

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

#### **Background of the Problem**

Sheela (not her real name) is a young girl from Karnataka. She married at a young age which she does not remember. She says they do not do registration during their marriage. They have no children. Sheela never went to school, as her family was poor and, as she was a girl, she had to work in the fields. She never felt the need of going to school as she married young. She, along with her husband, came to Goa as soon as they were married. She has two older brothers who went to school, but they were not interested so they dropped out. Sheela is not sure about her age, and does not know how to read and write. She now attends Bethesda Church in the community. She has accepted Christ as her Savior and now is eager to learn to read the Bible and also wants to learn to write.

Lalita (not her real name), is a girl from Orissa who was tricked and brought to Goa with many other young girls who had been promised jobs. Lalita was handed over to my family asking if we needed a domestic worker. She did not know how to speak any other language besides her native language. After staying in our house for a couple of weeks, we noticed how quickly she learned my native language (Konkani). She was smart and had this curiosity about everything. She was so eager to learn. But after a few days we discovered she was throwing up. We prayed for her thinking it is some kind of

evil. When we asked her if she was pregnant she said no. The next day she ran away. We tried to help these girls. With the assistance of the police, we tried to get ahold of the men who brought them, but we were not able to do anything.

These migrants are always criticized in many ways; for instance they are called “*ghatis*” (meaning people who come from the mountains or *ghats*), an illegal term to use. There is also criticism and discrimination among themselves. They value boys over girls. They treat girls as nothing and having no value.

In Karnataka, Orissa, Bihar and other undeveloped states, there is an on-going discrimination against women. Girls are always seen as having no value. I have seen this cruelty in our nation which disturbs my mind. In my school, I have seen among my Hindu girlfriends how they must behave at home and what their beliefs and superstitions are. The girls are weary of this, but to keep their families from being shamed, they have to practice and follow these beliefs.

As an Indian myself, I have seen how these girls lead their lives. In one way or another, their lives and my life intersect. We attend the same church and their lives impacted me in a unique kind of way. I grew up in a Christian family. My father is a pastor and has been pastoring two churches since 2003. Our church is located in Socorro Porvorim Goa, India. I come from a middle-class family. I have seen and learned many things about India through this community of migrants where my dad is pastoring. Life is totally different in Goa compared to their life. Our culture and lifestyle is different from that of the other states of India. People from Goa tend to dislike the migrants because of their lifestyle. As a Christian I have learned, and am still learning, to accept them with my whole heart and be friends with them just as I am with my friends in Goa. This is why

I want to engage in this study as I am indeed interested in knowing what is going on in the lives of these girls. I want the church to understand and engage them in a more holistic way so that they can develop as women who know that they matter in the kingdom of God.

CNN documents that in India a girl is seen as a liability in the household. CNN notes that when a girl is born into a family, it is often the mother who is blamed for giving birth to a girl whereas scientifically it is the man who is responsible. To keep this girl child alive, the mother has to pay a big amount of money from her parents to her in-laws. Only if she can pay is she allowed to keep the baby alive. In some cases, those who can afford an abortion will abort the fetus, while those who cannot pay have to keep them. The families say it requires a lot of money to get them married and they cannot afford it (Sidner June 13, 2012).

The old Indian people say that education which comes from the Western culture is unclean and destroys the Hindu tradition. It makes the girl forget her respect and how to respect others. Western culture is totally different from Indian culture and, therefore, it leads to this conclusion. The girl's parents, along with the groom and his family, say that an education makes a girl forget how to be submissive to her husband. As a result they say not educating them is the best way to keep their mouth shut. This is a big advantage to the husband as whatever crime he may commit against the girl; she can say nothing to him.

Teachers, as well as parents, often give preferential treatment to the boys. Greater value is placed on the boy because daughters are expected to marry young, have children, and run a household. A boy's education is considered a better investment since one day

he will be the one to earn a living and care for his aging parents. Thus boys are given the “first in line” privilege when educational opportunities are passed around (Kilbourn 2008, 212). A girl is likely to earn less than a boy as she doesn’t have any educational background. This fact is also often blamed on the girl, saying that she is useless and cannot earn enough, therefore, better to be given in marriage. Parents also say that a boy is the “light of the house” as he will earn and make a living and take care of his parents. He will also be the one to fulfill the customs during his father’s funeral.

Gender discrimination in Karnataka as well as Orissa and Uttar Pradesh— the states of the respondents, are all encompassing and unrelenting, affecting all aspects of a girl’s life. The powerful nature of this discrimination becomes evident when a family or a society determines whether or not to send girls to schools. Even girls who are allowed to attend school are still not free of gender discrimination. Female children daily face obstacles that prevent them from fully participating in the educational process, or cause them to drop out altogether (Kilbourn 2008, 211). In these places, even if the family desires to send the girl to school, there will be an objection from society. Even if there is no objection from the family, then there will be discrimination in the school by other students and teachers. This happens in the places of my respondents and their parents are also afraid of sending their daughters to school, as there are many rape and molestation cases happening in the schools by visitors or teachers or the male staff. All this cruelty against the female child happens because of a wicked world and wicked minds. In their innocence, these girls cannot defend themselves.

In situations of poverty, girls are more likely to miss out on education because of community attitudes and values. Children living in poverty often have fewer educational

opportunities, and discrimination, preferential attitudes towards boys, and rejecting attitudes toward girls cause them to have even fewer educational opportunities. Societies do not realize the harm they bring to the children, the future of the community, and the nation (Kilbourn 2008, 212). According to H. M. Philips, “an illiterate person has hundreds of enemies such as epidemics, hunger, disorder, humiliation and many others.” Therefore, illiteracy is a curse to humanity (Thengal 2013, 124).

“We keep telling children how to be adults. We keep preparing them for adulthood. We teach them how to be successful adults. However, we have to tell them how to be successful children first” (Karlen 2004, 184). Karlen adds, “If we want our children to be better people, we have to become better people. If we want children to absorb and internalize good things, then we have to surround them with those good things. That is the best lesson” (Karlen 2004, 183).

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2012, there was a gang rape which led to the death of the victim due to many internal injuries. After this rape case, there was an uproar in all of India for justice. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2015, a documentary film, *India's Daughter*, produced by Leslee Udwin was released. The Indian government banned this film in India. In the film one of the rapists was interviewed. In his interview he said, “When being raped, she shouldn't fight back. She should just be silent and allow the rape. Then they'd have dropped her off after 'doing her,' and only hit the boy.” He also said, “A girl is far more responsible for rape than a boy ... A decent girl won't roam around at nine o'clock at night ... Housework and housekeeping is for girls, not roaming in discos and bars at night doing wrong things, wearing wrong clothes” (Udwin 2015).

To respect a woman is a matter of a mindset. A man should learn manners from his home but, instead, he learns from his own parents that the work of the woman is housekeeping and serving them. They believe a girl should return home before 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. That she should not wear jeans or any wrong clothing. But even girls who wear a “burqa” (a garment which cover the whole body from the head to foot leaving the eyes uncovered), who wear sari (traditional Indian costume which covers the whole body except the face and belly) are raped. The mindset of the people, especially the elders of the village, regarding their unnecessary boundaries and limits for these girls needs to be altered. Change needs to come so women will be respected, that they realize that consent belongs to the women, and the right as to how she dresses and speaks belong to her (Udwin, 2015). But women have no say in this because they do not know that it belongs to them. These things are learned in school. No one has told it to them because most of the uneducated parents have their own thoughts in mind which they have learned from generations before them.

There are numerous attacks on women, educated as well as uneducated. In 2008 a CNN news reporter was assaulted by a mob. Men do not respect the boundaries of a woman. Coming from rural villages they do not understand the lifestyle of the cities. They are also single as the ratio of men is more than women. For this reason there is an upsurge in rape, trafficking, and sexual harassment. The culture of violence against women is getting progressively worse, even as India is getting more developed (Sidner August 23, 2013; available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UETYWi4S9yY>). If it is so hard for an educated girl to live in India, then how much more it is for an

uneducated girl? Where girls are supposed to be respected, there is only disrespect and they are seen as sexual objects, treated as nothing.

But Jesus called the children to Him and said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Luke 18:16, NIV). “Beloved of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 33:12, NIV), “All have sinned” (Romans 3:23, NIV), “Accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:5, 6, NIV), “Never will I leave you, nor will I forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5, NIV) and many other declarations—all these refer to both female and male (McDermid 2008, 28). This shows how much God values the girl child, too. God does not do anything with partiality and if we know this, we ought to love females and value them the same way. As workers of Christ we ought to follow the same example. The wicked people in the world need to be changed and shown the way of Christ. This study of illiteracy and the migrant girls hopes to raise awareness among Christians so we can advocate for their cause.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is adapted from “Social and Economic Consequences of Illiteracy,” a paper written by Niranjana Thengal (Thengal 2013, 128-131). This model (Figure 1) provided a framework for understanding the consequences of illiteracy. It discussed how illiteracy brought on poor health, less social cohesion, no or little education, and low economy.

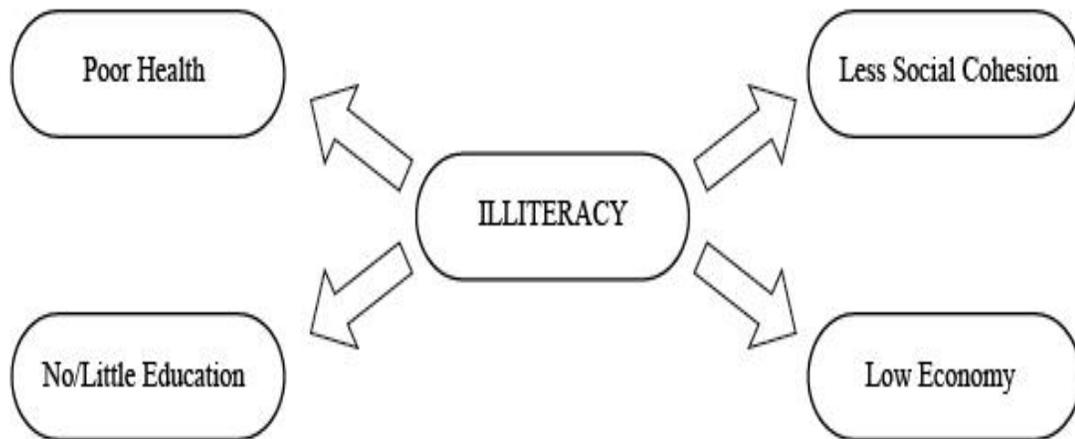


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework adapted from Social and Economic Consequences of Illiteracy (Thengal 2013, 128-131).

Looking at this framework gave a picture of how the church can understand the consequences of illiteracy. Once they understood, they could engage in strategic planning to respond to the felt needs of the immigrant girls who have not been educated properly and may give fruitful results in the future. The first consequence of illiteracy, as shown in Figure 1, is poor health. The World Health Organization (hereafter referred to as WHO) refers to health as “not merely being the absence of disease but also the physical, psychological, intellectual, spiritual and social well-being of a person” (Miles and Wright 2003, 20). United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereafter referred to as UNESCO) research has shown that illiteracy limits knowledge and practices necessary for self-care, particularly among women. This has a negative impact on household health, hygiene, and nutrition (Thengal 2013, 128). Thengal writes that the following are the consequences of illiteracy on health: The first is consequences in the home. Non-literate mothers are more likely to adopt inadequate nutritional and hygiene practices in their homes. They do not have access to preventive health measures, such as

vaccination and medical check-ups. As mothers acquire more years of schooling, their ability to gain knowledge and improve the nutrition of their children increases (Thengal 2013, 128). Secondly, according to Thengal, is disadvantages in the workplace. Illiteracy suffers from a high occupational accident rate, since they do not understand written instructions for the operation of machinery, putting their own health and those of their co-workers at risk. Failure to use safety equipment increases not only the risk of accident, but also of work related illness. This increases the need for medical services, on the one hand, and causes job absenteeism on the other. Illiteracy raises the risk of inadequate occupational hazard prevention practices (Thengal 2013, 129). In addition to the consequences that illiteracy brings on the health of individuals, Thengal also mentions that illiteracy has consequences in sexual and reproductive behavior. Disinformation is one of the most significant problems of illiteracy. Among other things, illiteracy increases the likelihood of high risk sexual behavior due to lack of awareness regarding sexual and reproductive health, as well as inadequate use of contraception. Unawareness of contraceptive methods increases the likelihood of adult and adolescent pregnancy (Thengal 2013, 129).

