

Investigating vitality of Education in Gender Empowerment: With reference to Central Himalayas

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Abstract

Uttarakhand stands out as one of the more developed states of India in the educational status of its population. Its growth in educational level, particularly for the females has been phenomenal between 1991 and 2001. In order to investigate impact of education on gender research was conducted on reproductive and post reproductive women in Hawalbagh block of Uttarakhand. Findings reveal bright ray of hope towards women empowerment as it was observed that women were aware regarding importance of education and were engaged in different professions. Equality of the sexes - in terms of men and women's command over resources, their access to education and health, and in terms of freedom to develop their potential has an intrinsic value in its own right. In this aspect a gender biasness was observed.

Key Words: Education, Reproductive, Post-Reproductive, Gender

Introduction:

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, research, or simply through auto didacticism. (Dewey, 1914) generally, it occurs through any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts. Etymologically, the word "education" is derived from the Latin educate (-A breeding, a bringing up, a rearing") from educe (-I educate, I train) which is related to the homonym educe (-I lead forth, I take out; I raise up, I erect) from e- (-from, out of) and duco (-I lead, I conduct). A right to education has been created and recognized by some jurisdictions: Since 1952, Article 2 of the first Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights obliges all signatory parties to guarantee the right to education. It does not however guarantee any particular level of education of any particular quality. At the global level, the United Nations' International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 guarantees this right under its Article 13.

Throughout history various governments have made it illegal to educate children privately or at home. Various totalitarian regimes, for example, have mandated indoctrination through propaganda in the Hitler Youth and propaganda in education under various communist regimes. Uttarakhand stands out as one of the more developed states of India in the educational status of its population. Its growth in educational level, particularly for the females has been phenomenal between 1991 and 2001. While it has grown by 14.48% for the entire population, the female

literacy itself has gone up by 18.56%. In fact there has been a steady improvement in female education, which has reached 60.26% in 2001. This gives Uttaranchal 18th rank in India in female literacy. It also shows that in the past thirty years female literacy has grown at a higher rate than that of men.

Review of Literature:

1. Agarwal. Dr Saraswati and Masant Hema, studied (2003) about the 'Absenteeism among post graduate Female students causes and remedies. The major findings of the study were-- i. Major causes of absenteeism among female P.G students include a) Unusualness of present education system (b) dissatisfactory economic condition of students (c) distant location of college from home. ii. Most of the students absent themselves because of (a) their illness (b) their job or training (c) cultural functions in the college (d) unsuitable curriculum (e) regular test in the class (f) problem due to class-mates. iii. For solving the problem of absenteeism most of the students suggested that (a) the education should be vocational (b) personal relationship should be established between the teacher and students by reducing present pupil- teacher ratio of 60:1.(c) the norm of compulsory 75% attendance for a student to appear in the final examination should be followed strictly by the Universities.(d) 20% weightage should be given to class tests in the overall assessment of a student (e) free or subsidized convenience facility should be provided to girl by the institution (f) household management course should be compulsory for girls at P.G level.

2. Ahmed. Nabi and Siddiqui Mohd Abid, (2006) "Empowerment of socioeconomically weaker sections through Education; Commitments and Challenges." it is found that urban women belonging to educated classes and the higher socio-economic groups enjoys more psychological secure and status rather than the girls belonging to the urban slums and rural and remote areas continue to lag behind or even deprived to receive primary and secondary education.

3. Ali. Sophia J, (2011) made a study on "Challenges facing women employees in career development: A focus on Kapsabet Municipality, Kenya". The objectives of the study, upon which this paper is based, were to asses' women's career development practices; find out if gender balance was given a chance; examine the challenges facing women in career development and establish the best practices on gender equality. The study found that promotion among women was low and training for women employees was minimal. Most women employees were dissatisfied with career development programmers and women were discriminated against in career development opportunities.

4. Begum. Mustiary, (2006) worked on "Women Entrepreneurship in India; Challenges and Strategies, from her research work she found that with changing times and change in cultural norms, increase literacy, industrialization, social and occupational mobility influenced the women to enter into the field of entrepreneurship. There is no denying the fact that women have made considerable progress in the last fifty years but yet they have to struggle against many handicaps and social evils in the male dominated society.

