

An Evaluation of literacy Education Present Status and Future Possibilities (With reference to Nomad Education in AJK)

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Abstract

Literacy is one of the key elements to evaluate the social and economical development indicator of society. Most of the developing countries having big challenge like Pakistan. To disseminate literacy education, government of Pakistan had been doing many efforts by using different mode of education but, unfortunately, the challenge is still there. This study basically helped to see the real picture of literacy education, especially in the region of Azad Jammu & Kashmir with special reference to nomad's education which is 4-5 million of population. This region having variety of mountainous valley which consist on large scattered population, mostly based on traditional sources of incomes like; cattle farming or agriculture. Nomads is also a big part of population, they are not having permanent houses and always traveled from one to other places, as the condition of weather. The main objective of this study was to evaluate the status of nomad population and what facilities or provisions are provided by the government for their literacy? A mixed method, ethnographic research approach was applied, including students and their parent. The research concluded that Nomads have traditionally marginalized and have very less opportunity of literacy education, while most of the population wanted to be a literate. There is need to provide opportunities for nomads through distance & Non-Formal system of education and to facilitate them through free education, scholarships and free books. If nomads become literate they would contribute in socio economic development of the region and also be able to improve quality of life.

Keywords: Literacy, Nomad, Quality of Life.

Introduction

Nomads education in anywhere in the world is very much important. For the progress and development of a country, it is very important to become every member of the society literate. Literate people can contribute more in the socio-economic development of the country. It is need of the day and also big challenge for each society. Same is the case in AJK (Azad Jammu and Kashmir), it becoming important that nomads' education should be kept in mind and there should be an equal level of chance of getting education for them. As all other areas of life are being improved day by day, Education System should be improved. Almost Government of every country of the world has signed up to the international pledges of Education for All (EFA). Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and human rights declarations have a bearing in determining education and other services provided by all these governments that were signed under the pact. United Nation member countries have well understood the requirement and philosophy to get in touch with the groups and communities. The Nomads have traditionally been marginalized and have very less chances of having opportunity of education.

It is said that education for Nomadic People is a very serious issue and it is a need to be solved the issue as early as possible (Dyer, 2006) The parameters of literacy education may be different and even vary from one region to another region geographically and from one area to another area in different era. Literacy has different meanings that are ranged from simple ability to read and write. It is different form society to society. The term literacy has different meanings to interpret and implement these ideas with knowledge and skillfully that a person may be required every time when the need arises. Some descriptions of literacy focus on perception and decoding. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Easton, 2009) describes the term literacy as “it is the ability to identify, interpret, understand, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts”

Literacy advancement occurs in the everyday contexts of the home, the community, and the school through a meaningful and functional experience that required the use of literacy in settings that are the part of the child’s everyday life and time. These settings are mostly social, with adults and children interacting through sharing, collaboration, and guiding literacy activities occur and are embedded purposefully within content areas such as art, play, social studies, and science to ensure that children experience purpose and construct meaning (Morrow, 1997).

Literacy involves a variety of learning that enabling the individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential and to participate in the community and wider society (UNESCO 2004). The literate person is “one who can read newspapers and write a simple letter, in any language is considered as a literate people” (Pakistan 1993)

The National Education Policy (2009), it recognizes that there are close links between equity indication opportunities and equitable income distribution and income growth for everyone who is the part of this society, if the education system is constructed on a divisive basis, the divisions it creates can endanger long run economic growth as well as stability of society, so there should be no diversity in curriculum and syllabus. There is a literacy report of Azad Kashmir. According to this report, 61 percent is the literacy rate. (CSIS, 2012) when it was compared with Pakistan where literacy rate is only 45% looks far better than Pakistan. According to Nabi (2013) who is a very senior World Bank economist, present at the release of the report authored by Teresina Schaffer, the literacy rate in Azad Kashmir is actually 78 percent. The enrolment of girls and boys is also noticed at Primary school level. For boys the percentage is 80 where is for girls the percentage is 74 for girls. However, enrolment rates for higher education are seen to drop very sharply as we moved. Only 33 percent of boys attend high school where the girl’s attendance of their school enrolment is 19 percent only.

