

Parents Perception Towards Education of Their Children

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Abstract

This study aimed to address a research gap concerning the influence of parental literacy background on their involvement in their children's basic education. The research was conducted in the lower Bagdogra gram Panchayat of Naxalbari block in Darjeeling district. Data was collected from 80 female respondents, comprising both literate and illiterate individuals. Both literate and illiterate parents expressed a positive attitude towards schooling and the importance of education in their children's lives. However, there were notable differences in their perspectives. Literate and illiterate parents generally believed in the fundamental importance of education for a child's mental development, but their opinions varied regarding its effectiveness in fostering all-round development. Both groups agreed on the significance of having an educational degree, with literate parents emphasizing its value in securing better job opportunities, while illiterate parents aspired to provide their children with better opportunities. Concerns were raised by both literate and illiterate parents about the education system's effectiveness in equipping students with practical life skills. The study found a consensus on the positive impact of education on a child's character, values, and overall development among both literate and illiterate parents. While there were variations in opinion, particularly regarding the role of schools in nurturing talents and practical life skills, both groups recognized the fundamental importance of education in shaping children's lives. The study highlighted the significance of education and parental engagement in children's lives, acknowledging the complexity of these beliefs and perceptions. These findings have important implications for educational policy and practice.

Keywords: School, Children, Parents Perception, Education, Opinion

1. Introduction

The parental attitude plays a significant role in determining the level of parental involvement in a child's upbringing. When a child is raised with affection and care in an environment that is nurturing and not overly restrictive, they tend to adapt more effectively to the broader social environment. In this context, it becomes evident that the family plays a crucial role in shaping a child's ability to integrate into the sighted world, often exerting a more profound influence than formal educational institutions [1]. Parents play a crucial role in guiding and nurturing their children's development. They provide emotional support, create a safe and loving environment, and help children build essential life skills. Parents collaborate with educators and schools to support their children's educational journey. This involves staying informed about their child's progress, participating in their learning, and making informed decisions about their education. They act as mentors and role models, imparting values, life lessons, and

ethical principles. They instill a strong sense of morality and ethics in their children through their own behavior and guidance. Parents advocate for their children's well-being, both in and outside the home. They ensure their children's rights and needs are met, safeguarding them from harm and injustice. This includes advocating for their children's access to quality healthcare, a safe environment, and equal opportunities [2]. Parents play a crucial role as active participants in their children's education, providing valuable support and enriching the learning journey [3]. It is essential to acknowledge parents as the primary educators of their children, with professionals acting as advisors [4]. The well-being of parents and their capacity to promote socialization have a profound impact on a child's development [5]. Throughout a child's journey from infancy to maturity, parents wield the most substantial influence on their development, and maintaining a consistent parenting approach is a fundamental aspect. As children enter adolescence, family involvement in their learning remains critical. Extensive research has consistently demonstrated that family engagement, both at home and within the school environment, plays a significant role in shaping academic achievement, improving school attendance, and increasing graduation rates among secondary school students [6]. This collaboration between families and schools not only fosters academic success but also contributes to a holistic and supportive educational experience for students. However, it is noteworthy that family engagement often experiences a decline as students make the transition from elementary school to middle and high school [7]. This involvement can be attributed to various factors, such as increased independence and academic complexity for students, as well as changing family dynamics. To counter this decline and sustain or even enhance parental involvement, schools should consider implementing comprehensive partnership programs.

2. Statement of the Problem

Parents have a crucial part in their children's education both at home and in the classroom, although this important function frequently goes unnoticed. Exploring parents' reading levels and educational backgrounds and how these aspects may affect their children's education is conspicuously underemphasized. Despite the fact that parents have a significant impact on their children's education, there hasn't been a lot of thorough research looking at students' home backgrounds, including parental education and literacy skill levels, and how these aspects can affect parental involvement in their children's basic education. Due to its extensive consequences for educational policy and practice, this research gap is particularly significant. The main goal of this study was to close this gap.

