

Impact of Education on Quality of Life of the Rural Women in Haora District : Some Observations

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ABSTRACT

Education of women is the most important influencing factor of quality of life. In the study area rural women are less educated than the male members in the family. The study shows that most of the rural people do not believe in higher education of the girls, marriage is considered the ultimate goal of the women. Less education and lack of political awareness among the rural women is a great limitation in the study area. Lower literacy rate and higher fertility rate have brought poor quality of life. Early marriage, occurrence of domestic violence, lack of freedom of mobility, freedom of expression and lack of decision making power of the women have affected their quality of life adversely. The present paper is highlighting the correlation between education and these parameters of QOL with the help of suitable maps and diagrams.

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Introduction:

World Health Organization has defined "Quality of life" as "the condition of life resulting from the combination of the effects of the factors such as health, happiness (including comfort), education, social and intellectual attainments, freedom of action, justice and freedom of expression" (Park, 2009, 16).

The 1948, the Declaration of Human Rights stated that everyone has a right to education. In economic and social development education is a crucial element (Park, 2009, 416).

In the Indian society women's roles are restricted to the domestic arena. Education is considered to be of marginal importance. This is based on the perception of roles which are prescribed for women. Marriage is the main purpose of their lives so education is geared towards making them good mothers, wives and daughters-in-law (Sengupta, 2000, 113-114).

Political representation is one of the most important conditions in liberal democracy. The Women's

Reservation Bill must empower women to raise their situation politically. Implementation of reserved quotas for women in legislatures and parliament is needed to restrict the under-representation of women. Ensuring equal participation of men and women in decision making process such effective implementation is also needed (Heredia, 2012, 51).

Higher educational attainment have better health and lifespan compared to their less educated peers. Education can influence in reducing child mortality rate and can increase life expectancy. Education can reduce inequalities and can improve health. At the grass root level education create self awareness on personal health and making health care more accessible (Raghupathi, 2020).

Domestic abuse is a social issue of concern to individuals and policymakers. Abusive relationship are characterized by a "cycle of violence" where tension builds up until violence occurs, the abusive husbands repents so his wife stays in the marriage and the process repeats itself with increasing violence.

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Through the cycle of violence battered women are characterized by “learned helplessness”, but they become unable or unwilling to leave an abusive marriage (Bowlus, Seitz, 2006, 1113–1120).

Women should be given equal status and equal power to the major functions of the family so that they can rear up their children in a better way and can run the family smoothly. Low familial decision making power in their families regarding the education and marriage of their children is generally possessed by the women (Jain and Akhtar, 2008, 50).

Reviewing above literature it can be stated that education can be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women in the society. It helps women to take decisions at every sphere of their lives and can bring consciousness among them. It can be said that if women get educated the village moves and the nation moves. Education, employment, political participation, shelter, health are the most basic indicators of the quality of life. Education has a large impact on the quality of life of the rural women and it can influence employment status, rate of political participation, health status of the women which has been highlighted in this paper.

Lack of education can bring poor health status, lower political participation, lesser economic freedom, lesser decision making power, lesser freedom of mobility, lesser freedom of expression among the rural women which has become a daunting challenge among the policy makers. For showing educational status, literacy has been taken as an indicator in the paper and attempts have been made to explore the picture of gender discrimination in the sphere of educational attainment in the rural areas of Haora. For the better and elaborate analysis discussions also made about the following aspects like 1) average years of schooling, 2) School attendance rate, 3) level of literacy. **Beside these correlations between education and political participation, between TMFR and education, between freedom of mobility, freedom of expression, economic freedom and decision making power and education have been highlighted in this paper.**

2. Objectives :

1. To highlight gender differences regarding literacy rate in the study area,
2. To discuss some aspects of education like average years of schooling, school attendance rate and level of literacy.

3. To show correlations between education and political participation, between education and TMFR, Between education and economic freedom, freedom of mobility, freedom of speech and decision making power of the women,

3. Study Area :

The district Haora has an old settlement in West Bengal and has diversified features of demography, social, cultural and also many other aspects. Heterogeneous groups of women are available here coming from all communities. It is also closer to the mega city Kolkata. Though Haora is in leading position in terms of rural female literacy rate in West Bengal, still it has poor quality of life in terms of political participation, economic freedom and decision making power. The Pilot survey has proved these which represents 20 percent of total sample. The present research work is a micro level study. So Haora has been selected here as the study unit. It is located within 22° 122 303 North to 22° 462 553 North of the parallels of latitude and 8°222 103 East to 87° 502 453 East of the longitude. Haora is situated in the southern part of West Bengal. It has 14 C.D. Blocks among which 13 blocks have been studied. According to 2011 census total rural population of Haora is about 1775885 among which male population is 909519 and female population is 866366. Rural Scheduled Caste female Population is 351898 and rural Scheduled Tribe female population is 7333. Male literacy rate is 86.9 per cent and female literacy rate is 79.43 per cent in Haora according to 2011 census.

4. Methodology :

- **Identification of the focus group** i.e. the rural married women and selection of the Sampled villages with Multi Stage Random Sampling method for the present study.
- **Selection of the blocks**-The district has 14 Community Development Blocks among which 13 rural blocks have been taken into consideration Each of the 13 Community Development Block has been sub-divided into certain Gram Panchayats and each Gram Panchayat has been sub-divided into certain villages. **Two** villages have been selected randomly (according to random table) from each block. Block Bally-Jagacha has not been taken into account as it has only two villages according to 2011 census and rest of the block is urban. Thus 26 villages have been surveyed and 1984 samples (Table 1 and Fig 1) have been taken for the study.

- After the random selection of the villages contacts were established with the Gram Panchayat for conducting the field survey. Then a reconnaissance of the villages with the help of pilot survey was carried out.
- **During the pilot survey** a representative random sample of about 20 per cent was conducted. From each village 10 per cent of total rural women have been taken into consideration.
- Sample women were grouped on the basis of various criteria like income, age, education etc. keeping in mind the prevailing socio-economic conditions.
- **Collection of the primary data** through the field survey conducted between November 2014 to February 2017 in the selected sample villages.
- Collection of the data from the rural married women from all caste and religious groups in the Haora district on the basis of standard questionnaire.
- Focused and in-depth interviews were conducted to generate qualitative data. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected. Local governing body i.e. Gram Panchayat and Government officials were also questioned to gather additional data.
- Group discussion with the focus group to know the details about the selected parameters has been conducted.
- Collection of the primary data, tabulation and analysis of the data according to research need has been done.
- Cartographic and statistical application to represent the data through diagrams has been arranged to get the result.

