



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WOMEN THROUGH ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM IN TEHSIL D.G. KHAN

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### **Abstract**

*This study assessed the role of adult literacy program in personal development of rural women. A sample of 330 female learners was drawn through multistage sampling. The findings showed that learners have gained awareness about various social and ethical issues. Their confidence, interpersonal skills and problem solving skills have improved. They were able to voice their opinion in domestic affairs and in affairs of relatives. They were able to take decisions about selection of health facilities, education of children, household decisions, purchasing of household items and marriage of children. Their social status within family and community has improved. Further, they were able to maintain their social relationships properly and also form new relationships or contacts. There was improvement in their confidence to voice opinion in their personal and family matters. Their ability to solve the household affairs also enhanced.*

**Key Words:** Adult literacy program, Personal development, Social status, Decision making power, Social relationships, Confidence

### **Introduction**

According to Moats (2000), the definition of literacy is the capacity to read, write, spell, listen, and communicate in ways that facilitate communication, encourage concept understanding, and enhance lives. According to UNESCO, literacy is the capacity for a person "to read and write with understanding a short simple statement of his/her everyday life" (UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 2000). Programs for adult literacy help adults become literate and acquire the information and skills needed for employment and self-sufficiency. The delivery of adult basic education, however, has a protracted and dismal history. Conventional wisdom held that non-



formal education could educate an entire population quickly and affordably in the 1960s and 1970s (Jones, 1990). Few participants acquired consistent literacy skills as a result of the 1970s programs' efficiency rates, which were generally around 12.5% (UNESCO, 1976). The projects of the 1990s focused on creating user demand and funded the activities of NGOs, which frequently ran programs that retained participants and appeared to be more efficient. This was in contrast to earlier funding of supply-driven, top-down government instruction implemented by weak public institutions. Institutions of the government were to be employed primarily for policy and oversight (Abadzi, 2003).

Adult literacy programs have historically been incorporated into educational policies in Pakistan, such as the 1970s and 1972 inculcate cognizance issues, the establishment of a Literacy and Mass Education Commission in 1981, and the passage of an ordinance at the federal level in 1985, which included various incentives like the issuance of passports, the restriction of federal government employment to those who were literate, and the granting of driving licenses in order to promote literacy in Pakistan. To expedite the adult literacy goal of 55% by 2003 and 70% by 2010, the National Education Policy (1998-2010) was established in 1998. Following that, the Education Sector Reforms (ESR) 2001–2006 program was implemented, keeping its commitment to increase adult literacy by 60% by 2005. Above notably, the 2001 National Plan of Action on Education for notably (EFA) vowed to improve adult literacy by 85% by 2015, working with UNESCO and the Ministry of Education. The adult literacy program has consistently been criticized for failing for a variety of reasons, including a lack of political will, funding allocation (which amounts to less than 1% of the education budget), a lack of organizational structure and coordination, a lack of centralized monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and most importantly, a lack of commitment.

In order to address the issue of primary school dropouts and satisfy the growing need for non-formal basic education with functional literacy and livelihood skills, the Punjab Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department was founded in 2002. By giving the illiterates access to basic education, the main goals are to join the struggle against illiteracy and advocate for a better future throughout the Punjab. Through Adult Literacy Centers (ALCs), the adult literacy program teaches illiterate adults aged 11 to 40 about literacy and life skills.

The curriculum of adult literacy programs not only develops the learners' literacy and numeracy skills but also raises awareness of various facets of life, such as hygiene, household management, community ethics, social issues, interpersonal skills, and some recommendations regarding the socialization of children and their health. The participants were able to acquire new attitudes, abilities, and behaviors thanks to these lessons. Personal development is the process of learning new abilities, dispositions, behaviors, or responses that can enhance your life and improve your general well-being. According to Saamego



(2022), self-awareness, self-esteem, personal values, mental toughness, emotional intelligence, spirituality, and social skills are all parts of personal growth.

### **Research Questions**

This study focused on following research questions.

1. To what extent adult literacy program has increased rural women's awareness about social issues?
2. To what extent adult literacy program has improved rural women's social status?
3. To what extent adult literacy program has enhanced rural women's decision making power?
4. To what extent adult literacy program has boosted rural women's confidence?
5. To what extent adult literacy program has enriched rural women's social relationships?

### **Review of Literature**

Bown (1990) claimed that after acquiring the literacy, people become more confident and courageous. The newly imparted knowledge gives them awareness and helps them to express their decisive and confident behavior. It makes the people more active in their social and individual activities.