Methodology:

Visualizing the above conditions the researcher has tried to investigate the real educational development of rural women. The research was conducted in Hawalbagh block of Uttarakhand .250 Reproductive and 250 Post reproductive respondents were selected by using multi stage sampling. Statistical analysis was utilized to determine relations between dependent and independent variables

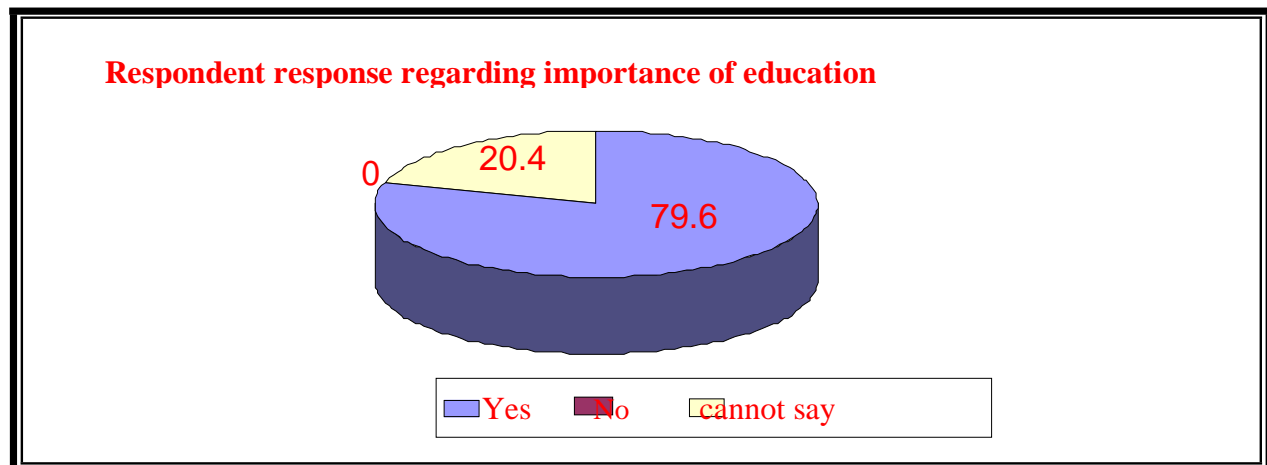
Observations:

The respondent were analyzed for the various independent

TABLE 1

Respondent response regarding importance of education

Response	Reproductive		Post-reproductive		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	156	78	43	86	199	79.6
No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cannot say	44	22	07	14	51	20.4
Total	200	100	50	100	250	100



In the **Bahá'í teachings** there are two extraordinary statements about the education of women. First, that women's education is of greater importance than men's education and, secondly, that not until the equality of opportunity in education for the two sexes is established will the foundations of war be removed. In similar context respondent response regarding importance of education was analyzed. It was good to observe majority (79.6%) agreed to the importance of education whereas

(20.4%) were neutral which clearly reflects the progressive attitude of women towards education thereby aiding in development process. Similar findings were observed for both the groups which may be considered as a golden step towards women education.

TABLE 2

Respondent response regarding main reason for necessity of women education

Response	Reproductive		Post-Reproductive		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Enhancement in potential and ability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gain self confidence	-	-	-	-	-	-
Economic independence	112	56	-	-	112	44.8
Develop Awareness towards rights	41	20.5	-	-	41	16.4
For proper bringing up of children	16	8	21	42	37	14.8
To gain respectability in society	10	5	-	-	10	4.0
Better marriage prospect	-	-	28	56	28	11.2
For Fulfilling family responsibility in better way	21	10.5	01	2	22	8.8
Total	200	100	50	100	250	100

Value in Parentheses () indicate percentage

Equality of the sexes - in terms of men and women's command over resources, their access to education and health, and in terms of freedom to develop their potential has an intrinsic value in its own right. If with equal education, women's contribution to economic development (or to desirable goals) is comparable to men's, then reducing gender-imbalances in education will enhance women's capacity to contribute to economic progress. This is the efficiency reason for reducing gender inequality in areas where women are currently deprived. Both the intrinsic (equity) and instrumental (efficiency) based reasons for gender equality are emphasized in the teachings of **Bahá'u'lláh**.²In similar reference respondent response regarding important reason for necessity of education was assessed. It was observed that economic independence was considered as main reason by 44.8% respondents in comparison to other factors. Respondents revealed that with increase in female schooling they would avail better economic opportunities for job as well awareness regarding other self-employment. Hence problem in family due to economic crisis would be resolved. Reproductive and Post reproductive contrast reveal that significant difference was observed between both groups. Majority (56%) reproductive respondents favored that education was important for women being economic independent which indicate positive attitude of respondents towards their economic Empowerment. In informal discussion, respondents revealed that by economically independent they would in turn be aware about their rights, gain social prestige as well as would be able to fulfill family responsibility in better way. However in post reproductive group respondents reported that with gain in education they would get suitable