5. Analysis of Data :

Statistical methods like Pearson's Correlation has also been done for correlating the variables. Bi-variant analysis and descriptive statistics have been done by using SPSS software. Spatial distributions have been shown within maps with the help of Arc GIS software. Bar graphs has been made in MS Excel. The consistency

of the primary data were checked before analysis. These data were processed and tabulated with a personal computer.

6. Discussion and Results :

According to Census of India (2011), average literacy rate in Haora is 83.31 per cent. Male literacy rate is 86.95 per cent and female literacy rate is 79.43 per cent. Block wise data is showing that in the rural areas in Haora, male literacy rate outnumbers female literacy rate..Maximum male literacy is found in Udaynarayanpur block and minimum male literacy is found in Domjur block. Female literacy is maximum in Shyampur-1 block and minimum female literacy is found in Domjur block (Fig. 2).

Table 2 and Figure 3 is showing male and female literacy rate of the sampled villages. According to this table maximum male literacy is found at Balarampur village and minimum is found at Bhashkur. Male literacy rate outnumbers female literacy rate in all the villages in the study area. Only exception is Bhashkur where female literacy (51.29 per cent) is slightly higher than male literacy (48.71 per cent).

Table 3 clearly shows that maximum male literacy is found at Goaldaha (98.70 per cent) and male literacy rate is minimum at Nabasan (68.97 per cent). In all the villages male literacy rate is greater than female literacy rate. Female literacy is maximum at Gaurangapur (96.61 per cent) and minimum at Jaladhula (52.63 per cent).

According to the Fig. 4 and Table 3 it is revealed that gender differences regarding male and female literacy rate is found in almost all the villages. Such differences is maximum at Chalkmanohar followed by Khempur and minimum at Bhashkur Village. Gender differences in literacy rate exist in almost all the sampled villages as male literacy rate is higher than the female literacy rate.

Figure 5 is showing literacy rate according to caste and religion. In the study area General category (Gen) women are more literate than Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) women. 79.74 per cent literate women belong to General Category and 20.26 per cent literate women belong to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.

Table 1: Sample Design for the Study Area

Universe	Sample Unit	Sample Size
Rural Women in Haora	26 Villages	1984 rural women in the selected villages