3. Objectives of the Study:

- a. To know the socio-economic background of the respondents
- b. To know whether the parents encourage their children to study well
- c. To understand the attitudes of parents towards schooling and education of their children.
- d. To compare the opinions of the parents who are literate and illiterate with regard to their perception towards children's schooling and education.

4. Research Methodology

The sample for the study consisted of residents of lower Bagdogra gram Panchayat of Naxalbari block of Darjeeling district. The names of the villages are Khudirampally 1, Harekrishnapally and Sukantapally. The data was collected from eighty respondents (47 General and 33 Scheduled Caste) from eighty households in these villages. All the respondents were female. The respondents were parents who had

one or more than one primary school-going children. They belonged to the age range of 25 to 45 years. Before collecting the data field visits were done. A pilot survey was conducted and a rapport was established with the respondents to generate honest responses. Respondents were included from each of the households. The assessment was done individually in Bengali language.

The data was gathered via a survey schedule that included inquiries about the respondents' socio-economic background and their views on whether quality education contributes to children's future success. Participants were asked for their opinions on the importance of motivating their children to excel academically, as they believe education fosters well-rounded development in young individuals. The survey also sought insights into whether a higher level of education enhances one's job prospects and whether children acquire essential life skills in school. The study also explored whether parents felt that their child's time was not unduly consumed by schooling.

5. Results and discussion

A. Socio-economic background of the respondents

Table 1 show that the survey has 80 female participants. Among them, 37 respondents were between the ages of 25 to 30 years. Additionally, 19 respondents belonged to the age group of 31 to 35 years, while 21 respondents were in the age range of 36 to 40 years. Furthermore, there were 3 respondents who were in the age group of 41 to 45 years. Forty-seven respondents, constituting 58.75% of the total, identified as belonging to the general caste. The remaining thirty-three respondents, accounting for 41.25% of the total were from the scheduled caste community. The primary language spoken by seventy respondents, representing 87.5% of the participants, is Bengali. Conversely, the remaining ten respondents, making up 12.5% of the total, indicated that their mother tongue is Rajbangsi or Nepali. It's important to note that some of these individuals have experienced illiteracy as a result of poverty and early marriages. It seems that 86.25% of the respondents' husbands (fathers of the child/children) are literate, and 13.75% are illiterate. Among the respondents, 81.25% are from nuclear families, while 18.75% are from joint families. Sixty respondents, or 75% of the total, are literate, whereas twenty respondents, or 25% of the total, are illiterate. Thirty-eight individuals have completed the Upper Primary level of schooling, fourteen have completed the Madhyamik level, fifteen have completed the Higher Secondary level, and three have graduated. Twenty of the respondents are illiterate. It's crucial to remember that some of these people were illiterate due to poverty and early marriages. It seems that 86.25% of the respondents' husbands are literate, and 13.75% are illiterate. Among the respondents, 81.25% are from nuclear families, while 18.75% are from joint families. Regarding the occupation of the mothers, nine of them work as maids, 69 of the respondents are housewives, and two of them are engaged in business, specifically as vendors selling momo and chowmin. A total of 96.25% of the respondents' husbands are engaged in business, which includes occupations such as vegetable selling and painting. Additionally, 3.75% of the fathers are employed in private jobs. Table 1 depicts that out of the 80 families who participated in the study, 12 have monthly incomes between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 5,000, 37 between Rs. 5001 and Rs. 7000, 29 between Rs. 7001 and Rs. 9,000, and 2 families have incomes exceeding Rs. 9,000. Table 1 reveals the size of the respondent's family. One family consists of 2 members. Among the remaining families, 62 have 3 to 4 members, and three have 5 members. There's also one family with 6 members. Lastly, 13 families have 7 members. Out of the 80 families with 3 to 4 members, 71 of them have 1 child each, and 9 of them have two children each. The total number of children is 89 and all are going to primary school. The children attend either Government or Non-Government schools.