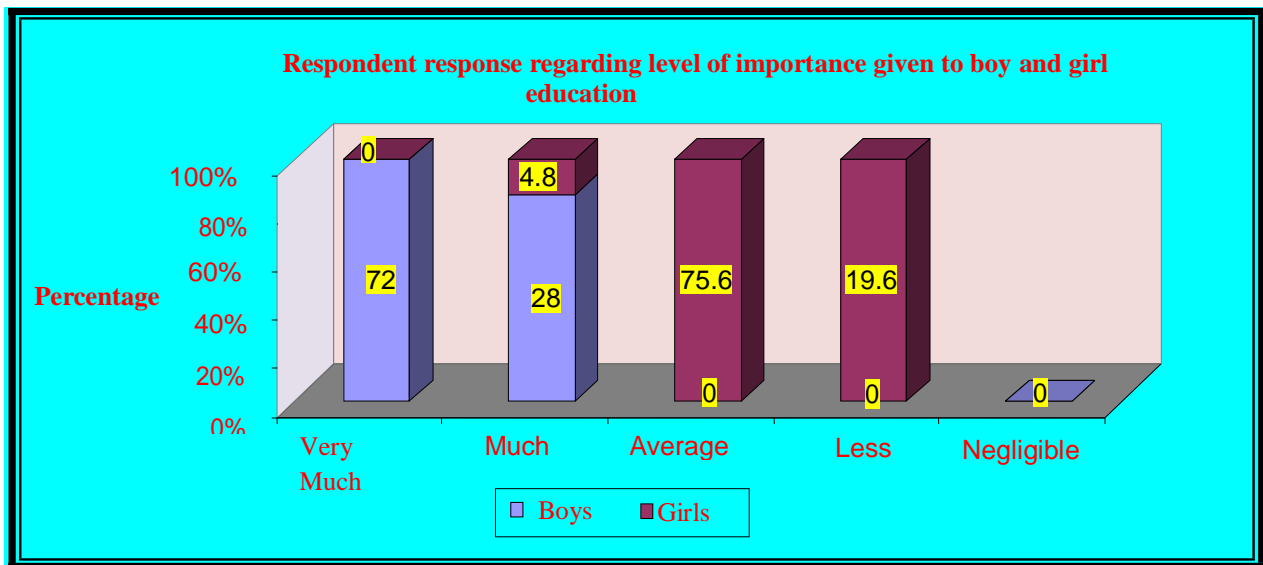
mate as well as will be able to take better care of their children. This reflects the post reproductive respondents considered major role of women was as housewife hence with increase in education status of respondents they would be able to take proper care of children as well as they believed more educated girl more better option she would have for marriage.

TABLE .3

Respondent response regarding level of importance given to boy and girl education

Response	For Boys			For girls		
	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total
Very much	180(90)	-	180(72)	-	-	-
Much	20(10)	50(100)	70(28)	12(06)	-	12(4.8)
Average	-	-	-	170(85)	19(38)	189(75.6)
Less	-	-	-	18(09)	31(62)	49(19.6)
Negligible	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	200(100)	100(100)	250(100)	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)

Value in Parentheses () indicate percentage



It was observed that through Table 3 that gender biasness is highly reflected in the area in terms of education. All respondents considered education of boy much important as they considered boys were bread earners of family as well as the entire responsibility of household in future lies in their shoulder hence their education was must .However majority (75.6%) respondents considered importance of girls education as average important and 19.6 % considered it as less important.

They considered that girl had to only full fill family responsibility and was considered others property (Paraya Dhan). Hence, in spite of education they should be well versed in household activates. Significant difference between reproductive and post reproductive group was observed in terms of education of girls. Post reproductive respondents owing to their mature age had narrow mind set of girls not moving out of their threshold. Hence majority (62%) considered girls education less important, whereas reproductive respondents have adopted a bit modern approach and have considered girl education average importance as they consider for taking care of family, children and herself education was important.