Source: Census of India, PCA, Haora, West Bengal, 2011

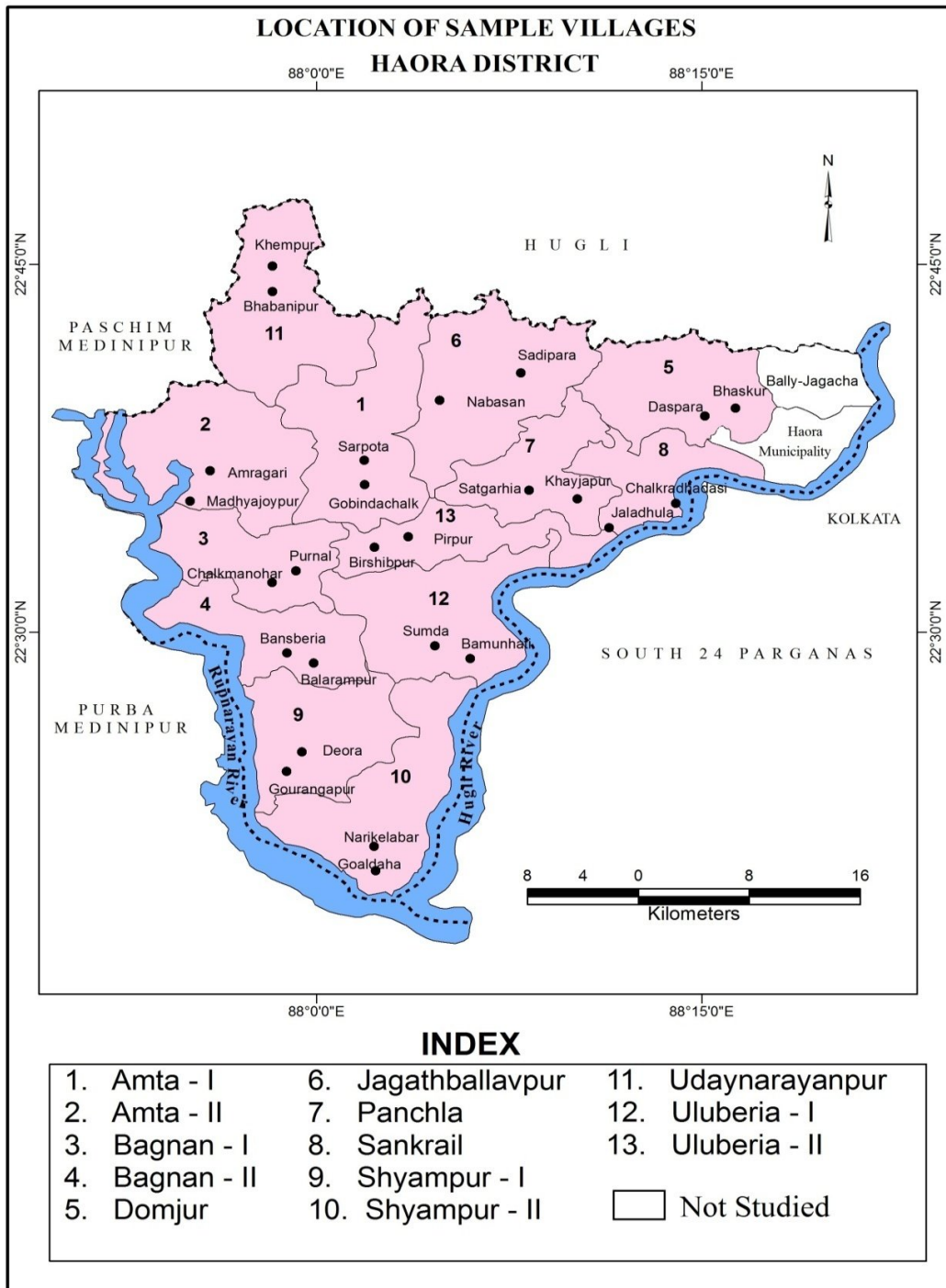


Fig. 1

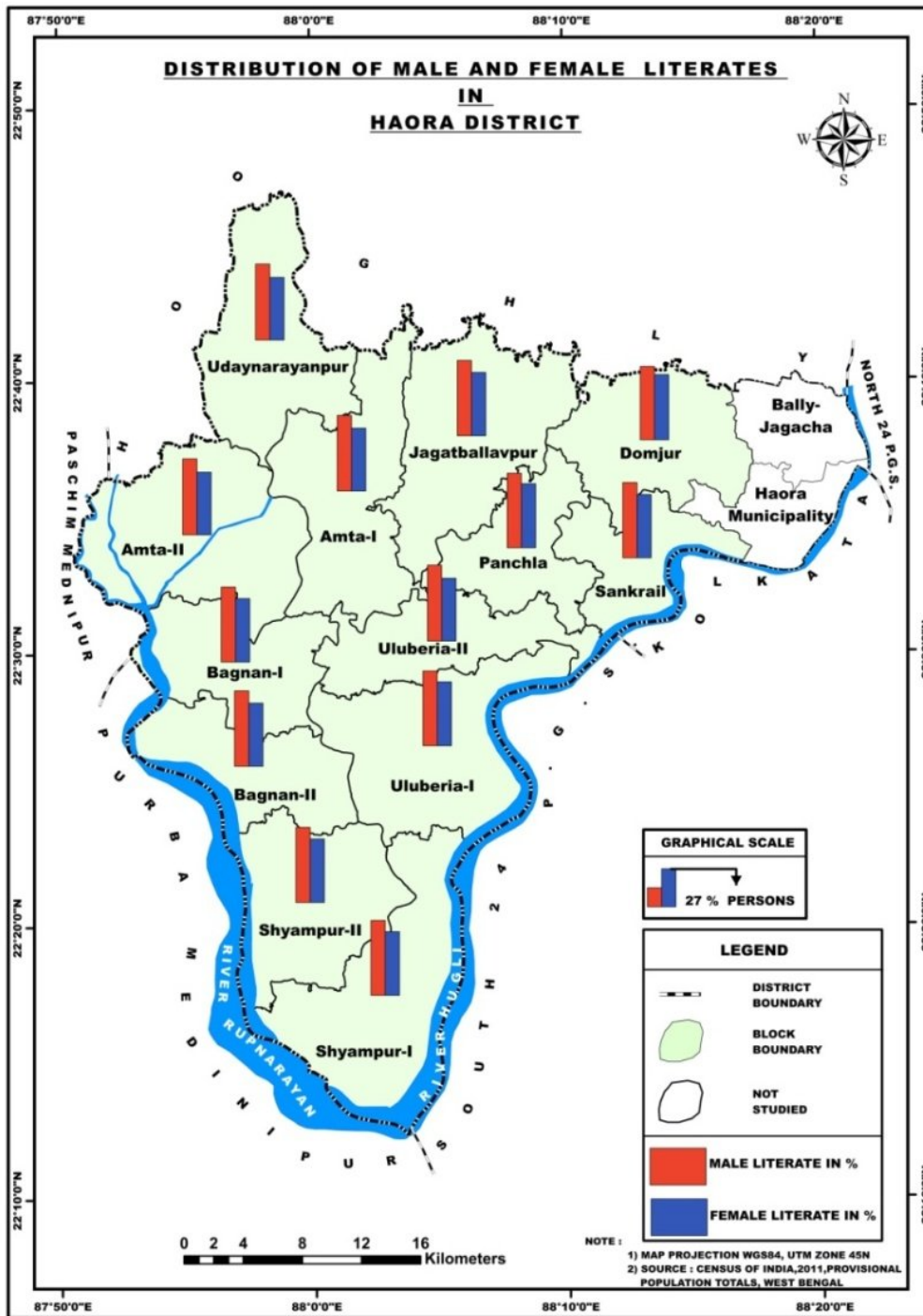


Fig. 2

Source : Census of India, 2011, Provisional Population Totals, West Bengal

Table 2: Literacy Rate of Sample Villages

Sl. No.	Villages	Male Literacy Rate (%)	Female Literacy Rate (%)
1.	Amragari	54.72	47.68
2.	Balarampur	92.07	83.98
3.	Bamunhati	54.92	45.08
4.	Birshibpur	53.21	46.79
5.	Bhabanipur	51.92	48.08
6.	Bhaskur	48.71	51.29
7.	Birshibpur	53.21	46.79
8.	Chalkmanohar	59.19	40.81
9.	Chalkradhadasi	51.70	48.30
10.	Danspara	53.40	46.59
11.	Deora	53.45	46.55
12.	Goaldaha	56.18	47.86
13.	Gobindachalk	53.65	46.35
14.	Gourangapur	55.52	44.48
15.	Jaladhula	53.28	46.92
16.	Khayjapur	52.70	47.30
17.	Khempur	57.57	42.43
18.	Madhyajoypur	57.48	42.52
19.	Nabasan	57.79	42.21
20.	Narikelabar	52.82	47.18
21.	Pirpur	56.02	43.98
22.	Purnal	55.44	44.56
23.	Sadipara	53.74	42.21
24.	Sarpota	57.16	42.82
25.	Satgarhia	54.73	45.27
26.	Sumda	53.50	46.50

Source : Census of India, 2011, West Bengal, Haora

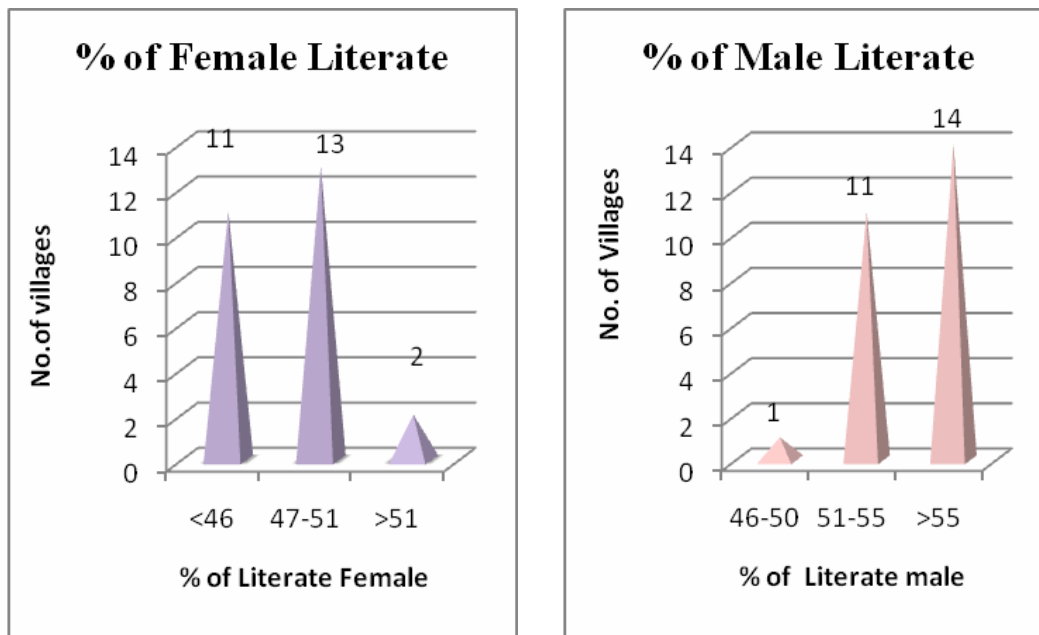


Fig. 3

Table 3: Gender Differences in Literacy Rate (% of Literate Women)

