

Literacy and its impact on the frame work of the society amongst Alipur district of Delhi

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Abstract

Literacy is the ability to read and write. A child is literate by the age of 10 years when he or she reaches 5th grade. But literacy must encompass not only ability to read and write but be knowledgeable enough to understand various concepts which are taught till grade 10th or 12th.

Aim: Aim of the present study is to look into the literacy levels of ever married women of age group 18 to 44 years of Alipur district of Delhi. The study also looks into correlation of literacy to age at first delivery, number of children and duration of breast feeding.

Methodology: A cross-sectional data of 198 ever married women in the age group 18-44 years were collected in 2019-20 from Alipur district, Delhi. The data was collected through interview and filling up of pre tested schedules. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 16 and Microsoft Excel 2001.

Results: The results indicate 49% of the women had their delivery in the age group of 15- 20 years, which indicates early marriage followed by early motherhood. 51% of the women had their delivery of their first child at 21 to 25 years age, which again indicates early marriage. This shows most of the women have completed their first delivery by 25 years, It is also been found that 40.4% of the women have 2 children , 49.4% women have 3 and 4 children whereas 10.1% women have 6 children. 7.1% of the women do not breast feed their children, although it is a low percentage, yet it is important to look into reasons behind the lag. It was found that due to bad

health or because these women wanted to go to work early that the children were not breast fed. 34.8 % of the women who breast fed their babies till 4 months and majority that is 48.5% of the women breast fed their children for more than 8 months.

Conclusion: The present study clearly depicts that education of women which is not given due importance lays the basic framework of the society as it directly or indirectly decides the fertility and family structure.

Key Words: Breast feeding, fecundity, fertility, illiteracy.

Introduction

The importance of women education for development is imperative for national growth (Kaur,2018). Rural women educational status has been designed through two parameters: first is the level of literary status, and second is the constraints faced by them to get education. It is revealed that among rural women literacy is low. If a comparison is done between various social groups, the scheduled caste women are at the bottom of the scale (Kaur ,2018). The constraints in achieving education are poverty , parental illiteracy, low socio economic status of family, negative attitude towards girls education, cost of education and dowry system. India accounts for 30 percent of the world's total non-literate population and out of which 70 percent are women. Women constitute 48.2 percent of the total population and 37.6 percent are still non-literate. The illiteracy level in rural areas stands at 53.9 percent. 68.84 per cent of our population lives in villages. (Census, 2011).

The education determines the marriage pattern and age of child birth in developed societies (Dommaraju, 2009). Pre-marital child bearing is uncommon in India and South Asia (Veron,2008) In our society, where child bearing can take place within a marriage, the time of first birth is governed by two factors i.e. age at marriage and age at first birth. In India and Nepal, where very early marriages take place, co-habitation does not take place immediately after marriage. In such situations, women stay at their parents home till maturity is reached and go to their marital home after gauna (Basu ,1993; Choe, Thapa and Mishra ,2005; Caltabiano and Castiglioni ,2008). Loess curves have been made to study relationship between age at marriage and birth of first child between 2003 and 2006. They have made four panels i.e. for nation as a whole, for Rajasthan (a state with high percentage of early marriage), for Kerala (with low percentage of early marriage) and the last one with a combination of some major states. National

level indicates non linear relationship as women who get married before 15 years, do not immediately indulge into child birth, in Rajasthan, it is non-linear. In kerala, it is linear and erratic pattern for all major states (Dommaraju, 2009).According to Kim, 2016 the fertility decision of women is influenced by the education of the women in the following ways: education has positive health impact on women and children. With higher level of education, children have higher survival rate and thus reduces the desire for more children. Women who are more knowledgeable and so are better at using contraceptives. Breast feeding is important for the nourishment of the child (Lucen et al 2012). It is the best nutrition for the baby, during the first six months of life as this practice protects the baby from diseases. According to Senthilvel et al 2013, the induction of breast milk was significant with education of mother. According to Baqui et al 2007, major cause of neo-natal deaths are pre mature births (28%), sepsis and pneumonia (26%), birth asphyxia and injuries (23%), tetanus (7%) and congenital anomalies (7%). This neo natal mortality can be reduced by starting breast feeding during the first hour of birth. So, awareness through education of women can only help to fight neonatal death.

Aim and Objective

The present study tried to look into literacy level of ever married women in the age group 18-44 years and to observe how literacy is correlated to age at first delivery, number of children and duration of breast feeding.

