

# Study of Problems Faced by Illiterate Women in District Pulwama of Jammu and Kashmir

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**Abstract:** *Great Social Scientist 'Swami' said "educate your women first and leave them to themselves, then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. Education is an important part of society. For the progress of society, everyone must contribute for its development, so education is the best tool for achieving this goal. Men and women are basic ingredients of the society. Mostly people think that men's contribution in society is more than women. But now, women are sharing equal responsibility in every field of society. So, women's education is very important for building porous society. Education is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Women have to play three main roles in her life : good daughter, good wife and a "good mother". Education helps women to know their legal rights and helps them build up their self-confidence. With this background, the present study makes an attempt to find out causes and problems faced by women due to illiteracy in District Pulwama of Jammu and Kashmir State. A self-designed questionnaire was used as a tool. The findings revealed that illiteracy was a common factor among the girls of District Pulwama. Majority of respondents were in the age group of 25 – 30 years living in nuclear families. Joint family system was disintegrating. Most of the families, at the time of data collection, had good income, but before 20 – 25 years, they could not afford the education of their children. All parents of the sample group were working as Masons, Carpenters, Tailors, Labourers, Gardeners, Salesmen, etc, but almost all of them had orchards. Main reason of illiteracy was poverty and ignorance of parents. None of the families were highly qualified.*

**Keywords:** Women, Illiteracy, Decision Making, Psychological Problems, Poverty

## 1. Introduction

The history of mankind reveals that there was time when it was not essential for everyone to learn or to read and write. The life was simple and the activities of a person were confined to his small village community and that of women were limited to their respective families only. With the passage of time, the complexity of life also increased. Now activity of the people is no more confined to the boundaries of their communities or families but has tremendously grown in the recent century. The scientific knowledge and technology have entered the sphere of our day to day life and culture. But in this process, women are still backward. Very few of them are getting the fruits of present development of our country.

The lack of education is the main cause for which women are the sufferers more than men. The lack of education means lack of self-reliance, self-confidence for which women are not able to come out of their problems. So educating a woman means educating a family. That is why our great social scientist Swami said "educate your women first and leave them to themselves, then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them". Illiteracy is defined as not being able to read and write.

Education is an agent of basic chance in the status of women in order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past. It will faster the development of new values through redesigned curriculum text books, the training and active involvement of education institutions.

The importance of women education is briefly summarized below:

Women's education helps in her "economic development and prosperity, improved life, health, dignity and honour, rights for justice, reduces poverty, etc.

Most educationists and sociologist agree that causes of educational backwardness among women are social, cultural burden of domestic work, lack of consideration from family, etc. Lack of school in near vicinity or distance from home could be said to be some of other reasons. A major cause of illiteracy is the economic condition of the people. Further urban, rural classification shows another gap. Urban bias induces a variation of literacy which has to be taken in to account.

Other factors like *lack of qualified female teachers, lack of transport facilities, lack of hostel facilities for girls, fear of sexual harassment, fixed schooling hours, etc* are also causes of illiteracy in girls.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

- A study was conducted by **Samanataray & Patnaik (1995)** on the gender discrimination among school students in the field of education. The findings of the study revealed that both rural and urban students felt no gender discrimination in the school situation. However, in the rural schools, the average students opined that boys studied up to the Post Graduate level and a girl up to Matriculation level. This opinion was also expressed by the urban school studies. Data regarding the home environment revealed that 38% of the rural students and 26% of the urban students felt the existence of gender differences in their homes.
- **Pai, Sudha (1998)** cautioned, after brief study of three villages from Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh, that female literacy, independent voting rights and change in the status in the family and society are required for

women to play active role in the village politics. The Pradhanis played an almost insignificant role in the functioning of the gram and block panchayat level bodies. They have never attended any meeting or made any decision about allocation of funds to individuals or scheme.