Sl. No.	Community Development Blocks	Villages	Gender Differences in Literacy Rate (%)
1.	Amta-I	Sarpota, Gobindachalk	6.35
2.	Amta-II	Amragari, Madhyajoypur	9.7
3.	Bagnan-I	Purnal, Chalkmanohar	12.98
4.	Bagnan-II	Balarampur, Bansberia	3.64
5.	Domjur	Danspara, Bhashkur	3.41
6.	Jagatballavpur	Nabasan, Sadipara	11.87
7.	Panchla	Satgarhia, Khayjapur	2.86
8.	Sankrail	Jaladhula, Chalkradhadasi	6.02
9.	Shyampur-I	Narikelabar, Goaldaha	5.05
10.	Shyampur-II	Deora, Gourangapur	3.54
11.	Udaynarayanpur	Bhabanipur, Khempur	9.23
12.	Uluberia-I	Pirpur, Birshibpur	6.80
13.	Uluberia-II	Bamunhati, Sumda	6.34

Source : Compiled by the author

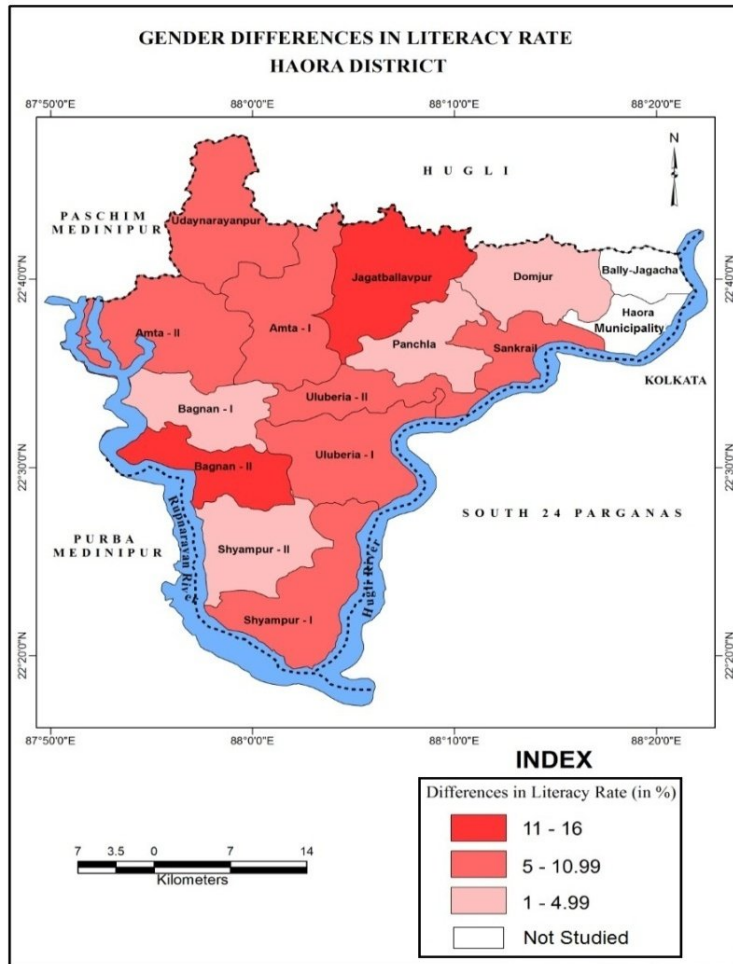


Fig. 4

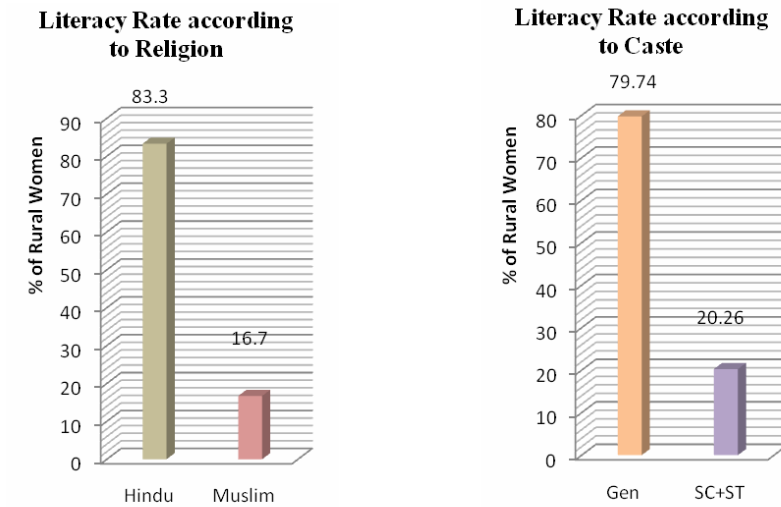


Fig. 5

6.1 Average Years of Schooling :

Formal schooling in rural areas usually starts from class I, so in this case schooling years from class I till

class X have been taken into account. In most of the villages in the study area women receive formal education up to class V or class VI.

Table 4: Average Years of Schooling

Sl. No.	Villages	Average Years of Schooling
1.	Sadipara	7.83
2.	Satgarhia	7.79
3.	Gaurangapur	7.68
4.	Goaldaha	7.64
5.	Amragari	7.25
6.	Nabasan	7.10
7.	Pirpur	6.95
8.	Balarampur	6.81
9.	Jaladhula	6.74
10.	Deora	6.69
11.	Bhabanipur	6.68
12.	Narikelabar	6.59
13.	Birshibpur	6.38
14.	Bhashkur	6.29
15.	Chalkradhadasi	6.09
16.	Sarpota	5.90
17.	Gobindachalk	5.87
18.	Madhyajoypur	5.84
19.	Purnal	5.82
20.	Sumda	5.70
21.	Khayjapur	5.69
22.	Chalkmanohar	5.67
23.	Bansberia	5.50
24.	Bamunhati	5.34
25.	Danspara	5.23
26.	Khempur	5.21

Source : Primary Survey, 2014–2017

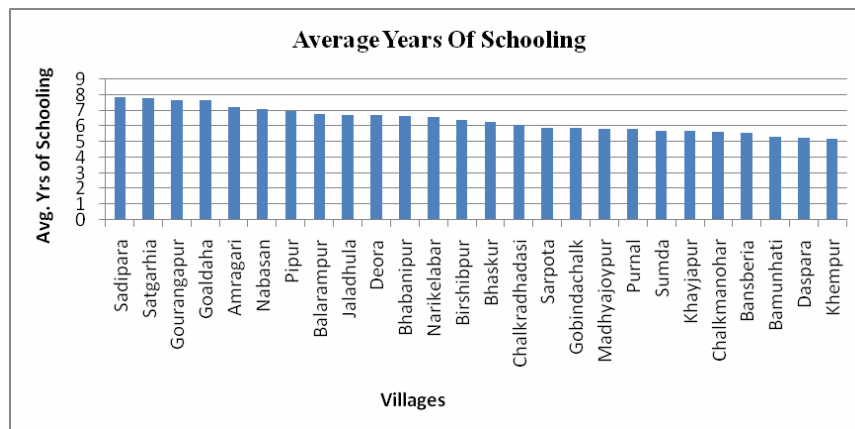


Fig. 6

Figure. 6 and Table 4 is highlighting mean or average years of schooling of the respondents in the study area. The bar diagram has been drawn in descending order which showing that in 11 villages average years of schooling is less than 6 years and in rest of the villages it is found among 6 to 7 years of age.