Lind (1996) stated that literacy can also empower students to engage in both individual and group action in a variety of spheres of their daily lives, including the home, workplace, and community. These behaviors have the potential to impact students' lives in two interconnected ways. First, the design and implementation of literacy programs has an impact on how people live their lives by empowering participants to become creators of their own learning, creators of their own knowledge, and dialogue partners about specific problems in their lives. Second, in order to create a welcoming environment, literacy programs can help larger socioeconomic empowerment activities. Many learners of both the genders want to have ability to read and write letters or sentences, to have understanding of money and currency and to get control over everyday life events.

Netine (2000) has noticed some significant effects when literacy programs have been taking place in a community. Women are now able to build smokeless stoves, water tanks for clean water, engage in household and community decision-making, and some even get the chance to hold leadership positions. To cooperate and bolster their social, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, they have formed groups. They are capable of reading and writing, and they are self-assured enough to persuade others of their abilities. They now try to reach out to different sectors and are more expressive.



Fiedrich and Jellema (2003) described that participation in adult literacy programs does allow women to enter and challenge masculine domains by working in fields where men predominate, learning previously linked power languages, and managing household finances.

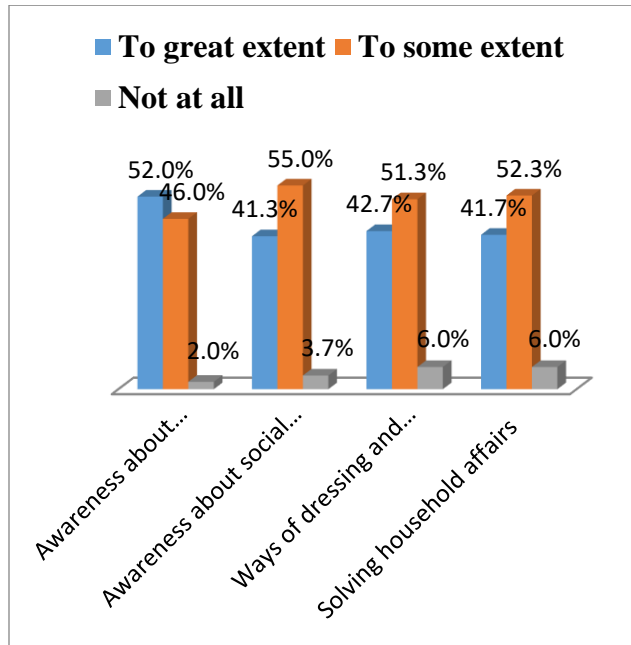
UNESCO (2006) reported that literacy is very helpful in teaching people humanistic manners and etiquettes. The practice of literacy and involvement in adult literacy programs can have positive effects on people's self-esteem, empowerment, creativity, and ability to think critically. Human benefits are fundamentally significant and may also be crucial to achieving other literacy-related advantages, such as better health and more political engagement.

## **Methodology**

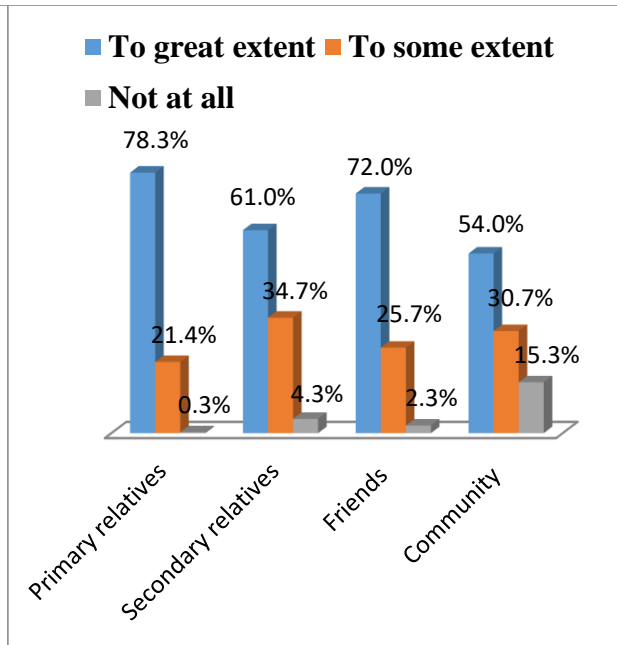
A cross-sectional survey was conducted on women who were enrolled and in last stage of Adult Literacy Program of Punjab Literacy and Non-formal Basic Education Department in Tehsil Dera Ghazi Khan. The population of the present study consisted of all the female learners (students) of the Adult Literacy centers who were going to complete the phase (six months) of Adult literacy Program. The sample was drawn by using multistage sampling. At first stage, three (3) union councils (Jhok Utra, Mana Ahmadani and Notak) of Tehsil Dera Ghazi Khan were selected purposively as the phase of program was going to complete here. The list of Adult Literacy Centers was taken from office of Punjab Literacy and Non-formal Basic Education Department and learners were selected through attendance registers of each center. At the second stage, ten (10) Adult Literacy Centers were selected and at third stage, eleven (11) learners were selected from each center. So the sample size of present study was  $(3 \times 10 \times 11 = 330)$  learners. Interview schedule was preferred for data collection because the population was not well educated. Personal development was measured by assessing improvements in their awareness about social issues, social status, decision making power, confidence and social relations. Pre-testing was done to check the validity and reliability of the research tool. For pre-testing, 40 respondents were interviewed. After pre-testing, 3 questions were added and two questions were restated. Chi-square and percentage analyses of the data were performed.

