

EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY AMONG THE DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUPS IN YUKSAM DEVELOPMENT BLOCK OF SIKKIM

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ABSTRACT

The present study deals with the educational inequality among different social groups of Yuksam development block. Education plays a vital role in socio-economic development of the country as well as in different social group in the society. Improvement in human resources mainly depends upon education. Educational facilities are inter-dependent with socio-economic development. The socio-economic development of an area is influenced by the pattern of education facilities. This study is mainly based on primary data supplemented by secondary data which have been randomly collected from 921 households selected from the list of Above Poverty Line (APL) and Below Poverty Line (BPL) families of Yuksam development block during 2010-11. The analysis shows that the level of inequality is higher in the Gram Panchayat Unit(GPUs) as it is situated in the remote area. Going by gender the rate of female literacy is lower than that of male in almost all social groups. It directly distresses them to fetch skilled job or employment.

Key words-

BPL, APL, GPUs, Rural Development, Social groups, Development block,

Introduction-

Education is an important factor which plays a significant role in development of the country and also helps to provide strong base for all round development of an individual with a clear view to bring quality socio-economic development. For human resource development education is the most important means. Education enhances better opportunity and economic security, improvement in health eradicates poverty and improves communication skill of an individual. Nowadays education has become a universal human right. Government are attempting to attain the goal of universal primary education and they also abolished official fees in primary education. Indian constitution made free and compulsory education as fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

Objectives-

Specifically the study attempts to analyse the educational inequality among genders and within different social groups of Yuksam development block.

Methodology-

The study is based on secondary data of Department of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation (DESME, 2005-08), District Census Handbook (DCH) for the years 1971-2001 and household level data which have been collected randomly from 921 household selected from the list of APL and BPL families of 9 GPUs, through personal interviews to head of the family with the help of schedule. The above information regarding all the aspects of literacy has been collected.

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Study Area-

In Sikkim there are 31 block administrative centre / development block. Yuksam was the first capital of Sikkim; it is a small hamlet in West Sikkim with an altitude of 1780m and located approximately 124 km from the present capital Gangtok (Fig. 1). Previously Yuksam development block comprises of 9 GPUs, 51 Gram Panchayat Ward (GPW), 3088 household along with 17,334 populations (DESME, 2008), now it has been divided into two development block i.e. Yuksam and Chongrang. The investigation is carried out before delimitation.

Educational Status among the Social Group-

Since Sikkim merged with India in 1975, provision of education to SCs/STs has received top priority in development. There has been a rapid improvement in educational status among the social groups and within the gender both in the rural and urban area. It has been found that at State level, according to the Census of India 2011, the rate of literacy increase from 17.74 in 1971 to 68.81 per cent in 2001 and 82.2 per cent in 2011. The rate of literacy increased from 44.14 per cent to 66.82 per cent in rural Sikkim, whereas in urban areas it increased from 69.85 per cent to 83.91 per cent during 1991 to 2001.

Although the rates of literacy continue to be lower in rural area as compared to urban. The data presented in the Table 1, shows the literacy rate among different social groups in GPU level. Going by gender the educational status of women is significantly lower than that of male in all social groups. The rate of literacy is quite lower in SCs/STs as compared to others. It can be noted that there is a huge gender gap in educational attainment to continue to exist in all social groups and more among the SCs/STs.

Causes of Educational Inequality-

There are many reasons for inequality within the society and the causes are further inter-related. The factors that create inequality include education, gender, wealth, health and occupation. The standard of education and the rate of literacy are very low in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Education is an important indicator of human progress. It is a fact that educational institutions are extremely low in rural areas. There are multiple GPW where even primary schools are absent. So many children do not go beyond primary level and that village cannot provide the population for maintaining schools.