6.2 School Attendance Rate :

It is another important aspect of education of the rural women which affect their quality of life. Most of the rural women has attended school to take formal education in the study area. It is maximum at Amragari(97.04 per cent) village and minimum at Jaladhula (50 per cent).

Table 5: School Attendance Rate (Percentage of rural women who attended school)

Sl. No.	Villages	Percentage of Rural Women
1.	Amragari	97.04
2.	Gaurangapur	96.61
3.	Sadipara	95.83
4.	Satgarhia	95.00
5.	Balarampur	93.75
6.	Chalkradhadasi	93.33
7.	Deora	92.86
8.	Nabasan	92.31
9.	Goaldaha	92.21
10.	Danspara	91.67
11.	Bhashkur	90.00
12.	Gobindachalk	89.47
13.	Narikelabar	88.64
14.	Purnal	88.24
15.	Madhyajoypur	88.10
16.	Sarpota	87.76
17.	Birshibpur	85.92
18.	Sumda	83.49
19.	Chalkmanohar	76.92
20.	Bamunhati	76.56
21.	Bhabanipur	76.47
22.	Bansberia	75.36
23.	Khempur	73.13
24.	Khayjapur	72.64
25.	Pirpur	59.38
26.	Jaladhula	50.00

Source : Primary Survey, 2014–2017

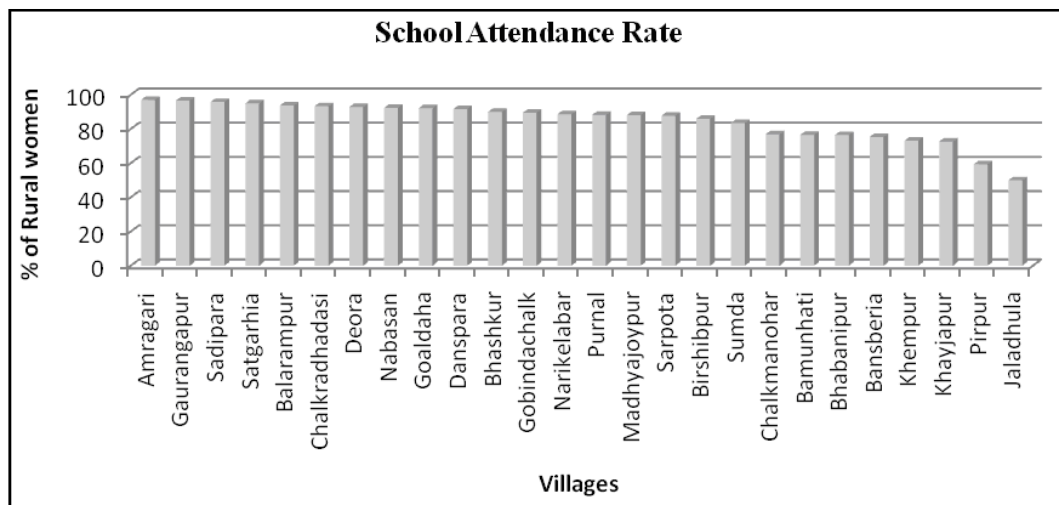


Fig. 7

6.3 Composition of Literates :

Level of education is an important aspect of educational status of the rural women. Women who have not taken formal schooling can only read and write are categorized as Just Literate. Rural women who have studied upto class IV belong to Primary Level of education. Women who have taken schooling upto class VIII belong to Middle School level. High School category stands upto class X and Higher Secondary School stands upto class XII. Graduate and Post graduate category is also available among the rural women in the study area.

Table 6 portrays on composition of literates or level of education which is highlighting that primary and middle school level of education is mostly found among the respondents i.e. among the rural women. Less than 20 per cent women in 6 villages have primary level of education, whereas it is minimum at Satgarhia village (5 per cent). Maximum percentage of women (54.77 per cent) having primary level of education is found at Madhyajoypur village. 25 per cent to 50 per cent women in 15 villages have primary level of education. Women who belong to just literate category have never attended school and they have no formal education.

Less than 20 per cent women having middle school level of education is found in 6 villages. It is maximum at Chalkmanohar and minimum at Balarampur village.

High school level of education is found among maximum women at Satgarhia (50 per cent). But it is minimum at Khempur (1.43 per cent only). Only in 8

villages 25 per cent to 50 per cent women have education upto high school level.

Higher secondary level of education is found among maximum women at Goaldaha and Sarpota.

Graduate and post graduate women are very few in number in all the villages. Maximum number of graduate and post graduate women are found at Balarampur village (9.38 per cent) and minimum number is found at Danspara village (0.83 per cent).

6.4 Education and Political Participation :

The participation of women and their engagement in political process is regarded as an important marker of the maturity and efficacy of democracy. Lack of political voice and poor representation of women in Parliament is a result of exclusions on gender basis (Rai, 2011, 47–48).

Voting is not a necessary indicator of political awareness of women. It is found that majority of women cast their vote without any purpose. Education is an important socio economic determinant of political awareness. The study has an attempt to show the correlation between education and political participation of the rural women in the study area because political participation is a key variable for the measurement of the status of women in a society.

