SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN VARANASI CITY: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract : Female education is essential to change the status of women in the society and also to empower them intellectually. This study aims to analyze the socioeconomic conditions of females and its impacts on their education in Varanasi City. The study is based on primary survey. Data of Pandareeba Ward was collected through a questionnaire by using random sample survey. Participation of women of different ages was considered in the survey. An analysis was made to find out the causes of low participation of females in education and access present educational condition of the females. The study concluded that females with educated parents, get higher education and suffer less from gender discrimination. A small percentage of females are affected by economic problems. More than half of the females are interested in higher education and support education. The main barriers to female education are low income and unemployment. Also, they are often subjected to violence leading to low attendance and high dropout rates.

Index Terms - **Education, female empowerment, gender discrimination, socio-economic.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the vital components of human capital. It is not only enhancing the capabilities of the individual in the form of better efficiency and improved skill but also contributes to the nation building. Education means a lot in everybody's life; it contributes significantly to demographic improvement by influencing marriage age, desired family size, infant mortality improvement, child nutrition, and household member health. The Education completely changes the person's thoughts and personality and helps us to attain positive attitude. Home is the first place of education and parents in everybody's life are the first educator. The first lesson of life comes from the mother.

The education of females means making society more meaningful and make next generation well educated, and confident. Moreover, this helps in making society capable of nation development and free from orthodox and useless superstition. The educational development of females is regarded as a critical approach to raise the level of productivity and reduce the malicious circle of poverty and suppression which ultimately enriches health and hygiene, thereby improving the quality of life.

Education for females not only relates directly to the universalization of primary school education but also has a significant impact on economic development and prevents rapid population growth. In India, the more severe problem in universalizing primary school education is a low fixed student enrollment or high dropout. The female population's analphabetism rate remains higher than that of their male counterparts and shows no sign of decline (Xiaodan & Narumi, 1996).

The educated females are very much aware of rapid population growth and associated problems; hence their decision is always in favor of population control schemes. Such positive changes come in the thought process of females when they are well educated to understand the seriousness of the problem. Researchers also gave their view about educated females that the educated females are more likely to adopt family planning techniques in comparison to uneducated or illiterate females. Gender discrimination was formalized and instituted through a multitude of cultural norms and practices, and this has contributed to gender gap and gender disparity in all spheres of life in no small measure. Women from marginalized groups like schedule tribes (STs) are more vulnerable to economic hardship. As girls are engaged in domestic work, they are less likely to be enrolled in school (Ghosh, 2007; Husain & Sarkar, 2011). An increment in the number of professional female and reduction in the gender gap will not only enhance the economic growth but will also improve the quality of life.

Education is indispensable to economic development. Education, mainly female education affects the income considerably and plays a major role in controlling fertility, so proper steps should be taken to reduce the gender gap in education by incorporating appropriate policy measures suggested by the planners (Das, 2010). After independence in India, one of the most pertinent issues which have attracted the attention of the policy makers was gender issue and related concerns. Gender issues have become central policy arena. The policymakers have firmly believed that a real commitment to gender equity and equality will strengthen every stratum of society that leads to reducing poverty as women can bring new energy and insights (Jayaweera, 1987; Pakhare, 2015).

Aforementioned literature has emphasized the importance of female education as a valuable tool for society and nation development. The existing literature accepted that primary schooling of a girl child is utmost important and this literature also suggested that the female education leads high quality of life, low fertility rate and less gender discrimination (Hossain & Kabeer, 2004). There is an abundance of empirical literature which links the female education and low gender discrimination. However, some authors questioned this link and said that the only females of marginalized families or backward class still suffered from gender discrimination and low educational status, but the general census is there is a positive relationship between women's education, healthy society, and nation development. Accordingly, Indian Census 2011 states that only 65.46% of country's female population could have classified as literate. The ratio of female education in Varanasi city of Uttar Pradesh is 57.2%, (District Census Handbook: Varanasi, 2011) which is significantly lower than Indian female educational percentage. This paper is an endeavor to interpret the education scenario, problems, and challenges of the female of Varanasi city, mainly how the social and economic condition affects the female education.