## **Results and Discussion**

The adult literacy program included the topics such as importance of education, hygiene principles, child care, some social issues, ways to solve household problems, manners of dressing and speaking as given by the religion. This was the class room practice and local area supervisor also delivers lecture on these issues. This gives them awareness to educate themselves as well as the other members of family and also enhance their capacity to make decisions in daily affairs.



**Figure 1 Improvements in awareness**



**Figure 2 Improvements in status**

The results of figure 1 presents that the adult literacy program has improved learners' awareness in different aspects of their life. The first indicator was to measure their awareness about importance of education. Majority of the respondents i.e. 52.0 percent said that after participating the adult literacy classes, their awareness about importance of education has increased to great extent and 46.0 percent of respondents stated that improvements in their awareness was to some extent while only 2.0 percent of respondents claimed that there was no improvement in their awareness regarding importance of education at all. This shows that 98.0 percent have respondents have felt improvements in their awareness about importance of education in life either to great extent or to some extent. The second measure was the awareness about social issues. Majority of the respondents i.e.55.0 percent said that their awareness about social issues have increased to some extent and 41.3 percent of respondents stated that the improvements were to great extent while only 3.7 percent of respondents have felt no improvements at all. This indicates that 96.3 percent of respondents have felt the improvements in their awareness about social issues due to participation in adult literacy classes.

The third criterion was the awareness about different ways of dressing and speaking. Majority of the respondents i.e. 51.3 percent claimed that there awareness about different ways of dressing and speaking has increased to some extent and 42.7 percent of respondents stated that improvements were to great extent while only 6.0 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This depicts that 94.0 percent of respondents reported that their awareness about different ways of dressing and speaking have increased either to great extent or to some extent after participation



in adult literacy program. The fourth parameter was the awareness about solving household affairs. Majority of the respondents i.e. 52.3 percent claimed that their awareness about solving domestic affairs has improved to some extent and 41.7 percent of respondents said that improvements were to great extent while only 6.0 percent of respondents stated that they have not felt improvements at all. This shows that 94.0 percent of respondents claimed to have improvements in their awareness about solving domestic affairs either to great extent or to some extent.

Further, adult literacy classes have significantly improved the status of learners in their relevant group and community by giving them knowledge and awareness about different aspects of life and enhancing their literacy and communication skills. As in rural areas, the literacy rate of female is very low, female with knowledge and skills are highly valued. The learners in class usually belong to the same area and sometimes they are closely related to each other as friends, neighbors and kinfolk. After enrollment in adult literacy classes, they have opportunity to interact with each other regularly and consequently they become more expressive and friendly to each other. This helps to build a positive image of others in their mind and they willfully give and also get the higher social status. The figure 2 shows the improvements in respondents' status in different relationships after adult literacy classes. The first indicator in this regard was to measure the improvements in status particularly with primary relatives. Majority of the respondents i.e. 78.3 percent said that improvements in their status from primary relatives were to great extent and 21.4 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 0.3 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This indicates that 99.7 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their status from primary relatives either to great extent or to some extent.

