

Women Literacy and Women Self Sufficiency is the Crucial Elements for Family Sustainability and Family Development: A Study for Ahemednagar District From State of Maharashtra

^aShivajirao K.Bachchhavpatil, ^bRajashree Gujarathi

^aAssistant Professor, Dept. of B.C.A, S.M.B.S.T.College,Sangamner, Dist Ahemadnagar, Maharashtra, India

^bProfessor, Sinhgad Institute of Business Management Chandivali, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

More than two-thirds of the world's 793 million illiterate adults (two-thirds of them women) are found in only eight countries and India is one of them. The female literacy rate in India is lower than the male literacy rate. Maharashtra is the seventh most literate state in India. Major factor behind the improved social and economic status of women is literacy. Literacy and self-sufficiency gives women self-confidence, economic liberty and thus increasing their participation in decision-making processes. This paper focuses on the contribution of women literacy and women earning for family sustainability and development for Ahemednagar district from state of Maharashtra.

KEYWORD: Literacy, sustainability, self-earning, women empowerment etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. According to a global study conducted by Thomson Reuters, India is the "fourth most dangerous country" in the world for women.

More than two-thirds of the world's 793 million illiterate adults (two-thirds of them women) are found in only eight countries and India is one of them. If the second most populated nation on Earth is to assume its role as a world economic leader, before becoming digitally or financially literate it must eradicate adult illiteracy. In today's information society, education is the driving force behind a strong economic and social development. Statistics show that illiteracy and poor economies go hand in hand. The Bihar state is India's poorest state has the lowest women's literacy rate in the nation. Maharashtra is the seventh most literate state in India. Values are lower in rural areas than in urban ones. It pinpointed three major causes among them; gender based inequality, social discrimination and economic exploitation. Literacy and self-sufficiency gives women self-confidence, economic liberty and thus increasing their participation in decision-making processes. It heightens social awareness and increases the chances at success of literate women's daughters.

In India when you educate a man you are educating an individual, but when you educate a woman, you are educating an entire community. (Tashi Chering, founding member of the Women's Literacy Project of Gulabgarh, India. District Paddar, J&K). Women who learn collectively can begin working collectively towards "India's Innovation Stimulus" thus becoming a vital force in the growing economic and

technological power that is India.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Though it is gradually raising the female literacy rate in India, is lower than the male literacy rate. Compared to boys, far fewer girls are enrolled in the schools, and many of them drop out. In Maharashtra only 19.2% of the households were female-headed. However, approximately 35% of the households below the poverty line were found to be female-headed. One issue can not be ignored: Is there a relationship between illiteracy and income? Some of the figures at the extremes in the rates of literacy compared to the range of GNP per capita could suggest that there is a correlation.

Literacy Rate	Per capita Income
Below 40%	Less than \$600
Above 98%	More than \$12,000

(Source www.literacy.com)

‘A better educated and self-sufficient mother has fewer and better educated children. She is more productive at home and in the workplace. And she raises a healthier family since she can better apply improved hygiene and nutritional practices’. Literacy rate in Maharashtra has seen upward trend and is 82.91 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 89.82 percent while female literacy is at 75.48 percent. In 2001, literacy rate in Maharashtra stood at 76.88 percent of which male and female were 85.97 percent and 67.03 percent respectively. In actual numbers, total literates in Maharashtra stands at 82,512,225 of which males were 46,294,041 and females were 36,218,184. Sex Ratio in Maharashtra is 946 i.e. for each 1000 male, which is above national average of 940 as per census 2011. In 2001, the sex ratio of female was 922 per 1000 males in Maharashtra. Male literates in Ahmadnagar district are 1,826,412.

Sr. No.	Particulars	Percentage/Value
1.	Female literates	71.15
2.	Male literacy	88.81
3.	Male Population	2,348,802
4.	Female Population	2,194,281
5.	Population growth rate	12.43

Table 1. Literacy Status in Ahemednagar District

Source: www.maharashtrgov.com.in

Women Literacy provides the option of becoming members of a self-confident and informed populace that can understand issues, represent themselves, take responsibility for self-improvement and family health, and better participate in civic affairs. These are among the priceless payoffs of literacy. Self sufficient women around the world make significant contributions to the economic life of their families, their communities, and their countries. Women literacy and self earning itself becomes the arena where women learn to shape their own lives.