II. OBJECTIVES

The study was undertaken with following objectives:
- To access the present condition of female education in Pandareeba ward.
- To find out the impact of the socio-economic status of female on education.

III. DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The data play a vital and important role in providing the unit's abstract form. These also help to equate or contrast units within a specific geographical phenomenon. (Khan, 2013). The present work is an outcome of intensive fieldwork. This study has tried to cover the impact of societal and economic conditions over female education. The study is a cross-sectional study which deals with female educational status on socioeconomic conditions, and how the socioeconomic conditions positively and negatively affect the women's education and their interrelationship with each other. The study has been conducted on a micro level where sampled Ward has been taken as a unit of analysis and data is collected through a general survey with the help of comprehensive questionnaires.

The variables are generated through a questionnaire based on a survey of 100 respondents taken from the Pandareeba ward of Varanasi city. The purposive sampling was used by considering the lower female participation rate in education and educational status of households. The results have been derived through simple percentage method.

IV. THE STUDY AREA

Varanasi is also known as Kashi and Banaras. The city stretches from Banaras Hindu University in the south, to villages and agricultural land in western and northwestern parts. Varanasi is Purvanchal's (eastern Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar) major commercial city. Often recognized as India's cultural and spiritual capital, Varanasi's interest among visitors, scholars and philosophers is quite clear. The city is located along the Ganga river bank in the form of a crescent. This ranges from 25 ° 15 ' to 25° 22' N latitudes and from 82° 57' to 83° 01' E, covering an area of 74.3 sq. km (Fig. 1) (Bano & Mishra, 2014).
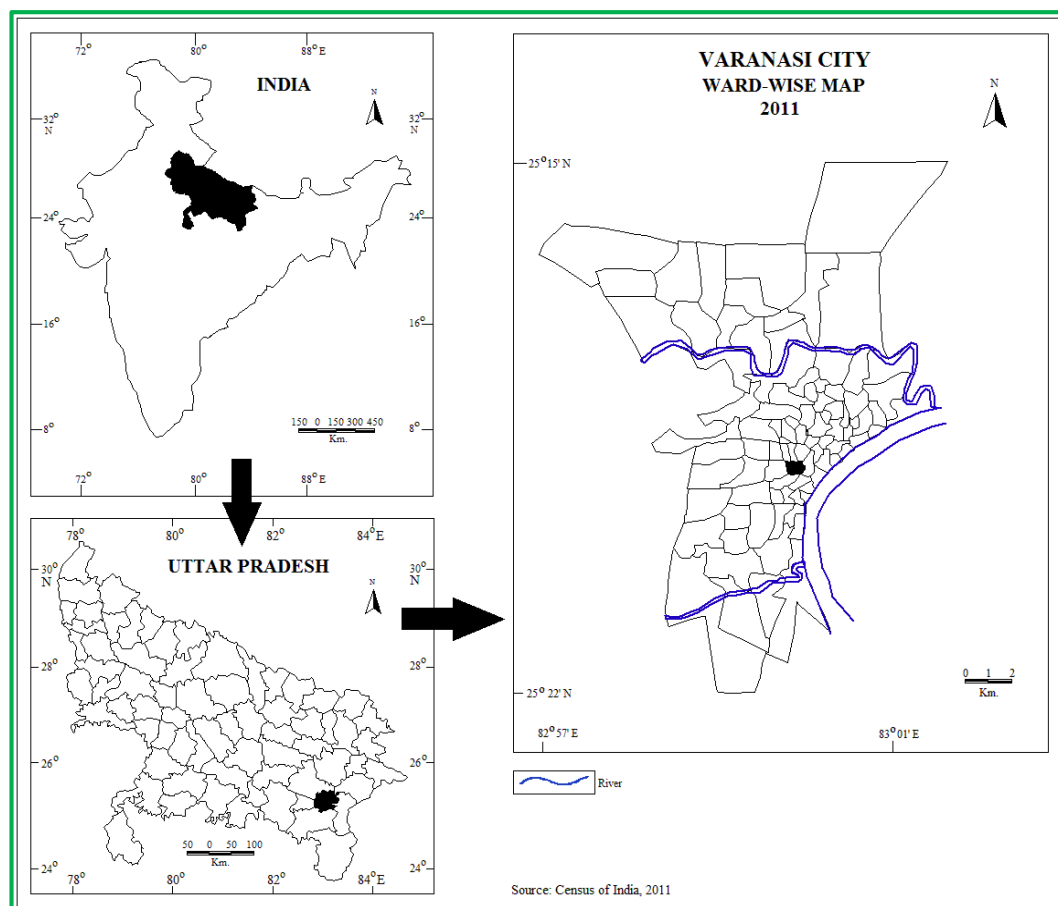