Medical facilities is the other important service absent in rural areas, hence the health status of villagers are poor. Rural areas are sharply backward in facilities like drinking water, electricity, transport and communication, housing condition, banking, market and many more. Therefore education is the only vital factor that plays a significant role in the upliftment of the rural poor and which also brings equality between rural-urban sector and also within the each sector itself. Lack of education creates the following inequality among the society:

LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA

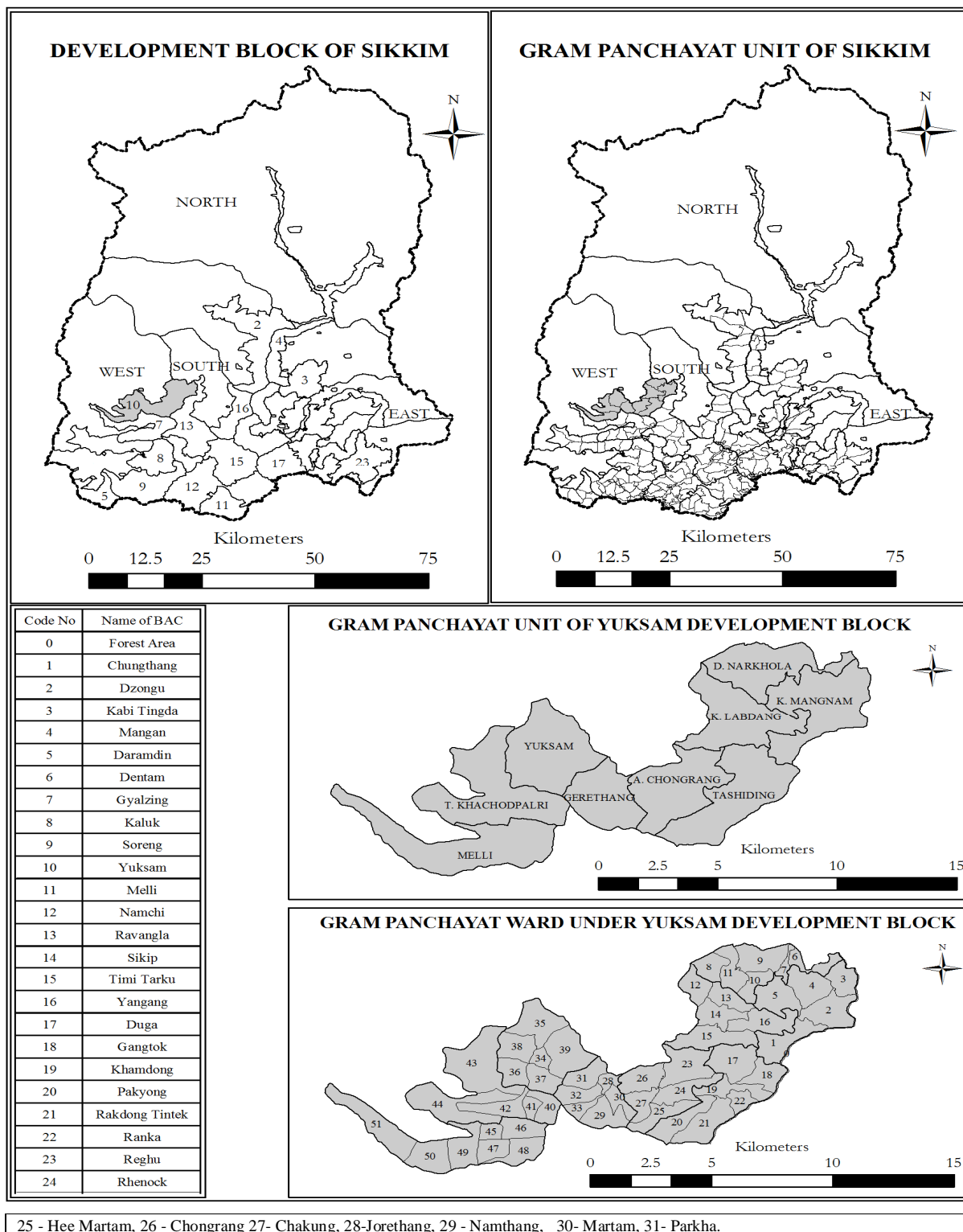


Fig: 1

Table 1: Social group-wise Literacy rate among the GPU

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Name of the GPU	Social Group	Total child below 7 yrs	Child below 7 yrs (F)	Child below 7 yrs (M)	Literate (M)	Literate (F)
K.Mangnam	MBC	15.30	14.30	33.40	51.30	51.40
	ST	7.70	17.60	12.80	79.40	44.00
D.Narkhola	MBC	11.00	15.00	20.20	68.80	55.00
	ST	20.00	23.00	0.00	80.00	38.50
	SC	33.30	0.00	0.00	66.70	50.00
K.Labdang	MBC	11.60	8.20	18.20	70.20	65.60
	ST	17.30	24.00	24.10	58.60	36.00
	OBC	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
Tashiding	MBC	0.00	0.00	16.70	83.30	62.50
	ST	8.20	9.00	16.80	75.00	57.80
	SC	7.90	20.40	42.10	50.00	43.60
	OBC	6.50	8.00	7.30	86.20	73.20
A.Chongrang	ST	20.20	21.70	14.60	65.20	55.40
	SC	14.30	8.70	19.00	66.70	65.20
	OBC	9.00	11.90	11.90	79.10	62.70
	MBC	3.60	6.20	10.70	85.70	65.60
Gerethang	ST	13.80	13.60	13.30	72.90	57.80
	SC	10.50	7.20	21.00	68.50	57.10
	OBC	12.00	4.70	9.30	78.70	73.30
	MBC	13.30	0.00	13.30	73.40	55.60
Yuksam	ST	16.10	8.80	17.20	66.70	59.60
	SC	14.30	8.30	14.30	71.40	66.70
	OBC	9.50	9.40	28.50	62.00	62.30
	MBC	14.50	12.50	13.00	72.50	53.50
T. Khachodpalri	ST	14.00	17.50	21.30	64.70	46.10
	SC	25.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	100.00
	OBC	13.10	16.00	21.30	65.60	50.00
	MBC	12.70	8.00	16.40	70.90	60.20
Melli	ST	12.00	13.50	23.90	64.10	57.20
	SC	66.70	0.00	0.00	33.30	100.00
	OBC	16.70	0.00	25.00	58.30	54.50
	MBC	14.60	8.60	17.70	67.70	57.00

Source: Field survey, 2010-11.

Gender inequalities-