The second consequence of illiteracy, shown in Figure, 1 was less social cohesion. Non-literate persons face greater obstacles in terms of social insertion, not only on a personal level but also within the family (child nutrition, hygiene, health and schooling among others), and at a societal level (lower productivity, high health care costs) (Thengal 2013, 128). The social effects of illiteracy are present throughout the entire life cycle. During early childhood, the effects of illiteracy can be seen within the family unit and the primary socialization process. Later, during adulthood, illiteracy

affects an individual's social position, income and cultural capital (Thengal 2013, 126). Cultural capital comes in three forms, namely, embodied which is one's accent or dialect, objectified, which may be a luxury car or record collection and institutionalized form, which refers to credentials and qualifications such as degrees or titles that symbolize cultural competency and authority (Bourdieu 2011).

The third consequence of illiteracy, shown in Figure 1, was little or no education. Children of parents who have failed to complete primary education are highly unlikely to complete primary or secondary education themselves. Poor families often give more importance on earning than education due to the opportunity cost of the latter. The pressing need to work, in order to supplement their families, is a chief cause of dropout among young people (Thengal 2013, 129- 130). Maternal education affects home environments and children's outcomes. Carneiro, Meghir, and Pary document:

The size of several of our estimates in this section is large, and suggests that we should seriously look at education policy as a way of improving the home environments of future generations of children. Educated mothers provide better surroundings for their children by postponing and decreasing childbearing, by increasing family resources, and by assortative mating. There is also strong evidence that educated mothers invest more in their children. However, educated mothers also spend longer periods outside the home working and earning. Still, whatever the negative consequences of spending time away from the children may be, they are outweighed by the positive effects (Carneiro, Meghir, and Pary 2007, 31).

The final consequence of illiteracy, shown in Figure 1, was low economy. Literacy and increased schooling improve productivity and drive economic growth. Education is one of the key determinants of individual income, not only because it naturally improves or increases personal productivity, but also because it improves the information available to individuals regarding the challenges they must face in society. Education influences a worker's standing in the occupational hierarchy and the ability to

find employment. Young people who fail to complete primary school have a lower chance of obtaining jobs of sufficient quality to avoid poverty (Thengal 2013, 131).

This current study adapted the framework laid out by Thengal enumerating the consequences of illiteracy, which includes poor health, no/little education, less social cohesion and low economy. However, for the purposes of the study, I only explored the physical health, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of the selected respondents because these three aspects were the elements that the church could practically engage in based on the context of the local church in Porvorim, Goa.

### Conceptual Framework

UNESCO has laid out the information campaign that everyone has the right to be educated, regardless of gender and age. However, the situation of the girls in India shows that illiteracy does exist particularly among migrant girls from other parts of the country.

Figure 2 below explains the flow of the current study:

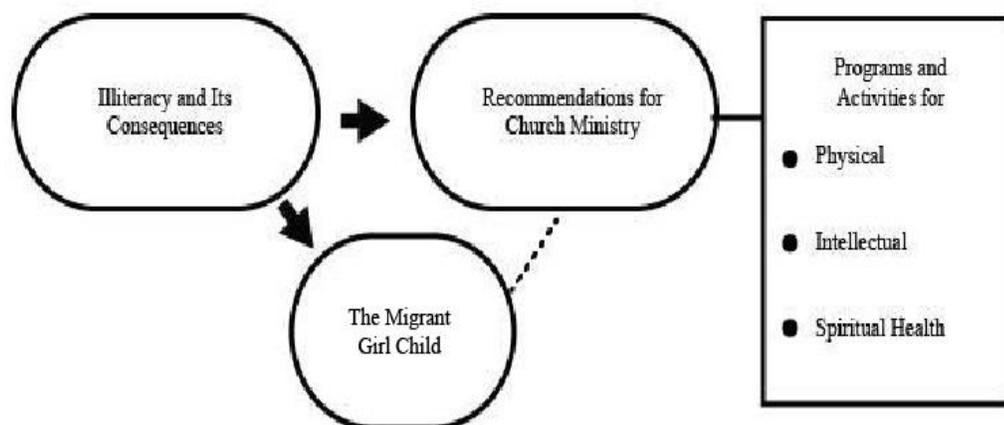


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

With this reality, the study was conducted to analyze whether or not illiteracy affects the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected respondents. The data was gathered from the interviews of the selected respondents and literature review was used to identify recommendations for holistic church ministries in terms of programs and activities for physical, intellectual, and spiritual development for these migrant girls. The researcher believed that in one way or another, the church could affect the life of the migrant girls.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study was guided by this main question: does illiteracy affect or not affect the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India? The following were the sub-problems of the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the selected students?
  - a. Age?
  - b. Marital status?
  - c. Socio-economic status in terms of income?
  - d. Religious background?
  - e. Highest educational grade completed?
2. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the physical health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa- India in terms of the following:
  - a. Appropriate height for her age?
  - b. Appropriate weight for her age?

- c. Marital Status?
    - a. Age married?
    - b. Age met her husband?
    - c. Married life experience?
  - d. Have or do not have children?
    - a. Number of pregnancies and childbirths?
    - b. Prenatal care
    - c. Number of surviving children
    - d. Feeling of having or not having children?
    - e. How did you manage breastfeeding?
  - e. Sleeping patterns?
  - f. Sickness?
  - g. Body Mass Index (BMI)?
3. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the intellectual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India in terms of the following?
- a. Skills in numeracy?
  - b. Level of formal education?
  - c. Skills in reading and writing?
  - d. Work experience?
  - e. Difference in life by knowing to read and write?
4. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the spiritual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India in terms of?

- a. Age when respondent came to faith in Christ?
  - b. How they came to believe in Christ?
  - c. Difference in life by knowing Christ?
  - d. Prayer?
  - e. Knowledge of death and resurrection of Christ have affected life?
  - f. Skills in reading and writing help in life with Christ?
  - g. Skills in reading and writing help in gaining knowledge of the Bible?
  - h. Important Bible stories or Scriptures?
  - i. Talk about the picture of migrant girls.
  - j. Belief in the goodness of God?
  - k. Belief in the power of God?
  - l. Sense of meaningfulness in life?
  - m. Describe Christian life?
  - n. Participation in church?
5. What recommendations can be offered for holistic ministry to the local church in terms of the following:
- a. Physical health needs of the migrant girls?
  - b. Intellectual needs of the migrant girls?
  - c. Spiritual needs of the migrant girls?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study hoped to be able to identify whether or not illiteracy affects the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected respondents. By being able to identify these issues, the findings can help the church understand, value, and respect these

girls and ultimately minister to them in ways that would be meaningful and relevant to their felt needs. This research also aimed to raise awareness among Christians to actively participate and look at the plight of migrant girls specifically in Goa, India. Finally, this study hoped to provide a framework with which to base future studies related to migrant girls in the context of the local church.

### **Assumptions**

This study was based on a major assumption that it is possible to identify whether or not illiteracy affects the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the selected migrant girls in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Holistic** refers to the scope of our developmental interests (Brewster 2005, 41). It refers to a person's spiritual, emotional, social, physical, and intellectual or mental being (Dialing 2013, 13).

**Illiteracy** means the lack of reading, writing and arithmetic (3R's) skills. It is the lack of minimum capabilities needed to function effectively in a society (Thengal 2013, 124). In this thesis, only reading and writing factors was considered as the respondents know to count since they were involved in begging or selling things.

**Migrants** refer to persons coming from other parts of India and staying in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India. In this thesis, migration is defined as a part of the normal livelihood strategy of poor people. Within this thesis the term migrants is referred to the low-income migrants in Goa from other rural parts of India. When applying this term within the thesis, I did not, therefore, refer to the middle and high-income groups of the

incoming people from other parts of India but migrants who are in a disadvantaged situation compared to that of Goans, both due to their low educational level, as well as due to the differences in salary for Goans and non Goans. These are migrants who are living in slum areas where there is no water and waste facilities, as well as on most levels they are alienated from the society they live in, as well as despised by their surroundings (Droszt 2013, 6-14).

**Numeracy** refers to a competence allowing more effective participation in relevant social activities (Evans 2000, 236). It is also the ability to process, interpret and communicate numerical, quantitative, and mathematical information in ways that are appropriate for a variety of contexts (Evans 2000, 236).

**Spiritual Health** is defined in this thesis as “Christian” spiritual health. By this, it included aspects such as a “conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, within the context of a community of believers that fosters that relationship, as well as the child’s understanding of-and response to-that relationship” (Allen 2008, 11).

### **Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

There were four limitations to this study. First, this study was limited only to Bethesda Church, Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India. This church is well functioning in terms of outreach ministries like hospital visitations, tract distributions, house-to-house prayers, children’s ministries, evangelism, Bible study and fasting prayers. Since other churches in the area were not studied, the findings may not be automatically applicable to other churches within the community or other contexts.

Second, the criteria for the selection of respondents were the following: 1) they should be migrant girls residing in Socorro, Goa, India who are between 11 to 18 years of

age as this age group can already express their thoughts and feelings in a meaningful way; (2) never went to school or, at the most, dropped out without completing any grade; 3) did not know to read and write but could count since counting is part of their lifestyle of begging, and they did not learn this in school; and 4) should attend Bethesda Church for at least a year before the beginning of the interview.

Third, this study only emphasized discovering and analyzing whether or not illiteracy affected the physical, intellectual and spiritual health of the selected migrant girls. I believe that exploring these aspects could aid the church in understanding the felt needs of the respondents, and think about engaging in strategic planning to help improve their lives. I did not include the socio-emotional aspect per se in the discussion because some elements in the spiritual dimension already included the following: a sense of importance in life and meaningfulness of life, which are basically dealing with the socio-emotional health of the migrant girls.

Finally, this research will significantly increase the research on the area of holistic child development in Goa, India, as it relates to the implications of the holistic ministry in Bethesda Church. Thus, I acknowledge that there would be a lack of local studies and local literature available.

This chapter discussed the background of the immigrant girls in Goa, India, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study as well as the problem statement among others. The next chapter will explore the relevant studies and literature that could give more light on the study of illiteracy and the situation of migrant girls.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This chapter presents a discussion on the research topic using relevant studies and literature. The following are the various topics that will be discussed: the girl child in the eyes of the Heavenly Father; background of the situation of the migrant girls in India, consequences of illiteracy which also included its effects on physical, intellectual, and spiritual health; and finally, benefits of education for girls.

#### **The Girl Child in the Eyes of the Heavenly Father**

Let me begin by saying that God does not show favoritism to a boy over a girl, as we see in Acts 10:34 and in Romans 2:11, which says “God does not show favoritism.” In eleven biblical Scriptures mentioned below in this topic, we see how God values both girls and boys. God appraised females as equals with males in the creation, fall and redemption of humankind, as well as the opportunity and responsibility of service in God’s kingdom. That some of their roles differ is immediately obvious, such as in child bearing; but study of Scripture makes clear the equality shown by God in these four areas (McDermid 2008, 25).

Human dignity flows from the image of God in humans as one unpacks Genesis 1:26 and this includes children. At the moment of conception, children are made in God’s image and must be treated with the dignity that this implies. Because humankind is made male and female, each sex is equally deserving of dignity. In many cultures the bias towards the boy child does not take into account this important reality. Children are not

possessions, but they are gifts and deserve our best care and love. Children do not need to do anything or possess anything, i.e., talents, abilities, and others in order to have dignity, in that, dignity is not earned but rather only affirmed by adults (Garrison 2009, 5-6). We should always appreciate and nurture our God given gifts because God loves children and gives them to us to love them, whether male or female.

Zechariah 8:5 says, “The streets of Jerusalem will be filled with boys and girls playing there” (NIV). According to Prophet Zechariah, a truly happy scene to God has both girls and boys playing together in the streets. Our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace (Psalms 144:12b, NIV). How beautiful it will be to see God’s children playing together, loved, protected and adored by God, so precious in His sight (McDermid 2008, 32). Children bring blessings on our families and our communities. They bring joy in God’s kingdom. They bring joy to our lives and only if we will nurture them with social equity, can they change the world.

According to the New Testament, God still requires that a woman be subject to her husband in the home. Nowhere do we read that God gave authority to brothers or other male members of the family to require acquiescence of females. Both males and females are commanded by God to respect our fathers and to obey them. Fathers are always commanded to take care and protect their children including girls. Nowhere in the Bible do we see that God gave any male permission to sexually abuse females at home. (McDermid 2008, 26). Today we can identify in most of the places in India where people misuse Scriptures, how they use them to try to dominate and gain control over women, how they take advantage of a women, considering them as a weaker vessel where they should be the ones to support and take care of them.