There was a report on “The report Kashmir the economics of peace-building” by (CSIS, 2012) was published in which it was said that the devastation that had been caused by the October earthquake at AJK schools has been “particularly heartrending”. In this report, it was also published that there are more women than men now in Azad Kashmir, especially in Mirpur and Muzaffarabad districts where they outnumber men: 104 and 106 respectively to 100 men. The report also revealed that AJK are not a prosperous too. That is why and the status of Nomads education is very poor. In the report it is stated that nomads are in reasonable numbers in the territory of AJK particularly in summer season a large number of Nomads move towards the hilly areas of AJK. Overall literacy rate of nomads is less than 1% and also there is no proper system of education for nomads. The report also pointed out that AJK is heavily dependent on remittances from abroad, and the business made by the nomadic people as their animals are being sold not only in the urban areas of AJK but also in the different locations of Pakistan which is ultimately a great source of income. Nomads relate to their environment among the various ways. They can be distinguished the [hunter-gatherer](#), the [pastoral nomad](#) owning [livestock](#), or the “modern” peripatetic nomad.”

Origin: According to Easton, P. (2009) Latin nomad member of a wandering pastoral people, from Greek, from *nemein*. In this way Nomadic means anything that involves moving around a lot and do not sit and settle at one place. Nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes follow their animals with them, they hunt some animals and take them with them while their moving. They carry tents with them to have their accommodation at various places they move and live where they want and find pasture. It is also said that people who work for their state department, they also travel from one foreign country to another in four-year postings they also might be called as nomad. And even those who have been serving at different departments and have been transferred to far and remote areas due to their jobs can also be called as nomads. If they keep on changing their schools a lot because of their parents move, they then definitely had a nomadic education. (UNESCO, 2004)

Education of Nomads: Eshete, A., Sedel, C. and Souza, A (2005) says about the educational status of nomads that they are the socio-economic group in Azad Kashmir. They constantly travel and keep on migrating in large groups or sometime in small groups. They continuously busy in search for their livelihood within a community or throughout the country. They even migrate across international boundaries too. They in fact are the poorest community of a country. It is observed that Nomads do not live continually in the same place but they have to move periodically or with a certain period of time. But one can know that it is different from the [migration](#) because nomad is the change of habitat, area and locality for or in search of food. All the above mentioned reasons are great hurdle in providing education to nomads and it remained a challenge from many years in every country and of course here in Azad Kashmir. It is the main hurdle of not improving literacy rate rapidly. According to Abdul kareem, A.Y. (1992) it is a great challenge to provide education to nomadic communities. This issue must be resolved very early faced by Commonwealth education policy-makers, practitioners and other actors within the field. Evidences show that nomadic children are among those groups that are consistently not enrolled in formal schools. On the other hand, the very nature of the nomadic lifestyle is perceived as conflicting with the aims and aspirations of formal education structures that aimed at enable and developing inactive societies.

Types of Nomads: Dever, M & Burts, D. (2002) stated that there are following four famous types of nomads around the globe. i) Pastoral ii) [Gypsies](#) iii) Horticultural iv) Bakkarwals “Pastoral nomads: Pastoral nomads are those who migrate in an established territory to find pasturage for their animals and depend on domesticated livestock. Most groups have focal sites that they occupy for considerable periods of the year or certain period of time. This type of pastoralist nomads may depend entirely on their herds and animals. Pastorals also hunt different animals, practice some agriculture, or they trade with agricultural people for grain and some other goods. Some nomads even cultivate their crops between their seasonal moves. They are found in Southwest Asia and North Africa”

[Gypsies:](#) Gypsy nomadic groups are associated with a large number of their society but they maintain their mobility life and living. These groups are very tinker and some are traders. These even make and sell their own and simple products. They hunt their animals. This is a diverse group that are loosely termed [Gypsies](#) are the best-known example of this type of nomad’s.

Horticultural: These nomadic people as the term indicated about them. These nomads practice a limited kind of agriculture of their own and move periodically from place to place. They raise their own crops. They often combine agriculture with hunting and gathering. Anthropologists may refer to such groups as [horticultural](#) people that distinguish them from settled agricultural people for their own facility.

Bakkarwals: The term “bakkarwals” is used for those people who move from one location to another with their ships or animals like cows, buffalos, sheep, goats and some other animals. They look after bring up their animals and earn money by selling their animals in different locations. Bakkarwals are largely available in Asian countries like Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan etc. Dr Eshya, (2011) stated that Pakistani bakkarwals play a major role in the economy of the country. They provide meet in all parts of the country. In Pakistan, by cost they mostly belong to Gujjar family and speak Gojri language that is their mother tongue. They move from one station to other station in summer and winter seasons. In summer, they are camping in Neelum, Kaghan, Gilghit and Shamali Alakajat along with their animals. They do not have their native place. While in winter season, they were camping in Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Gujerkhan, Heripur, Manshera, Khariyan, Kotli, Mirpur and in some other areas.