The Scatter Plot is showing the correlation between Voting Behavior and Average Years of Schooling (Table-4) among the rural women. There is a significant positive relationship between the educational level i.e. average years of schooling and the voting behavior

Table 6: Composition of Literates (Percentage of Literate Women)

Sl. No.	Villages	Just Literate	Primary Literate	Middle School	High School	Higher Secondary School	Graduate & Post Graduate
1.	Amragari	2.96	19.26	33.33	25.19	10.37	8.89
2.	Balarampur	6.25	18.75	15.62	40.62	9.38	9.38
3.	Bamunhati	14.04	35.09	26.32	17.54	5.26	1.78
4.	Bansberia	16.13	46.77	17.74	14.52	3.23	1.61
5.	Bhabanipur	7.14	42.86	22.86	18.57	7.14	1.43
6.	Bhashkur	2.04	47.62	13.61	26.53	4.76	5.44
7.	Birshibpur	6.15	23.08	41.53	18.46	9.23	1.53
8.	Chalkmanohar	23.08	20.51	46.15	5.13	5.13	–
9.	Chalkradhadasi	6.67	31.11	22.22	28.89	4.44	6.67
10.	Danspara	8.33	23.33	41.76	24.17	1.67	0.83
11.	Deora	7.14	42.86	22.86	18.57	7.14	1.43
12.	Goaldaha	4.39	18.06	20.83	45.83	11.11	2.78
13.	Gobindachalk	2.94	38.24	41.18	11.76	4.41	1.47
14.	Gourangapur	10.17	16.95	33.90	30.51	6.78	1.69
15.	Jaladhula	5	35	40	10	5	5
16.	Khayjapur	10.47	41.86	17.74	14.52	3.23	4.65
17.	Khempur	12.5	41.07	17.86	1.43	5.36	1.78
18.	Madhyajoypur	11.90	54.77	23.81	4.76	4.76	–
19.	Nabasan	7.69	25.64	35.90	23.08	5.13	2.56
20.	Narikelabar	4.88	41.46	37.80	13.00	2.44	1.22
21.	Pirpur	26.93	22.22	22.66	18.52	7.41	3.70
22.	Purnal	11.76	33.82	32.35	14.71	4.42	2.94
23.	Sadipara	4.17	16.67	45.83	20.83	8.33	4.17
24.	Sarpota	4.44	22.22	17.78	35.56	11.11	8.89
25.	Satgarhia	5	10	25	50	5	5
26.	Sumda	8.08	47.48	29.29	9.09	4.04	2.02

Source : Primary Survey, 2014–2017

of the women (who cast their vote according to their choice). There is a willingness among educated women to exercise their voting rights without any biasness i.e. they are able to cast their vote for their deserving candidate rather than under the influence of either party or husbands or any other people. Educated women are able to take their own decisions regarding political matters. **Pearson's Correlation** (Table 7) is showing also positive relation between years of schooling and voting behavior of the respondents which is significant at 0.01 level.

6.5 Education and TMFR :

Fertility is the actual bearing of children. Some demographers prefer to use the word natality in place of fertility. A women's reproductive period is roughly from 15–45 years – a period of 30 years. Fertility depends upon several factors. Universality of marriage, lower age of marriage, low level of literacy, poor level of living, limited use of contraceptives and traditional

ways of life are the main causes for the higher fertility in India (Park, 2009, p 417).

In demography fertility refers to the actual birth performance of the group of women or to the relative frequency with which the births occur in total population or in the population exposed to it (Sinha and Zacharia, 2005, 102).

Educated women generally do not have early pregnancies, are able to space their pregnancies, have better access to information related personal hygiene and care of their children and make better use of health care services. Higher literacy rates among women are associated with low fertility and low maternal mortality as well as low infant mortality.

6.6 Total Marital Fertility Rate (TMFR) :

The average number of children a woman would have if she were to pass through her reproductive years bearing children at the same rates as the women now

Table 7: Person's Correlation

Voting Behaviour (Percentage of Women Having Independent Decision)	
Education (Average Years of Schooling)	+0.709*

*Significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed).

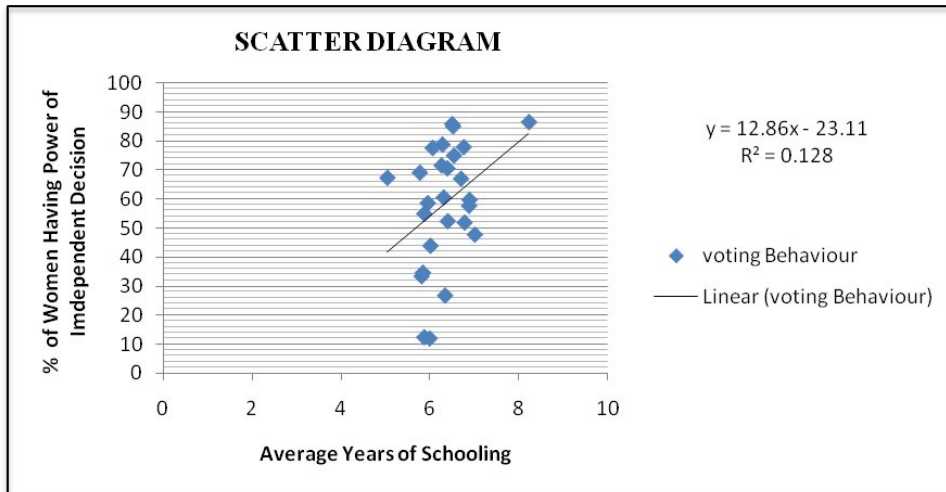


Fig. 8

in each age group is known as Total Marital Fertility Rate. It is computed by the age specific fertility rates for all ages. It means average number of children that

would be born to a married woman if she experiences the current fertility pattern throughout her reproductive span.

Table 8: Person's Correlation

	R	Sig. (2-tailed)
Average Years of Schooling vs. TMFR	-0.42*	0.03

*Significant at 0.05 level

Source : Calculated by the author

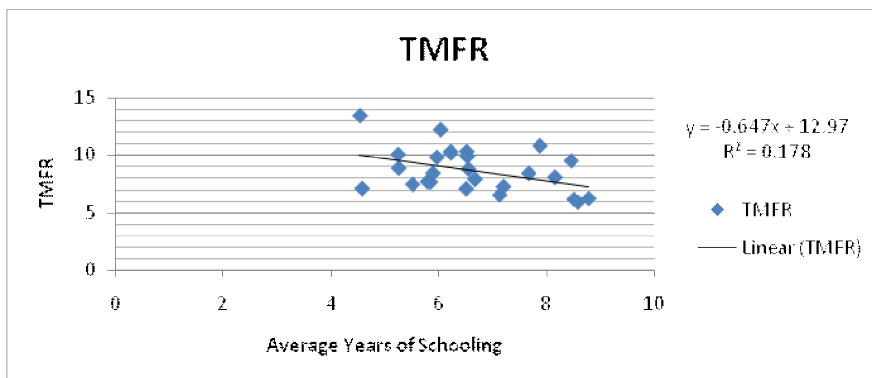


Fig. 9

Pearson's Correlation (Table 8) and the Scatter Diagram is showing the significant relation between education (**Average Years of Schooling**) and TMFR. There is a negative relation between TMFR and educational attainment. Here the correlation has been shown between average years of schooling of the women with children and TMFR. Such relationship portrays that with the increase in level of education there is a tendency of decreasing TMFR.