The New Testament gives abundant evidence that girls and women are now, along with their male counterparts, equal recipients of God's gracious redemption. Jesus found both sexes equally sinful, but also with equal access to God's forgiveness and redemption. For God so loved the world (including the girl child) that He gave His only Son that whoever (girl child included) believes in Him might have eternal life (John 3:16, NIV) (McDermid 2008, 26-27). 1 John 3:16 tells us all that Jesus died for all of us, and not only for males. He loved and loves us all with the same amount of love.

Throughout the biblical account, we witness how Jesus valued females, both young and old, in the way he healed the crippled woman on the Sabbath and called her a "daughter of Abraham" (Luke 13:16). He talked with and ministered to "sinful" women (John 4 and 8), admitted women to the group of those who travelled with Him (Mark 15:16), and had women among his closest friends (Luke 10), treating them with all respect (McDermid 2008, 32). God's respect for and attitude toward the girl child are reflected in accounts from the New Testament church. His offer of opportunities and responsibilities become particularly important in the light of the treatment of girls today (McDermid 2008, 33). The world has changed so much and everything seems to be the opposite of what Jesus and God-fearing men did in those times. We can find only a few men in Karnataka, Orissa, Bihar, from where these migrants come from, who respect women with dignity.

In Acts 16:16-19, Paul cast away the evil spirit from the slave girl. Paul knew the consequences, but his concern was for the girl more than themselves. He knew the power of God would be as effective for her as it was for the adults to whom he ministered. Paul was not afraid of the consequences and he brought deliverance to the suffering child

(McDermid 2008, 34). This shows how much he cared for her. He risked his life for the girl child.

Women and girls are not only looked upon as unequal to their male counterparts, but also as having little value, except as at best procreators, and at the least, playthings. The Prophet Joel had a lot of courage to announce women among the recipients of the Spirit and its effect on them as well as on men (Joel 2:28-29) (McDermid 2008, 34). No matter how humankind looks upon women, God always sees the best in them. God does want us to change our minds regarding women, and treat them equally as they are worthy of our love.

God welcomes children fully into the family of faith. Children are essential to the life and ministry of the church, bringing spiritual gifts and abilities and fulfilling definite roles. The church needs to be a place where children may dynamically connect with God and engage in meaningful participation; being disciplined, equipped, and empowered for life and ministry (McConnell, Orona and Stockley 2007, 6). Many churches do not seem to be so anymore. Many leaders want only their churches to grow in numbers. The church should see the needs of the people inside and outside the church. We are God's ambassadors and should work for His creation.

Christ made it clear that children are able to receive the kingdom of God (Mark 10:14) and are, therefore, able to be an active part of the kingdom community (McConnell, Orona, and Stockley 2007, 6). Children are the hope of humankind. Without resources, education, mentoring or proper nurture and love, they cannot know the love of God and neither can they know their importance and worth. They cannot know that the one true King loves them unconditionally.

### **Background of the Situation of the Migrant Girls in India**

This section discussed why I chose to study the migrant girls in Socorro.

Porvorim, Goa, India, how girls are seen and treated in India, followed by consequences of illiteracy on the physical, intellectual and mental health of the girls and finally, benefits of illiteracy.

I chose these girls because my church is located in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India, where they reside as migrants. India has one of the fastest growing youth populations in the world. Girls below 19 years of age comprise one-quarter of India's rapidly growing population. Unfortunately, the majority are out of school and have limited choices available for the future. They are caught in the cycle of early marriage, repeated pregnancy, and poverty. Industrialization, liberalization, and urbanization, and female feticide have brought about some obvious changes in stereotyped concepts of masculinity and femininity, affecting household composition, residence patterns, specific kinship relationships, and male and female attitudes and behavior (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramy 2015, 215). All these wrongdoings should be eliminated from the society so that the girls have equal rights as boys do.

The respondents in this study were in a critical period and have gone through different situations which they did not wish to undergo. The church needs to provide biblical responses to issues such as war, racial discrimination, social injustice, ecological concerns, and much more. At this age group (mid-teens) a number of girls become pregnant, suffer miscarriage, obtain an abortion, give birth to a child, have children born out of wedlock, drop out of school, run away from home, and see their parents' divorce (cited in Anthony 1992, 160-161). Being non-literate makes it even worse that they cannot fight for the wrongs that are happening in their lives.

Teenagers need guidance to help them balance what they are learning with what they already know, or accept to be true. Piaget referred to this balancing process as maintaining equilibrium between what they know and the new information they are receiving from their surroundings (cited in Anthony 1992, 162). Coming from a different culture where they have no respect and their lifestyle is different, they need to learn and adjust to the lifestyle of Goan culture.

It has been widely agreed that migration of women is primarily related to marital migration where wives follow the husband's migration. There is also another group of singles and widows who count for a large number of female migrants, and the number of these is rising in India (Droszt 2013, 14-15). India is a male dominant society and gender discrimination is customized habitually (Sivakumar 2008, 2). Girls born in cultures where they are devalued are especially at risk (Kilbourn 2008, 146). Being made or considered of no value, the girls face different kinds of injustice which we will see later in this chapter.

These girls have their own motives for migration and, mostly it is to earn a livelihood and take care of the family. These girls did not go to school, and therefore, do domestic work such as dish washing, cleaning the house, washing clothes or staying in lonely houses to care for the house when the family is in a foreign land. Since they have big families, they cannot afford school, and have to earn by taking care of the younger siblings while the parents are working for a living. Also, once they start to earn a living, they feel the need for money and work in as many places as possible. Women furthermore, continue to be vulnerable to gender-based discrimination in wages and labor market segmentation which reserve the most repetitive, unskilled, monotonous jobs for

women. There is no uniform salary or number of working hours for most female workers within the domestic occupation, leaving them vulnerable to improper working conditions and low salaries. Migrant women are therefore at higher risk of receiving a lower salary than most other groups in the society (Droszt 2013, 16). Generally women are considered as having no value, so being a migrant woman makes it even harder for them to stand on their own feet and look after their families. They have to work mainly as domestic workers, and are paid much less than the men or a local woman would earn.

These girls come from a Hindu background. Most of them come to church for the sake of healing. But if the husband will not allow, they cannot do anything about it. Disobeying their husband leads to fights which can even lead to the death of another person. I have witnessed in Goa an incident where the husband even tried to kill his wife by burning. Having no knowledge about laws and how to register complaints, these wives have to suffer and accept everything that is done to them.

Findings of Sangath Society for Child Development and Family Guidance (SSCDFG) in 2001 conclude that migrants have no “secure home or employment” as well as they tend to live under “unhygienic” surroundings and have lower school enrolment levels and higher prevalence of child labor. They furthermore conclude that the Goan discourse on migrants, which is negatively loaded, results in the migrants being victims of “double alienation” and dislike from the surrounding Goan society (Droszt 2013, 16-17). This is mainly because Goan culture is very different from the culture of these migrants. There is a lot of racism and therefore, they are called as *ghatis* (coming from the ghats (mountains) and good only for labor work).

These girls attend Bethesda Church which is located in the community since 2002. My father pastors the church, and my aunt is a full-time minister going around the community to find the lost sheep. We have different ministries in the church. Our Sunday worship takes place at 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. We have Wednesday afternoon prayers which are house-to-house and Friday fasting prayers every week. My aunt and dad visit door-to-door sharing the gospel in this community. We previously had a hospital ministry where we distributed tracts every Sunday and prayed for sick people. We had to stop this ministry as we were arrested by the police and given a last warning not to repeat it. We also started teaching them (men and women) to read and write in Hindi so that they can read the Bible. My sister taught them for a year and some of the church members could read with her help. They needed more practice but, at the same time, my sister got a job in a faraway place, which made her have to stop the classes as the transport system is not convenient in Goa.

Illiteracy may be analyzed at different levels, through complementary indicators. First, complete illiteracy is defined as the lack of the most basic reading and writing skills. Completely non-literate persons can neither read nor write and have zero years of schooling. Second, functional illiteracy is the lack of minimum capabilities needed to function in the society, having no fixed parameters, in as much as there is no consensus regarding what those capabilities are, aside from reading and writing (Thengal 2013, 125). These migrant girls need to learn to read and write and also be capable to function in the society. This will help them to defend themselves from the injustice happening to them.

UNESCO defines functional illiteracy as measured by assessing reading, writing and mathematical skills in the various domains of social life which influence individual identity and insertion into society. From this perspective, illiteracy involves not only reading and writing, but also the acquisition of the skills necessary for effective and productive performance within society (Thengal 2013, 125-126). Since they cannot read and write, they do not have the privilege to read the Bible on their own and do some personal reflections based on what they read. In addition, the cults in the area are very cunning. As soon as we share the Gospel to the migrants, the cults go and try to convince them that the Gospel they heard is not right. Having no knowledge to read or defend one's belief, the migrants are led astray.

One of the main problems for female migrants, primarily those migrating from rural to urban areas, is that they are marginalized; both because of their marginalized status as women, as well as their status as migrants. There is no guaranteed minimum wage for migrant workers, primarily because they work in the unorganized sector, which results in migrants earning less than other workers, even when they provide the same work as local workers. This also seems to be the trend in Goa, where SSCDFG states that migrants in Goa “generally work in the unorganized sector as unskilled labor . . . living off daily wages” (Droszt 2013, 16). They take any job that is offered to them in order to survive in a place where no one values them, and a place which is much more developed from their native place. India has a quite unsatisfactory socio-economic condition due to the high rate of illiteracy among her people. There is an urgent need to identify the various consequences that are caused by illiteracy so that we can motivate each and every individual to join their hands together to eliminate illiteracy from the Indian democratic

society (Thengal 2013, 124). The leaders of India need to realize that educating girls will be for the benefit of the country as well as the girls. Table 1 gives the data of youth illiteracy rate from 1990 to 2015 of different countries in the Asia and the Pacific where in India shows an increase in the rate of youth illiteracy. This is a need that is real and has to be addressed.

**Table 1:** Youth Literacy Rate (15-24 years) (%), Female, 1990- 2015

Region	Country	1990	2000	2010	2015 Projection
Asia and the Pacific	Afghanistan	...	...	...	...
	Bangladesh	38.0	60.3	78.5	85.8
	Cambodia	...	78.8	85.9	91.9
	China	91.5	98.5	99.3	99.5
	India	49.5	67.7	74.4	87.2
	Indonesia	95.1	98.5	99.4	99.7
	Iran	81.2	90.6	98.5	99.2
	Nepal	32.7	60.1	78.4	85.5
	Pakistan	...	43.1	61.5	72.2
	Papua New Guinea	...	64.1	71.9	76.6
	Timor-Leste	...	71.4	78.6	82.4

**Note:** 1990 data refer to the period 1985-1994, 2000 data refer to the period 1995-2004, 2010 data refer to the period 2005-2010; *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, May 2012.*

### India and the Girls

Gender discrimination is not biologically determined, but it is determined socially and the discrimination can be changed by the proper and perpetuated efforts. Denial of equality, rights and opportunity, and to stop anyone from something by force, in any form on the basis of gender is gender discrimination (Sivakumar 2008, 2). Kishor and Gupta argue that “in almost every sphere of human functioning, the roles defined to women are subordinated to those defined for men, the rights for women are fewer or less

emancipating than those that men have, and the obligations women have, are more limiting than those of men” (cited in Droszt 2013, 9).

Article 14 of Indian Constitution says that the state shall not deny to any person equality before or equal protection of the law. Article 15 says that no woman can be discriminated against on the ground of sex. Article 15 (3) emphasizes that the state shall make special provisions for women and children and Article 16 provides equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment by the state (cited in Sivakumar 2008, 9). Gender discrimination is a consciously practiced science or discipline. Yet it surrounds us. Meeting human obligations to childhood is a universal responsibility. All components of human society have to lend their committed energy, time, and resources to restore childhood and dignity to girlhood (McDermid 2008, 38).

As of 2013, India has forty million bonded workers, those who are unable to leave forced and exploitative working circumstances, and between twenty and sixty million child laborers who work instead of going to school, and are thus denied the benefits of the overall economic progress of the country. National law prohibits children under the age of fourteen from working, yet, many are still found laboring in factories and farms and as servants in the homes of India’s middle class (Goswami and Lagon 2013, 53).