The study defined the present status of literacy on the basis of three basic skills listening, reading and writing according to the definition of literacy in Pakistan which are being brought to meet the literacy education and what efforts have been made to cater the educational needs of nomad education in the state of AJK. Nomads are very significant population of this region which always migrated due to climate. In 2014 according to UNESCO survey on education shows literacy rate to be 60 percent. Economic Survey of Pakistan shows literacy in different provinces as follows: Punjab province is 62% Sindh province is 60%, KPK province is 52%, Baluchistan province is 44% and AJK is 72%

UNESCO REPORT AND LITERACY IN PAKISTAN: According to UNESCO (2013) report in Pakistan there are almost 5.5 million children who are out of school, the second highest number in the world only after Nigeria. The figure is very alarming. Students drop out ratio is different but those who don’t go to the school even are greater in number.

The condition is very worst. The illiteracy rate of adult is greater in Pakistan after India and China. But one thing must be kept in mind that we have a very large number of adults as compared to any other country of the world. However, on the other hand, our youth is not attending their schools as compare to other countries of the world. UNESCO's findings show on the topic of global primary education, it describes that Pakistan's current educational crisis is worst regarding primary education in Pakistan. This is the country among all those other 21 countries that are facing an "Extensive" learning crisis. The most critical situation is that Pakistan has only 2.6 percent of their GDP for Education now, before this it was 2.0 just. That is why the desired results were not achieved successfully.

Broadly speaking about the particular matter, the global standards of primary education seemed very severe not only in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir but also in South and West Asia and in Western Africa too. According to Literacy Programs (2012) report, our country has inequalities in education within the country it is a bitter fact. "In our country, the parents are forced to send their children to work instead of schools due to inflammation and price hiking and even one more reason is that they think if they send their children to school then it is not possible for them to get key posts or jobs for them. The Geographical disadvantage is often motivated by poverty and gender discrimination. In Baluchistan, province of Pakistan only, there are only 45% of children of grade 5 age who could solve a two-digit subtraction, compared with 73% in wealthier Punjab province of the population. Only around one-quarter of girls from poor households in Baluchistan can achieve their basic numeracy skills. Rest of the girls has to stay at their houses and perform their household affairs instead of going to school. On the other hand, boys from rich households in the province fared much better, approaching the average in Punjab." The report of Kashmir economics of peace-building" by (CSIS, 2012) was published in which it was said that the devastation that had been caused during the earthquake at AJK schools has been "particularly heartrending". Many teachers were died due to the earthquake. Now the number of girls is larger than the boys here Azad Kashmir, especially in the districts of Mirpur and Muzaffarabad where they outnumber men: 104 and 106 respectively to 100 men.

After considering the literacy its importance, needs in school and for the parents now we have to look its importance for nomads. All governments around the world have signed up to the international pledges of EFA and human rights declaration which all have a bearing determining education and other services to all the citizens of state. Nomads as per the calculation of their population are the no doubt an important community particularly here in our region AJK. According to Dyre, C. (2006) education for nomadic people has always a challenge for all the governments around the globe. Historically literacy instructions for students with nomadic way of life has emphasized life skills applications and has primarily focused on functional sight word instructions.

To educate nomads particularly of AJK nomads is becoming increasingly important because of the attributed projection in accelerating development, employability, improving democracy, health and unity. Nomads are playing important role in the stability of the society by assisting in economic development of the state also by providing livestock Ismail, (2002).

Nomads of AJK: Nomadic pastoralists are people who keep livestock as a source of their livelihood through sale and use of livestock and its products in AJK. The nomadic pastoral in the regions of AJK are characterized by climate that ranges from dry and semi-dry, and high temperatures with less than 750 mm of rain per annum. These regions of AJK are also divided accordingly. The dry and semi-dry lands cover over 75% of the 4000 km of AJK's total area.(NPHC, 2003/2004)

Challenges To Education For Nomads: There are a lot of challenges which government is facing in respect of educating nomads. According to a report compiled by PND in collaboration with UNESCO (2012) there are challenges facing nomadic communities to access formal education. These challenges are of two ways. The first way the perceived challenges and then the structural challenges at everywhere as these nomads are facing. To overcome these challenges it is needs to work with zeal and zest. Perceived Challenges: There are some policy making who say that the "perceived challenges" stem from the way others even including nomadic people and their way of life. Many of them say that these are uncultured, ignorant and unwilling people resulting in their exclusion from education and decision-making that affects them as Ismail, (2002). They think that they do not want to improve themselves culturally and educationally. They explained it as: The pastoralists system was thought to be destructive of natural resources. They used human resources inefficiently and were unable to use the social services available. There was no need to provide educational services or responses. And other challenges are structural challenges.