Specifically, fifty-three (approximately 59.55%) of the children study in Government schools. Thirty-six (approximately 40.45%) of the children study in Non-Government schools. Out of the 89 (29 male and 60 of them female) children, eighty-three (approximately 93.26%) attend school regularly. Six (approximately 6.74%) of the children do not attend school regularly.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Description of the Respondents

Age of respondents (in Years)	Frequencies	Percentage
25 - 35	37	46.25
31 - 35	19	23.75
35 - 45	3	3.75
Community of the respondents		
General	47	58.75
SC	33	41.25
Mother Tongue of the respondents		
Bengali	70	87.5
Others (Rajbansi, Nepali)	10	12.5
Education status of Mother (respondents)		
Literate	60	75
Illiterate	20	25
Education level of respondent		
Upper primary	14	17.5
Madhaymik	28	35
Higher secondary	15	18.75
Graduate	3	3.75
Illiterate	20	25
Education level of Respondents' Husband		
Literate	69	86.25
Illiterate	11	13.75
Type of family		
Nuclear	65	81.25
Joint	15	18.75
Occupation of the Respondents		
Maid	9	11.25
Housewife	69	86.25
Business (vendor - selling momo, chowmin)	2	2.5
Occupation of the Respondents' Husband		
Business (vegetable seller, painter)	77	96.25
Private job	3	3.75
Monthly income of the family (in		

Rupees)		
3000 - 5000	12	15
5001 - 7000	37	46.25
7001 - 9000	29	36.25
Above 9000	2	2.5
Family size of the respondent		
2 member	1	1.25
3 member	31	38.75
4 member	31	38.75
5 member	3	3.75
6 member	1	1.25
7 member	13	16.25
Number of child/children of the respondent		
1	71	88.75
2	9	11.25

Source: Field Survey

B. Parents' Perspectives on their Children's Education

(i) Opinion of the respondents about whether good education will help children to get ahead in life. Table 2 reflects Respondents' Consensus on the Positive Impact of Good Education on Children's Future Success. Hundred percent of the respondents irrespective of their literacy level agree that good education helps children to get ahead in their life. They give various reasons behind their view on the above point

Table 2: Opinion of the respondents about ‘whether good education will help children to get ahead in life’

Reasons for Agree	Frequencies	Percentage
Education helps a child to brighten up his/her future	27	33.75
Education is the most valuable part of a child's life because it increases the knowledge	16	20.00
A good education helps in obtaining a good job	14	17.50
Every child has the right to education	11	13.75
Illiteracy is a curse	11	13.75
Education is necessary to get a good family life after marriage	1	1.25
Total	80	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 shows that 33.75 percent of respondents believe that education helps a child brighten up his/her future, paving the way for success and opportunities. Education is the most valuable part of a child's life, as it significantly increases knowledge, and is the opinion of 20 percent of respondents. Fourteen respondents' perspective is that a good education is a key factor in obtaining a good job and building a stable career. Every child has the right to education and 'illiteracy is a curse' are the opinion of 13.75 percent of respondents each. Only one respondent opined that education plays a role in shaping one's

family life after marriage. Parental involvement in children's education is important in every country. In some low-income countries, where low school fees for uniforms, books, or transportation can break the family budget, parents show their commitment to their children's learning by making substantial sacrifices to cover the costs [8]. Everyone understands the need for education, and that is why every respondent agreed. Education is now the right of children because of this opinion, the respondents in this study are all women, and 20 of them were not literate, according to them, illiteracy is a curse, and it is better to eliminate it.