Despite laws prohibiting sex selection, female fetuses and newborn baby girls are routinely killed. It is not a rare phenomenon. It happens without hindrance (Farah 2004, 8). Today millions of girls are discriminated against and murdered, just because they are female. More than fifty-million girls and women have been killed because of gender in the past century. Gendercide (genocide against specific gender group) still exists today. In India sex-selective abortion, or feticide, is illegal. But the justice system does not work

for unborn girls. Although the laws are in place, because they are not upheld, it is estimated that 700,000 girls are aborted every year. On average, one girl is aborted in India every minute, just because she is a female. This discrimination also continues beyond the womb. Infanticide (the murder of a baby girl) is another form of deadly gender bias that exists today. Families may kill their own baby girl, because they desired a son (Invisible Girl Project 2013). The female is not considered a successor as she would move on to another family. Laws combating these concerns remain on papers alone. The fact is that the right to be born and right to live is being denied to the girl child (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 213).

Females are facing lots of discrimination against them, like abortion, with the help of scanning, feticide by giving liquid extract from cactus, or raw paddy or by pressing the face by pillow or by breaking the neck, not giving enough and nutritious food, denial of education, no health care, early marriage, teasing, rape and sexual harassment, dowry, divorce and destitution for impractical or no reason (Sivakumar 2008, 3). There are, though, other factors than that of gender that are relevant when looking at Indian women as a group, which are class, caste, religion and geographical position, as well as that of migrant or resident position in the state of living (Droszt 2013, 18).

In India, men are perceived as the sole breadwinners and are highly valued. Indian parents pamper their sons with attention, because they expect the sons to take care of them in their old age. In spite of the educational and economic gains made by Indian women, they continue to be seen as financial burdens. This is particularly felt in families that uphold the tradition of the dowry; gifts to the bridegroom and his family as part of the marriage contract between the two families (Parikh 1990, 20). Other forms of this

prejudice against girls and women include neglect and lethal violence. If a family has a son, they may be more likely to feed and care for him than they would their daughter, neglecting her. When a girl is married, although dowry is illegal in India, families still often expect it. If her family fails to provide enough of a dowry then her husband may kill her. Or if a wife cannot produce a son for her husband, he or his family may abuse and kill her (Invisible Girl Project 2013).

Girls in India have suffered continuously even before India got its independence from the British (August 15, 1947). The oppression of women never stopped. The male in India was and is still crushing the female through polygamy, female infanticide, child marriage, widow burning, euthanasia and forced female illiteracy - all sanctioned by religion (Mangalwadi 1999, 22). Women are far behind men in most areas of culture and learning, and they are the saddest victims of this mental and spiritual development. It is typical for a woman to be looked down upon as a sex object (Mangalwadi 1999, 27- 28). These continuous, systematic forms of discrimination against girls and women are widespread throughout India today. Girls and women are still regularly sold into brothels. Girls and women are also frequently kidnapped to become wives for men who have no women in their villages. Hence, further discriminations result against women (Invisible Girl Project 2013).

Although significant progress in gender equality in **education** was achieved during 1993 to 2005, pro-male gender bias still exists in the within-household allocation of educational expenditure. This bias occurs primarily through differential spending on sons and daughters in the primary and middle school age groups, and through the decision to enroll sons and not daughters in the secondary school age group. Bias is substantially

greater in rural than urban areas. An important mechanism through which households spend less on **girls** is by sending sons to private schools and daughters to the free government schools (Azam and Gandhi 2013 abstract). Parents have several incentives for not educating their daughters. Foremost is the view that education of girls brings no returns to parents and that their future roles, being mainly reproductive and perhaps including agricultural labor, require no formal education (Sivakumar 2008, 4). Women are not allowed to do other work than domestic work, which is not evaluated as real work. When applying for work, a workplace often prefers men instead of women (Droszt 2013, 12-13).

Article 39(a) of Indian constituency emphasizes that as citizen's men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood. Article 39(d) says that the state should secure equal pay for equal work for both men and women and Article 34 provides that the state shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions for work and for maternity relief (The Constitution of India 1949). Fennema defines gender equity as the set of behaviors and knowledge that permits educators to recognize inequality in educational opportunities, to carry out specific interventions that constitute equal education treatment, and to ensure equal educational outcomes (cited in Kilbourn 2008, 210). By this definition, educational equity for girls means equity for everyone (Kilbourn 2008, 210). From home to school everything is in favor of a boy, no matter if it is good food or good clothes. Bhat states that "Within the poor households, due to patriarchy and male chauvinist values, the men are given priority in servings of food and other needs, thereby women getting the least. This makes women in poor households the poorest of the poor. The gender dimension of poverty can be seen in men getting better basic needs

satisfaction compared to women” (cited in Droszt 2013, 11). Domestic violence has devastating repercussions on the family. Mothers are unable to care for their children properly. Often they transmit to them their own feelings of low self-esteem, helplessness, and inadequacy (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 214).

In India, violence within the home is universal across culture, religion, class, and ethnicity. Girls face violence at the hands of their husbands, fathers, brothers, and uncles in their homes. The abuse is generally overlooked by social custom and considered a part and parcel of marital life. It may also include rape and sexual abuse (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 214). Daughters are discriminated when it comes to education opportunities. They also have to cook and wash their brothers’ clothes even if their brothers have time and strength to do both (Mananzan 1998, 57).

At work, female workers are given lower wages, promoted less, and sexually harassed. In rural areas women have the triple burden of work in the field, house work, and marketing of products. In India till this day, female infanticide happens daily, along with dowry debts and sometimes even widow burning (Mananzan 1998, 57). Girl children often experience discrimination, abuse and exploitation. Yet gaining an accurate picture of the situation of the girl child is difficult (Kupp 2008, 41). Another way by which girls are forced into prostitution is in the name of custom. The practice of “Devadasi” is practiced in the Southern part of India, in which a girl is “dedicated” to worship and serve a deity or a temple for the rest of her life. Bound by the poverty and lack of social support, they may eventually end up in prostitution (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 215). Thousands of girls suffer due to all of these crimes. By getting paid

with low wages, it is so hard to pay for a dowry and all the things asked for from the men's side. Women are sexually harassed just for the pleasure of men.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights states that the traditional practices arise out of generations-old values and beliefs specific to every community member. Others are harmful to particular sectors of a community, such as women. These harmful traditional practices may include female genital mutilation, early marriage, taboos, practices that prevent women from controlling their own fertility, nutritional taboos and forced feeding of women, and son preference with its negative implications for girl children, such as female infanticide, early pregnancy and bride dowry. These harmful practices persist in many communities unquestioned because they have taken in an aura of necessary morality among their practitioners and supporters (Kupp 2008, 40-41). These questions will arise and actions will be taken when a girl child is educated and can talk for herself, without relying on others.

While the battle for literacy is being won for men, it is being lost for women. Indeed, the female illiterate bears the double burden of both the yoke of poverty and the misfortune of being born female (Lim 1996, 4). Being born a female seems a curse when it is such a big blessing. Women are not given the opportunity to be educated, and are made to suffer their whole life where they cannot make any improvements for themselves. I believe that if they knew how to fight for their rights would they be freed from these oppressions. Until then, their dreams remain dreams. The reason women experience more severe and multidimensional poverty is related to a patriarchal gender bias (Droszt 2013, 10).

Kishor and Gupta say that power is more than one party's control over another, but also covers the more subtle, stronger type of power, which is the internalization of dominance where the subaltern party has internalized and accepted the power structures of the dominant group. This is, for example, seen in relation to wife battering, where 40% of all Indian women agree that "a husband is justified in beating his wife if she neglects the house or children" (Droszt 2013, 18-19). Women need power to overcome the dominance and violence against them and, therefore, need to be educated to be invested in power. India is squandering potential for greater growth by its lack of access to justice and opportunity for all its citizens (Goswami and Lagon 2013, 52).

In communities where sex discrimination is more prevalent, providing physical protection to women is an additional burden. Indian families show a greater desire for material affluence. Thus the son's marriage contract has become a means of gaining consumer goods such as refrigerators, cars, and motor-bikes; items which imply higher social standards. These conditions affect the lives of many Indian women, from birth to childhood to adult life (Parikh 1990, 29). There is an elevated social status afforded to having a boy that reveals the low value placed on females in many parts of India. These attitudes are not easily whisked away by mere statutes. Even where laws exist, the will to enforce them has been lacking (Fernandes 2007, 9). If a boy is born in the household, then it means that he will receive all the material goods from the girl who will marry him, whereas, if it is a girl then the parents have to pay for her when she gets married. Francois Farah indicates that India's missing-girl problem stems from families' preference for sons who carry the family name and occupation forward into the future (Farah 2004, 8). Sons

also perform religious rites and support their aging parents, while girls must be married off (Farah 2004, 8).

Children are being trafficked and made to labor in factories for long hours. The traffickers take one-third of their wages, and they are left with less than an average of \$40 per month. Even though their school is closer than the factories they work in, they have no education. Even though the mothers have complained against this injustice, the local police take no action as they get some pay from the traffickers and, therefore, they are denied justice (Goswami and Lagon 2013, 51-52). In cases of children who have been trafficked or have become victims of child marriages, it violates their right to education, employment, and self-determination (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 215).

Psychological violence includes verbal abuse, harassment, confinement, and deprivation of physical, financial, and personal resources. They are often caught in a vicious circle of economic dependence, fear for their children's lives as well as their own, ignorance of their legal rights, lack of confidence in themselves, and social pressures. These factors effectively force women to a life of recurrent mistreatment from which they often do not have the means to escape. The sanctity of privacy within the family also makes authorities reluctant to intervene, often leading women to deny that they are being abused. This is equally common in the higher, as well as in the lower segments of the society (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 214).

In the existing social scenario in India, vulnerability is a product of inequality, low status, and discrimination, and of the patriarchal authority unleashed on children, especially the girl child. This is further compounded by the apathetic attitude of society, fueled by a mindset which views women as mere assets with no freedom of choices and

options to lead a life with dignity. Women and children are trafficked and exploited, and forced to lead a life of indignity, social stigma, debt, bondage, and a host of ailments including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 215).

### **Consequences of Illiteracy**

The World Declaration on Education for All constitutes one of the world's broadest, most representative agreements in the field of education, reaffirming the right of every person to receive an education which satisfies his or her basic learning needs throughout life (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 15). These are statements written down and spoken out, but hardly being brought into practice. Droszt cites:

Women need to be empowered with political empowerment which is encompassing legislation, workers unions, bills and schemes, juridical empowerment including universal juridical rights for the different groups within a given society, or specific right that only covers the subaltern groups as a way to eliminate inequality, economic empowerment encompassing equal salary for same work, possibility of income for housing and healthy nourishment, and financial possibility of sending children to school, etc. (Droszt 2013, 19-20).

Sivakumar explains that empowering women is a basic human right where she wants neither to beg for power nor search for power hierarchy to exercise power against others (Sivakumar 2008, 7). On the contrary, she demands to be accepted as human first of all; a person in command of herself and for all the resources - physical, social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual to be equally accessible to her (Sivakumar 2008, 7-8). These are all the rights she should have and should not have to fight for. This all belongs to her.

When a couple has a few daughters, it is argued that they have a right to know the sex of their next progeny; however, the same argument is not pressed against a family which has a few sons. No woman is pressured to abort the fetus if it is a male. Sex determination tests and repeated abortions of female fetuses do not guarantee the future birth of a son (Parikh 1990, 25). While waiting for a male child to be born, these kind of families kill many girl children.

There are arguments in support of the tests of sex determination and abortions that, these tests will help reduce the incidence of female child neglect and female infanticide. If certain families do not desire a girl child because of dowry burden or other factors, then sex determination tests would ensure that they do not have them. They argue that it is more humane to prevent the birth of daughters into such families than to bring them into a world where they would lead a life of neglect and abuse (Parikh 1990, 26). Indian mentality should be changed to where women are not less valued than men, but are equal and therefore, have equal rights. This mentality can be changed by giving education to all women as well as men in India. This should be fit into their minds at a young age that when they get old, they will have the same attitude of respect towards women which is taught in school. The dowry system is banned, but is still followed because of the greed of human beings.

Women are already oppressed and discriminated against. By accepting female feticide, one is inadvertently further victimizing the victim (Parikh 1990, 26). Gender seems to be one of the most dominant variables that influence human development from conception to death, particularly in Indian society. Apart from class, race, age, religion,

and ethnicity, gender is another vital social stratification, putting the female at a level of disadvantage (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 212).