TABLE 4
Respondent's satisfaction regarding notion that educated parents should full fill responsibility of their children primary education

Response	Reproductive		Post-reproductive		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Fully satisfied	20	10	-	-	20	8.0
Satisfied	180	90	42	84	222	88.8
Neutral	-	-	08	16	08	3.2
Unsatisfied	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fully unsatisfied	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	200	100	50	100	250	100

Table 4 reflects respondent's satisfaction regarding notion that educated parents should fulfill responsibility of their children primary education which clearly reveals that respondents were aware about necessity of education but a number of factors like poor economic condition, excess house hold responsibility and taking care of sibling acted as a blockage in their path way of education. Data reveal that majority respondents (96%) were fully satisfied with the above notion, similar observation was reveal in both group

TABLE 5
Respondent response regarding School dropout children in their family

Respo nse	For Boys			For girls		
	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total
Yes	180(90)	50(100)	230(92)	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)
No	20(10)	-	20(08)	-	-	-
Total	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)

Value in Parentheses () indicate percentage

Table 5 shows respondents response regarding school dropout children in their family. It

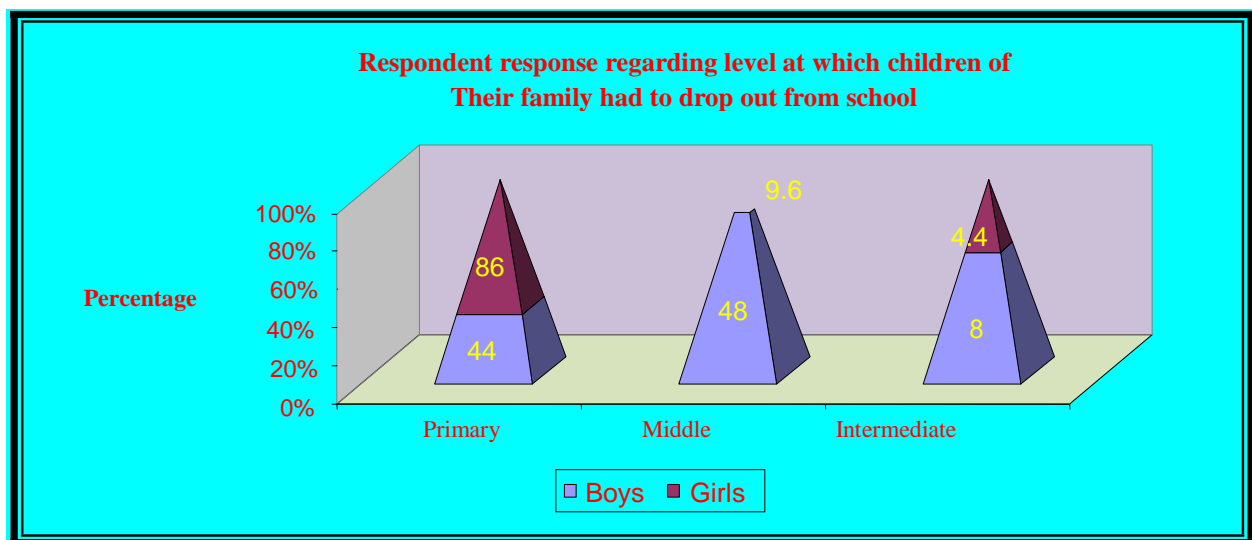
was observed that both boys and girls were hampered by various social and economic fields. All girls had to drop out from school at some level or other. Condition of boys was also similar but difference was observed in level of education. However, only 8 % boys attained education hence did not dropped the school. The data reveal poor education level although literacy percentage was higher.

TABLE 6

Respondent response regarding level at which children of their family had to drop out from school

Response	For Boys			For girls		
	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total	Reproduc tive	Post reproductive	Total
Primary	65(32.5)	45(90)	110(44)	165(82.5)	50(100)	215(86)
Middle	115(52.5)	05(10)	120(48)	24(12)	-	24(9.6)
Intermediate	20(10)	-	20(08)	11(5.5)	-	11(4.4)
Total	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)

Value in Parentheses () indicate percentage



The poor economic condition was mainly responsible factor for drop out children from school. It was observed that gender biasness was found such that difference was seen regarding level of