Fig. 1. Location map of study area

The city is part of Varanasi Urban Agglomeration (VUA). Due to increasing population and rapid development, by 1991 Varanasi became a million plus city. According to census 2011, Varanasi had a population of 3,676,841 of which male and female were 1,921,857 and 1,754,984 respectively. In the 2001 census, Varanasi had a population of 3,138,671 of which males were 1,649,187, and remaining 1,489,484 were females. There was an increase of 17.15% in the population as compared to the population in 2001. The average population density/km2 is 2395. Varanasi Municipal Corporation consists of 90 municipal wards.

V. IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ON FEMALE EDUCATION

5.1 Society and female Education

Religion and caste are one of the main parameters of the society. Religion has an influence on caste, demonstrating the capacity of the community to provide education. Gender-specific educational standards may also reflect cultural and religious or caste norms. The girl's marriage is the main issue in every family. Those families who are economically deprived will invest less in their daughter's education in comparison to their son, who is expected to provide monetary help for their family.

Table 5.1 contains descriptive statistics for female education attainment level, for the sample of Pandareeba ward. The data of the table reveals that according to religion 43% Hindu, 85% Muslims and 2% female of other faiths were educated. The table above also depicts that Muslim females (5%) were more illiterate than Hindu females (3%). The primary cause of illiteracy

in Muslim female are early marriage, big family, and gender discrimination. Table 5.1 also shows that 32% Muslim women and 35% Hindu female were engaged in higher education.

These percentages indicate that the Hindu community is much interested and involved in girl's higher education. The educational attainment of women of other religion is very low. But this small percentage shows the substantial growth of female education. Moreover, 2% and 6 % females of Hindu and Muslim community were primary educated, respectively (Fig. 2). And 3% and 12% females of Hindu and Muslim were educated up to senior secondary, respectively.

Table 5.1: Educational profile of the females in Pandareeba ward, Varanasi city

Categories	Religion wise (education in %)			Caste wise (education in %)			
	Hindu	Muslim	Other religion	SC/STs	OBC	General	Others
Illiterates	3	5	0	0	2	6	0
Primary	2	6	1	2	4	3	0
High School	2	6	0	1	1	6	0
Senior Secondary	1	6	0	1	2	4	0
Graduation	16	22	1	1	12	25	1
Post-Graduation	17	9	0	0	4	22	0
Others	2	1	0	0	1	2	0
Total	43	55	2	5	26	68	1

5.2 Economic Condition and Female Education

The economic factors influence the educational decision of the family. The Economic situation of female's parent plays a major role in the schooling status of females. Female's parents who earn more than ₹12000 per month support higher women's education (31%) than others. Those families whose monthly income is up to ₹6000, they had lower female educational status because they have a large number of sibling (Table 5.2). Only 9% females were literate whose family's income was less than ₹3000.; the families with monthly income of ₹3000-6000 had 11% literate females. As the household income increases, the