Structural Challenges: There are several other challenges can be called as “structural challenges”. These challenges arise from policies and programs that intersect with political motivations and educational inheritances. Nomads are by nature mobile while the orientation of formal education in AJK that requires full time attendance. These arrangements increase costs and limit access to education for nomadic people whose children are a source of labor for them. They, children, earn for their parents. That is why they are very much reluctant to send their children to school. If they send then who will earn for them, graze their cattle and do domestic work for them. These are some major reasons which can be highlighted.

Research Methodology: The major objectives of the research were to identify the present status of literacy education and facilities are provided to Nomad for getting literate. Population of the study constituted 760 nomadic parents and 2250 nomadic children who spend summer season in different areas of Azad Jammu Kashmir particularly in Neelum Valley Bagh and Pounch district and winter season in different areas of Pakistan like Hari Pur, Jehlum, Fateh Jang etc. Sample of the study were as, 182 parents and 198 children, selected through cluster sampling technique. Furthermore parents and students were divided into two categories each. Category ‘A’ consists of all those parents who send their children to school and they are 57 in numbers (Appendix I-A). In Category ‘B’ 125 parents were selected who don’t send their children to school (Appendix I-B). Category ‘C’ consists of the 125 illiterate children (Appendix II-A) and category ‘D’ consists of the 73 literate children. Two questionnaires for parents and students were served. Questionnaire items covered the objectives to identify nomads’ literacy status, efforts made to enhance literacy role, indications of ways to find out how literacy can contribute the role in socio economic development of AJK. Researcher personally visited to collect the data from respective target sample. Before launching the tool to collect field data tools were piloted and validated by concerned professionals. In the light of the respondent’s suggestions a few items were modified before carrying out the full study. Several instruments used in the current study evaluation generated data that were considered to be both qualitative and quantitative, including the questions with four and in some cases five possible choices contained in the parents and students surveys that resulted from the two focus group. Survey on Nomadic parents who send their children to school: The research depicted that members of nomadic families are 3010 and the number of all children who go to school are just 57 and in percentage of literate children is just 2 % which is in fact an alarming situation of literacy rate.

The study indicated that 49% respondents are in favor of improving their social and technical skills, 23% boost the test scores, 20% earn higher grades and 8% are of the opinion is they want to improve their confidence. Hence most of the respondent supported the statement that nomadic parental involvement can help students in improving social and technical skills. Another statement that; Parents think children going to school will help them financially. Respondents replied that 71% were of the opinion yes and, 12% said “no”, 9% said they “don’t think so” while 8% have “no idea” about this notion.

In the response of statement that; “nomadic parental expectations at the end of school year are that children religious values may be developed and improved” 54% respondents were in favor “developing religious values”, 33% about “good behavior”, 13% are of the opinion is “to improve confidence”. On the statement that; “nomadic parents think that children going to school will ultimately loss of business and time for them” Among them 59% respondents think about their “business loss”, 29% think it “wastage of money”, 12% are of the opinion is “wastage of time

The statement asked that: “Why they are not sending their children to school? Respondents indicated that 56% school is “so far” from them, 37% talk about their “financial problems” while 7% said that they “don’t want to educate their children”. On the question to nomadic parents opinion about the “distance of the nearest school from their homes” 29% said school is “far”, 71% said school is “so far”, 0% said school is “near”, 0% response was school is “so near” and 0% with any other opinion. Hence most of the respondents confirmed distance is very far. Question to nomad’s parents wishes about their children future? Mostly said that only want two things from their children first to look after the animals and secondly just spend their lives as a nomad. Their response about the above question was 29% said “YES”, 39% were of the saying “not at all”, 30% said they “don’t know”, 2% were of the opinion “not for all” and the 0% with any other opinion. Question about that “Nomad’s parents are satisfied with their living and they don’t want to bring any change” responded, 21% said they “don’t know”, 43% were think “maybe”, 36% said they “want change”, 0% were of the opinion “they don’t want” any change and 0% with any other opinion.