Women are seen as nurturers and the providers of emotional caretaking, while men are considered providers of economic support. As a girl develops, unknowingly, the lines of Manu Smriti, “by a young girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independent, even in her own house,” gets incorporated in her mind (in Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 212). Girls inherit their mother’s domestic chores and adopt stereotypical gender roles. Low self-esteem and self-worth are common. After marriage, her husband and in-laws control her life. Consequently, the girls enter a state of silence (cited in Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 212).

In India, the birth of a boy is a time for celebration, while the birth of a girl, especially a second or subsequent daughter, is often perceived as a crisis. Three-quarters of the population of India still reside in rural areas where the problems related to girl children are predominant (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 213).

The four-fold system of “*purusharthas*,” which outlines an ideal Hindu life cycle, is directed toward the goal of attaining “*moksha*.” This form of salvation or perfection could be achieved through sons, who after lighting the funeral pyre can offer ancestor worship. Women are not considered suitable for acquiring the knowledge or religious training. They are therefore, expected to lead a life of devoted subjugation, so that they may be reborn as a man in the next life, and thus be gifted with religious privileges (Rao and Vidya and Sriramya 2015, 213).

### Consequences of Illiteracy on Physical Health

This section discusses the consequences of physical health of the girls due to their illiteracy- their appropriate height, weight, age when married, married life experiences, pregnancies and childbirths, prenatal care, breast feeding, female feticide, and lack of health.

Research in the fields of psychology, nutrition and neuroscience suggest that the first five years of life are critical to the development of intelligence, personality and social behavior. It is during this period that millions of cells are born, grow and become interconnected. When this process of growth, development and interconnection does not take place adequately, child development is negatively affected (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 42). Girls are breastfed for a shorter time so that the mother can immediately get pregnant again with a boy. As a result, girls miss out on life-giving nutrition during a crucial time of their development, which stunts their growth and weakens their resistance to diseases (Sivakumar 2008, 6).

Illiteracy not only affects income and awareness of rights, but also leads to poor nutrition and health. The daily diet of adults is adopted by their children, who learn by example. Eating habits may reduce or exacerbate nutritional risk, breaking or perpetuating the vicious circle of malnutrition (Thengal 2013, 127-128). The household is weak. They lack strength because of poor health and inadequate nutrition. The majority of the household are women, the very young and the very old (Myers 2011, 115).

Illiteracy reduces the income an individual could potentially receive over the course of his or her working life. Lacking the necessary skills and schooling, illiterate persons are barred from better paying positions or jobs (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 11). This leads to poverty and people in poverty frequently look to sons for their earning

potential. Women are often disadvantaged when seeking credit, equal pay, leadership positions, and recognition for labor in the home (Kupp 2008, 45). Gender bias against women and girls results in less calorie intake, less education, and less medical help for women and girls (Droszt 2013, 11).

The educational capital of the household is essential to a child's physical and social development. Such development is unquestionably limited among children whose parents have not acquired basic reading and writing skills (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 7). Without education, the quality of life of the girls is very different from those with education. There is no physical development as they did not experience childhood. At the age they should be enjoying their childhood, they are given into marriage to avoid further expenses, are made to work in the house looking after their siblings while parents go for jobs, and are made to work as domestic laborers to supplement her family's income (Schneider 2008, 15). Parents look only for their benefits and not of the girl child as she is considered just as an object which will be given to another's house to be used. Doing all the work and having no proper nutrition, these girls do not have energy to do the day-to-day activities. To respect their parents, these girls go to sleep late at night and wake up early in the morning to finish all the household chores as her parents come tired from work and her brothers tired from school.

When they are given into marriage their life is fully dependent on their husband and on his family. The girls are not accepted into marriage until they fulfill the demands of the groom. If the family of the girl fails to provide the asked dowry, the girl has to suffer more by her in-laws and husband. There is physical abuse that might also lead to death. This is one of the reasons why a girl child is always considered a financial burden,

and either aborted or not sent to school by which they can save money for her wedding. It is said in India that “To educate a girl is like watering the neighbor’s garden!” The question that arises if a girl is educated is, “Who is going to find a husband and pay the higher dowry price for an educated girl?” The more the girl is educated, the higher is the dowry price (Schneider 2008, 12). So this brings double cost to the parents of the girl. They have to pay for her education and also pay higher for her dowry.

I remember a time at my brother’s work place on the ridge in Andhra Pradesh, one of the workers there was distributing sweets to everyone. When asked for the reason he said his wife gave birth to a child. When they inquired that he has been working there for more than a year without going home, he replied saying that he has his brother there and that is how his wife could bear a child. In large families, there is polygamy. Anyone sleeps with the wife of one person and it is acceptable for the whole family.

There is another case in the community of Socorro, where the person got married to a young girl and after some days while sitting with his friends, they challenged him to marry another girl and he did. The same thing happened again and he was supposed to marry another girl but fortunately, he found Christ. They now stay together in one small house without any quarrel. Both the wives cannot fight or argue with each other and neither with him. They have to obey everything that he says.

A girl’s sexuality is seen as needing male control. A new bride may be required to prove her virginity, but not the groom (Kupp 2008, 45). On her wedding night, after sexual intercourse, there should be blood on the white bed sheet which will prove that the girl was a virgin. If no blood, then she is not accepted in the family anymore. As long as women’s contribution to the family and society is not seriously valued, they will be

perceived as inferior. Limited educational opportunities, economic deprivation, and neglect of their basic health needs are reflections of Indian society's devaluation of women, just as street harassment, rape, and dowry murders represent the denial of their basic human rights and dignity. The new trend of sex-selective abortions is yet another example of the society's denial of women's worth (Parikh 1990, 20).

Illiteracy not only limits the full development of individuals and their participation in society, but also has repercussions throughout life, affecting a person's family environment, restricting access to the benefits of development, and hindering the enjoyment of other human rights (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 15). Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 19).

Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married before their 18th birthday. Girls who live in rural areas are more likely to become child brides than their urban counterparts. Girls who marry are not only denied their childhood, they are often socially isolated, cut off from family and friends and other sources of support with limited opportunities for education and employment. Households typically make decisions about girls' schooling and marriage jointly, not sequentially, and education tends to lose out. Accordingly, lower levels of education are found among women who married in childhood. Child brides are often unable to effectively negotiate safer sex, leaving themselves vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, along with early pregnancy (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] 2014, 2-4).

Young women do not freely make their own choices to abort a female fetus. They do it under severe pressure from the family, even though the tests involve risks like hip dislocation, serious blood loss, and even miscarriage. If the amniocentesis test is carried out earlier than the fourteenth or fifteenth week of pregnancy, there is a possibility of inaccurate results. If the tests are carried out in the late phase (sixteenth to eighteenth week) there are greater health risks to the mother (Parikh 1990, 25). The pressure to become pregnant once married can be intense, and child brides typically end up having many children to care for while still young. Child brides are also less likely to receive proper medical care while pregnant. Women who marry as adults are less likely to have delivered their most recent babies in a health facility, compared to women who married younger. This, along with the fact that girls are not physically mature enough to give birth, places both mothers and their babies at risk. Ending child marriage will help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by allowing girls and women to participate more fully in society. Empowered and educated girls are better able to nourish and care for their children, leading to healthier, smaller families. When girls are allowed to be girls, everybody wins (in UNICEF 2014, 4-8).

### Consequences of Illiteracy on Intellectual Health

This section discusses the consequences on intellectual health of the girls due to illiteracy- their skill in numeracy, formal education given to girls in India, ability to read and write, the kind of job they get, logical or analytical thinking, and confidence in decision making.

Dr. Abdul Kalam believes in making education reachable, flexible, and feasible for all. He encourages creating educational opportunities for underprivileged children,

beyond boundaries, as he strongly believes that education was the single most powerful tool that could alleviate poverty (Temurnikar 2015). The ability to read and write is the basis for all other education; literacy is necessary for an individual to understand information, whether written or verbal. Without literacy skills, the abilities to read, write, do math, solve problems, or to access and use technology, today's adults will struggle to take part in the world around them and fail to reach their full potential as parents, community members, and employees (Jackson 2014).

According to Stromquist, "Women need any knowledge that will enable them to negotiate effectively for legal, social and political rights. Women need information to increase their awareness of oppression, i.e., the existence of male dominance and exploitation which is inferior pay and treatment in the labor market" (in Lim 1996, 7). Recognition of women's rights and believing in their ability are essential for their empowerment and development. Girls should realize their own capabilities and potential which will strengthen their self-image and foster them with confidence to take action in life. Political empowerment implies to discuss, share and empower politics by knowing its pros and cons and thereby to influence policies and decision making (Sivakumar 2008, 7).

Apart from political, juridical and economic empowerment there is another kind of empowerment which is decision-making, and is structured by the definition of the subtle form of control, inherent in internalized control (cited in Droszt 2-13, 20).

Rowland defines this empowerment as

"generative empowerment" and it is related to all above definitions of empowerment, in that if there is no generative empowerment taking place, it is very hard, if not impossible, to bring about above types of empowerment. The ability and possibility of being a part of the decision

making takes a large part of this type of empowerment in that it includes a strengthening of the empowered person's own ability to make choices, thereby giving back the control to the disempowered (Droszt 2013, 20).

Even in the family as well as in society, the decision making power of women is denied. Mostly males make the important decisions in the family and in the society. This makes women as voiceless, and destroys her self-confidence, and she feels less important in the family as well as in the society (Sivakumar 2008, 12).

Without education girls are deprived of intellectual and cultural development. It makes them dependent and vulnerable to oppression, exploitation and enslavement (Mangalwadi 1999, 39). Denying girls an education is an effective way of silencing them (Schneider 2008, 13). If they are educated they have their own opinions, so before they are educated they are given into marriage. The household lacks access to social services and information. Children do not have access to quality education (Myers 2011, 115). They are unable to read a legal contract or a newspaper, or use a computer. They lack the ability to understand the meaning or meanings of a text and form a critical opinion (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 19-20).

The patriarchal family structure results in less schooling of the girl children, which results in gender inequality in their adult lives (Droszt 2013, 11). Poor families often give more importance on earning than education due to the opportunity cost of the latter. The pressing need to work, in order to supplement their families, is the chief cause of school dropout among young people. Moreover, the temptation to leave school is increased by the perception that those who complete their education are not rewarded with wages and job prospects (Thengal 2013, 130). Thus, they do not know or have any skills. They may not understand the basics of nutrition, the need to boil water, the

importance of child spacing, how to read the instructions on a packet of food, or improved seeds or medicine. They do not know the importance about sustainable agriculture, running a small business, the importance of saving money (Myers 2011, 114). Women are to be strengthened, firstly on trusting their own ability to make choices, secondly that they trust in their ability, and are capable of making choices within the family, and lastly that there is offered a space for them to speak within the community (Droszt 2013, 22).

The problem of unwanted children is serious and its remedy lies in access to safe birth control. The success of family planning also depends on its availability along with primary health care. The serious lack of health care facilities in rural areas accounts for the high infant and mortality rates in India (Parikh 1990, 29-30).

In India, the tradition of a dowry system is mainly responsible for the continuing devaluation of Indian women, whether as young girls as young brides, or as mothers (Parikh 1990, 30). Girls start acquiring skills like cooking, knitting, applying rangoli, singing, etc., as all these are perceived as feminine characteristics. Girls are socialized to accept male domination and ignore their own needs, especially in rural areas (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 214).

Most adolescent girls in India have little knowledge of menstruation, sexuality, and reproduction. Large numbers of rural and urban populations believe that menstruation contaminates the body and makes it unholy. In certain cultures, girls are isolated in a separate room for three days and are untouchable during this period. As a consequence, the girl often sees herself as impure, unclean, and dirty (Rao, Vidya and Sriramya 2015, 214).

Abuse and violence against girls in the society may contribute to the development of dysfunctional behavior, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, somatization disorders, etc. Discrimination and neglect can result in lowered self-expectations, negative attitude toward self, lack of initiatives, and so on. Many times, on probing further, the symptoms can be conceptualized as exaggerations or stereotyping of female gender roles and sex-typed behaviors. It is also documented that girls tend to undergo depression or anxiety, and dissociate more owing to their status in authoritarian patriarchal society (Rao, Vidya and Sriramya 2015, 215).

#### Consequences of Illiteracy on Christian Spiritual Health

This section discusses the consequences on Christian spiritual health of the girls due to illiteracy- knowledge of God, superstitions, knowledge of personal God, God's power and power in prayer.

