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Access to Education and Dropout among Married Women of Kirtipur Municipality

- Ram Raj Pokharel¹

Abstract

Education is the systematic instruction to gain knowledge. Education is one of the fundamental means for all for alleviating poverty and bringing improvement in the standard of living through different socio economic activities. Literacy enhances access to information that may be necessary to conduct various essential activities to daily life and work. This study aims on investigating the educational status of married women and drop out among the respondents, causes of illiteracy and trends of dropout of respondents in Kirtipur Municipality. The study has used the quantitative research with emphasis on exploratory and descriptive research design following the stratified sampling technique from nine different wards of the municipality. The study concludes that the educational access of married women in the study area is good.

Key words: educational access, dropout, married women, illiteracy and status.

1. Introduction

Education is the systematic instruction to gain knowledge. Education is one of the fundamental means for all for alleviating poverty and bringing improvement in the standard of living through different socio economic activities. Literacy enhances access to information that may be necessary to conduct various essential activities to daily life and work.

Quality education produces knowledgeable or qualified manpower which is the pillar of the nation for development. Without the progress of education it is difficult for the development of the nation.

Education develops the personality and rationality of individuals, qualifies them to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and thereby improves their socio-economic status. It has been recognized as a major instrument which societies can use to direct the process of change and development towards desired goals. Education is the key for development.

The impetus given to education by Late Padma Shamsher J.B. Rana is the initiative of the villagers along the Indian border in establishing their own schools and the general freedom movement combined to provide tremendous force for the rapid expansion of education immediately after 1951. Many schools were opened quickly often without adequate planning, financing or facilities.

¹ Mr. Pokharel is a Phd Scholar and Assistant Professor of Sociology, Patan Multiple Campus, TU, Nepal

Nearly all of them charged tuition and catered to the more favored socioeconomic classes (K.C, 2001)

To prevent complete chaos and provide some guidance for educational development several organizational steps were taken. These included creation of an educational ministry strengthening the educational directorate and appointment of seven school inspectors. A board of education was appointed and in 1954-55, a National Education Planning Commission mapped out a long range plan for the orderly development of education in Nepal. With the help of American Aid, primary schools were expanded, a teacher training program was established, adult literacy classes were opened and provision was made for the preparation and printing of text books. Colleges were established both in the Kathmandu valley and in the hinterlands. In 1962, a UNESCO team made a comprehensive survey of a decade of educational progress in Nepal and made recommendations for continued development, but with great emphasis on educational planning (K.C, 2001)

The description of education in Nepal today, which follows, includes the details of events after 1951 and thus they are not more fully developed here. At this point it is sufficient to note that 1951 marked the beginning of a new dynamic period in the development of education in Nepal, a period which is still continuing (Hugh, 1965).

Nepal has made significant progress in education at all levels during the past three decades. Currently 3.8 million students are attending primary school and 1.5 million students are attending the secondary schools (lower secondary and secondary together). Universal primary education i.e. enrollment of all 6-10 years old children in primary schools is the long term goal of the government. The education for All- Plan of Action has set the target of attaining universal primary education by 2015 AD (Manandhar & Shrestha, 2003).

Secondary education has also expanded rapidly, as a result of efforts of the government to provide success to secondary education and also due to increased public demand for this level of education. Higher secondary education has emerged as an alternative to Proficiency Certificate Level education provided in the campus of Tribhuvan University. There is now a country wide network of higher secondary schools. All of which are functioning under private management. The Proficiency Certificate Level program is proposed to be phased out with the expansion of the higher secondary schools. Literacy rate has gone up steadily reaching 54.1 percent for population of 6 years and above. Expansion of primary education and execution of various non-formal education programs have contributed towards this increase (Manandhar & Shrestha, 2003)

The Education Regulations 2059 (2002 AD) based on the seventh Amendment of the Education Act, 2028 allows the public schools to charge tuition and other fees on the students. The government is committed to free primary education. The tuition can now be charged in the Public Secondary Schools. Several new features such as Teacher Licensing System, setting up of village Education Committees, formation of school management committees with major representation of parents, have also been included in the revised regulations. Further, the new terminologies have

been used to describe the types of schools. The present government aided schools are called community schools and the private schools are described as institutional schools (Manandhar & Shrestha, 2003).

