

Education

Education is essential for success in India's fast-growing global economy. More Indian children are going to primary school now than ever before, but higher education remains elusive for large groups in the population. Nationwide, women still lag behind men, rural dwellers have far less education than their urban counterparts, and less than one in five of the poorest women are literate.

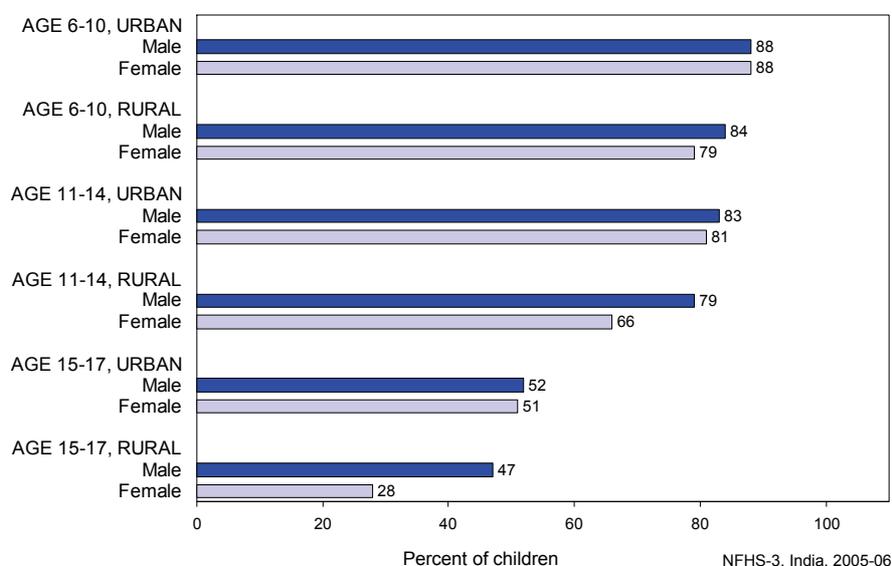
India Has Not Yet Achieved Universal Literacy

- Despite marked achievements in recent years, only 55 percent of female respondents in NFHS-3 and 78 percent of male respondents are literate.
- Literacy is increasing dramatically among women. While only 38 percent of women age 45-49 are literate, 74 percent of women age 15-19 are literate.
- In rural areas only 46 percent of women are literate, compared with 75 percent of women in urban areas. Only 19 percent of women from the poorest households are literate, compared with 90 percent of women from the wealthiest households.

Women's Educational Gains Are Slower after Primary School

Girls are now almost as likely to attend primary school as boys. Nationwide, 85 percent of boys and 81 percent of girls age 6-10 are attending school. After primary school, however, girls in rural areas fall behind. By ages 15-17, 49 percent of boys but only 34 percent of girls in India are still attending school. At every age, children from rural areas are less likely to be attending school than urban children.

School Attendance by Age, Sex and Residence



- Disparities in education between boys and girls are particularly evident in Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. On the other hand, girls are slightly more likely to be attending school than boys in Meghalaya, Delhi, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Kerala.
- At every age, children from rural areas are less likely to be attending school than urban children, but the urban-rural differences are much smaller for boys than for girls.

For more information about education, please see Chapters 2 and 3 in the NFHS-3 final report.