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**Thesis Abstract**

**EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN LITERACY WORKERS: A  
CASE STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO A CLUSTER OF VILLAGES  
IN CHANDPUR REGION OF FARIDABAD DISTRICT, HARYANA**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work

By

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## **Introduction**

Literacy rate in India was 16.7% in the year 1951, 52.21% in 1991 and 65.38% in 2001. The male literacy rate during the decade 1991-2001 has increased to 75.85%. On the other hand, the female literacy has gone up to 54.16%. The rural–urban gap with regard to literacy rate has come down to 20.85 points by 2001.

According to the Census report of 2001, literacy rate in Haryana is 68.59 %, which is higher than national literacy level. Women literacy rate is 56.31 %, which is 2.15 % higher than national rate. The difference in male – female literacy levels is 22.94. Faridabad district has maintained its literacy status above the state average. Faridabad is the third highest in the state with regard to female literacy rate. However, Faridabad occupies only 10<sup>th</sup> position with regard to male literacy level in the state. Gender gap in literacy levels in Faridabad is 15.2 %.

## **Empowerment of Women Literacy Workers**

A large number of literacy workers are women. What is the motivation for such voluntary literacy workers to join the literacy campaign? Is this voluntarism, a sign of women empowerment?

Empowerment is a process of building or sharpening of capacities, so that the people experience continuous and sustained changes or development. Have the women literacy workers empowered because of their involvement in literacy work? If so, how much they are empowered, what are the factors of empowerment and to what extent could literacy work be a means of empowerment for women literacy workers?

## **Objectives of the study**

- ❑ To critically study the implementation of National Literacy Campaign in Faridabad district in the state of Haryana with particular reference to NGO contribution to the campaign;
- ❑ To look in to the socio-economic background of women literacy workers;
- ❑ To evaluate the level of empowerment of women literacy workers in the district;
- ❑ To study the impact of National Literacy Campaign (NLC) work on the personality, life and aspirations of the women literacy workers;
- ❑ To ascertain the impact of voluntary work on the motivation level of the women literacy workers as denoted by the formation of self-help groups;
- ❑ To suggest measures for upgrading the involvement of women literacy workers in NLC.

## **Findings of the study**

Literacy workers are 100 % literate and have reached at least high school level of education. The literacy workers are voluntary workers and have taken up the task of imparting literacy to the adult illiterate women without expecting any remuneration from the Government. The literacy workers have been found the best-educated members of the family. Social and educational profile of woman literacy workers is better than the average women of the village. The literacy workers had a higher level of empowerment before taking up the voluntary literacy work.

Literacy work has facilitated the literacy workers to interfere meaningfully in the lives of the women of the neighbourhood. Literacy work has enhanced social status and respect of the literacy workers & opened up more opportunities for the literacy workers to move out of home. There are several situational factors that contribute to the voluntarism shown by the literacy workers. These factors are the encouragement given by family members, the Panchayat council members, the district and bloc level literacy council & their training, respect and recognition given by the illiterate women of the neighbourhood. Since they are better educated, literacy work has been a useful time pass for them. Many of the learners too find leisure between the unending household works by attending literacy programme. Most of the literacy classes have a lot of fun, singing and group dancing.

The active involvement in the yearlong literacy work has enhanced to the self-esteem, self-concept, self-confidence and social competence of the literacy workers. Their beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour patterns have been modified due to literacy work. The role of literacy workers in the decision making of the family affairs have increased. Literacy work has not affected the economic status of woman literacy workers. After the literacy work some of the literacy workers have actively involved in the formation of self-help groups bringing together the learners of the literacy classes. The literacy workers hold the executive posts of the self help groups such as president, secretary and the treasurer. Political participation of the literacy workers has not changed significantly. However, the literacy work has given the literacy workers more opportunities to meet the civil authorities face to face. The literacy workers have taken active role in conducting various cultural programmes like *balmela* (children's festivals) and annual literacy day celebrations. They have also helped some women to meet the civil authorities to obtain pension, disability certificate and to open bank account. The problems in the path of empowerment of women are of two categories; restrictions at home and safety problems outside the home. They are bold in discussions but timid in practical level However, literacy work has boosted the process of great change in the lives of women and the process of empowerment initiated by the literacy work is still continuing through the formation of self-help groups, micro-credit formation and micro-enterprising movement.

The process of women empowerment is a long term phenomenon and an isolated event like participation in literacy campaign does not really make significant changes in the lives of literacy workers unless accompanied by more challenging levels of social participation like participation in the SHG movement.