

Source:- Gender Equity in Literacy in India: Some Issues

Author: Dighe, Anita & Patel, Ila

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Introduction

Women constitute the largest group among the adult illiterate population in India, though the female literacy rate (age group 7 years and above) has increased from 9.52 per cent in 1951 to 19.42 per cent in 1991, India still has a vast illiterate female population in 1991 (Prem Chand, 1991:1). While it is recognised by policy planners that the problem of illiteracy is grave amongst women, women's literacy has never received the priority attention it deserves.

Despite the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy among women, their educational needs are not systematically addressed in national educational policies and plans. The major thrust of the government in the educational strategy in development plans has been on making women literate through an expansion of the formal educational system. The assumption has been that access to formal education would solve the problem of illiteracy among women. In spite of the policy initiatives to improve women's education since Independence, problems of access, quality, quantity and relevance have exacerbated over the years.