



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

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BENEFITS GAINED BY RURAL WOMEN THROUGH LITERACY PROGRAMME IN DINDIGUL DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

KEY WORDS: Benefits, Literacy, Women,

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ABSTRACT

Literacy is seen as an enabler for the most vulnerable and for women and girls with no or minimal education. The main objective of the study was benefits gained by the rural women through literacy Programme conducted in Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu, India. The study was descriptive in nature. Purposive sampling was adopted for the study. A household survey was conducted in Five experimental villages namely, Kalikkampatti, Ambathurai, Thoppampatti, kollapatti and M.G.R colony of selected panchayats in Dindigul District. The study concluded that all women learners invariably reported that the participation in literacy programme helped them to read the name-board of a bus. 98.8 per cent stated that they could read and write Tamil letters; 91.6 per cent shared their views happily that they could write their house address correctly; 85.5 per cent of them learned to put their signature.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is seen as an enabler for the most vulnerable and for women and girls with no or minimal education. Improved literacy and numeracy can help poor people to develop more productive livelihoods, protection and peace and to take on increasingly active roles in transforming their families and communities.

In India, out of the 1210.6 million population, consisting 623.1 million male and 587.5 million female, only 763.5 million (434.6 million male and 328.9 million female) are literate (Keshherwani, 2014). The literacy trends of the States/ UTs present quite a diversified pattern. The literates constitute 74.04 per cent for all persons, 82.14 per cent for males and 65.46 per cent for females (Census of India, 2011). Thus, only three-fourths of the population aged 7 years and above is literate in the country. In other words, four out of every five males and two out of every three females in the country are literate. The females in the country lag behind their male counterparts in literacy attainment.

Review of Literature

Ferdinand et al (2019) was investigated the Influence of Adult Literacy Education on Socio-Economic Development of Women in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. Purposive random technique was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 550 women from selected organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis that were beneficiaries of adult literacy education. Majority of the respondents generally agreed to a high extent that adult literacy education influences the mental development of women in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. The mean responses showed that adult literacy education: helps women to solve their family problems; helps women think out solutions for their community. It also equips the woman with the ability to process information in their environment accurately; gives them the ability to solve their health problems; and to contribute intelligibly in political matters. Adult literacy education gives women the capacity to think productively; and help their children academically.

Kingah's (2014) observed that the two years' training in mother tongue literacy of Fulfulde was more useful to Mbororo women in the areas of personal, family and community life, health related issues, income-generating activities, attitude towards children's education, decision-making, perception of the status of a woman, engendering change, reading, writing and communication than literacy in Arabic and French.

Tharakan (2004) reported that only 60 of the 150 neo-literates (40 per cent) were found to have reading and writing abilities at a 'desirable' level. Interestingly, 108 neo-literates (72 per

cent) had retained the ability to read. What the other 60 per cent of neo-literates seem to have lost is the ability to write. It required a lot of persuasion to make them write.

Sue Nicholson (2019) stated that literacy is seen as an enabler for the most vulnerable and for women and girls with no or minimal education. Improved literacy and numeracy can help poor people to develop more productive livelihoods, protection and peace and to take on increasingly active roles in transforming their families and communities. Women now had a greater share in decision making as they were able to make their own money. They were not cheated as much and could understand what they were signing.

Objectives of the study

1. To understand the background details of the women learners, Literacy Facilitators and Literacy Education Supervisors
2. To assess the benefits of literacy programme for Rural Women in Selected Panchayats of Dindigul District.

Methodology of the study

The study was descriptive in nature. Purposive sampling was adopted for the study. A household survey was conducted in Five experimental villages namely, Kalikkampatti, Ambathurai, Thoppampatti, kollapatti and M.G.R colony of selected panchayats in Dindigul District. Using an interview schedule, data were collected from the illiterate women in the age range of 35 to 55 years, for preparing a detailed profile of the illiterate women in the five experimental villages.

During the survey, an effort was made to identify the potential Literacy Facilitators (LF). i.e. persons competent to train women in the neighbourhood to become literate. Most of them were students studying in the 7th to 12th standard or volunteers in the age group of 12 to 18 years who exhibited readiness to teach atleast two illiterates in their locality for one hour a day. Based on the information collected through the survey, a status report was prepared at panchayat level.

In order to supervise the Literacy Facilitators, ten Literacy Education Supervisors were identified from the five experimental villages. They were the local persons having leadership qualities and a spirit of volunteerism. Their qualification was prescribed as pass in the higher secondary examination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The village-wise distribution of the women along with the Literacy Facilitators and the Literacy Education Supervisors involved in the literacy intervention programme is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of the Persons Involved in the Literacy Intervention Programme

Name of the Villages	Non-literate women (35-55 years)	Literacy Facilitators	Literacy Education Supervisors
Kalikkampatti	60	30	4
Ambathurai	50	25	3
Thoppampatti	34	17	1
Kollapatti	22	11	1
MGR Colony	14	7	1
Total	180	90	10

From the above table, 180 non-literate women, 90 Literacy facilitators and 10 Literacy Education Supervisors was selected for the literacy experiment in the five villages namely, Kalikkampatti, Ambathurai, Thoppampatti, Kollapatti and M.G.R colony. Each Literacy Facilitator selected two illiterates each from their locality. Accordingly 180 women illiterates were selected for the learning process.

Table 2 Benefits gained by the Women Learners from the Literacy Programme

Benefits	Learners* (N=180)	
	No.	%
Could read name board of the bus	180	100.0
Was able to read and write Tamil letters	178	98.8
Was able to write house address	165	91.6
Was able to put signature	154	85.5
Could fulfil the needs of women who could not fulfil their literacy needs during their childhood	150	83.3
Gained confidence to travel independently	103	57.2
Could do bank transactions independently	93	51.6
Could read sign board and advertisements bearing big letters	57	31.6
Was able to read and write personal letters	46	25.5
Was able to form sentences and read fluently	22	12.2

***Multiple Responses**

As shown in Table 2, all learners invariably reported that the participation in literacy programme helped them to read the name-board of a bus. 98.8 per cent stated that they could read and write Tamil letters; 91.6 per cent shared their views happily that they could write their house address correctly; 85.5 per cent of them learned to put their signature. 83.3 per cent of the women stated that women who could not fulfil their literacy needs during their childhood could accomplish it through the literacy programme. 57.2 per cent felt that they could travel alone with full confidence, because they could read the name board of the bus. 51.6 per cent were able to carry out bank transactions independently; 31.6 per cent stated that they could read sign board and advertisement bearing big letters; 25.5 per cent of them were able to read and write personal letters and 12.2 per cent were able to form sentences and read fluently. The benefits of literacy programme gained by the women learners is also presented graphically in Figure 1.

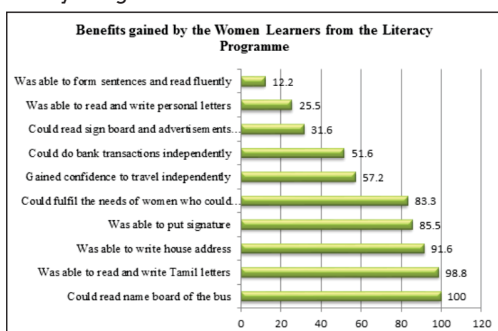


Figure 1

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the primary needs of villagers like reading name-board of a bus, read and write Tamil letters and putting signature, etc., could be satisfied only because of the training under the literacy programme. Most importantly, the literacy programmes resulted in increasing the confidence level of women in performing certain tasks independently. The study recommended that educated person and their volunteer participation in motivating the women to read and write in local languages is the need of the hour to enhance total literacy in India.

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