Refers to inequalities in the conditions among men and women for realizing their full rights. It is a well known fact that the status of Indian women is somehow different from western women. In India home is considered as an ideological physical space where women can perform her role as mother, wife, daughter and sister. In rural areas the girl child is engaged in helping their parents, cleaning the house, taking care of siblings, sick and elderly, preparing food, collecting firewood and grazing animals are some of the key tasks to be performed. Men hardly participate in domestic chores. They work outside the home and execute his role as a bread winner. Therefore the household resources and property are allocated in the favour of son due to their productive role.

Early marriage of a girl child has a negative effect on education. Likewise boys are encouraged for better and higher education and are consequently equipped with skill to compete, whereas girls are encouraged to impart domestic skills to be good mother and wives. Women hardly get opportunity to create their choices for themselves. Therefore a strong gender inequality exists in educational attainment. Table 2, shows the gender wise percentage of literates.

Table 2: Gender-wise percentage of Literates

Name of the GPU	Persons	Male	Female
K. Mangnam	55.42	53.00	47.00
D. Narkhola	55.00	53.00	47.00
K. Labdang	54.44	51.00	49.00
Tashiding	62.76	50.80	49.20
A. Chongrang	56.74	51.60	48.40
Gerethang	61.89	52.90	47.10
Yuksam	65.46	53.40	46.60
T. Khachodpalri	61.75	50.00	50.00
Melli	57.73	52.00	48.00

Source: DESME, 2008.

Occupational inequalities-

The standard of education taught in rural and urban areas has wide differences. The kind of education received in remote areas are too meagre to fetch high quality skilled jobs for the poor, therefore only the richer sections are able to hold on to highly skilled job. This certainly shows educational inequalities among different social groups in rural areas. To find out the occupational structure in GPU level, the persons engaged in the diverse segment of economy have been considered. The population has been presented by dividing into 3 broad sectors (Table. 3).

- I. Primary Worker - this sector consists of cultivator, persons engaged in livestock, agricultural labour etc. Out of total population 38.2 per cent population are engaged in the primary sector of the economy. The higher percentages of work force are in T. Khachodpalri and in D. NarkholaGPU and lowest is observed at Tashiding GPU.