Women in developing world especially rural women have typically fewer skills to offer in the labor market. Their options for gainful satisfying employment are few; their potential for contributing to the society is limited largely to the domestic sphere. And that contribution is further constrained by ignorance and lack of skills related to health, nutrition and hygiene (Bhatt & Sharma, 1992).

The disproportionate investment in male education is often justified by the differing roles assigned to men and women. Men take responsibility for supporting the family while women contribute domestic labor. The reality however, is that fewer and fewer women in the developing world have the luxury of depending entirely on male support. The data and case studies compiled in the course of this project show very clearly that large numbers of women and not just widows and divorces are actively engaged in the work force not by choice but because they need to work to survive and support their families (King & Bellew, 1993)

Women in Nepal are generally less educated than men with a median of less than one year of schooling compared with 1.4 years among males. This gap in gender has not narrowed in recent years. The net attendance ratio which indicates participation in primary schooling among those age 6-10 years and secondary schooling among those ages 11-15 years shows as 13 percent point difference at primary school level and 8 percent point difference at the secondary level (King & Bellew, 1993)

Men are twice as likely to be literate as women (70% and 35% respectively). As expected, literacy is as much lower among rural women and men as those living in the urban areas. A higher proportion of women 43 percent and men 79 percent living in the hill ecological zone are literate compared with those in the mountain and terai zones. Women living in the western development region and men living in the western and mid-western region are more likely to be literate than those living in the other development regions. The percentage of literate women is highest in the western hill sub region (62%), while literacy is highest among men residing in the mid-western hill sub region (87%) (Manandhar & Shrestha, 2003).

Nepal has an active literacy program consequently the 2001 NDHS added a question to ascertain the proportion of women and men who have attended a literacy program. Women are much more likely to have participated in a literacy program than men, with 19 percent of women and 5 percent of men having done so.

Men are more educated than women. Nearly three in four women and two in five men have never attended school. 15 percent of women and 30 percent of men have some primary education only, while 9 percent of women and 20 percent of men have some secondary education and 4 percent of women and 13 percent of men have completed their school leaving certificate (SLC). Among both

women and men, the percentage with no education is lowest in the hill ecological zone and almost of same in the terai and mountain zones. More than one third of male residing in the central region (36%) reported having no education. Among females the highest percentage reporting no education in the far western region (67%) followed closely by the central region (65%) and the mid- western region (64%) (Manandhar & Shrestha, 2003)

The gender gap in the level of education even among the sub region, although among males, the percentage that have never been to school is less than 45 percent in all sub regions, among females the percentage who have never been to school exceeds 50 percent in most of the sub regions and exceeds 75 percent in two of the thirteen sub regions (western, mountain and central terai region) (NDHS, 2001).

2. Objectives

This paper aims to explore educational access among the married women of Kirtipur. And this study also attempts to find out the causes of illiteracy and trends of dropout among the respondents in the study area.

3. Methodology

Kirtipur Municipality is the study area. The total population is 29360, the numbers of households is 1577 and the total female population of the study area is 15130 and male population is 14230 (Kirtipur, 2015). Multi stage sampling method has been used in the study. For the selection of wards, out of 10 wards only 3, 6 and 9 wards have been selected on the basis of purposive sampling method. And the total population compositions (both male and female) of the selected wards is 29360 and among them 138 married women have been selected as a sample by the purposive sampling method (that may consist of household head or other).

This study is based on descriptive as well as explorative research design. This study is descriptive as it attempts to provide proper knowledge about the socio-economic characteristics in the study area. At the same time this study is explorative as well because it attempts to explore causes of illiteracy and trends of dropout and its causes of respondents of the study area.

4. Discussion and Analysis of the study

4.1. Socio-economic and educational characteristics

4.1.1 Age of the respondents

The age distribution of respondent is classified in 5 years age group. The information has been collected from the married female above the age 20. Out of them different 7 groups are presented here in table 4.1

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondent by Five Years Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
20-24	11	8.00
25-29	4	17.50
30-34	31	22.50
35-39	30	21.70
40-44	18	13.00
45-49	6	4.30
50+	18	13.00
Total	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4.1 shows that all the respondent are above the age 20 and out of them majority of respondent are in age group 30-34. Out of 138 respondents, 22.50 percent age in this age group followed by 21.70 percent in 35-39 and 17.50 percent in 25-29 age groups respectively. In short, we can say majority of respondents are of the age of 25-39.