6.7 Education, Marriage and Family :

Family is very important for examining the status of women in a society. Family structure differs from one society to another, from one community to another. Rural–urban differences are also found even within the same country. In every society classification of family is possible in terms of the functions they perform, types of kinship relations and number of generations living together. While every family has to

do some functions, it is the kinship relations and number of generations living together that determine the type of family structure (Jehangir, 1991, 99–100).

The paper is highlighting on various aspects of marriage and family life like **Age of marriage, relation between ill treatment by husband or in-laws and education, relation between age of marriage and education, relation between education and family related issues like freedom of mobility, freedom of expression, economic freedom and decision making pattern** by the rural women which actually cast tremendous impacts on the quality of lives.

6.8 Education and Marriage Age :

Education plays an important role in determining the age of marriage for women. Dropout rate of girls are much more than boys. Women have a low paid job and limited decision making power at home and forced to early marriage and face violence and sexual abuse.

Table 9: Relationship between Education and Marriage(% of women who are married at the age of less than 18 years of age)

Serial No.	Villages	Illiterate	Literate
1.	Amragari	63.33	36.67
2.	Balarampur	88.89	11.11
3.	Bamunhati	90	10
4.	Bansberia	83.33	16.67
5.	Bhabanipur	20	80
6.	Bhashkur	12.5	87.5
7.	Birshibpur	85.71	14.29
8.	Chalkmanohar	77.78	22.22
9.	Chalkradhadasi	59.09	40.91
10.	Danspara	20	80
11.	Deora	22.22	77.78
12.	Goaldaha	78.95	21.05
13.	Gobindachalk	15.38	84.62
14.	Gourangapur	84.62	15.38
15.	Jaladhula	68.42	31.58
16.	Khayjapur	25	75
17.	Khempur	40	60
18.	Madhyajoypur	55.56	44.44
19.	Nabasan	46.15	53.85
20.	Narikelabar	92.16	7.84
21.	Pirpur	83.33	16.67
22.	Purnal	60	40
23.	Sadipara	52.94	47.06
24.	Sarpota	10.53	89.47
25.	Satgarhia	33.33	66.67
26.	Sumda	80	20

Source : Primary Survey, 2014–2017

In all villages illiterate women are married at less than 18 years of age according to primary survey. From the field study it is found (Table 9) that marriage at less than 18 years of age is common among 92.16 per cent of women in the village Narikelabar and 90 per cent in Bamunhati. Corresponding highest percentage (89.47 per cent) in case of literate women is found in Sarpota. Such percentage is lowest in Narikelabar (7.84 per cent). Though education exerts positive impact on marriage, but more than 80% literate women in 3 villages have got married at less than 18 years of age.

6.9 Education and Ill Treatment :

Domestic abuse is a social issue of concern to individuals and policymakers. Abusive relationships are characterized by a “cycle of violence” where tension builds up until violence occurs, the abusive husband repents so his wife stays in the marriage and the process repeats itself with increasing violence.

The relationship between husband and wife is the most important as the interpersonal relations are concerned among the members in the family. Due to poverty, poor education and less economic freedom a Muslim wife has to depend on her husband (Jehangir, 1991, 101). Education of an individual can influence largely the relations with the opposite sex after marriage. Possibility of adjustment also increases with the increase of education (Jehangir, 1991, 102).

Literacy can play an important role on women's life who are ill-treated (Fig. 10). In the villages of Bhabanipur, Khempur, Sarpota, Gobindachalk, Daspara, Bhaskur, Satgarhia, Khayjapur, Pirpur, Birshibpur, Sumda

and Bamunhati literate women are mostly ill-treated than the illiterate women. In Madhyajoypur, Nabasan, Sadipara, Jaladhula, Chalkradhadasi and Purnal illiterate women suffer mostly from domestic violence than the literate women. The women of the villages Sarpota, Gobindachalk and Khayjapur are severely suffering from ill-treatment.

6.10 Education and Freedom of Mobility, Freedom of Expression and Economic Freedom :

Women with greater freedom to go outside home alone or have greater freedom of mobility are also more likely to participate in domestic decisions (Mahmood, 2002, 121).

Freedom of movement is an integral component of women's empowerment. Women's mobility as a function of factors within the households, specifically a woman's relation to the household head is a burning issue as it improves their quality of life. Mobility is positively correlated with economic freedom (Mehta and Sai, 2021).

Women's voices are suppressed, controlled or punished explicitly by laws, policies and discriminatory practices and implicitly by social attitudes, cultural norms and patriarchal values (OHCHR Report, New York (2021) from <https://www.ohchr.org>, (retrieved on 26.1.22)

Lack of freedom of expression is a problem that affects the marginalized section i.e. the women in the society. Access to free expression is also vital both to support the development process and as a development goal in its own right (Index On Censorship Report (2013)

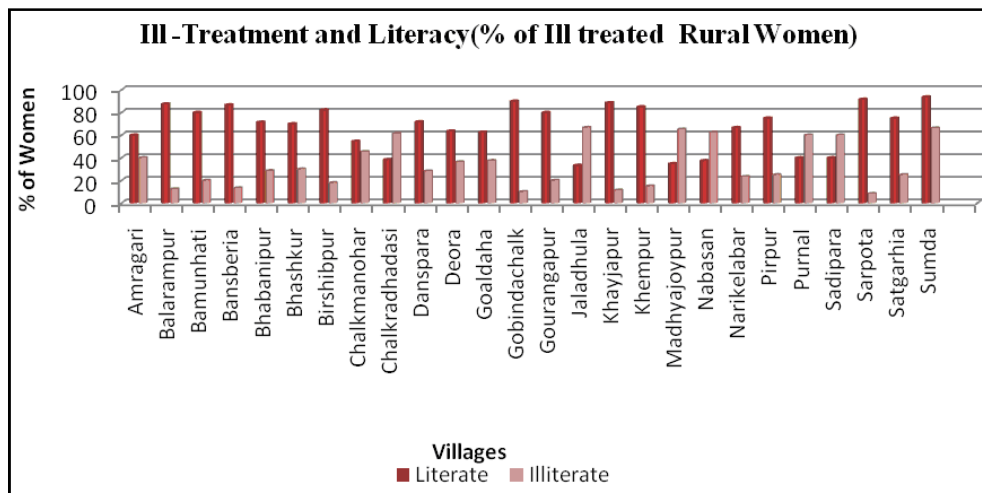


Fig. 10

from <https://www.indexoncensorship.org>, (retrieved on 26.1.22).

Economic Freedom is the key to a better quality of life and greater opportunities. Women's economic independence is a necessary element for economic development (Awan and Akbar, 2018).