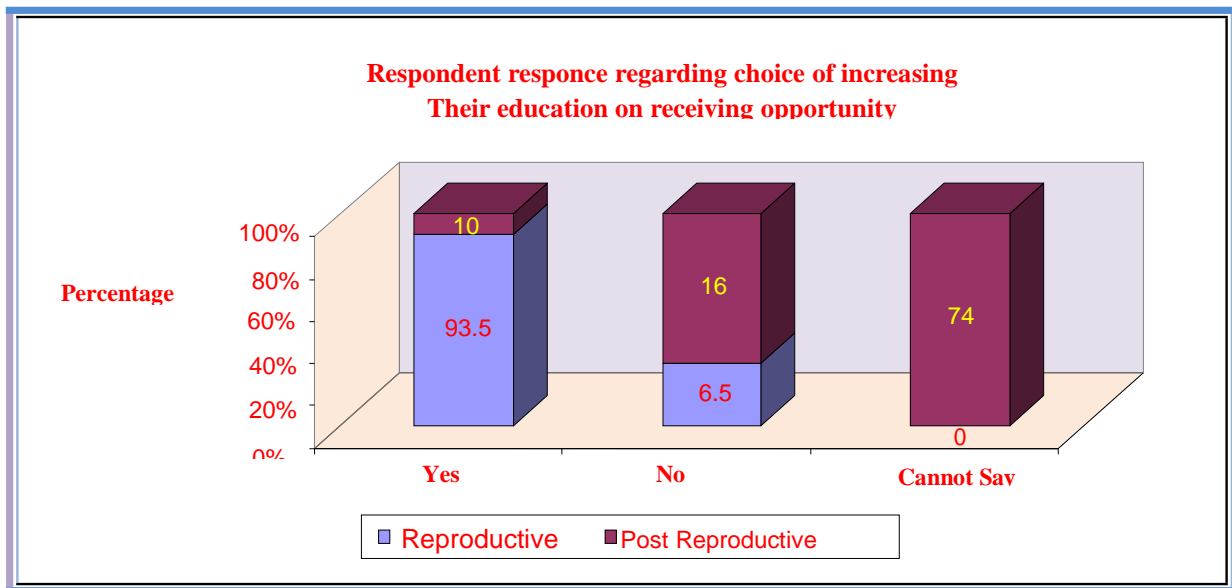
education. In case of reproductive group majority 57.5 % boys had to leave school after middle, whereas in case of girls 86% left school after primary. However in post reproductive group respondents have similar results for both boys and girls.

TABLE 7

Respondent response regarding choice of continuing their education on receiving opportunity

Choice	Reproductive		Post-Reproductive		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	187	93.5	5	10	192	76.8
No	13	6.5	8	16	21	8.4
Cannot Say	-	-	37	74	37	14.8
Total	200	100	50	100	250	100

Value in Parentheses () indicate percentage



The poor economic condition, excess work load and care taking of younger sibling were the main factors due to which the respondents had to leave their education in between. In same context, respondent response regarding choice of raising their education of receiving opportunity was analyzed. Data reveal that maximum (76.8%) respondents wanted to continue their education which due to above stated factors they had to leave in between. Contrast between both groups reveals that in post reproductive group respondents were neutral regarding raising their educational level. However, majority (93.5%) respondents totally favored to achieve higher education on receiving opportunity

TABLE 8

Respondent response regarding any organization working for women development in their village at Government / Non-Government level

Response	Reproductive		Post-reproductive		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	77	38.5	03	06	80	32
No	21	10.5	05	10	26	10.4
Cannot say	102	51	42	84	144	57.6
Total	200	100	50	100	250	100

Value in Parentheses () indicate percentage

Data revealed that majority (57.6%) had no information regarding organization however information obtained through secondary sources and reproductive sources (38.5%). It was revealed that various organization in the direction of women development. These organization and various Aaganwadi workers were playing major role in imparting basic education. It was observed that since reproductive respondents were of younger age, hence they were aware about these NGO's which were involved in development process

TABLE 9
Respondent response regarding reasons for school dropout in between

Reasons	For Boys			For girls		
	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total
Poor economic condition	119(59.5)	19(38)	138(55.2)	93(46.5)	20(40)	113(45.2)
Taking care of siblings	-	-	-	44(22)	20(40)	64(25.6)
Participation in household work	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lack of concentration in studies	09(4.5)	-	09(3.6)	-	-	-
Participation in household work for economic earning	72(36)	31(62)	103(41.2)	63(31.5)	-	63(25.2)
Other	-	-	-	-	10(20)	10(4.0)
Total	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)