4.1.2 Respondents by Caste and Ethnicity

In this study different major 5 caste and ethnic groups namely Newar, Brahmin, Chhetri, Thapa-Magar and Sunuwar are recorded separately and others insignificant number of castes and ethnics are comprised under other category. The detail figure of caste/ethnic distribution of respondents is presented in the table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Caste/Ethnicity

Caste/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Newar	57	41.30
Brahmin	3	2.20
Chhetri	31	22.50
Thapa-Magar	21	15.20
Sunuwar	13	9.40

Others	13	9.40
Total	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From the table 4.2 it can be seen that majority of respondents are from Newar that holds 41.30 percent followed by Chhetri 22.50 percent, Thapa-Magar/Rana Magar 15.20 percent and 9.20 percent Sunuwar. Similarly insignificant proportion of Brahmin found which holds only 2.20 percent. Finally 9.40 percent holds by other that includes-Tamang, Gurung and Lama. The population of study area has high dense of Newar.

4.1.3 Marital Status of the Respondents

Marriage is a universal demographic component. In this study, respondents' marital status is categorized mainly in two different categories; namely married and widow. The marital status of respondent is presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	134	97.10
Widow	4	2.90
Total	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4.3 reveals that almost all 97.10 percent respondents are married and 2.90 percent are widowed.

4.1.4 Respondents by Household Facility

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Available Facilities at Home

Facilities	Yes		No		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Electricity	132	95.65	6	4.35	138	100
Radio	113	81.88	25	18.12	138	100
Television	119	86.23	19	13.77	138	100

Telephone	33	23.91	105	76.09	138	100
Toilet	101	73.19	37	26.81	138	100
Drinking Water	28	20.29	110	79.71	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From table 4.4, it is seen that nearly 96 percent of respondents have electricity at their household and more than 80 percent have radio. Similarly, more than 86 percent respondents have television at their home where as only 24 percent have telephone facility. It is miserable to say that even being an area under capital city (Kathmandu District) 4.35 percent respondents have no electricity facility. Similarly another important thing is 76.09 percent respondents have no telephone facility at their home.

4.2 Causes of illiteracy

4.2.1 Literacy Status of Respondents

The main objective of this study is to find out the educational status of female among Kirtipur Municipality, hence primarily to know the educational status. The literacy status of the respondent is collected as literate or illiterate. The literacy status of sampled 138 respondents is presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Respondents by Literacy Status

Literacy Status	Frequency	Percent
Literate	83	60.10
Illiterate	55	39.90
Total	138	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From table 4.5, it is shown that out of total 138 respondents 60.10 percent are literate and 39.90 percent are illiterate. This 39.90 percent illiteracy rate of female indicates that still the educational status of women is backward. However this is the better percent of literate female comparing to female literacy rate of Nepal, which is around 42 percent.

4.2.2 Causes of Illiteracy

As we know there may be different factors that are leading or hindering women to read and write. Hence 138 respondents were asked about their causes of illiteracy; means why did they not go school and why they could not read and write? Regarding this question different causes or factors

came as hindering factors of their illiteracy. These different factors or causes about why did they become illiterate is presented in table 4.6 in detail.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Respondents by Causes of Illiteracy

Causes of Illiteracy	Frequency	Percent
Lack of Awareness	48	87.27
Economic Problem	6	10.91
Household work	1	1.82
Total	55	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From this table 4.6 it is found that majority of respondent 87.27% pointed out that the main cause of their illiteracy is lack of awareness. This means they were unknown or they did not know about the need and importance of education and sis not take formal classes. Similarly 10.91 percent respondent out of 55 illiterate said that they could not go to school and became illiterate due to economic problem. Insignificant or only one respondent said the household work is her cause of illiteracy. Hence from this table it can be concluding that most of the female in our society are illiterate because they don't know about the needs and importance of education or they are unaware about literacy and its advantages.

