

## A PERCEPTUAL STUDY TO FIND OUT THE CAUSES OF FEMALE ILLITERACY IN MUMBAI'S SUBURBAN DISTRICT

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### Abstract

*Literacy is a process which dispels and promotes rational thinking and moulds human beings into becoming responsible citizens. The absence of literacy i.e. illiteracy has a negative impact on social as well as economic growth of the nation. This hinders the development of individuals, society, community and the country as a whole. For the success of any program, people should be motivated by providing necessary congenial environments, socio-economic conditions and committed efforts on the part of implementing bodies. In spite of the number of efforts made by central and state governments in India, still illiterates remain. This paper considers the perception of B.Ed student teachers to identify factors responsible for female remaining illiterate and suggests strategies to adopt for achieving better results in Mumbai's suburban district.*

**Key Words:** *female illiteracy, Mumbai's Suburban District, B.Ed*



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### Introduction:

The problem of illiteracy continues to be a global issue and social problem, obstructing developmental efforts in the era of globalization. At the individual level, illiteracy blocks the overall development of an individual. It prevents people from imparting education to their children and more significantly, makes them lack self-esteem, which in turn leads them to isolation. At the societal level, they face difficulties in functioning effectively in the knowledge driven world, face difficulties in community involvement and civic participation. Moreover, illiteracy also causes an inferiority complex. Despite a number of policies and programmes being initiated by the Government of India and spending of huge financial resources for removing illiteracy, the problem of illiteracy hasn't been solved. Illiteracy impacts the overall long- term GDP growth rate. A combination of social discouragement and individual choice largely explains the reasons of illiteracy.

Male literacy in the Mumbai's suburban district has touched 94.82 per cent from 91.56 per cent in 2001 and female literacy has gone up five per cent from 81.12 per cent in 2001 to 86.93per cent in 2011.This clearly indicates that there is still a long way to achieve 100 %

literacy mark. The sample chosen to understand the perspective of the causes is prospective teachers i.e. student teachers pursuing B.Ed. because it is imperative that they are sensitized about this issue.

### **Review of Related Literature:**

**Pawan Chaurasia & Others (2019)** shares illiteracy is one of the biggest issues of the modern world; it is found in every corner of the world. And hence they are focusing the depth of this issue in their localities and peer groups. This article is a small-scale survey with data from 500 individual from around the country, asking few important questions to understand the reality of this issue and giving few solutions.

Literacy gains made by children have been slow. The majority of the responses to the reason of low literacy is submitted as lack of awareness and poverty which they feel is the implication of lack of education. When the literacy rate rises in the rural areas, it will automatically sort the issue of poverty. Social groups such as NGOs, often willing and committed to counter hegemonic knowledge, emerge as one set of effective mechanisms for the acquisition of both literacy and empowerment of the underprivileged. Quite a few people who submitted the responses are aware about the NGOs working for the people and that's a major positive.

**Shiv Prakash Katiyar (2016)** expresses how India shares the highest proportion with more than one third of the world's illiterates along with one fourth illiterate population at the national level. Illiteracy is one of the important factors which negatively affect the socio-economic development of society. The illiterate population is isolated and excluded from mainstream society. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the pattern of illiteracy across the Indian states. The study is based on secondary data extracted from the Census of India 2011- applying the diagram and mapping to present status of illiteracy at a regional level. The analysis of the pattern of illiteracy reveals that illiteracy is the highest among rural females while it is lowest for urban males. The gap between male –female illiteracy indicates that there is heterogeneity in rural females and homogeneity in urban males. Moreover, there is a regional imbalance in educational as well as in empowerment efforts.

### **Need of the study:**

The first meeting of the World Congress of Education Ministers took place in Tehran, organized by UNESCO to discuss the problems of illiteracy at the international level on September 8, 1965. Since then this historic date has been observed as the International Literacy Day. Subsequently, the first international literacy day was celebrated on September 8, 1966. Therefore, this day has been celebrated each and every year. On the eve of International Literacy Day 2013, the Director General of UNESCO, emphasized that Literacy is much more than an educational priority-it is the ultimate investment in the future and the first step towards all the new forms of literacy required in the twenty first century. Illiteracy Flagging India 307, The International Literacy Day focuses on the empowering role of literacy and its importance for participation, citizenship and social development.

“After six months of deep disruption, education stands on fragile ground everywhere. Without remedial measures, this crisis will magnify the educational failures that already existed before it”, said UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Ms Stefania Giannini at the opening of the UNESCO global webinar held on International Literacy Day (ILD) 2020. In this period of pandemic, it is imperative that student teachers be sensitized about the issues of illiteracy among B.Ed. students and encourage them to take positive steps to help in literacy.