(ii) Opinion of the parents about ‘whether parents should encourage their children to study well’

Table 3: Opinion of the parents about ‘whether parents should encourage their children to study well’

Reasons for Agree	Frequencies	Percentage
a) Parents always stay with the child	49	61.25
b) The guidance of parents only can move the child forward	31	38.75
Total	80	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Regarding whether parents should encourage their children to study well, survey result shows that 100% of the respondents agree that parents' encouragement is crucial for a child's academic success. Out of 80 respondents, 49 individuals believe that parents should always stay with their children to support their education. According to the survey, 31 respondents are of the opinion that the guidance of parents alone can propel a child forward in their academic journey. Family plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's personality and preparing them for an independent life and “.....contribution towards their children’s education, it turns out that mothers are more prepared to undertake their role in their children’s education, rather than their fathers...”[9]. When parents actively engage in their children's education, it often leads to a positive and motivating outcome. One of the studies revealed that parents’ low literacy and limited formal education posed a great challenge to their child's education, however, when parents are eager to see their wards through formal education, their own illiterate status does not become a handicap implying that illiterate parents are interested in their children’s education [10]. In the above two cases, the opinions are the same for all the respondents irrespective of their literacy level. However, in the following cases, variations in the perception of children’s education of respondents were observed depending on their literacy level.

(iii) Opinion of the parents about ‘whether Education helps the child for all-round development’

Table 4: Opinion of the parents about ‘whether Education helps the child for all-round development’

Education helps the child for all-round development			
Literate		Illiterate	
Agree (39)	Disagree (21)	Agree (12)	Disagree (8)
School gives not only better education but also teaches various skills like art and	Teachers only pay attention to education, they don’t try to know about the talent of	The school trains their child in different activities like sports, and art.	Education does not give all-round development because it depends on the talent or intelligence level of

dance.	the child.		the child
Because in school they will get vast knowledge about everything.	Parents and home are also one of the sources for a child's development.	The child becomes more active through education.	Girlchild should also know the household work.
Their level of knowledge increases in school which helps their all-round development.		Along with education, their child knows how to behave.	
Education makes a child perfect and mentally developed.			

Source: Field Survey

Table 4 shows that among the eighty respondents, 63.75% of them agree with these points, while 36.25% of the respondents disagree. However, out of 60 literate respondents, 39 of them agreed. They opined school not only provides better education but also teaches various skills like art and dance. They believe that school offers a vast knowledge about various subjects, contributing to a child's holistic development. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that education in school leads to an increase in the child's level of knowledge, ultimately contributing to their all-round development. Out of 20 illiterate respondents, 12 of them agreed. They think schools provide training to children in various activities, including sports and art, which makes children more active, and in addition to academic learning, education also teaches children how to behave. The role of the school is vital in a child's life as it encourages kids to make friends and learn how to work with others. In addition, the role of the school ensures that children are mentally and developmentally ready for the real world by learning many lessons that will benefit them later on in their adulthood. Overall, the consensus is that education is a fundamental factor in making a child perfect and mentally developed.

But reasons for disagreeing among them were important. Table 4 depicts that 21 literate and 8 illiterate respondents disagree with this opinion. Literate respondents believe that teachers primarily focus on education and do not pay attention to the talents of the child. At the same time, respondents recognize that parents and the home environment also play a crucial role in a child's overall development. Whereas illiterate respondents think education may not guarantee all-round development as it can be influenced by the individual child's talent and intelligence level and for girls to acquire knowledge of household tasks are important in addition to their regular education

(iv) Opinion of the parents about 'whether better educational qualification helps in getting better jobs'

Table 5: Opinion of the parents about ‘whether better educational qualification helps in getting better jobs’

Better educational qualification helps in getting better jobs			
Literate		Illiterate	
Agree (35)	Disagree (25)	Agree (10)	Disagree (10)
An educational degree is the most valuable degree to get a better job.	Because nowadays many literate people are unemployed.	Education is the only factor to get better jobs.	Money also matters in obtaining a good job.
Without an educational degree, no one can sit for a competitive examination	Work experience is more important than educational qualification.	They don’t want their child to suffer like them.	Nowadays many literate people are unemployed.