The second aspect was to measure the improvements in status with secondary relatives. Majority of the respondents i.e. 61.0 percent said that their status from secondary relatives has improved to great extent and 34.7 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 4.3 percent of respondents have not felt any improvements. This describes that 95.7 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their status with primary relatives either to great extent or to some extent after adult literacy classes. The third criterion was to measure the status from friends. Majority of the respondents i.e. 72.0 percent said that their status from friends has improved to great extent after adult literacy classes and 25.7 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 2.3 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This depicts that 97.7 percent of respondents have felt improvements after adult literacy classes in their status from friends either to great extent or to some extent. The fourth aspect to measure improvements was the status from community. Majority of the respondents i.e. 54.0 percent said that their status from community has improved to great extent and 30.7 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 15.3 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This shows that 84.7 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their status from community either to great extent or to some extent.



Moreover, adult literacy program has improved the decision making power of learners in various aspects of their lives including selection of health facilities, children's education and marriage, different household decisions and purchasing of household items. As the learners have increased knowledge and interaction, they as well as their family members consider them better to decide about these issues.

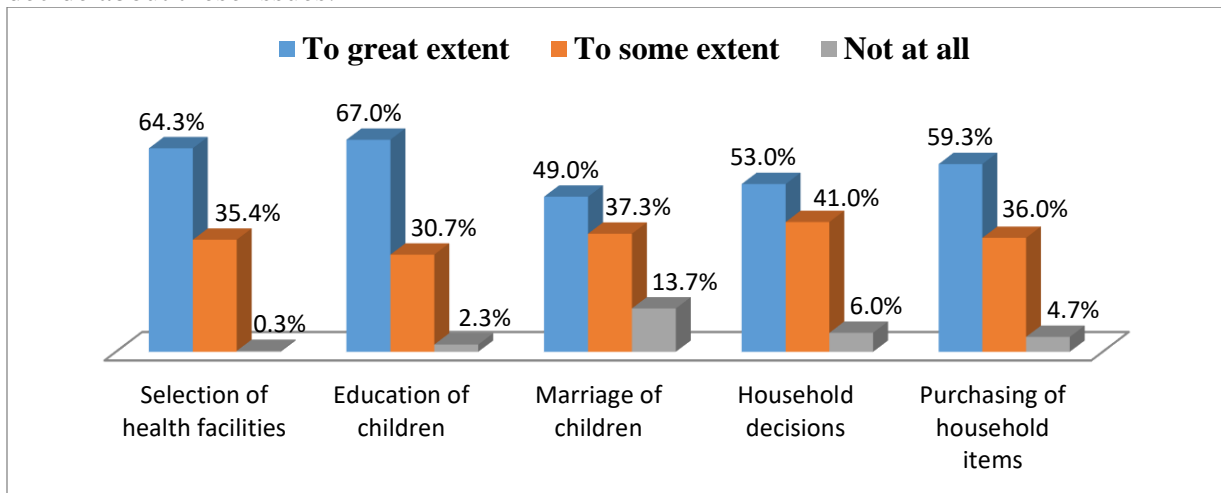


Figure 3 Improvements in decision making power

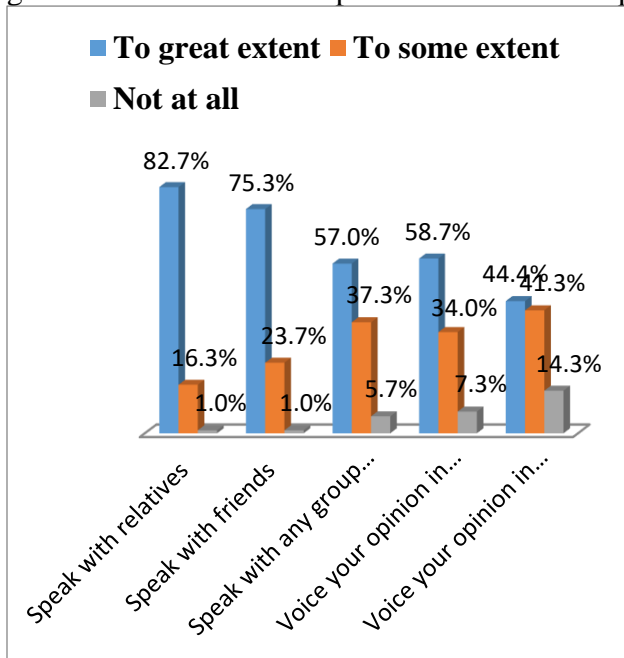
The figure 3 describes the results regarding the improvements respondents have felt in their decision making power. The first indicator to measure the decision making power was regarding the selection of health facilities. Majority of the respondents i.e. 64.3 percent said that their decision making power has increased to great extent and 35.4 percent of respondents reported the improvements to some extent while only 0.3 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This depicts that 99.7 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their decision making power regarding selection of health facilities either to great extent or to some extent. The second criterion to measure decision making power was the education of children. Majority of the respondents i.e. 67.0 percent said that their decision making power regarding education of their children has increased to great extent and 30.7 percent of respondents stated that improvements were to some extent while only 2.3 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This describes that 97.7 percent of respondents reported improvements in their decision making power regarding education of their children either to great extent or to some extent.