Women are primarily the homemakers. The absence of pictures and books in their mud homesteads was a reflection of the systematic emptying of the female mind—a mind that God had created to be filled with all that is intellectually true, morally noble, culturally good and aesthetically beautiful (Mangalwadi 1999, 31). This mind is instead filled with superstitions and all kinds of evil by culture and tradition. Without education, they do not have knowledge of their personal history, or knowledge of the Bible and other great literature. They lack the basic tools of reading and writing that enables them to mature and grow intellectually (Bates 2008, 114).

Non-literate, poor, deficient in social skills, lacking self-esteem and the ability to establish meaningful relationships or respect others and their property, these girls often lose their place in society. Of utmost importance, they lose their place in the church

family (Bates 2008, 114). For women to attempt to develop or use their reasoning powers is considered sacrilegious. Superstitions and moral impurities are not abstract evils. Their practical consequences are to sear human conscience so effectively as to make life hell for the weak (Mangalwadi 1999, 29). In some parts of India women are considered equivalent to footwear and therefore, have no respect or right to say or decide anything. Their life seems meaningless.

The loss of family, affection, and a sense of acceptance and belonging results in tremendous emotional losses for the girl child which will be carried over into adulthood. Her innocence, wonder and awe of a God who is neither physical nor material, the ability to reason, the ability to trust people and a sense of being needed and of belonging is lost. They have no spiritual role models to guide them. Society looks down on them as trash and worthless. For this reason they can't help but believe that God too must view them this way. It is hard for them to understand the unconditional love and compassion of God (Bates 2008, 114-115).

They suffer from broken and dysfunctional relationships with God, each other, the community, and creation. They may suffer from spiritual oppression in the form of fear of spirits, demons and angry ancestors. They may lack hope and be unable to believe that change is possible. They may never have heard the gospel, or have only responded to a truncated version of the gospel that lacks transforming power (Myers 2011, 115). We can see that the superstitions and influences of the Hindu religious system are embedded in their thinking and pervasive in all of the society. They need to understand that their life is just as valuable as a boy's life. John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* says that "The Gospel of

life is not for believers alone, it is for everyone. The issue of life and its defense and promotion is not a concern of Christians alone” (cited in Fernandes 2007, 10).

Caste system is still going on in India. The greatest problem with caste is the existence of outcasts, and opinion is divided on both historical and practical aspects of this issue. Outcastes have been known as untouchables, unseeables, Panchamas, Chandalas, Pariahs, Harijans and Scheduled castes. Presently the accepted term is “Dalits.” Dalits have also sometimes been called as outcastes. The grip of caste system is so strong in Hinduism that there is no easy solution to get rid of the evils related to it. When caste concerns lead to suppressing others and even threatening their survival, we have to reconsider and change the stiffness of caste (Bharati 2005, 155-156). Every Hindu’s life is attached to some kind of religious act from the moment of rising up from bed to sleeping. There are certain things they should see in the morning and certain things they should not (Bharati 2005, 176). Being non-literate the girls have to follow these rituals everyday not knowing that it doesn’t make any sense.

### **Benefits of Education for Girls**

According to the article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), “Every person has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the fundamental and elementary stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Education shall be directed to the all-round development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (United Nations General Assembly, Article 26). The following section discusses the benefits of education of girls on their physical health.

### Benefits of Education of Girls on Physical Health

Education is a key mechanism for promoting greater understanding and mutual respect (Education For All [EFA] Report 2015). Education empowers women to overcome discrimination. Girls and young women who are educated have greater awareness of their rights, and greater confidence and freedom to make decisions that affect their lives, improve their own and their children's health and chances of survival, and boost their work prospects (UNESCO 2013). A nation or society, without the participation of women cannot achieve development. If we eliminate gender discrimination, women will deliver all the potentials, skills, knowledge to develop the family, the nation and the whole world (Sivakumar 2008, 12).

According to the United Nations, education is a basic human right, not a luxury for the rich. Education is an essential hope-offering intervention strategy due to its lifelong impact in the quality of life. World Vision believes that "Formal education is recognized as a major tool in developing human capabilities, transmitting knowledge and cultural heritage and improving the quality of life" (cited in Kilbourn 2008, 210). Yet poverty and traditional values and customs keep millions of girls from receiving the education that is necessary to equip them to raise healthy families and participate in community development. Lack of opportunity for an education is a key factor in loss of hope for girl children (Kilbourn 2008, 210).

Societies benefit economically and socially when their girls are educated. UNICEF emphasizes that educating girls can help eradicate poverty and promote peace. Education empowers girls by broadening their choices and experiences, thus giving them a more fulfilling and productive life. Women who are educated tend to marry later and

choose to have fewer children—such marriages result in better maternal health and child health (Kilbourn 2008, 222- 223). Increasing access to school for all generally reduces feelings of injustice in society that have fueled many conflicts (EFA Report 2015).

Cultural practices and traditions is a particular cause of discrimination against girls. Many parents feel that education for girls is a waste of money as there are no employment opportunities and society does not allow them to pursue a career. Schools are often far from home. Girls are more affected by this than boys. There is gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and insecurity, political instability and migration (Miles and Wright 2003, 368). Empowering women with the help of laws, education and employment will make the society to accept the women as an equal gender like male. Female also has all the potential, and empowering women will help to use her full capability and mitigate the economic dependency of women (Sivakumar 2008, 11).

The Global Monitoring Report (GMR) showed in 2013 that there would be 14% fewer child marriages of all girls had primary education. There would be 64% fewer birth if they had secondary education (cited in Delprato 2015). All the societies and governments should take a step to educate women so that they are empowered and this will help to eradicate women's rights violations under the pretext of any tradition or custom. If there are no laws, laws should be made. If they exist so, their implementation should be ensured through authorizing each and every educational institution to intervene if they notice any such violation. Learning gives us the means to lead meaningful lives and a proper education will also awaken the desire to benefit others (EFA Report 2013).

Education is one of the most powerful ways of improving children's health. Educated mothers are better informed about specific diseases, so they can take measures

to prevent them. They can recognize signs of illness early, seek advice and act on it (UNESCO 2013).

A mother's education is crucial for her own health. Every day, almost 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, including pre-eclampsia, bleeding, infections and unsafe abortion. Educated women are more likely to avoid these dangers, by adopting simple and low cost practices to maintain hygiene, by reacting to symptoms, and by making sure a skilled attendant is present at birth (UNESCO 2013). Child marriages also lead to health problems and cause teenage pregnancies, which have proved to be very harmful for the health of a mother and her child. Only when a mother is educated can a mother seek the right help for her child, make sure they get the right nutrients, and look after herself (EFA Report 2013).

Malnutrition is the underlying cause of more than a third of global child deaths. Educated mothers are more likely to ensure that their children receive the best nutrients to help them prevent or fight off ill health, know more about appropriate health and hygiene practices, and have more power in the home to make sure children's nutrition needs are met (UNESCO 2013).

### Benefits of Education for Girls on Intellectual Health

Education is very important for a woman and for the society because through her it flows on to next generation. The old African proverb which says, "Educating a girl is equal to educating a whole family," "Educate a man, you educate an individual, but educate a woman, you educate a nation" convey the essence of girls' education (cited in Suen 2013, 60). Women are to be prioritized because they possess the ability to pass education on to next generation (Gul and Khan 2015, 106). But since the mothers of the

migrant girls are not educated, they are not educated also and so it continues in generations ahead. Education creates opportunities that children would not otherwise have had. It helps to build self-esteem; it can provide the skills, information and self-confidence needed to be a better parent and an active participant in civil affairs. It can help individuals to become better decision-makers— personally, politically and economically and to respond positively to changing and challenging situations. It can help to develop a proper respect for individuals and communities, reducing misunderstanding and intolerance (Miles and Wright 2003, 367). In India, mostly, a woman in her young age depends on her father, in the middle age, she depends on her husband and in the older age she depends on her son. Woman always depends on somebody for her livelihood hence, independence in economical aspects are imperative for women's development. Economic independence will free the women from the slavery position and boost the self-confidence. Economic independence of women also helps in the national economic development (Sivakumar 2008, 10).

Education develops the skills, imparts knowledge, changes the attitude and improves self- confidence. It provides employment opportunity and increases income. Hence, educating women is the prime factor to combat gender discrimination (Sivakumar 2008, 10). An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen (Kilbourn 2008, 222). Bhasin remarks that “women need knowledge not so much to read and understand the world but to read, understand and control their world. If women cannot read then they will not know what is going around them in the world. If women cannot write, they will not be able to file complaints or any other things that are going against them” (in Lim 1996 7-6).

Writing skills for young children is a slow work, but they persist with amazing good will until they have copied out what is asked of them. Writing can be a way of reinforcement learning where the children can hear and speak the Lord's Prayer, see it on a chart, and then write it out. They need encouragement and plenty of time from adults. When they are finished with their work, they will have so much joy and contentment to see it in their folder (Cully 1979, 131). Number work can help deal realistically with the church budget. They can involve in helping out with building maintaining cost, helping people within the community and throughout the world. It will be helpful in constructing a time-line to visualize the centuries off biblical and church history (Cully 1979, 132). This will make a great impact on the church and the people around them. We often see how joyful the pastor and the parents together with the church feel happy when children are so active in the church.

Education gives employment which brings income and improves the economic position of the women. Employment gives economic independence for the women (Sivakumar 2008, 2). Education can help eradicate poverty and increase family income by producing a more productive and better-equipped work force. Women, in particular if educated, have an improved quality of life. They tend to be healthier, marry later, better protect themselves against such things as HIV/AIDS, raise healthier children, and invest in their own children's education (Miles and Wright 2003, 367- 368).

Literacy enhances the working capabilities of people by providing them with skill development. According to India census 2011 the female literacy rate was only 45 to 65 percent against 82.14 percent of the male literacy rate (Thengal 2013, 124). One can see the disparity between the male and female literacy rate.

Education empowers girls and young women, in particular, by increasing their chances of getting jobs, staying healthy and participating fully in society – and it boosts their children’s chances of leading healthy lives (UNESCO 2013). Building job opportunities for parents reduces the need for their children to work and enables them to focus on their education (Goswami and Lagon 2013, 54). Family and society together can lead girls toward the positive psychology of increasing optimism, strong social connections, and healthy self-confidence (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 215).

Given the male bread-winner model that is common in India, fathers rarely have the time or the inclination to spend time obtaining and processing information relating to schooling. While mothers within this system might have the time, they may not have the freedom to interact with others, obtain information and act on it if they live under very restrictive social norms that dictate what women can and cannot do. The autonomy of mothers in this context can be crucial. Women with greater autonomy have greater physical mobility and are better able to network freely and obtain information about schools. They may also be able to act on this information better than mothers who are very dependent because they are able to visit schools, speak with teachers, take children to/from schools, buy books etc. Both physical and decision-making autonomy are important in this respect (Alfano 2011, 80-81).

Mothers who have greater economic autonomy are likely to be able to influence decisions of sending their children to school because they have economic freedom. This might also mean that the household is better off and such economic autonomy might help in prioritizing schooling (Alfano 2011, 81). Education transforms lives. It reduces child marriages and reduces early births; educated people are more tolerant; maternal education

improves child's nutrition; it increases job opportunities; it leads to more concern about the environment; mother's education saves mother's lives as well as children's lives (UNESCO 2013). Better-educated women, for instance, might invest more in children's education and at the same time have greater autonomy (Alfano 2011, 89).

By improving knowledge, instilling values, fostering beliefs and shifting attitudes, education has considerable power to change environmentally harmful lifestyles and behavior. Education can encourage people to use energy and water more efficiently, and to recycle household waste (UNESCO 2013). Education can indeed show the brighter side of the world to these girls and help them reuse things and save energy which they never even thought of before.

Education is a basic human right and we are meant to have it already! It is like one breathes, eats and drinks. It transforms men and women's lives alike. "The fact that education transforms lives and this transformation is seen as unacceptable for many who want to keep girls dependent, enslaved and socially paralyzed in one name or other. The people who want to keep the status quo for their vested interest always oppose girls' education because it moves societies and changes the world and they are afraid of change" (EFA Report 2013). This is all political games. When girls are uneducated the men and the society and the leaders can do anything they wish to, they can force the girls into anything they want to and because of lack of knowledge these girls are trapped into their hands.

Education lights every stage of the journey to a better life, especially for the poor and the most vulnerable. Education enhances job opportunities, helping households to escape poverty. Educated men and women are more likely not just to be employed, but to

hold jobs that are secure and provide good working conditions and decent pay. By benefiting women in particular, education can help narrow gender gaps in work opportunities and pay. As well as helping lift households out of poverty permanently, education guards against them falling – or falling back – into poverty (UNESCO 2013).

