap has direct bearings on other areas like employment, health awareness, and community participation. The findings highlight the imperative for special education policies and support structures for rural areas to fill this gap and foster inclusive growth.

Table 2 reports the comparative level of social rights awareness (e.g., voting rights, property rights, legal protections) between rural and urban women. According to the data, 60% of urban women express high awareness of their social rights, while only 15% of rural women are aware of them. Conversely, 35% of rural women have moderate awareness, while 30% of urban women have moderate awareness. A considerable 50% of rural women indicate a lack of or low awareness of their social rights, whereas only 10% of urban women.

Table 2: Awareness of Social Rights

Awareness Level	Rural Women (%)	Urban Women (%)
High Awareness	15%	60%
Moderate Awareness	35%	30%
Low/No Awareness	50%	10%

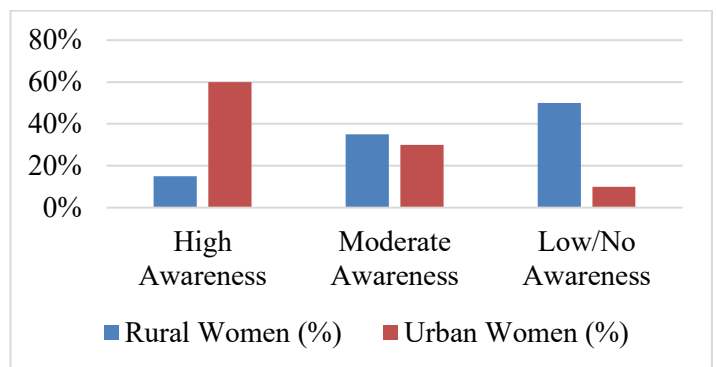


Figure 2: Graphical representation of Awareness of Social Rights

The extreme difference in levels of awareness between rural and urban women serves to emphasize the huge influence of education and access to information on social empowerment. Urban women, with better education and easier access to media, community programs, and legal resources, are likely to be better informed about their rights. Conversely, rural women, especially those with low education and fewer resources, are less exposed to social rights information, leading to lower civic engagement and restricted social mobility. The evidence indicates that educating rural women, making them aware of the law, and conducting community outreach programs may be instrumental in enhancing their awareness of their rights, encouraging increased societal engagement, and advancing gender equality.

Table 3 shows the rate of employment for rural and urban women, a clear difference existing between the two. A paltry 18% of the rural women work, whereas 45% of the urban women are involved in some kind of employment. Alternatively, 82% of rural women are jobless, compared to 55% of jobless urban women.

Table 3: Employment Status

Employment Status	Rural Women (%)	Urban Women (%)
Employed	18%	45%
Unemployed	82%	55%

The employment statistics reveal a significant disparity in economic opportunities between urban and rural women. Urban women are more likely to be working, indicating greater access to labor markets, varied employment opportunities, and greater levels of education.

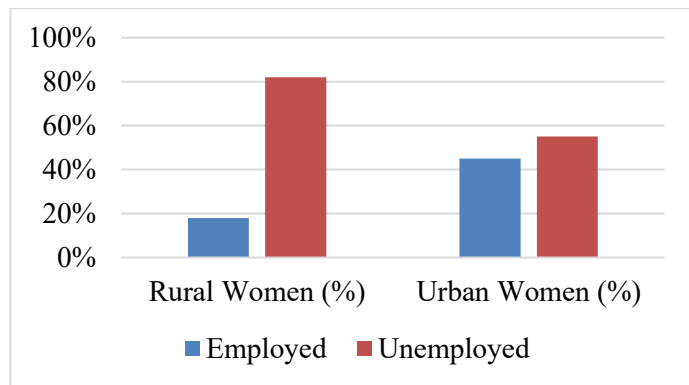


Figure 3: Graphical representation of Employment Status

Rural women, on the other hand, experience obstacles such as restricted access to employment opportunities, lower education levels, and conventional gender roles that can limit their engagement in the labor market. The rural women's high rate of unemployment implies the necessity of specific policies and programs to facilitate increased job generation, skill building, and availability of employment opportunities in rural areas. Furthermore, enhancing educational facilities and vocational training could empower rural women economically and narrow the gap in employment between rural and urban areas.

IV.CONCLUSION

The results of this comparative research evidently illustrate a stark contrast in education, social rights awareness, and employment status between rural and urban women of Jharkhand. Urban women have superior educational achievements, with a greater percentage achieving graduation and higher, whereas a majority of rural women are at the primary or no education levels. This educational disparity has a direct impact on their awareness and economic engagement, with urban women exhibiting higher levels of knowledge of their social rights and higher employment. Rural women, on the other hand, experience compounded disadvantage with limited education, low awareness of rights, and high unemployment. These inequalities highlight the imperative need for focused interventions in rural areas, such as enhancing access to quality education, increasing legal and social awareness, and increasing employment opportunities to foster inclusive and equitable development for women in both rural and urban areas.

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