Source: Field Survey

Table 5 reveals that 56.25% of the respondents agree with this statement, emphasizing the critical importance of education, while 43.75% of the respondents disagree, citing the concern that even many literate individuals face unemployment. Literate respondents (35) agreed because they think having an educational degree is often considered the most valuable asset for securing better job opportunities and for many competitive examinations, possessing an educational degree is a prerequisite. Illiterate respondents agreed because they often aspire to provide their children with better opportunities and aim to prevent them from facing the same hardships they did. The reasons for disagreeing among the literate and illiterate respondents are many like in today's world, unemployment affects many educated individuals, and having work experience often carries greater significance than one's educational qualifications. Financial considerations also play a significant role in securing good job opportunities according to them. Evidence from research has shown parental engagement in children’s learning is critical to students. Yet, a consensus on what parental engagement means is still problematic as it has many definitions. According to Kim, parental engagement refers to parents’ involvement in their children’s lives in order to enhance their outcomes. As such, parental engagement is not just involvement in or support of the school, but also, helping with learning.

(v) Opinion of the parents about ‘whether a child learns important life skills at school’

Table 6: Opinion of the parents about ‘whether a child learns important life skills at school’

A child learns important life skills at school			
Literate		Illiterate	
Agree (55)	Disagree (5)	Agree (16)	Disagree (4)
They get moral values in school.	They don’t notice any type of good life skills in their child.	The children come to know how to respect elders.	They don’t notice any type of good life skills in their child.
The children come to know how to respect elders.		They come to know how to speak with elders.	

They come to know how to behave in society.		The children become well-mannered.	
Comes to know how to read and write.			

Source: Field Survey

Table 6 reveals that 88.75% of the respondents agreed, as they believe that schools are instrumental in imparting moral values to their children. However, 11.25% of the respondents express disagreement, stating that they do not observe the development of significant life skills in their children through the educational system. Both literate and illiterate respondents find common ground in their agreement that schools have a profound impact on shaping students' lives. They recognize that educational institutions do more than just impart academic knowledge; they also play a vital role in cultivating character and social behavior. In this educational setting, moral values are instilled, creating an environment where the importance of respecting elders is emphasized. Schools extend their influence beyond textbooks, teaching children not only essential reading and writing skills but also proper social conduct. Furthermore, the value of respecting elders is inculcated, and as students progress through their educational journey, they develop the ability to communicate respectfully with adults. This shared perspective highlights how schooling significantly contributes to the development of well-mannered individuals who possess not only knowledge but also the social skills and moral values necessary to navigate through life successfully. The reason for disagreement appears to be consistent among both literate and illiterate respondents. They share the view that they do not notice significant development of positive life skills in their children through the educational process.

- (vi) Opinion of the parents about whether Schooling does not takes away valuable time from their child's life

Table 7: Opinion of the parents about whether Schooling does not takes away valuable time from their child's life

Schooling does not takes away valuable time from their child's life		
Literate	Illiterate	
Agree (60)	Agree (17)	Disagree (3)
Schooling makes their child systematic in doing work.	Because if children go to school only then they will get better education.	As in school all classes are not being taken so time is wasted, besides that staying at home, they can help his father.
Child learns how to behave with everyone in society.	School is the most important place for a child to gain knowledge.	Classes are not taken by the teacher, so time can be spent in doing other work at home.

Source: Field Survey

Table 7 shows that 100 percent of literate parents agree that schooling is essential for making their child literate and equipped with vital skills for the future. They think schooling makes their child systematic in doing work. Through formal education, children develop systematic approaches to handling tasks and

assignments, ensuring efficiency in their work habits and enabling them to interact respectfully and harmoniously with diverse individuals in society. However, 85 percent illiterate respondents believe that school serves as the most crucial environment for children to acquire knowledge and essential life skills, making it an invaluable institution in their educational journey when they attend school regularly. According to 15 percent illiterate parent, due to the irregularity in taking classes by the teachers, valuable time is lost in school. It is more practical to utilize their time productively by engaging in household chores.