- **Tiedemann (2000)** in the study about the attitude of parents and society towards the girl's education in Germany showed that parental stereotyping has an effect on children's self-perception of their mathematical ability with boys tending to have a higher self-concept than girls.
- **Desilra (2002)** conducted a research on the marital postponement in Sri Lanka. The study revealed that during the present century female age at marriage has increased almost seven years. Change in many socio-economic variables such as educational status of women and employment seems to have influenced female age at marriage in Sri Lanka. The unemployment problem among young educational females in Sri Lanka delays the marriage. The study also revealed that literacy and education can influence attitude and norms regarding expectations of marriage and in the choice of partner which leads to delay in contracting of marriage.
- **Yerin (2003)** investigated the effect of school level and gender on the total test anxiety and worry and emotionality of students in India. It was found that the female students had higher degree of test anxiety than the boys. In addition results revealed that female students experienced higher emotionality than male students.
- **Willension-Doll (2005)** conducted a study on the composition and attitude of the teaching staff towards the girl's education in England. Result revealed that the teachers believe that they give equal treatment to both boys and girls. This can help them in achieving their goal of girl education.
- **SexanaRartika (2010)** in his study on status of female education and reasons for drop out from the school in Uttaranchal showed that the main reasons for dropping out were financial difficulties for both boys as well as girls. The study also showed that the imposition of parents' choice upon females, lack of privacy for girls in schools were also cited as reasons by adolescents for dropping out.
- **Masud (2011)** conducted a study on the socio-religious perspective on the social transformation through girl's education in Pakistan. He found high percentage of illiteracy among Pakistani girls than boys. The study shows that there is high percentage of girls not going to school. In addition the study revealed that there are greater amount of girls not completing primary schools (drop outs).
- Study conducted by **Taylor and Francis (2012)** on the influence of financial factors on motivation to send children to school among poor individuals revealed that the low income families had low motivation towards their children in advancement of the educational system.

### 3. Objectives

- To find out causes of female illiteracy in district Pulwama

- To find out the problems faced by women due to illiteracy in District Pulwama

### 4. Methodology and Procedure

Research Methodology is a way to systematically investigate the research problem. It plays an important role in carrying out the research in more objective and successful way. The sample of the present study consisted of illiterate women in the age group of 19 to 30 years. The sample size for the present study was 50. The criteria for the sample selection were illiterate females falling in the age group of 19-30 years. Purposive Sampling Technique was used and tool used for the present study was a Self-designed interview schedule. The interview schedule consisted of *background information, causes of female illiteracy, psychological problems, social problems, health problems, awareness about laws and rights, economic problems and decision making of females.*

A pilot study was carried out to check if the tool need any modification. The investigator contacted the sample group at their respective homes. The data was interpreted and analyzed with the help of percentages. After the required information was gathered, it was then analyzed. The data collection was then coded and tabulated, percentages were drawn and after which, interpretation was done.

### 5. Results and Discussion

Majority of the respondents i.e. 54% of respondents were in the age group of 25-30 years and the remaining 46% were in the age group of 20-25 years. 60% of the sample were living in nuclear family indicating that joint family system is disintegrating. Regarding income of respondents 58% of the respondents had monthly total income of Rs. 60000-80000. 26% of the respondent family's income was Rs 40000-60000, 10% of the respondents had nearly Rs. 1 Lakh income and only 6% had Rs 20000-40000 income. Data indicated that people living in Chersoo (Pulwama) had good monthly income but lived a very simple living, worked hard in paddy fields, fruit orchard and mustard fields. They all worked from dawn to dusk to earn their livelihood. It is worth mentioning that all used to earn in addition to their agricultural land. Agricultural land gave them main livelihood and monetary benefit. However their occupation of being labourer, mason or carpenter or any other job was a supplementary work as they did not want to sit at home during relaxed period of agriculture. Data indicated that majority of the respondent's fathers were not qualified and worked as carpenters, masons, labourers, tailors, etc. 46% of the mothers were illiterate.