“With Proper System of Education (boarding schools, mobile, education etc.) Nomads are Willing to Send Their Children to School or Not” The responses were 38% said “they don’t know”, 7% were of the opinion “maybe”, 55% said “yes” they will send their children to schools, 0% were of the opinion “never” and 0% with any other opinion. Hence most of the respondents are in favor of sending children to school. What Government should do to educate Nomad’s Children? that “, 17% were of the opinion was that there should be “mobile education”, 47% said that there should be “permanent residence” for them, 36% said that there should be “home education” for their children, 0% opinion was about “distance learning” and 0% with any other opinion. Hence nomadic parents wanted permanent residence or mobile schools are the best solution to provide education to their children.

Most of the respondents were in favor of the statement that they like education. 73% respondents “like” education, 7% “don’t like” education, 15% said “may be”, 5% said that they “don’t know” and 0% with any other opinion. Did nomadic illiterate children ever go to school? Results stated that 58% of the nomadic children “never” went to school even once in their life, 37% “went for some time” and 5% said that “no” they didn’t go to school. Which means majority of nomadic children are even unaware of school and what is it for? It is desperately needed to wake up their sense and make them educated about the importance of school and education.

Opinion of illiterate Nomadic children: If they get opportunity to go School, will they go? Data illustrated that 77% respondents said that they want to go to school. 5% were there who said “no”, 18% said “may be”, 0% said they “don’t know” and 0% with any other opinion. Hence, most of the respondents showed the natural interest of children and positive attitude to go to school. Understanding of Nomadic illiterate children about the impact of education in their live: respondents indicated the fact that 83% respondents were of the opinion that they “don’t have any idea about the impact” as they don’t know the value of education and its uses even. 7% said that there will be “impact”, 10% said that they have “no idea”, 0% said that “may be” there is impact and 0% with any other opinion. It means it is lack of awareness.

How many illiterate children of Nomads like education? The data discover fact that in response 77% said they “like” education, 6% they “don’t like” education, 10% said “may be”, 7% said they “don’t know” and 0% with any other opinion. Above figures show the brighter picture that if we become able to provide them education at their door steps they are willing to get education. Did Nomadic illiterate children ever go to school? Stated that 43% of the nomadic children didn’t go to school even once in their life, 51% went for the option “sometime” and 6% said they “never” went to school. It means majority of nomadic children are even unaware of what school is and its benefits. It is desperately needed to wake up their sense and make them educated about the importance of school. On the statement that if nomadic children get any opportunity to go school what will be their choice? 73% said their choice will be school which shows the natural interest of children and positive aspect for the people who are responsible to provide education to them, answer of 6% said “no”, 4% “may be” they will go, 7% said they “don’t know” and 0% with any other opinion.

What are the big causes not attending the school? Said 83% was nomadic movements which seems to be the major reason of nomadic communities unable to attend school. 11% talk about financial problems, 6% said because of communication problem and 0% with any other opinion. Nomadic children do different types of activities during their holidays. The collected data shows that 36% students “look after their animals”, 43% were busy in “Fetching Water/firewood”, 17% students were “Looking after the babies/cooking food”, 4% said that they “revise their school work” and 0% of others. Most of the nomadic students look after their animals and waste most of their time. Some parallel activities need to be designed.

Level of study of literate students: 93% of them are only “primary” 7% children who reach up to the “middle level. Was 0%, aspect of “Construction of school near home” was 21%, “Provision of free education by government” aspect was 44% and 27% of others. Data shows that availability of schools and free educations are the major sources of encouragement and in future if these areas could be addressed there will be more enrolment of nomadic children.

Conclusion

The investigation confirmed that literacy status of nomadic population of the region is very poor. Most of the families never tried to educate their children obviously because of different reasons like financial issues, unavailability of schools and lack of awareness about the benefits of education. Literacy status of nomadic communities at AJK region is alarming and somehow one feels like education which is basic rights of human, nomadic community are deprived from this fundamental right.

The study showed that it not failure of public sector only it is also big failure of Non-governmental sector as well. It is unfortunate that both sectors could not introduce any system for nomads' education. There is no such rule of their enrolment in the institution. On the basis of this study it is need to introduce variety of opportunities to cater the nomadic population by providing incentives for education like; stipend for nomadic children, construction of schools, (as formal system), non-formal system of education, and awareness complain by public and private sector. This large population can be brought in main stream of the society and can play role in socio economic development of the region. After earthquake 2005 numbers of NGOs launched project for the development of region but unfortunately this sector still deprived and unhandled.

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