Education is a protection for the present and the future. Children are gaining a better understanding about themselves, their lives and the world around them. They are learning to make choices and to know their own worth and value so that greater respect is given to them. With sufficient education come greater opportunities for employment. Vocational education provides more possibilities, whether through local business or by generating self-employment. Although boys currently dominate the job market, parity for girls will develop as discriminatory practices diminish (Miles and Wright 2003, 367). Every hour counts for these children—we must educate girls to help bring about changes quickly in our society. Education gives girls dignity. You cannot change your life if you do not know how. If girls and women are empowered they can take control of their own lives and their bodies. That is why education is priceless and important for girls and women (EFA Report 2013).

Education is indispensable in strengthening the bonds that hold communities and societies together. Education helps people understand democracy, promotes the tolerance and trust that underpin it, and motivates people to participate in politics (UNESCO 2013). Education increases the likelihood that citizens will make their voices heard in other ways than violence, such as signing petitions, boycotting products or taking part in peaceful demonstrations (EFA Report 2015).

As young girls are given more and more opportunity to get educated, to become literate, and to play an active part in society, their ambitions rise proportionately. They dream big, and they want to put their education to good use and to give back to the community (Chaudhary 2015). Educating girls will improve the life of girls and also the community and will bring no harm to anybody.

### Benefits of Education for Girls on Spiritual Health

Many churches fail to teach children to their fullest capabilities to understand the Bible and its background, the church, or the Christian lifestyle. Although children grow in the ability to think ideally, they are not encouraged enough to develop their understanding of God, deepen their knowledge of Jesus, or find fuller meaning in prayer and worship. Sunday school teachers are rarely aware of the background knowledge of human practices given by social studies (Cully 1979, 132).

Families, particularly parents play a huge role in bringing up children in Christian faith. These migrant girls when developed spiritually, can help their children to grow spiritually also by walking in the way (Christian life) with their children. A Christian family should have a quality of life together, a quality of life that can take many shapes and in which persons can play various roles. Many times we see how a “perfect family” is considered as, where the father and mother is giving a set of roles. This is neither typical nor the best in all the societies (Westerhoff III 1980, 31, 32). Family and looking after children keeps on changing as time passes by. It is not only the role of the mother to look after the children as a housewife. She has the full right to earn as well. When these migrants will learn to read and write they can be spiritually developed. Once they are developed spiritually, there is a greater probability that they can teach their children

biblical skills. Children who have been learning biblical skills at home and have had opportunities to explore the meaning of faith with parents bring these resources into their religious education classes at church.

Many times children are excluded from the adult world. They are also expected to be serious and responsible at the same time. They are treated as incomplete human beings in need of being shaped into adults. They are treated like they do not know enough and cannot think well enough, feel deeply enough or act maturely enough to be treated equally as adults (Westerhoff III 1980, 15). “Because of their age, adults have rights and privileges in the church and in the world, rights and privileges denied to children” (Westerhoff III 1980, 16). But this should not happen in a dynamic Christian church that believes that children are part of the Kingdom of God. As the Body of Christ, everyone in the church deserves equal rights and privileges. And this is the very thing that as a researcher, I want to communicate to the church in Goa—that the migrant girls who are non-literate can be ministered with proper nurture by the church and give them the care that they so rightly deserve.

This chapter explained the issues revolving around the importance of educating girls and women, the context of the girls in Goa, and the benefits of education for girls. The next chapter will discuss the research methods and procedures of this current study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study is to explore whether or not illiteracy affects the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected migrant girls in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India. This chapter covers the methodology which includes the method of the study, sources of data, research-gathering procedure, and data-gathering instruments.

#### **Method of the Study**

This study is qualitative research employing a multiple case study approach. Qualitative research is a type of research that encompasses a number of philosophical orientations and approaches (Merriam 2009, 19). It is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding was an end in itself, so it was not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting, what their lives were like, what was going on for them, how they interpreted life, what the world looked like in that particular setting and, in analysis, to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting (Merriam 2009, 14). This method fits the study in which I wanted to engage. I wanted to explore how illiteracy impacted the lives of the migrant girls in my country using the multiple case study approach. It was also appropriate for this study because it involved collecting and analyzing data from several cases (Merriam 2009, 49). I did each case study independently of the others, and

completed them as individual case studies before doing any analysis by comparison (email from Armstrong 2015). I then tried to find if there were common trends among the four case studies and/or differences among them as it related to how illiteracy affects or does not affect the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the migrant girls in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India. Each case study followed this bounded system: (a) regarding time, the selected respondents who were the four migrant girls should have had attended the Bethesda Church for at least one year before the beginning of the interview, and (b) regarding place, the selected respondents who were the four migrant girls should have had resided in Porvorim, Goa, India for at least one year before the beginning of the interview. In this way, the respondents were no longer in a “stage of adjustment” towards the church and the research locale.

To insure the validity and reliability of this qualitative research, I employed the strategies suggested by Sharan Merriam. First, I used triangulation applying multiple methods and sources of data by comparing and cross-checking data collected through interviews from people with different perspectives, or from follow-up interviews with the same people (Merriam 2009, 216). In this study I interviewed four migrant girls coming from different parts of India. Second, as suggested by Merriam, I also did member checks by taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived, and asking if they are plausible (Merriam 2009, 229). For this strategy I communicated with the respondents back and forth to make sure that the information received from them was satisfactory. Lastly, I provided enough description to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine how their situations

match the research context, and, hence, whether findings can be transferred (Merriam 2009, 229).

### **Sources of Data**

In selecting the respondents for the study, I employed purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was based on the assumption that the researcher wanted to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore selected a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam 2009, 77). To begin purposive sampling I determined the selection criteria that were essential in choosing the respondents. The criteria for the selection of respondents were the following: 1) they should be migrant girls residing in Socorro, Goa, India who were between 11 to 18 years of age since this age group could already express their thoughts and feelings in a meaningful way; (2) never went to school or, at the most, dropped out without completing any grade; 3) did not know how to read and write but could count since counting was part of their lifestyle of begging and they did not learn that in school; and 4) should have attended Bethesda Church for at least one year before the beginning of the survey. The study intended to have five respondents, but only four were available for interview. The other one had to leave the state for personal reasons. So when it was time for the interview, my sister could not locate her anymore. My sister and I tried to find another migrant girl who would fit the criteria of the study, but we could not find anyone in the church. So I just went ahead and interviewed the four available respondents with the permission from my thesis adviser.

Data was gathered through a semi-structured interview on Skype with each selected respondent in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India. Resally Dialing conducted her field research with her respondents through online interviews (Dialing 2011, 58). She

was able to gather sufficient data through this, and in like manner, I was also able to gather adequate data from my respondents from my respondents despite the physical distance.

Aside from the interview responses, I also used photo interpretation. I showed the respondents four pictures of Indian women working in various kinds of jobs and asked them if they could relate with those pictures.

Lastly, another source of data was the drawings of the respondents about their experiences related to their illiteracy in their day-to-day life. Even though these respondents are not literate in terms of reading and writing, they could drawing or scribbling figures. Then as part of the data gathering, I asked the respondent what she wants to communicate in the drawing that she had created. Collins, McWhirter and Wetton say that even though a child may have drawn a scribble, to the child this scribble has meaning that can be discussed (in Miles 2000, 142). Shan Shan Yang in her master's thesis used drawings as part of her data. She writes, "Drawing helps children reflect on and express their perceptions" (Yang 2013, 46). In this current study, I used the comments of the respondents regarding their drawing to provide insights about their varied experiences of being deprived of formal education.

### Research-Gathering Procedure

I observed the following procedures in the conduct of this study. The following diagram explains the process of the field research (Figure 3).

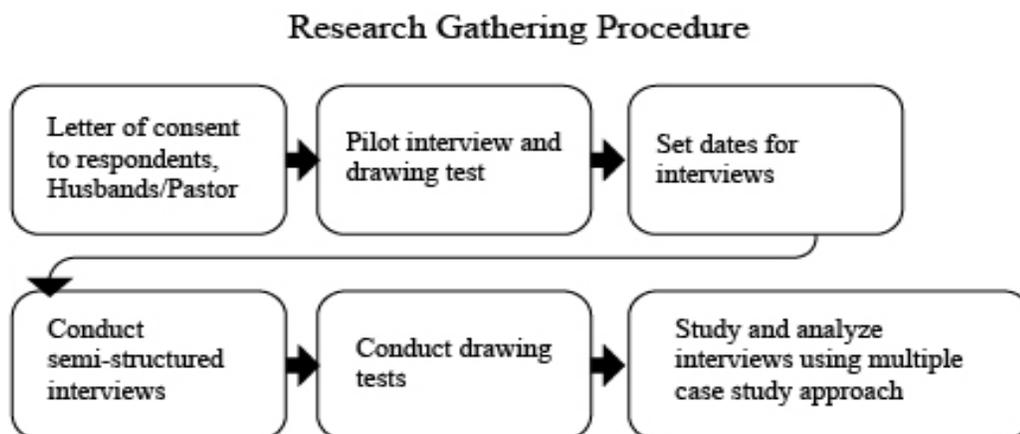


Figure 3: Research-Gathering Procedure

First, for ethical purposes, I wrote a letter and sent it through email to my sister. She in turn read that letter to the girls asking for permission to conduct and record the interview through Skype. As the respondents cannot read or write, I wrote a letter in Hindi and it was read to each one of them by my sister (See Appendix A). The letter contained the objectives of the study and the instructions and process of the interview.

Second, once permission was secured, I did a pilot interview through Skype with one of the respondents. I explained to her the purpose of the pilot interview and then, with her permission, interviewed her using the interview questions I had prepared in this study (see Appendix B for the interview protocol). I then asked her if she understood and could answer all the questions. The questions were clear to her, so I did not have to revise them again. I also did the drawing activity with her to see if she could accomplish this.

She needed some encouragement to begin with her drawing, and then she could actually draw even though she felt shy and hesitated in the beginning. This worked and therefore I employed this approach to the actual selected respondents of the study.

Third, I set the dates upon the availability of the respondents for the conduct of the interview with each of the four selected respondents. Once the dates were set, I engaged each respondent in a semi-structured/conversation approach interview. To document the interviews, I used Skype recording with the permission of the respondents, which helped me to focus on the interview.

As part of the methodology of the research, I also asked each respondent to describe her physical, intellectual, and spiritual life through drawing. The respondents said that they were unable to draw, but I told them that I was not looking for any good drawing and that even some scribbles would do as long as they could explain to me what that drawing meant to them. They were actually able to draw at the first try and explained it quite well.

Finally, after all interviews were done, I studied and analyzed the interview transcriptions and recordings using the multiple case study approach. Information was edited, redundancies were sorted out, parts were fitted together, and the case record was organized for ready access (Merriam 2009, 203). Each case study was analyzed, first, as a single case study using the research questions as the guide and then I employed coding to assign a summative and salient attribute for a portion of the data from the interview transcripts. I observed repetitive patterns and salient trends to guide my data analysis and interpretation. Strauss notes, "A researcher who wishes to become proficient at doing qualitative analysis must learn to code well and easily. The excellence of the research

rests in large part on the excellence of the coding (Strauss 1987, 27). In coding, I observed the following as cited by Strauss: similarity, difference, frequency, sequence and consequence so that the study could bring in a deeper understanding of the effects of illiteracy on the health of migrant girls (Strauss 1987, 155).

### **Data-Gathering Instruments**

The study explored whether or not illiteracy affects the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the respondents. To fulfill the objective of this study, I used three data-gathering instruments, namely, semi-structured/conversations approach interview, photo interpretation, and drawing. First, the semi-structured interview/conversation approach was used to gather the responses of the respondents. Predetermined questions were used with all the interviewees. The interview questions were derived from a variety of sources.

The first part of the interview questions which consisted of questions about the respondents' physical health was adapted from the World Health Organization Quality of Life (Harper 1997), Clark Armstrong and Jeri Gunderson. The questions were the following:

1. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the physical health of the selected migrant girls between the age of eleven to eighteen in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India, in terms of?
  - a. What is your height?
  - b. What is your weight?
  - c. Are you married?

1. At what age were you married?

2. Can you share with me a bit about how you met your husband?
  3. Can you tell me a bit about how married life has been for you?
- d. Do you have any children?
1. Can you talk a bit about your experiences during your pregnancies and childbirth? This question will answer about delivering first baby, abortions, breastfeeding and how many children as we get along discussing on it?
  2. How regularly did you have check-ups with the doctor?
  3. How many children are surviving?
  4. How do you feel about having children? Or, has it been hard for you to not yet have children?
  5. How did you manage breast feeding?
- e. What are your sleeping patterns?
- f. How often do you have sickness (colds, fever)?