Methodology

A total 198 respondents were taken for this present study which was conducted in the Alipur district of Delhi. The age groups of 18-44 years were considered for this study which was conducted during the period of 2019-2020. The data were collected through interview and filling up of pre tested schedules. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 16 and by using Microsoft Excel 2001. Chi square test, correlation were applied and the significance level was taken at 0.05 level.

Results

In the present study, factors influencing the socio demographic profile of Alipur district were looked into, which included variables like education, age during first delivery, number of children and the duration of breast fed. Table 1: shows the socio- Demographic profile of Alipur women in the age group 18 to 44 years, The ever married women were taken into consideration which shows 49% of the women deliver in the age group 15- 20 years, which indicates that early

marriage followed by early motherhood. 51% of the women deliver their first child at 21 to 25 years, which again indicates early marriage. This shows most of the women have completed their first delivery by 25 years. Table 1 also shows that 40.4% of the women have 2 children, 49.4% women have 3 and 4 children whereas 10.1% women have 6 children. Table 1 also looks into a very important inter-related factor that is duration of breast feeding it is observed that 7.1% of the women do not breast feed their children, although it is a low in percentage, yet it is important to look into reasons behind the lag. It was found that due to bad health or because these women wanted to go to work early that the children were not breast fed. 34.8 % of the women breast fed their babies till 4 months and majority that is 48.5% of the women breast fed their children for more than 8 months.

Table 1: Socio Demographic Profile of Alipur Women

EDUCATION		
	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	83	41.9
Upto 10th	45	22.7
12 th and Above	70	35.4
Age During First Delivery		
15-20 Years	97	49
21-25 Years	101	51
Number of Children		
1 & 2	80	40.4
3 & 4	98	49.4
5 & 6	20	10.1
Duration of breast feeding in Months		
Nil	14	7.1
1-4 Months	69	34.8
5-7 Months	19	9.6
8 & above	96	48.5

Table: 2 show the comparison of age at first delivery to education of women. It is observed that 72 percent of the women who were illiterate conceived in the age group 15 to 20 years. Only 19% of the women who were 12th pass and above gave birth to their first child in the age group 15 to 20 years. The reason being, women who achieve a higher level of education are engaged in education and their intellect guided them to plan their family. It is observed that significant differences exist between education and age at first delivery ($p=0.000$). This indicates that with increase in level of education, the age at delivery also increases. This is shown in table 2 that women who are educated beyond 12th deliver in the age group 21 to 25 years are 51.

Table 2: Comparison of Age of women of Alipur during First Delivery with Education

EDUCATION	15-20 Years	21-25 Years	Total	Chi Square Value	2 tailed Sig Value
Illiterate	72	11	83	83.61	0.000*
Upto 10th	6	39	45		
12 th and Above	19	51	70		

*Significant (P Value ≤ 0.05)

Table: 3 show the comparison of number of children that a woman gives birth in relation to education of women of Alipur. It is observed that significant differences ($P=0.000$) exist between level of education and number of children that a women gives birth. It is clearly observed that 56 numbers of the women who are educated 12th and above give birth to 1 or 2 children only. Only 3 of these women give birth to 5 or 6 children. There are reasons for this low number to give birth to more children. The reason could be religious taboo or probably awaiting for a boy child.

Table 3: Comparison of Number of Children with Education of women of Alipur

EDUCATION	1 & 2	3 & 4	5 & 6	Total	Chi Square Value	2 tailed Sig Value
Illiterate	6	62	15	83	87.19	0.000*
Upto 10th	27	16	2	45		
12 th and Above	56	11	3	70		

*Significant (P Value \leq 0 .05)

Table: 4 show that significant differences (P=0.000) exist between education and duration of breast feeding. It is observed that 52 of the women who are educated till 12th or beyond, their duration of breast feeding is the longest that is 8 months and above. Very few women do not breast feed their children irrespective of their education. This in turn indicates some kind of awareness among all sections of women whether literate or illiterate.

Table 4: Comparison of duration of breast feeding in Months with Education of women of Alipur

EDUCATION	No Breastfeeding	1-4 Months	5-7 Months	8 & above	Total	Chi Square Value	2 tailed Sig Value
Illiterate	4	63	7	9	83	113.3	0.000*
Upto 10th	5	0	5	35	45		
12 th and Above	5	6	7	52	70		

*Significant (P Value \leq 0 .05)

Table: 5 showed the positive correlation between age during first delivery, duration of breast feeding in months with educational qualification where as with education the number of children is negatively correlated.