**Table 1: Causes of Illiteracy**

Causes	No. of Respondents	Percentage
•Poverty	25	50.00
•Family pressure	21	42.00
•Ignorance of parents	04	08.00
•Any other	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Parents give more importance to son's education :</b>		
•Yes	33	66.00
•No	17	34.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Due to domestic work, daughters remain illiterate :</b>		
•Yes	46	92.00
•No	04	08.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Heavy work load reason for female illiteracy :</b>		
•Yes	47	94.00
•No	03	06.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Data from Table 2 revealed that the main reason for illiteracy of the female respondents was poverty. 42% of the sample revealed that they had pressure from family not to educate their children, especially girl child, 8% of the respondents had low I.Q. Parents did not stress upon the education of girl child. Their daily routine work was priority to them. 66% of the parents gave more importance to their son's education because they support them in old age. Majority 92% of the respondents were of the view that daughter remained illiterate in villages because they are supposed to do the domestic work of their families and have to work in fields. The result of the present study coincide with Baligar (1995) which also show that the major reason for valuing a son was that it is through him that the family lineage would continue. Co-education and lack of transport facility in school was not a reason for the drop out of the females in school.

**Table 2: Psychological Problems**

<b>Cursing self for being un-educated</b>		
• Yes	39	78.00
• No	11	22.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Illiteracy affects self-confidence :</b>		
• Yes	38	76.00
• No	12	24.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Illiteracy effects self-respect :</b>		
• Yes	27	54.00
• No	23	46.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 2 reveals that 78% of the sample cursed themselves and were feeling very bad being illiterate. Being illiterate was simply a curse for them which often they regret. 76% of the respondent revealed that their confidence get effected due to their illiteracy. This means that they were denied of the benefits of modern knowledge and thus enabled them to take the benefit of modern technology. 84% of respondents

sometimes had a feeling of being useless due to illiteracy. Lack of education meant lack of self-reliance, self-confidence for which women were not able to come out of their problems.

**Table 3: Social Problems**

Attitude of family members towards female child :	No. of Respondents	Percentage
• Loving & warm	32	64.00
• Cool	18	36.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Like to spend time with :</b>		
• Illiterate People	35	70.00
• Literate People	03	6.00
• No Criteria	12	24.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Cut down your social circle :</b>		
• Yes	06	12.00
• No	44	88.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Illiteracy affects your marriage choice</b>		
• Yes	36	72.00
• No	14	28.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

From table 3 it was found that 64% of the respondent families have loving and warm attitude towards them. None of the families treated their female child uncared. 70% of the respondents liked to spend their time with illiterate people, the reason being that they were not comfortable and confident when among literates. Majority 72% of the respondent thought being illiterate could affect their marriage choice as they did not have decision making power at their homes.

**Table 4: Awareness about Laws and Rights**

Aware about various rights of women :	No. of Respondents	Percentage
• Yes	05	10.00
• No	45	90.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Action towards harassment :</b>		
• Feel depressed	01	2.00
• Self defence	17	34.00
• Consult parents	18	36.00
• Consult friends	08	16.00
• Consult husband	02	04.00
• Consult elders	04	08.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

90% of the sample were not aware about the rights of women. This eventually leads to violence against women.

**Table 5: Economic Problems**

Source of income of respondent :	No. of Respondents	Percentage
• Labourer	14	28.00
• Gardener	08	16.00
• Mat Making	04	08.00
• Dying	02	04.00
• Pickles Vegetables	06	12.00
• Knitting	08	16.00
• Pottery	05	10.00



• Sweeper	03	06.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Do you supplement family income?</b>		
• Yes	38	76.00
• No	12	24.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Preference towards :</b>		
• Earning money	36	72.00
• Study	14	28.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 5 depicts that nearly all the respondents do some sort of work like gardening, field works, making mats, pickles, etc. to support their family and self. 76% of the respondents revealed that earning and supplementing family was the demand from their family. 72% of the respondent liked to earn money rather than to study.

## 6. Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that illiteracy is the grass root level problem for every community. It is a hindrance for the development of any society. The present study revealed that parents gave preference to son's education because they support them in old age. All parents were paid low wages who worked in different sectors. Girls remained illiterate due to lack of parental support and poverty. Parents supported male child's education rather than females. Co-education, lack of transport facility, attitude of teachers were not amongst the factors affecting girl's education. Illiterate respondents regret of being illiterate and feel lack of being self-reliant, self-confident, etc. Respondents liked to spend time with illiterates only.

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