### **Rationale of the study:**

B.Ed. student teachers are chosen for understanding the perspectives of the causes of illiteracy because they are future teachers. They are the ones who will be the pulse of the society impacting young minds. So they need to realize the need of 100% literacy in the society. Moreover they cannot be just reluctant after understanding the causes and consequences of illiteracy, but have to actively get involved to work for it.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- To find out the perception of student teachers of social causes of female illiteracy
- To find out the perception of student teachers of economic causes of female illiteracy
- To find out the perception of student teachers of parents role in causes of female illiteracy
- To suggest role of student teachers to achieve 100 % female literacy

**Sample: 100 B.Ed. student teachers**

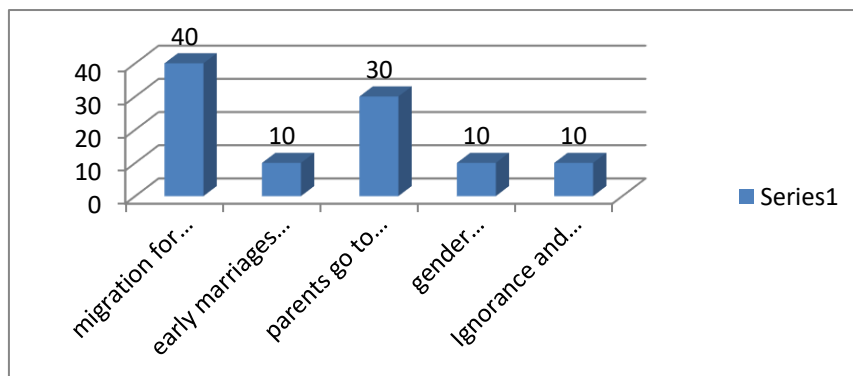
**Tool: To gather data for the research, online Questionnaire is administered to 100 B.Ed student teachers**

**Research Methodology: Based on the objectives of the research, Survey Methodology is used to carry on the research effectively.**

**Findings:**

**Social Factors impacting Female Illiteracy**

Migration for work in seasonal periods	Early marriages as per social custom	Parents go to their workplaces and household activities are undertaken by the young female children	Gender disparity at home and society in this region	Ignorance and traditional thoughts plays a negative role in educating female child
40%	10%	30%	10%	10%



**Inferences:**

Comparing sub points of social factors impacting female illiteracy, 40 % amounts to migration work in seasonal periods.

Out of 36 districts in Maharashtra, Area wise Mumbai Suburban district is the 2nd smallest district in the whole of Maharashtra and it ranks second in population. The highest population is not only because of the natural increase but also because of the influx of migrants who come in large number. So along with Mumbai City District, Mumbai Suburban District is also known as the Magnet of Migrants because of various reasons. Basically there are many pull factors than the push factors which are attracting so many people to Mumbai Suburban District. So the density of population is highest.

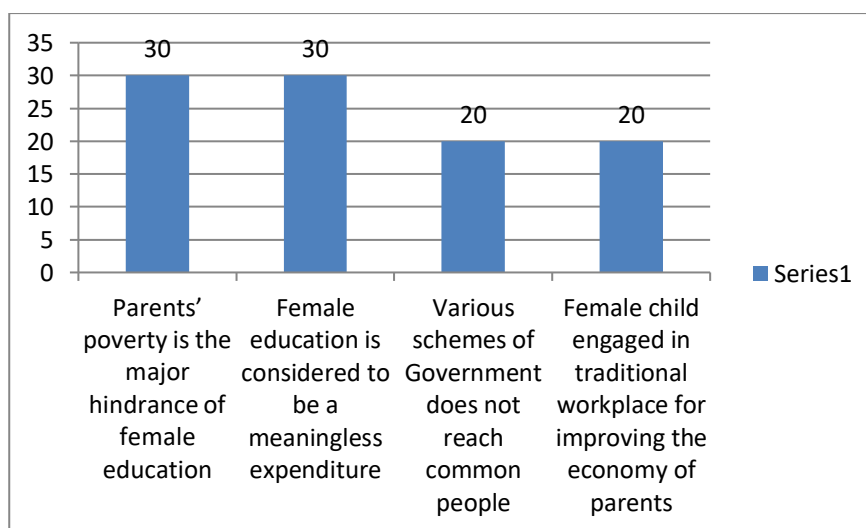
The migrants do not only come for skilled jobs or professional jobs. There is a big chunk of migrants who come seasonally e.g. helping in construction work. So since it is not a permanent job, school going children suffer a lot since they keep on transferring to the city and native place very occasionally.