Children dropping out from school has been the matter of urgent concern especially in rural areas. Hence in this context respondent's response regarding important reason for children leaving school in between was analyzed. It was observed that poor economic condition due to which respondent's participation in house hold economy was required acted as main factor for dropping the school in between. It was observed that boys (55.2%) left school because of poor economic condition. However, girls left school due to excess work load (25.2%), economic reason (45.2%) and taking care of siblings (25.6%). It was also reported that 10% had to leave school as their mother had expired during delivery, so the respondents had to act as mother for family and younger sibling. However, in total it was observed that the lack of economy was the main hindrance for the rural development

TABLE 10

Respondent response regarding main hindering factor in women education

Response	Reproductive		Post-reproductive		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Poor economic condition	170	85	-	-	170	68
More emphasis on boy education	30	15	10	20	40	16
Social insecurity	-	-	30	60	30	12
Fulfilling sibling responsibility	-	-	10	20	10	4
Security of girl	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	200	100	50	100	250	100

The vital statistics reveal that literacy rate of state has increased from 41.70 % in 1991 to 60.26 % in 2001. (Statistical handbook -2012) For girls and deduction of research also reveals that literacy rate of girls was found to be high as stated in Table 12. But still a wide literacy gap was observed in the same context in order to access the main reason for such literacy gaps respondent respond regarding main hindering factor was observed. Data reveal that majority 68% considered poor economic condition was main hindering factor for women education as due to lack of finance, girls had to drop out and victims of school dropout were mainly girls in comparison to boys. However 12 % also considered issue of social insecurity as hindering factor for women education. It was observed that school were not properly maintained and had opened toilets due to which girls have to face difficulties as well as school distance was another factor aiding in social insecurity. Reproductive versus post reproductive contrast reveal respondents consider as economic reason as main hindrance factor, whereas in post reproductive group, gender biasness in education and social insecurity were related to problems in women education

TABLE 11

Respondent response regarding favours of various notions related to women education

Response	Education is important to understand political, social and economic right For better care of husband and children					
	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total
Fully satisfied	-	-	-	-	-	-
Satisfied	195(97.5)	12(24)	207(82.8)	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)
Neutral	05(2.5)	30(60)	35(14)	-	-	-
Unsatisfied	-	08(16)	08(3.2)	-	-	-
Fully unsatisfied	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)

Value in parentheses (-) indicate percentage

Response	For Boys			For girls		
	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total	Reproductive	Post reproductive	Total
Medical	17(8.5)	-	17(6.8)	12(6)	-	12(4.8)
Science	-	-	-	-	-	-
Law	21(10.5)	-	21(10.5)	-	-	-
Engineering	121(60.5)	12(24)	133(53.2)	-	-	-
Music	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social work	-	-	-	-	-	-
agriculture	41(20.5)	38(76)	79(31.6)	172(86)	5(100)	222(88.8)
Home science	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	16(8)	-	16(6.4)
Total	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)	200(100)	50(100)	250(100)

Table 10 reveals respondent response regarding notion that educated women would be able to take proper care of family and children health as well as women education is necessary for understanding social economic and political rights. Data reveals that all respondents favor that educated women would be able to take better health care of her family as well as children, as she would be aware about different medical facility and would avail them. Similarly majority (82.8

%) also favored that education was necessary to get aware regarding social, political and economic rights. However, women recognizing need of education in all spares may be considered as a golden step in direction of development.

It was observed that respondents were aware about mainly three fields viz. Doctors, Engineers and Lawyers. Hence they selected mainly these three fields for their children. It was observed that in case reproductive group majority (86%) preferred agriculture for girls as they thought it would help them in future to perform better at fields. They believe that rural women are mainly linked with agriculture as she is busy from dawn till dusk in house hold and agriculture activities. Hence, information regarding agriculture would be beneficial for girls. However, Engineering was observed as fields of education of boys so that more income is added to family. It was also reported that 8% respondents selected vocational education for girls NTT, B Ed etc. so that they could do job along with being house wife. In case of Post reproductive group agriculture field was selected in total respondent responds and shift from basic field to vocational education was one of the remarkable observations in the field of education which would defiantly aid in the economic development.

Conclusion:

In total, it was observed that respondent's awareness towards necessity of education and their choice of increasing their educational status on receiving opportunity may be regarded as a stepping stone towards their educational development. Reproductive respondents were more aware regarding education importance and benefits however post reproductive respondents favored the notion regarding importance of education in present scenario .School drop outs was a major concern for hindering educational development but associated factor were economic necessity which could be tackled as a way to enhance educational development.

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