According to the Table 9 rural women in the study area have limited freedom of mobility. Village Madhyajoypur has the highest percentage (78.69 per cent) of women who enjoyed freedom of mobility or movement in their daily lives which can give them better quality of life and it is lowest (42.05 per cent) in Narikelabar village. 50 per cent–60 per cent surveyed women in 12 villages have expressed their views that they can travel without any escort to market, health centre, relatives house, fair and friends home.

Freedom of expression can influence the quality of life of rural women. Out of 26 surveyed villages 50 per cent to 70 per cent women in 12 villages and less

than 50 per cent women in 11 villages have enjoyed such freedom (Table 9).

Table 9 is showing the access and control over economic resources of the rural women including their freedom to use household resources. Only in 5 villages more than 50 per cent women have such freedom. 40 per cent–50 per cent women in 12 villages have economic freedom with highest in Bhaskur village and lowest in Madhyajoypur village.

6.11 Education and Decision Making Process :

Women are not considered as an important element in decision making either in farm practices or in household practices. In Indian society traditionally they are put in a weak position and have a subordinate role to play in the family (Antwal *et al.* 2005, 64).

According to the Table 10 in Madhyajoypur village about 72.13 per cent (63.93 per cent+8.20 per cent) women have decision making authority whereas in

Table 10: Freedom of Mobility, Freedom of Expression, Economic Freedom (% of Rural Women)

Serial No.	Villages	Freedom of Mobility	Freedom of Expression	Economic Freedom
1.	Madhyajoypur	78.69	75.41	22.95
2.	Khayjapur	73.58	64.15	42.45
3.	Sumda	73.39	67.89	47.71
4.	Bamunhati	65.63	46.88	46.88
5.	Purnal	64.10	57.69	52.56
6.	Birshibpur	63.38	49.29	38.03
7.	Pirpur	62.5	46.88	37.5
8.	Bhaskur	62.24	76.53	62.50
9.	Chalkradhadasi	61.76	50	41.12
10.	Gourangapur	59.32	69.49	52.54
11.	Bansberia	57.97	50.72	43.48
12.	Jaladhula	57.89	63.16	31.58
13.	Goaldaha	54.55	46.75	45.45
14.	Amragari	53.13	50	31.25
15.	Deora	52.69	50.54	43.01
16.	Nabasan	52.63	45.61	29.82
17.	Sarpota	51.02	40.82	44.89
18.	Danspara	50.58	53.49	46.42
19.	Bhabanipur	49.41	43.53	50.59
20.	Sadipara	48.48	36.36	51.52
21.	Khempur	47.76	37.31	47.76
22.	Chalkmanohar	47.17	49.06	45.28
23.	Satgarhia	45.45	50	45.45
24.	Balarampur	44.12	64.71	35.29
25.	Gobindachalk	42.11	32.89	32.89
26.	Narikelabar	42.05	80.68	36.36

Source : Primary Survey, 2014–2017

Pirpur the percentage falls to 25 per cent. More than 50 per cent women only in 9 villages have decision making power in the family. In fewer cases women are the sole authority of taking familial decisions whose husbands stay out of their home. But in most of the families husbands are the sole authority of taking decisions in the study area.

It is being reflected from the Table 12 that there is a positive relationship between education (Average Years of schooling), freedom of mobility, Freedom of Expression, Economic freedom and Participation in

decision making process. Such relation has been justified by Pearson's Correlation Coefficients. Generally women with higher level of education have more freedom of actions in the family that can improve their quality of life.

7. Major Findings :

- Gender differences regarding literacy rate have been found almost in every villages in the study area. Women education lags far behind than that of men.

Table 11: Decision Making Pattern

Serial No.	Villages	Only Wife	Only Husband	Husband & Wife	Head of the Family
1.	Amragari	9.37	45	39.38	6.25
2.	Balarampur	8.82	26.47	45.06	17.65
3.	Bamunhati	7.80	60.94	28.13	3.13
4.	Bansberia	7.25	40.58	39.16	13.04
5.	Bhabanipur	9.41	37.65	40	12.94
6.	Bhashkur	6.25	50	25	18.75
7.	Birshibpur	7.04	57.75	18.31	16.90
8.	Chalkmanohar	4.41	33.83	55.68	5.88
9.	Chalkradhadasi	4.41	33.83	55.88	5.88
10.	Danspara	2.91	31.40	25.57	40.12
11.	Deora	8.60	32.26	48.39	10.75
12.	Goaldaha	6.49	44.16	37.66	12.99
13.	Gobindachalk	7.89	55.26	27.63	9.21
14.	Gourangapur	8.47	50.85	33.90	6.78
15.	Jaladhula	2.62	36.84	52.63	7.89
16.	Khayjapur	10.37	37.74	47.17	4.72
17.	Khempur	19.40	34.33	19.40	26.87
18.	Madhyajoypur	8.20	21.31	63.93	6.56
19.	Nabasan	8.77	22.81	52.63	15.79
20.	Narikelabar	11.36	22.73	62.5	3.41
21.	Pirpur	6.25	59.38	18.75	15.62
22.	Purnal	12.82	44.87	30.77	11.64
23.	Sadipara	6.06	39.40	25.57	40.12
24.	Sarpota	18.37	46.94	20.41	14.28
25.	Satgarhia	9.09	31.82	59.54	4.55
26.	Sumda	4.59	57.80	21.10	16.51

Source : Primary Survey, 2014–2017

Table 12: Pearson's Correlation

	Freedom of Mobility	Freedom of Expression	Economic Freedom	Participation in Decision Making Process
Education (Average Years of Schooling)	+0.909	+0.917	+0.857	+0.600

Significant at 0.01 level

- The education received by women is determined by socio-religious factors. Educational attainment among the Hindu women is comparatively higher than among the Muslim Women. Literacy rate is generally higher among the General Caste than among other castes i.e. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.
- The general trend of rural women is that they mostly receive formal education till class V or class VI. The importance of higher education is insignificant. Graduate women are very few in number in the study area
- Indicators of quality of life of the women like political participation, age of marriage, TMFR, age of marriage, Ill-treatment, freedom of mobility, freedom of expression and decision making power are correlated with average years of schooling.

8. Conclusions :

Education can be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women in the society. It helps women to take decisions at every sphere of their lives and can bring consciousness among them. It can be said that if women get educated the village moves and the nation moves. Women's education can improve their ability to manage basic childcare, increase the nutritional content of diets and ensure more effective diagnosis of disease. It can also improve elementary health care to provide a good quality of life. Gender discrimination still persists in national, state, district and village levels. Rural women in India are less literate than rural men. There is negative attitude of the family towards educating the girl child. The present study is focusing on the correlation between education and political participation, TMFR, age of marriage, decision making power, freedom of mobility, freedom of expression and economic freedom of the rural women. Such correlation is showing that education has large impact on the these quality of life indicators. Thus it can be concluded that education is the great moderator of the quality of life of the rural women in the study area.

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