Table 3: Occupational Structure among the GPU

Name of the GPU	Primary Worker	Other Worker	Non-Worker
K. Mangnam	39.40	18.60	42.00
D. Narkhola	43.30	18.70	38.00
K. Labdang	35.00	28.00	37.00
Tashiding	32.00	33.00	35.00
A. Chongrang	35.20	25.80	39.00
Gerethang	37.40	21.60	41.00
Yuksam	40.80	22.20	37.00
T. Khachodpalri	43.70	15.30	41.00
Melli	39.60	23.40	37.00
Total	38.20	23.80	38.00

Source: Field survey, 2010-11.

II. **Other Worker (OW)** - All workers, i.e., those who have been engaged in some economic activity during the last one year, but are not cultivators or agricultural labourers or in household industry, are 'Other Workers (OW)'. The type of workers that come under this category of 'OW' include all Government servants, municipal employees, teachers, factory workers, plantation workers, those engaged in trade, commerce, business, transport banking, mining, construction, political or social work, priests, entertainment artists, etc. In effect, all those workers other than cultivators or agricultural labourers or household industry workers are 'Other Workers'. There are 23.8 per cent to the total population are engaged in this sector. The highest proportion of other workers is noted as 33 per cent in Tashiding GPU followed by K. Labdang and A. Chongrang. T. Khachodpalri GPU has lowest population in these activities which has been observed (15.3 per cent).

III. **Non Workers** -Persons who did not work during the reference period was treated as non-worker. The non-workers broadly constitute students who did not participate in any economic activity, the person who were attending to daily household chores like cooking, looking after children, cleaning utensils, fetching water etc. pensioners those who are drawing pension after retirement, and the persons who are seeking/available for work and persons having unidentified source of income and not engaged in any economically productive work during the reference period are included in this category.

After deducting the total workers and other workers from total population, the remaining population is treated as economically inactive population (dependent). The number of people who cannot be employed and mostly supported by economically active population (aged between 15-64). It classified as those in aged under 15 remain in full time education and of old people aged 65 and over is considered as dependent population. The percentage of non-workers was constitutes about 38 per cent of total population. More than the half of the non worker is females and the children under the age of 15 years. The highest non workers population was noted in K.Mangnam GPU at 36.3 per cent, while the lowest was recorded in Tashiding GPU respectively. The wide variation was noted from one GPU to another.

Income difference-

Economic inequalities exist among all poor within these countries. The higher earning is associated with the higher level of education. The parents with the higher level of education, occupation and income are the characteristics associated with the better educational outcomes of

their children. Most of the poor people are ignorant and illiterate and do not believe in the system of education, therefore they do not encourage their children.

Poor household with financial crises cannot compensate for their child education, because the little money which they earn is spend in the sustenance of the family. Most of the poor people are unemployed and barely have any income to send their children to school. Therefore the rate of illiteracy is more among the weaker sections of the society and their income is also low as compared to the other. The per capita income of TashidingGPU ranks the highest (78,236), followed by A.Chongrang GPU. Relatively low per capita income is found at T.Khachodpalri and K.Mangnam GPU. If we consider the total average income of a household Tashiding ranks the highest among the other GPUs (Table. 4).

Table 4: GPU-wise per capita income and Social Group-wise average monthly income

Name of the GPU	Per/C/Inc	MBC	ST	SC	OBC	Total Average Income
K. Mangnam	34837	2714.28	2450.00	0.00	0.00	2604.00
D. Narkhola	49733	4166.66	4000.00	2750.00	0.00	4085.36
K. Labdang	68415	5460.25	4590.90	0.00	5000.00	5263.72
Tashiding	78236	7950.00	5036.27	3555.88	7482.22	5611.00
A. Chongrang	75432	3120.00	2630.64	4214.28	6710.00	4875.00
Gerethang	55330	3440.00	2555.84	3383.33	7160.00	3657.52
Yuksam	48953	2816.66	3984.84	4685.71	3085.00	3710.66
T. Khachodpalri	30993	2333.33	2307.79	1500.00	2625.00	2354.54
Melli	51685	3313.51	4120.25	2000.00	3383.33	3824.39

Source: Field survey, 2010-11.