(vii) Opinion of the parents about ‘whether schooling does not make their child lazy and unresponsive to family problems’

Table 8: Opinion of the parents about ‘whether schooling does not make their child lazy and unresponsive to family problems’

Schooling does not make their child lazy and unresponsive to family problems		
Literate	Illiterate	
Agree (60)	Agree (16)	Disagree (4)
School teaches child how to become responsive towards family.	They think that school will make them responsive and they will become more active.	Their child becomes lazy and if they tells them to do any work they denies doing it.
Schooling makes a child perfect.		Not interested in any household work.

Source: Field Survey

Table 8 depicts that 100 percent literate and 80 percent illiterate respondents agreed education in school instills a sense of responsibility and responsiveness towards family life, shaping a child's character and values. Additionally, formal schooling plays a significant role inculcating a child's abilities and skills, contributing to their overall development and excellence. Whereas, 20 percent of illiterate respondents believe that the child becomes lethargic and unwilling to contribute to household chores, often refusing to fulfill any responsibilities assigned to them due to schooling. They lack interest in participating in domestic tasks and display reluctance when asked to help.

Conclusion

In a comprehensive survey that included both literate and illiterate respondents, various perspectives emerged regarding the role of education in a child's life and overall development. While there were areas of consensus, there were also notable differences in views and concerns expressed by these two groups. The majority of both literate and illiterate respondents expressed a favorable attitude towards schooling and their children's education. They recognized the importance of education and its positive outcomes. However, it is essential to note that there were distinct differences in their viewpoints. Literate respondents were generally skeptical about the role of schools in nurturing children's talents. They believed that teachers primarily focused on academic education and might not pay adequate attention to fostering a child's individual abilities. Instead, they emphasized the significance of parents and the home environment in a child's holistic development. This perspective highlights a level of disillusionment among literate parents regarding the ability of schools to provide a well-rounded education. On the other

hand, illiterate respondents seemed more inclined to believe in the fundamental importance of education for a child's mental development. However, there were varying opinions among illiterate respondents about the effectiveness of education in ensuring all-round development. Some agreed that schools played a vital role in teaching various activities and social skills, preparing children for adulthood. Others disagreed, suggesting that individual talent and intelligence levels could significantly influence a child's development. This divergence in opinion among illiterate parents suggests that while they recognize the value of education, they are uncertain about its effectiveness in fostering all aspects of a child's growth. Interestingly, both literate and illiterate respondents agreed on the significance of having an educational degree. Literate respondents stressed the value of an educational degree in securing better job opportunities and as a prerequisite for competitive examinations. In contrast, illiterate respondents aspired to provide their children with better opportunities and prevent them from facing the hardships they had experienced. However, there were also dissenting views in both groups. Some argued that in today's world, unemployment affects many educated individuals, and work experience often carries more significance than one's educational qualifications. Additionally, the role of financial considerations in securing good job opportunities was acknowledged, underlining the complexities of the relationship between education and employment. Both literate and illiterate respondents agreed that schools have a profound impact on shaping students' lives, teaching essential reading and writing skills, as well as instilling social skills and moral values. However, there was a consistent concern among both groups that the educational process does not adequately equip students with practical life skills. They noted a gap in preparing children with essential skills for real-life situations. In terms of parental engagement, both literate and illiterate respondents recognized its importance in children's learning. They agreed that parental engagement goes beyond mere involvement in or support of the school and extends to parents actively participating in their children's lives to enhance their outcomes. Kim's definition of parental engagement was referenced, emphasizing its broader scope. This shared perspective underscores the consensus on the critical role parents play in their children's education. In summary, the survey revealed a general consensus among both literate and illiterate respondents regarding the positive impact of education on a child's character, values, and overall development. While there were variations in opinion, particularly regarding the role of schools in nurturing talents and practical life skills, both groups recognized the fundamental importance of education in shaping children's lives. The slight divergence of opinion on school attendance among a minority of illiterate parents, due to concerns about teacher consistency, further highlighted the complex nature of these perspectives. Overall, the survey findings emphasize the significance of education and parental engagement in children's lives while acknowledging the multifaceted nature of these beliefs and perception.

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