**30 % reason** of female illiteracy is that parents go to their workplaces and household activities are undertaken by the young female children. This is a common scenario in many localities affecting education of children specially girls.

**10 % each is due to** Early marriages as per social custom, Gender disparity at home and society in this region, and Ignorance and traditional thoughts plays a negative role in educating female child. Though we are in 21st Century, where modernization and industrialization is at the peak, but still the mental set up of many people are not in cognizance with it. We still witness gender bias in family. Lot of stereotyping ideology and hence those practices are being carried in the society which further hinders optimum growth and development of girls.

**Economic factors impacting female illiteracy**

Parents’ poverty is the major hindrance of female education	Female education is considered to be a meaningless expenditure	Various schemes of Government does not reach common people	Female child engaged in traditional workplace for improving the economy of parents
30%	30%	20%	20%



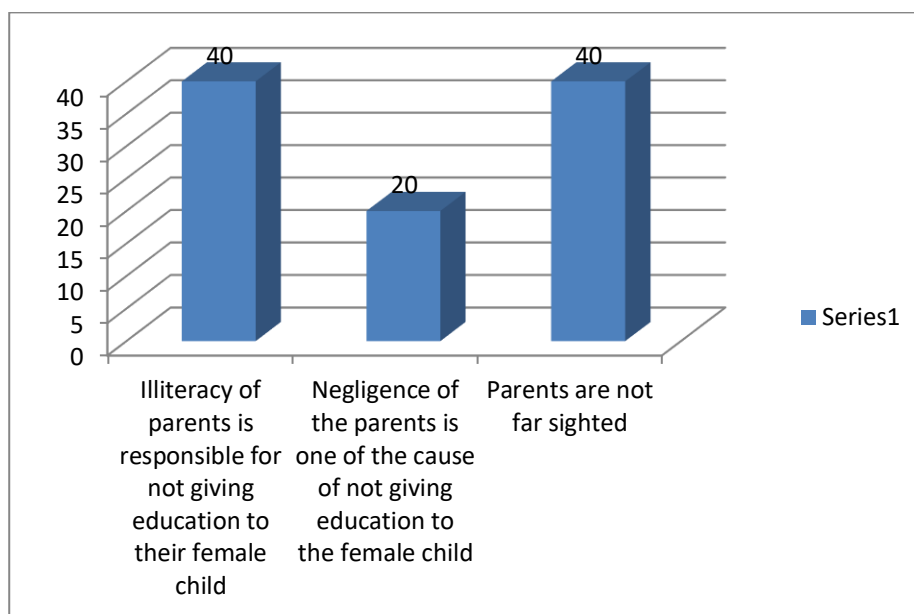
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As per 2011 Census, Mumbai Suburban District has recorded a houseless population of 19,077 persons comprising of 12,674 males and 6,403 females. There is still a large number of people living in slums in highly inhumanity conditions. Their basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and education is not taken care of.

**30 % each** of the economic factors of Parents’ poverty is the major hindrance of female education and Female education is considered to be a meaningless expenditure constitute Economic factors impacting female illiteracy. **Moreover 20 % each of** Various schemes of Government does not reach common people and Female child engaged in traditional workplace for improving the economy of parents results as a hindrance to 100 % literacy rate.

**Role of parents impacting female illiteracy**

Illiteracy of parents is responsible for not giving education to their female child	Negligence of the parents is one of the cause of not giving education to the female child	Parents are not far sighted
40%	20%	40%



**Inferences:**

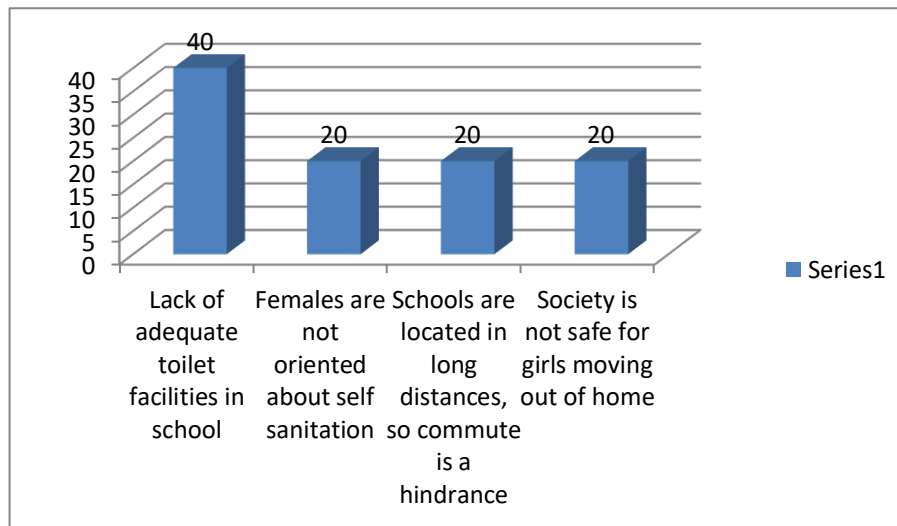
**40 % each** of Role of parents impacting female illiteracy is due to illiteracy of parents is responsible for not giving education to their female child and parents are not far sighted