In the history of human development, woman has been as important as man. In fact, the status, employment and work performed by women in society are the indicator of a nation’s overall progress. Without the participation of women in national activities, the social, economical or political progress of a country will be stagnated. The evidence going to present in this study reveals that interaction between social, economic,

cultural and human benefits needs to be recognized by women literacy and women self-sufficiency in order to sustain the changes taking place.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Low social status of women gets reflected in low economic status. It is noticed that about 61 per cent of the Indian women are illiterates as per 1991 census. Accordingly, most of the women work in unorganized sector either in agriculture or in household industries. This in turn does not get captured in "statistical purdah" created by existing concepts and the methods of measuring labor participation that creates invisibility of women's contribution to National Income of the country (**Gopalan, 1995**). For example, the census defines work as gainful economic activities but activities done for domestic consumption are not considered as work. So it is finding that as late as 1991 only 22 per cent of total female population is considered to be workers in contrast to 52 percent of the male population though the rural areas show slightly higher female work participation rate i.e. 27 percent. As expected the urban area has failed to provide many avenues for female workers as is evident from the statistics. (Premi and Raju, 1994). Lack of women education is a significant health risk, and the relationship between the lack of education and ill health among women and children is well documented.

The highest rates of illiteracy among women are found in regions that report high rates of infant mortality, low life expectancy, and poor nutrition. Women who are poorly educated are less aware that an unsanitary household and unclean drinking water can be lethal. They are less likely to seek out health-related information services. Since the female literacy rate is 71.15 per cent in Ahmednagar district, the percentage of women employees in government offices are much lower than that of men (the percentage being 7.50 and 34.91 respectively in 1990). Thus it is notice that the low status of women in the society gets reflected in low status of employment opportunities which gets reinforced by lack of confidence and economic liberty in Ahmednagar district.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Why women have restricted access to education, training, property ownership, financial credit, and other resources needed for self-sufficiency?

5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The prime aim of this research is to focus on the contribution of women literacy and women earning for family sustainability and development for Ahmednagar district. The other objectives of this research are as follows,

1. To study the impact of women literacy on family education and health development.
2. To study the effect of women literacy on social and economical development.
3. To study the effect of self earnings women on self-confidence, participation in family decision making.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE SELECTION

The underlying methodology of the research is based on a grounded theory approach that is, to develop a series of theoretical propositions that describe how literate and self earning women make positive impact on family development. A convenience

sample was selected that included Doctors, Teachers, Nurses, service women from Government and Private sectors. All samples were studied and selected randomly. The primary method being a series of structured interviews and questionnaire. Approximately 30 interviews were taken from each stream and questionnaires were collected separately A questionnaire was designed and working women were asked to fill it. Interviews were taken with working women. Interviews lasted between 20 to 40 minutes.

Secondary-data for Research Paper is accumulated through Manuals, Journals, Reference Books, Reports, Research papers and Government websites.

7. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The present study attempts to study the status of empowerment of literate and working women in Ahmednagar district. The study was carried out in various schools, colleges, Hospital, Banks, Government and private offices. The collected data was tabulated as per the questions and percentage of answer was noted for literate and self earning women empowerment.

The questionnaire was quantitative and focused on education level; work profile such as type of organization, job title, working hours, job security, as well as information on salaries and savings. The women were also asked on their participation in family decision making, economic liberty, confidence building, and involvement in society. Self earning women's were also asked about their involvement in community participation. Here is a questionnaire and an analysis of the Data.

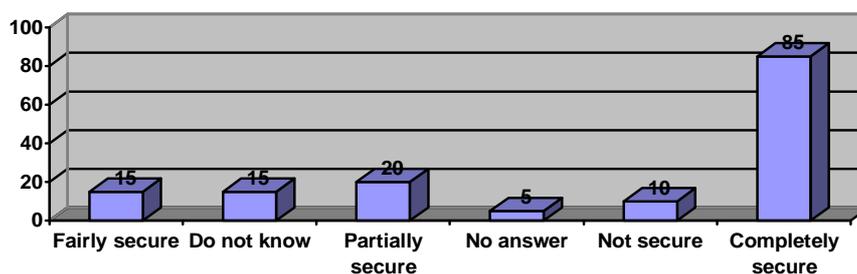
I) What is the main reason you are working?

Sr. No.	No. of Respondent	Income	Do not know	Self Satisfaction	No Answer	Opportunity to spend time with others
1.	150	76	14	40	10	10

Table 2. Reasons for working.

Interpretation: - Among 150 respondents 50.55% of respondents were agreed that main reason for service is Income and 26.66% respondents agreed that it is for self satisfaction and 06 % respondents said that job is for opportunity to spend time with others.

II) How do you think your job is secure?



Graph 1. Job security for Women. (Source: Primary data)

Interpretation: - Among 150 respondent 53.33% of respondents agreed that there were secured with the jobs. 10% respondents were fairly secure and 13.33 % partially secure with their jobs.