Table 5: Showing Correlation between Educational Qualification and Other Variables

EDUCATION	Age During First Delivery	Number of Children	Duration of breast feeding in Months
	.386*	-.462*	.569*
	.000	.000	.000

*Significant (P Value \leq 0 .05)

Discussion

The present study which is a cross-sectional study is being conducted at Alipur district, Delhi in 2019-20. Ever married women in the age group 18 to 44 years were involved in the study. A data of 198 which was collected from Alipur district was being analysed and studied. Socio demographic variables like education, age at marriage, age at first child birth and duration of breast feeding are being considered. It is observed that the literacy level is very low in these women. 41.9% of the women are illiterate. This is in line with 2011 census. India accounts for 30 percent of the world's total non-literate population and out of which 70 percent are women. Women constitute 48.2 percent of the total population and 37.6 percent are still non-literate. The illiteracy level in rural areas stands at 53.9 percent (Census, 2011). It is observed that all socio demographic factors are inter-related and most important of all is education (Caldwell, 1973, Caldwell, et al, 1983, 1988, Schultz 1984). Education is the root cause and effect of everything. The education determines the marriage pattern and age of child birth in developed societies (Dommaraju, 2009). It is observed that significant differences exist when comparison between women education and age at first birth is done. It is indicated that education and age at first birth are related in such a way that, if level of education increases, the age at which a woman gives birth to first child also increases. Women who have higher level of education are aware of pros and cons of giving birth to a child; they are very well aware how they have to look into the well being of their children. Women, who achieve higher level of education, tend to marry late, as they tend to complete their education before marriage. But it is also observed that women tend to give birth to their first child immediately after marriage because it proves their fecundity and grants them greater autonomy (Senthuraman, 2007; Barua and Kurz, 2001; Khan et al, 2009). When education level is compared to the number of children that is when women would give birth during her fecund period. It is observed that significant differences exist, which indicates that if literacy level increases, then women with higher education give birth to one or two children. Only a small number of highly educated women give birth to 5 or 6 children. There are serious reasons for the same it could be family pressure to give birth to a male child or religious taboo. Kim et al, 2016 states that education has positive health impact on women and children and thus children have higher survival rate and thus reduces the desire for more children. Women who are more knowledgeable and so are better at using

contraceptives. Education and breast feeding are positively correlated. Higher the education level, longer is the duration for which breast feeding is done. Educated women are very well aware, how breast feeding will improve their child's health, intellect and overall development of the child. It would ward them off various worries, which they would have to face, if their child is not immunized with mothers milk. According to Baqui et al, 2007, major cause for neo-natal deaths are pre mature births (28%), sepsis and pneumonia (26%), birth asphyxia and injuries (23%), tetanus (7%) and congenital anomalies (7%). This neo natal mortality can be reduced by starting breast feeding during the first hour of birth. So awareness through education of women can only help to fight neonatal death.

Conclusion

The present study clearly depicts that education of women which is not given due importance due to basic society frame work, which is patriarchal as it runs on male lines. Man is not only considered the bread earner of the family rather the world revolves around him. He is the decision maker in the family. So in a society where there are less resources, women education is considered, waste of time and money. This leads to increase in illiterate women. These women get married early which in turn decides the age at the time of birth of first child. It is observed that women who are educated have a delayed age of first delivery. Not only this, these women have fewer children as compared to illiterate women. Due to literacy they can plan the health and welfare of the family. They also breast feed their children for a longer duration. They understand that breast feeding a child is equivalent to immunizing a child against diseases which may not be known. So, it may be concluded that education of the women should not be considered important, that it will help them become financially independent. Although women being financially independent stand a lot of value but there literacy level decides the structure of the society which means a healthy family with healthy and well nourished children. In developed and developing countries, the women with higher education have less number of children than less-educated women. Education reduces fertility because more educated women earn more and may raise their children more effectively. Education also improves maternal and child health, thereby increasing a woman's ability to give birth to healthy children, reducing the economic necessity for more children. Educated women tend to breast feed for longer periods which lowers the child's exposure to diseases and also contributes to women reproductive health. An understanding of modern contraception helps women control birth. Finally, higher education

empowers women and includes them in household decision making on family planning. Each mechanism is significant, depending on the individual and institutional context, but there is limited evidence on the relative importance of each one (kim, 2016).

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