resulting in shunted growth of children in education. **20 % constitute** due to negligence of the parents is one of the cause of not giving education to the female child.

So the major reason what B.Ed students perceive is it's not the negligence but since the parents are themselves illiterate , are not farsighted and motivated resulting in snowball effect of withdrawing their children towards education.

**Other reasons**

Lack of adequate toilet facilities in school	Females are not oriented about self sanitation	Schools are located in long distances, so commute is a hindrance	Society is not safe for girls moving out of home
40%	20%	20%	20%



**Inferences:**

Average number of Schools and colleges per 10,000 population in the District. Greater Mumbai (M Corp.) recorded 2 primary, 2 middle and 1 secondary/ matriculation schools per 10,000 populations.

Number of toilets and sanitation is very poor in many schools resulting in **40 %** of other reasons as lack of adequate toilet facilities in school, and **20 %** each as females are not oriented about self-sanitation, schools are located in long distances, so commute is a hindrance and Society is not safe for girls moving out of home.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions:**

**Suggest few more causes which are hindrance to achieve 100% female literacy in Mumbai's suburban district.**

- Lack of enforcements that ensure that all children are sent to school, lenient to almost no action on child labor.
- Due to traditional norms girls are never considered as a person who will financially support the family whereas she has considered a family burden
- It is also that girls will be married and go to other's place hence need to taught household works than education. Plus if girls studied more than boys , it will be difficult to get a eligible boy to marry her. Caste system and gender discrimination is still prevailing in India.
- Females are expected to do home chores, language barrier due to migration, college timing not suitable for a few as they do jobs, poor background.
- Sanitization ,Education , Poverty, Awareness, are causes which are hindrance to achieve 100% female literacy
- Special Schools should be set up for girls with proper hygiene and sanitation. The parents of girl child should be made aware about how important it is to worry about their education rather than their marriage.
- The interest for education and literacy is not nurtured among the girls as well. They are from a very young age made to believe of themselves as a housewife or homemaker. Resulting in women not wanting to complete their education after a certain time period.
- Burden of house work on girls, emotional blackmail and pressures put on girls to understand the family situation and leave the idea of studying by their own self.
- Reluctance ingrained in female child about education by the family and society which makes the female child herself reluctant to join schools.

**How can you as a student teacher contribute to female literacy?**

- By educating the issues of girl illiteracy. Show videos, seminars. So even they can carry forth the message. One educated mother will uplift the entire family.



- I really want proper education for all females as then they can be independent and strong. I can contribute to female literacy by spreading a word on its importance. Education is basic right for all hence females should receive it too.
- I can teach student in a group and can hold literacy camps in target area by joining NGOs already working in these fields.
- I will held sessions on Self-confidence & decision making for illiterate girls.
- As a part of practice teaching, we can be associated with NGO's that teach underprivileged girls and teach them the importance of education to be self-sufficient with education.
- Basic education, to learn more, to learn basic skills are some of the contribution as a student teacher to female literacy.
- I will ensure female literacy by motivating girls to set higher goals in life. By providing equal opportunities to them in various activities boost their moral that they can be independent and successful in life.
- I will incorporate the core values of female literacy in all my teachings to sensitize the students of current generation towards the importance of female education.
- As a student teacher, I would teach the illiterate parents about the importance of education in student's life especially the female girl's life...
- It is very important to make women aware of their right to education and also make them understand that it's not necessary for them to be a homemaker or housewife as expected from the society.
- By educating the ones in need. Give knowledge to house maids and their children.
- Self-defense training is must for each and every female.
- Reaching out to females in under privileged sections and giving them free of cost teaching and study material

So we can conclude that '**action speak greater than words**'. This paper is just an attempt to dig deeper into the causes and how as individuals we can contribute our bit for the bigger cause. All the factors stated above as causes of illiteracy are not in our purview but understanding those factors will make us to plan better for a literate , educated and empowered society.

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