Fig. 2. Religion wise female educational status. (Data is based on personal survey)
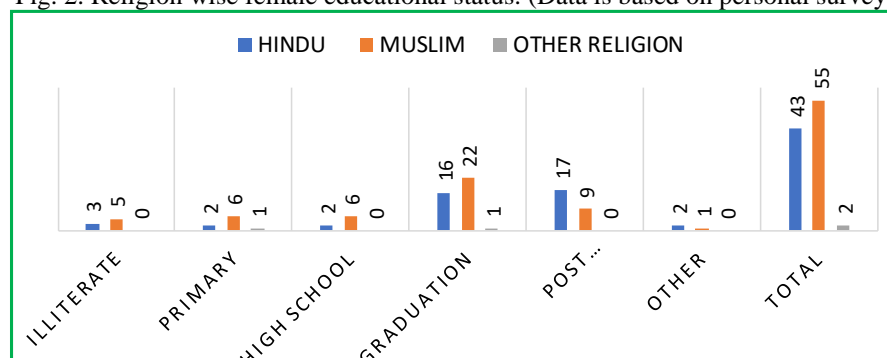
educational status of females also goes up.

Table 5.2: Income of the families of respondents

Educational Status of the Respondent	<3000 (in %)	3000-6000 (in %)	6000-9000 (in %)	9000-12000 (in %)	>12000 (in %)
Illiterates	2	1	3	1	1
Primary	0	1	4	3	2
High School	0	2	2	1	3
Senior Secondary	1	1	1	2	3
Graduation	4	3	8	12	9
Post-Graduation	1	2	5	5	12
Others	1	1	0	2	1
Total	9	11	23	26	31

23% literate female were from those families who have a monthly income of ₹6000-9000 and 26% of literate females belong to monthly income group of ₹9000-12000 (Fig. 3). Mostly richer families have a higher rate of women's education and also have a good societal background which supports female education. According to the study, 70% female got their primary and secondary education through government school as state schools are more affordable and subsidized than private school. Only 30% females opted for private school education as these females were more financially robust.
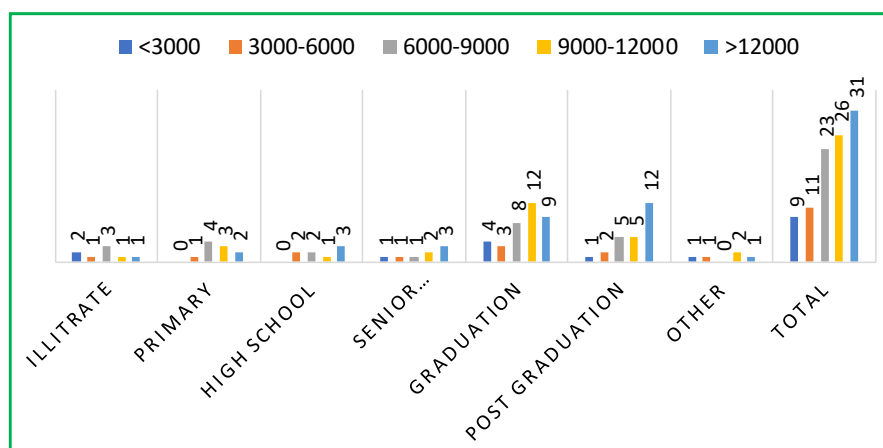

Fig. 3. Income wise educational status of the respondents. (Data is based on personal survey)

VI. CONCLUSION

The present paper examined the socioeconomic impact on female education. The education survey results found a positive correlation in the context of women education. The education of parents plays a vital role in women's education. The educated parents encourage female education as they very well know about the importance of education and its role in their empowerment. The survey results postulated that up to 80% parents of respondents were educated and they support female higher education. Survey also states that up to 95% females were educated and more than 60% females were getting the higher education. This result shows that society has started supporting women's education. At the same time, 16% female respondents were facing gender discrimination by their families, and 15% respondent's families were not interested in female education.

If we go through economic aspects, then we observe that a small portion of female respondents was affected by low economic status, but most of the economically suffered respondents were related to higher age groups. Overall my survey "socioeconomic impact on female education" gave me positive results which break stereotype for female.

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