According to the field survey report, the monthly average income of the Most Backward Class (MBC) of TashidingGPU ranks the highest within the Yuksam development block, followed by the OBC of the same GPU. Table 4, shows the per capita income, total average income and social group wise monthly average income of the GPUs. Poverty also affects the health status of the weaker section of the society. Medical facilities is absent in the rural areas. Health centre located in the rural areas are inadequately equipped to meet their minimum needs. Therefore illiteracy and poverty are greatly responsible for high birth rate in rural areas. In addition the poor deem the children as god's blessings and an asset for the family. They have a conventional belief that the children in return would help them in fields during the old age.

Educational Institution-

The educational institutions are classified into four categories, namely monastery school, lower primary/primary, junior high school/secondary and senior secondary school. Primary institutions serve as the base of education, so it has a great impact in the literacy of a particular area. There are total 50 numbers of institutions out of this 29 belong to lower primary/primary and 6 monastery institutions in Yuksam Development Block. Recently one livelihood school have also been started at Tashiding GPU, as a part of Government initiative to convert literacy rate to 100 per cent by 2015.

Among this Tashiding GPU ranks the highest number of institution followed by Yuksam, T. Khachodpalri, Melli and A.Chongrang GPU. While in Gerethang, K.Labdang, K.Mangnum and D.Narkhola GPU there is less than 5 educational institutions (Fig. 2).So the development of thepucca roads indirectly affects the educational facilities of the GPUs. In other words maximum

educational institution occurs on the road level than the rural interior. Rural roads connectivity plays an important role in understanding the location pattern of institutions distribution (Fig. 3). It is extremely difficult to get rid of the educational inequality between the students. The standard of education taught in rural and urban areas are poles apart, the urban being more advanced and superior in their quality than that of rural. This is the major reason why the urbanites thrive in all the competitive sectors in comparison to rural. By providing quality education in rural schools it helps to render the rural students to compete equally with the urban students.