The third parameter of decision making power was the marriage of children. Most of the respondents i.e. 49.0 percent said that their decision making power has improved to great extent and 37.3 percent of respondents reported the improvements to some extent while only 13.7 percent of respondents have not felt any improvements at all. This shows that 86.3 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their decision making power regarding the marriage of children either to great extent or to some extent. The forth aspect of decision making power was regarding the

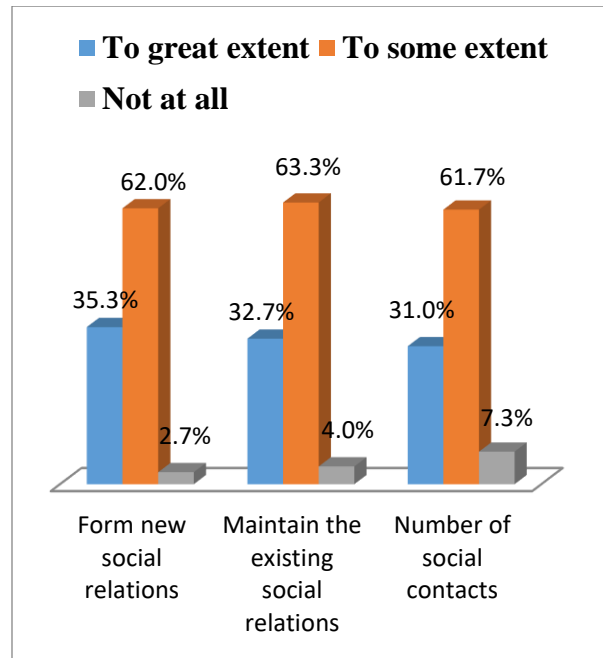


household decisions. Majority of the respondents i.e. 53.0 percent said that after adult literacy classes their decision making power has improved to great extent and 41.0 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 6.0 percent of respondents have felt no improvements at all. This indicates that 94.0 percent of respondents reported improvements in their decision making power regarding the household decision either to great extent or to some extent. The fifth indicator to measure the decision making power was regarding the purchasing of household items. Majority of the respondents i.e. 59.3 percent said that their decision making power regarding the purchase of household items has improved to great extent and 36.0 percent of respondents stated that improvements were to some extent while only 4.7 percent of respondents felt no improvement at all. This shows that 95.3 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their decision making power regarding purchase of household items either to great extent or to some extent. These results explain that after participation in adult literacy classes, the decision making power of respondents has increased very significantly.

As the adult literacy classes have enabled the learners to be more expressive and friendly, so they have become more confident to speak with their relatives, friends and other members of community. Now they are more expressive to voice their opinion in their own domestic affairs and the affairs of their relatives. The adult literacy classes have improved their knowledge and skills and the learners consider themselves better than before in various situations. These improvements give them confidence to speak and voice their opinion in different routine matters.



**Figure 4 Improvements in confidence**



**Figure 5 Improvements in social relations**





The figure 4 describes the improvements that learners have felt in their confidence to speak with different people and to voice their opinion in different aspects of their life. The first indicator to measure the confidence was to speak with relatives. Majority of the respondents i.e. 82.7 percent said that their confidence to speak with relatives has improved to great extent and 16.3 percent of respondents stated that improvements were to some extent while only 1.0 percent of respondents reported no improvements at all. This shows that 99.0 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their confidence to speak with relatives after adult literacy classes either to great extent or to some extent. The second aspect to measure confidence was to speak with friends. Majority of the respondents i.e. 75.3 percent stated that their confidence to speak with friends has improved to great extent and 23.7 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 1.0 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This describes that 99.0 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their confidence to speak with friends either to great extent or to some extent after participation in adult literacy classes.