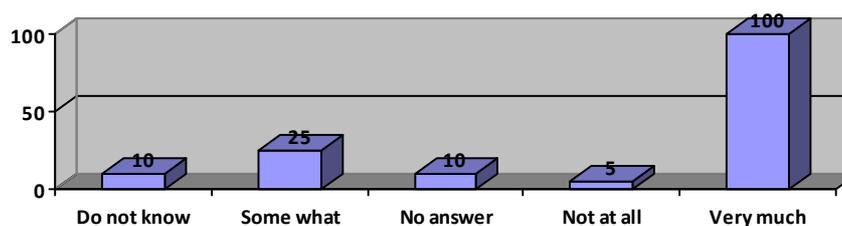
III) Does society have different attitudes towards self earning women?

Sr. No.	No. of Respondent	Yes	No
1.	150	89	61

Table 3. Society’s attitude towards earning women(Source: Primary data)

Interpretation: - Among 150 respondent 89 % of respondents agreed that society have different attitudes towards self earning women. 61% agreed that society have neither different attitude towards self earning women.

IV) Does your earning have an impact on your family decision making?



Graph 2. Family decision making. (Source: Primary data)

Interpretation: - Among 150 respondent 66.66% of respondents said that they were involved in family decision making. 16.66% respondents were involved in family decision making partially and 05 % said that they were not involved in family decision making.

IV) Since joining Job, does your image in community changed?

Sr. No.	No. of Respondent	Do not know	Some what	No Answer	Not at all	Positive Image
1.	150	15	25	10	05	95

Table 4. Image in Community. (Source: Primary data)

Interpretation: - Among 150 respondent 63.33% of respondents said that job changed their image in community positively. 10% respondents said that the image in community change partially and 03 % were agreed that they job and self earning had not any impact on image in community.

V) Do you feel that Literacy and self earnings are the best option for Family Management?

Sr. No.	No. of Respondent	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1.	150	109	30	10	01

Table no. 5 Family Management (Source: Primary data)



Graph 3. Family Management (Source: Primary data)

Interpretation: - Among 150 respondent 72.66% of respondents strongly agree that self earning with literacy is the best option for family management. 20% respondents were agreed with same opinions. 06 % respondents remain neutral and 0.06 % respondents disagreeing.

VI) Do you have economic liberty in your family?

Sr. No	No. of Respondent	Do not know	Some What	No Answer	Not at all	Very Much
1.	150	05	50	10	10	75

Table 6. Economic liberty in family (Source: Primary data)

Interpretation: - Among 150 respondent 50% of respondents said that they have complete economic liberty in their families. 33.33% respondents somewhat economic liberty. 06 % admitted that they do not have any type of economic liberty in their families.

VII) Do self earnings give self-confidence, and economic development?

Sr.No.	No. of Respondent	Do not know	Some What	No Answer	Not at all	Very Much
1.	150	01	30	10	10	99

Table 7. Women self-confidence and social development (Source: Primary data)



Graph 4. Women self-confidence and social development. (Source: Primary data)

Interpretation: - Among 150 respondent 66% of respondents admitted that self earnings heighten their confidence and family economic development. 20% respondents have somewhat self-confidence, increasing. 06% admitted that they do not have any type of self-confidence and economic development.

8. SUGGESTION:

Literacy and self-sufficiency gives women self-confidence, economic liberty and thus increasing their participation in decision-making processes in families and society is crucial.

Following are the suggestion to strengthen & to empower the women within and outside the family.

1. Changing societal attitudes, community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
2. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
3. All forms of discrimination against the girl child and violation of her rights shall be eliminated by undertaking strong measures both preventive and punitive within and outside the family.
4. Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination.
5. Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured.

9. CONCLUSIONS:

The respondents living and working in Ahmednagar District and were relatively young, educated women. The skills and economic power the women have gained from formal employment has led to higher feelings of self worth for many, a sense of independence and pride in being able to help their families possibly move out of poverty.

The data shows clear evidence of the importance of women's earning to family income.

On an average the women earned money for their families. This money was used in positive ways to help with education, medical and living expenses as well as home management. Economic empowerment has also led to higher levels of decision making in the family. Positive opinion about work and respect from the society and their family members were sources of support and empowerment for women. Important factor behind the improved social and economic status of women from Ahmednagar District is literacy and self-sufficiency. Employment and education gives women self-confidence, increasing their participation in family decision-making processes.

The study is based on expressed opinions of the respondents, which may not be free from their individual perception, and bias in spite of researcher efforts to get them as objectively as possible.

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