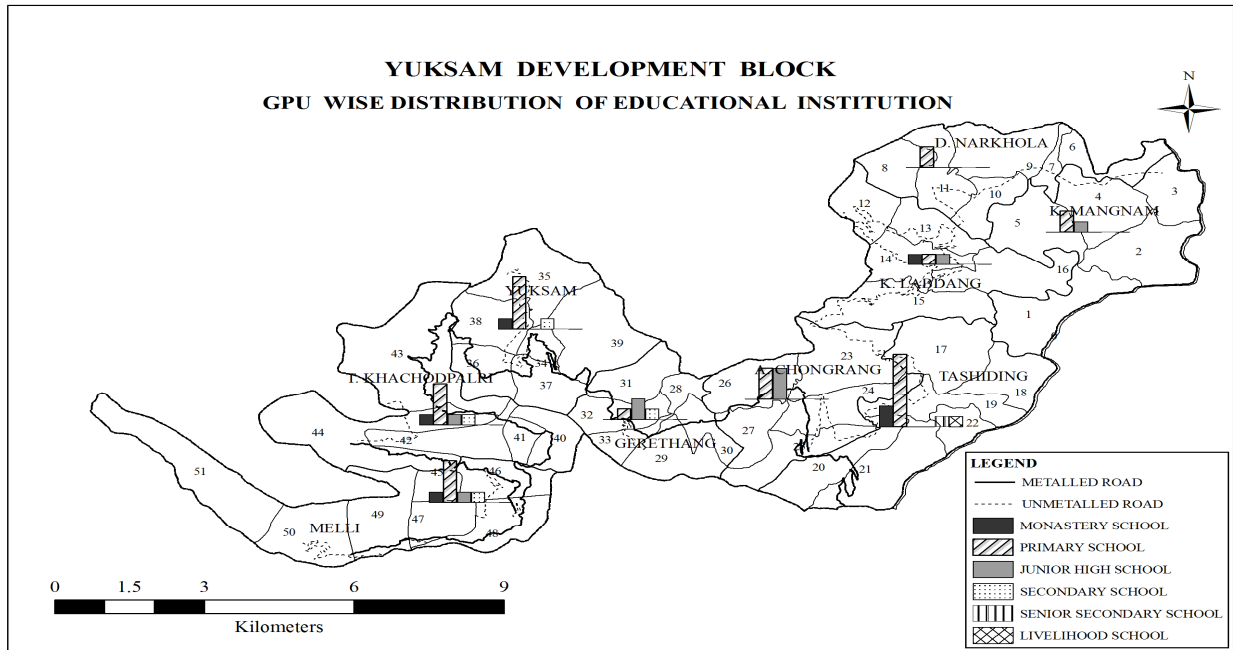


Fig: 2

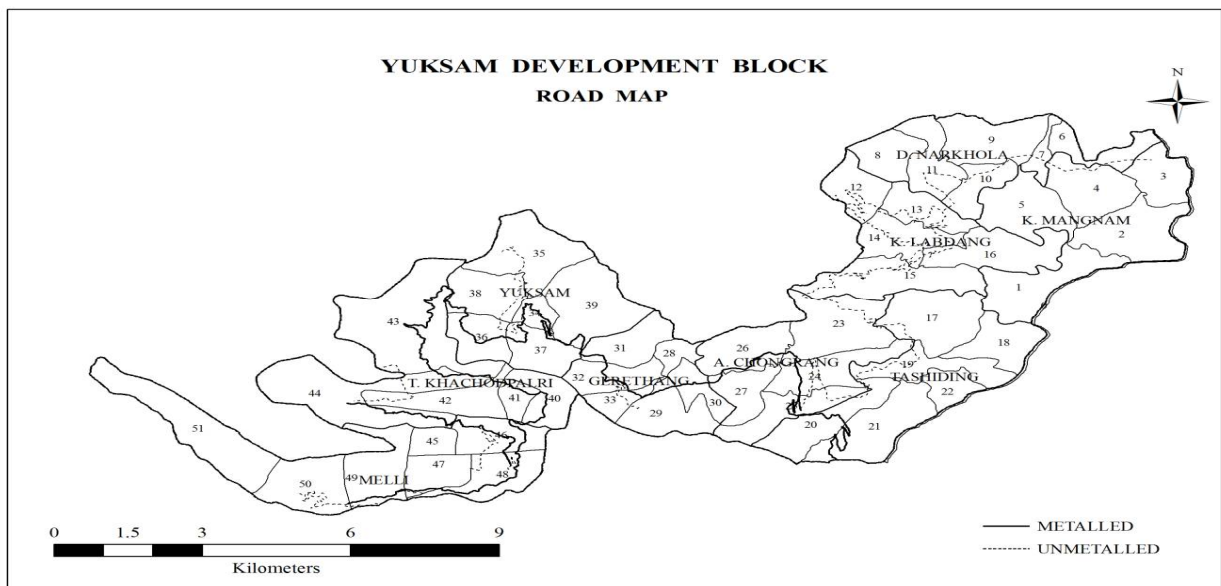


Fig: 3

Pattern Changing in Education-

After independence India brought about massive programme for planned socio-economic development in establishing and believing in social order and economic justice to all the section of the people. Developmental strategy was formulated to uplift the teeming millions from educational inequalities, poverty, malnutrition, unemployment and other difficulties of mankind. At present we clearly notice that there has been considerable improvement in educational status in both rural and urban areas. Increase in number of educational institution help to change the education patterns and also increased the school going children as compared to the past. Education is an important factor and most crucial inputs of development. Education also helps the people for all round development. It occupied a prime place in Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) right from its inception from the Fifth Five Year Plan, in the form of elementary education.

The central and State Government has made sincere efforts by adopting various educational schemes like SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA), RastriyaMadyamikShikshaAbhiyan (RMSA), cooked Mid-Day Meal (MDM), ICDS, Saakashar Bharat Mission and Scholarship schemes to improve the quality of education. In Sikkim State Government provides school uniforms, raincoat, shoes, school bag, books and note book to the student up to primary level. This programme has rendered a great amount of help to a large number of BPL household who are unable to send their children to school. Significantly there has been a huge decline in illiteracy and the number of school going children in villages have increased. Vigilance and continued public participation helps in the successful implementation of the programme.