The third criterion to measure confidence was to speak with any group from community. Majority of the respondents i.e. 57.0 percent said that their confidence has improved to great extent and 37.3 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 5.7 percent of respondents felt no at all. This shows that 94.3 percent of respondents have felt improvements in their confidence to speak with any group in community either to great extent or to some extent after adult literacy classes. The fourth indicator was the confidence to voice their opinion in domestic affairs. Majority of the respondents i.e. 58.7 percent said that their confidence has improved to great extent and 34.0 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 7.3 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This shows that 92.7 percent of respondents have reported improvements in their confidence to voice their opinion in domestic affairs either to great extent or to some extent after participation in adult literacy classes.

The fifth criterion was the confidence to voice their opinion in affairs of relatives. In this regard, 44.4 percent of respondents said that their confidence has improved to great extent and 41.3 percent of respondents reported improvements to some extent while only 14.3 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. This shows that 85.7 percent of respondents have reported improvements in their confidence to voice their opinion in affairs of relatives either to great extent or to some extent after participation in adult literacy classes. The adult literacy classes also affect the social relations of learners. It helps the learners to form new social relations by providing them the opportunity of face to face interaction on regular basis with other learners, teacher, local area supervisor and literacy coordinator. It also helps them to maintain the existing social relationship because most of the learners in class are related to each other by kinship, friendship and territory. It helps them to improve their number of contacts in this way.

The figure 5 describes the improvements that respondents have felt in their social relations after adult literacy classes. The first indicator to measure the effect of adult literacy classes on



social relationships of learners was to see the extent to which learners have formed new social relationships. Majority of the respondents i.e. 62.7 percent said that they have formed new relationships during adult literacy classes to some extent and 35.3 percent of respondents stated that they have formed new relationships to great extent while only 2.7 percent of respondents reported that they have not formed any relation at all. This shows that 97.3 percent have respondents have felt that during adult literacy classes, they have formed new social relations either to great extent or to some extent. The second parameter in this regard was to maintain the existing social relationship. Majority of the respondents i.e. 63.3 percent said that adult literacy classes have enabled them to maintain the existing social relations to some extent and 32.7 percent of respondents stated to great extent while only 4.0 percent of respondents described that effect of adult literacy classes on their existing relations was not at all. This shows that 96.0 percent of respondents stated that adult literacy classes have enabled them to maintain existing social relations either to great extent or to some extent. The third aspect was to measure the improvements in number of social contacts. Majority of the respondents i.e. 61.7 percent said that after participation in adult literacy classes, their social contacts have increased to some extent and 31.0 percent of respondents reported improvements to great extent while only 7.3 percent of respondents felt no improvements at all. Further the association of variables was measured through Chi-square test.

**Table 1**

**Association between literacy skills and Social Relations**

Literacy skills	Social Relations			Total
	To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	
To great extent	62	41	4	107
To some extent	110	45	5	160
Not at all	15	13	5	33
Total	187	99	14	300

Chi-Square Value = 14.160  
 Level of significance = 0.05  
 Gamma Value = 0.01

Degree of freedom = 4  
 Significant

The table No. 1 describes the association between literacy skills and social relations of rural women. The independent variable was literacy skills and dependent variable was social relations. The chi-square value shows that relationship is significant. The gamma value is positive which depicts that relationship is direct. This means greater the level of literacy, better will be the social relations of rural women.



**Table 2**  
**Association between literacy skills and Decision making power**

Literacy skills	Decision Making Power To Purchase Household Items			Total
	To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	
To great extent	73	31	3	107
To some extent	81	70	9	160
Not at all	24	7	2	33
Total	178	108	14	300

Chi-Square Value = 11.858  
 Level of significance = 0.05  
 Gamma Value = 0.14

Degree of freedom = 4  
 Significant

The table No.2 describes the association between literacy skills and decision-making power of rural women. The independent variable was literacy skills and dependent variable was decision-making power to purchase household items. The chi-square value shows that relationship is significant. The gamma value is positive which depicts that relationship is direct. This means greater the level of literacy, greater will be the decision-making power of rural women.

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that effects of adult literacy program on learners' knowledge and awareness about various aspects of life including importance of education, social issues, solving household affairs, ways of dressing and speaking were very significant and striking. Majority of respondents reported improvements in their status from primary relatives, secondary relatives, friends and community. The adult literacy program also improved decision making power of women regarding selection of health facilities, education of children, household decisions and purchasing of household items and marriage of children. Further, confidence of learners in speaking with relatives, friends, any group of community, to voice their opinion in domestic affairs and in affairs of relatives has increased after participation in adult literacy classes. This program also enabled learners to form new relationships, maintain the existing relationships well and increase the number of their social contacts. The adult literacy program mainly contributed in the personal development of rural women.



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