4.3 Drop Out Status of the Respondents

One of the objectives of this study is to find out the drop out status of the sampled female and its causes. There may be different causes that may lead drop out and affect female educational level. Hence in this study the 55 sampled female (who are literate and taken formal education) were asked whether they are going to school/campus or not. The drop out status of the respondents is presented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents by Drop out Status

Drop out	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	89.09
No	6	10.91
Total*	55	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

* This is the total number of women who got education from formal sources.

The table 4.7 shows that out of 138 respondents 55 have taken formal education and out of them 49 respondent have left school/campus and 6 are continuing till the date of survey. This number 49 out of 55 is very high. It directly affects the educational status of women.

4.3.1 Drop out Status of the Respondents by class

Table 4.8: Distribution of Respondents by Drop-out Class

Drop-out Class	Frequency	Percent*
1	2	4.08
2	4	8.16
3	6	12.24
4	8	16.33
5	13	26.53
6	6	12.24
7	3	6.12
8	3	6.12
9	2	4.08
10	2	4.08
Total	49	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

*This percent is calculated only on the basis of dropped out population

From the table 4.8 it is found that majority of literate respondent (26.53 percent) who dropped out their classes have dropped out in class 5 and followed by in class 4 (16.33 percent) and class 3 (12.24 percent) and class 6 (12.12 percent). From the above able 27 it can be concluded that most of the female had dropped out in primary and lower secondary level.

4.3.2 Causes of Drop Out

Why does an individual leave school or campus? There may be various causes. There is no doubt that without any cause no one leaves their school or college. Here in this study also the sampled

females are asked why they leaved school. Why did they drop out from their academic institutions? The detail causes and figure is presented in table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Distribution of Respondents by Causes of Drop out

Causes of Drop out	Frequency	Percent
Marriage	7	14.29
Failed in Exam	9	18.37
Household work	20	40.82
Lack of awareness	4	8.16
Far School	4	8.16
Economic Causes	3	6.12
Others	2	4.08
Total	49	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4.9 shows the various causes about why they left their academic institutions. Majority of respondents have drop out their classes due to household work, which covers 40.82 percent followed by 18.37 percent who dropped out because they failed in exam. Similarly, 14.29 percent women have dropped out due to their marital status i.e. when they married; they compelled to leave school/campus. And some women 8.16 percent have dropped out due to lack of knowledge about the importance of education or we can say due to less priority in education and same (8.16 percent) of women have dropped out due to far school means not availability of school in reachable distance. So there are various causes that are leading drop out and hindering female education.

5. Conclusion

This study based on the small scale survey of three wards of Kirtipur Municipality from the 138 selected sample population and their household members, the major findings are mentioned below.

The findings are separately mentioned on household, individual and their subject matter. Here, in this study household characteristic consist the socio-economic as well as demographic characteristics of the respondent's household members. While conducting field operation 138 sampled respondents were asked along with their households members. The total population is 29360, the numbers of households is 1577 and the total female population of the study area is

15130 and male population is 14230. There is no significant difference between male and female in number.

All 138 sample households have their own land. Likewise in most of houses some facilities like electricity (95.65 percent), radios (81.88 percent), television (86.23 percent) and toilet (73.19 percent) etc. are available but only few households having telephone (23.91 percent) and drinking water (20.29 percent) facilities. It is found that 60.10 percent people are literate where as 39.90 percent are illiterate.

Majority of respondents (87.27%) pointed out that, the main cause of their illiteracy (or why they could not read and write is lack of awareness. And (10.91%) illiterate said that they could not go to school due to economic problem. So the main cause of lower female literacy is due to lack of knowledge or ignorance regarding the importance of women education.

Out of dropped out majority of respondents (26.53%) have dropped out in class 5 followed by (16.33%) in class 4 and 12.24 percent from class 3 and 7 respectively. In case of causes of drop out most of (40.82%) have dropped out their classes due to household work, (18.37%) due to failed in exam, (14.29%) due to marriage and due to distant school and lack of knowledge about the importance of education (8.16%). Finally 6.12 percent respondents have dropped out due to economic problems.

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