Relationship between Literates and Educational Institution

The data presented in below scattered diagram shows the relationship between literates and educational institution and it has been noted highly significant and positive i.e. 0.963 (Fig.4).

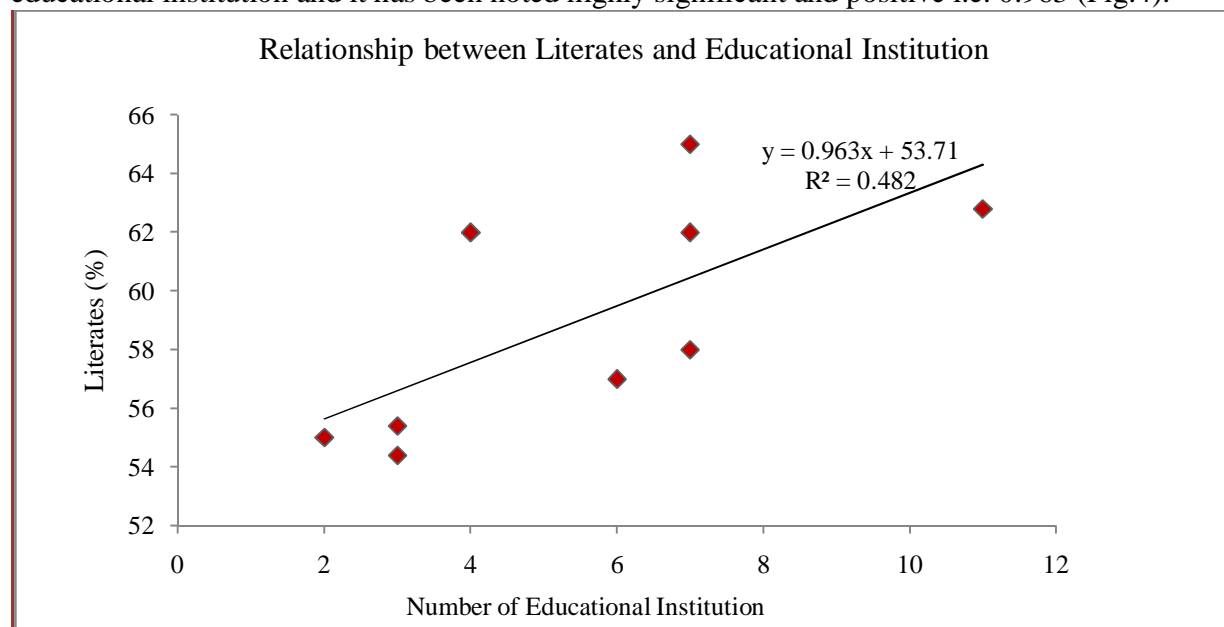


Fig: 4

It is observed that the level of literacy is low in all the GPUs. Though younger generation wishes to educate their children, it lags behind due to various restrictions. Low levels of income in general and poverty in particular forces many people not to send their children to school or to pull out them from schooling during income shocks. Children are either obligated to supplement low households earnings by working outside their homes.

Consequences and Possible remedies-

It is worthwhile to mention that the level of literacy among the villages is very low due to educational, medical, transport and communication facilities. Socio-economic development being in the initial stage is still in the process of development. It has been clearly noticed that in hills the expansion of road network plays an important role in education pattern. Gender inequality, poor health status and poor transport facilities have resulted to a greater poverty among them. It may be concluded that quality education is the centre point of all factors through which we can improve health status, access good employment for all round development of a household and society. To reduce educational inequality among different GPUs Government should emphasise on good educational resources by improving quality of teaching faculties, infrastructure, adopting modern methods in school activities by adding extra curriculum and its prospectus and also facilitating the rural students to access all the modern educational resources such as internet, computer, teaching learning materials and library etc. Educational awareness camp should also be encouraged in remote villages for the rural parents to expose educational advantages. In order to fairly execute the distribution of facilities provided by the central and state government the concerned department should have to keep a strict vigilance in the remote areas for the successful implementation of the programme in an appropriate manner.

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