The second part of the interview questions, which consist of questions about the respondents' intellectual health, is developed by Jeri Gunderson, one of my thesis committee members. The questions were the following:

2. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the intellectual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India, in terms of the following?
  - a. How many numbers can you count or identify?

- b. Can you share a bit about any formal educational experiences you may have had?
- c. We've talked before about situations that were difficult for you because you could not read or write. Can you share with me about two or three of those experiences?
- d. What has been some of your work experiences? If you could read and write, what kinds of work would you like to do?
- e. What kinds of differences do you feel/think that your ability to read and write would have made in each of those situations? How would that have changed things?

The third part of the interview questions, which consist of questions about the respondents' spiritual health (Gunderson and Armstrong's Suggestions, 2015). The questions were the following:

3. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the spiritual health of the selected migrant girls between the age of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India, in terms of the following?
  - a. Can you share a bit about when you came to believe in Jesus Christ?
  - b. Can you share a bit about how you came to believe in Jesus Christ?
  - c. What differences has knowing Christ made in your life?
  - d. How has prayer made a difference in your life?
  - e. How has learning about his death and resurrection affected how you live your life?
  - f. How would the ability to read and write help you in your life with Christ?

- g. What differences compared to now, would reading and writing make in your understanding of the Bible?
- h. What Bible stories or Scriptures have been important for you to learn about how much Jesus loves and cares for you? How did you see yourself in the story?
- i. The interviewee was shown four photos or drawings that showed a scene from the life of a migrant girl in Goa. She was asked to describe what she sees or to tell a story about the picture and then talk about how learning to read or write might change the picture?
- j. How have you experienced the goodness of God in your life?
- k. How have you felt the power of God working in your life?
- l. How important do you think is your life?
- m. How would you describe your Christian life now?
- n. Why do you attend your present church?

Finally, I have developed the fourth part of the interview questions based on the suggestions of my proposal defense panel, which consist of questions about the recommendation for the church. The questions were the following:

- 4. What recommendations can be offered for holistic ministry to the local church in terms of the following:
  - a. What would you suggest to the church to improve your physical health needs?
  - b. Are there any areas where you think the church can help you grow intellectually?

c. What can the church do to improve your spiritual health needs?

The second data-gathering instrument that I used is photo interpretation. Professor Jeri Gunderson and I chose four random photos from Google that depict the common life of migrant girls in India. And then I showed these photos to my respondents to gather their perception as they take a look at these pictures and discover whether or not they see themselves in the pictures. The photos are the following:



Finally, I used the drawings of the respondents as one of the data-gathering instruments. To help the girls begin to talk about their experience of being non-literate, I asked them to draw a picture of what they experience in life. They could draw their physical, intellectual or spiritual experiences. Recording the girls' comments about the artwork was also a way of gathering insights about their experiences. Gross and Hayne suggest that the draw-and-tell technique generates more information because drawing

helps children feel more comfortable and relaxed in an unfamiliar situation. Drawing may also facilitate memory retrieval. Drawing helps children to arrange and organize their narratives, giving them the opportunity to tell a better story (in Miles and Wright 2003, 14). However, when the respondents said that they could not draw, I told them that they could and that they would describe it to me and they did it. They were provided with colored pencils, crayons, glitter, stick figures, erasers, pencils, etc. all they used was just paper and pen. I believe they used only pen and pencil because they were not confident about their drawings. Having to color what we draw takes more effort to think about using the correct colors and the correct shades. Since they have never drawn anything before, they finished it with just paper and pen.

### **Treatment of Data**

The narratives gathered from semi-structured interviews/conversations, photo interpretation, and the drawings were all transcribed, and translated into English. I gathered all the data from each of the respondents, wrote a case study for each migrant girl, and then created an integrated summary on all their perceptions to identify commonalities that pertain to the consequences of illiteracy to the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the respondents.

This chapter discussed the methodology of the study. The next chapter will present the analysis and interpretation of data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The intention of this research was to explore whether or not illiteracy affects the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India. This chapter contains the four case studies with data gathered through interviews and drawings. The structure of each case study follows the sequence of the sub-problems. In order to maintain the privacy of the respondents, they were given pseudonyms as follows. Respondent one was given the name Aarti, respondent two is Sunita, respondent three is Rekha, and respondent four is Shanti. The final section of this chapter presents the integration of all the responses of the selected respondents in terms of illiteracy and their physical, intellectual, and spiritual health.

#### **Case Study One: Aarti**

This section presents the story of Aarti. The case study includes her demographic characteristics, her experiences as a non-literate person in terms of her physical, intellectual, and spiritual health.

#### **Aarti's Demographic Characteristics**

Aarti, who does not know her age comes from a poor family. She got married at a young age since she did not go to school. Being non-literate, she cannot get a well-paid job to support her family. Everything that she earns is just enough to pay her housing rent and to buy the needful things for her house as migrant women are at a higher risk of receiving a lower salary

than most other groups in the society (Droszt 2013, 16). She comes from a Hindu background, as her parents are Hindus. Aarti did not complete any grade. When she began going to school, after a few days her teacher spanked her which made her cry and this incident was seen by her elder brother who did not like it. Aarti's brother brought her home at the very moment and never allowed her to go to school again and neither did he go. This is related to what Kilbourn said that female children daily face obstacles that prevent them from fully participating in the educational process, or cause them to drop out altogether (Kilbourn 2008, 211). This presents a challenge to the local church and society in general to give opportunities for both boys and girls alike to education as it is a basic human right.

#### Aarti's Physical Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

Aarti's weight is 60 kilograms and her height is 4.8 ft. Her BMI is 28.6 which means she is in the overweight range which is 25 to 29.9. When I asked her if she thinks she is overweight, she said, "No I don't think so. I am fine as there are many others who are very fat and I am blessed that I can even run." I thought that her self-esteem is intact in one way or another. She says "I got married at an early age when I was eleven." Aarti assumes that she was eleven when she was married as they do not have marriage certificates. In rural villages where she was born, since some parents have no understanding about sending their children to school, they make them work in the house and then give them into marriage at an early age. She knew her husband since she was young as they are cousins. Her husband is her maternal cousin. Eventually her parents gave her into marriage with him and she got married. She obviously liked her husband as they were cousins and had been together for around eleven years. For Aarti, since the beginning, her marriage was not good. Aarti says, "My marriage life was a hell." She was heart-broken by her husband, as he was an alcoholic and got drunk every single night. He came home late and

beat her and their children. After she prepared the meal she used to wait for him to eat with the hope that he will not be drunk that night, but her hopes were shattered. Being beaten and scared, no one under the roof had dinner. She had to throw out the food every day as it got spoiled by next day as they did not have a refrigerator to store it. He spent all his money that he earned on alcohol, gambling, tobacco and betel nut while she had to earn by washing dishes in people's houses and pay all the household expenses, school fees for children and housing rent.

After they came to know Christ things became fine and now she recalls, "My married life is completely opposite from that of before. There is no more fighting between me and my husband." She has been pregnant four times and all four children are surviving. Her first child was born when she was twelve years of age (on the assumption that she was married when she was eleven). It was a girl and so in desiring to have a boy she was pregnant the second time in two years and gave birth to another girl child. So she was pregnant in another year and it was a girl again. After that, she was pregnant again and finally had a boy child. All her children were born in Karnataka in her home town. All the deliveries were done by her mom at home and her mother took care of the children too as Aarti had to work and take care of the expenses. Her husband spent several months out of town every time that she gave birth. He never gave the reason for it and came home only a few times. So since she could not take care of four children by herself, she stayed at her mother's house. She had regular meetings with the doctor when she was pregnant. She was so sad and troubled in her heart for having four children. They did not have any family planning to have certain number of children as long as they had a male child. She was very frustrated and tired with her life because of her husband as he did not support her in taking care of the children and providing for them. She remembers and says, "At that time my husband did not have any sense of how he should take care of his wife and children. He did not

know what a wife is and children are. But now he knows.” Since he received Jesus in his heart he now has the sense of how to take care of his family and what they mean to him. She reveals, “It is good to know Jesus Christ as He is the one who takes away our trouble.” She did not have good sleep for around two years before she became a Christian. She used to get fever at 11:00 in the night until 5:00 in the morning. She spent two years visiting the doctor and taking the prescribed medicines but nothing helped her. She felt better only until the effect of the medicine or injection remained but did not get healing from it. But when she began attending the church and accepted Jesus she received healing and since then she sleeps well and has peace.

#### Aarti’s Intellectual Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

Since Aarti did not go to school and did not have the chance to study but only work in the house, she does not know to read and write. She can roughly count the numbers from one to ten. Since she does not know to read and write she faces a lot of difficulties in her day-to-day life. If she has to go to the Panchayat office or the hospital she is unable to fill out or sign any forms. She is so afraid someone might cheat her by making her to approve something with a thumbprint while she does not even know what that is. Since her children are going to school now, they are teaching Aarti some basic things like writing her signature and counting.

Since her childhood, she has been working as a sweeper, cleaning the floor, washing clothes and dishes, farming, office cleaning and cooking. This is actually common because the Portuguese people in Goa are leading a somewhat luxurious lifestyle. After she got married and gave birth to her first child they came down to Goa in search of a better job and better life. Every time that she was pregnant she had to go back to Karnataka for her delivery and stay some time with her mother. She states, “If I had formal education, I would not have gotten married so early

and would have known to take care of my children and would at least have little bit of idea to take things into my hands when my husband was not around.” She does not know what work she would like to do as she thinks that would depend on what she studied. But if simply told to choose a job she said she really likes to work in offices where she can work on computers.

### Aarti’s Spiritual Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

One evening at about six o’clock, two ladies from her church came to her house to share about Jesus Christ. They shared the Gospel and she felt quite fascinated about it. She had never heard something like that before that someone loves us so much that He even died for us. With joy she expressed, “I felt peace of God in my heart and I liked it so much. I believed it was true and immediately I received healing my sickness and I didn’t get fever at night since then. Also my husband believed when he saw that I was healed and he stopped drinking alcohol and chewing tobacco. Since then we both together with our children began attending church and we liked it so much. Within two months we were baptized.” She has been faithfully attending church as well as every prayer meeting since then. It has been five years since then and they have never missed church. They have so much peace in their lives now. Before they had only sadness in their life. They feel good when they pray and very happy and content when God answers their prayer. They enjoy praying so much that they can even sacrifice their food, but not prayer. Aarti says, “Hindu gods gave me only beating from my husband and took away peace from me, but Jesus gave me the true peace and no one can take it away from me. If Jesus did not come for me and die for me and shed His blood for me, then I would not be happy and would die getting trapped in this world. I have no idea where I would be by now without Jesus Christ.” These are powerful words from a girl who was born as a Hindu.

She says she is very weak in her spiritual life because she cannot study the Bible since she cannot read and write. If only she had learned to read and write by going to school it would have been helpful for her to study God's Word deeper and in a more personal way. Then she said that it would have been easier and more comfortable for her to share the Gospel to others as she would understand even deeper if on her own she could read and study the Bible and then just ask questions to an elder if she had questions.

She says that she feels sad that every time she has to ask the pastor about different things (normal life as well as spiritual life). Even though it is the pastor's job to help them grow spiritually, she feels she is bothering him all the time and that she has become a burden to him. If the pastor explains something she has no choice but to remember everything he has told because she cannot write it down like others do. She feels jealous when she sees others take some notes on the sermons when the pastor is preaching. Writing down would also help her to analyze what the pastor is saying, whether it is all correct or not. She recalls the incident when the Jehovah's Witnesses people came to their house. She did not know what to say when they began preaching to her and her husband. Everything just seemed to be right. For a moment she felt that whatever they were telling was all truth and that they were being lied this whole time in this local church that she goes to. But after they left her house she immediately called up her pastor and told everything that happened. Her pastor was able to convince her and tell her the truth and bring her on the right path again. These cults try to convert people who are newly saved. We still do not know how these cults find out about new believers. Aarti is afraid of these people, as she cannot answer anything to them aside from telling them "Let's talk together with my pastor." She gave the cult member a particular day to meet to Pastor, but they never came again. In fact they met her husband once on the way to their house and he was able to directly tell them not to show up

again. If she knew how to read and write, she thought she would have been able to read some Scriptures to them right away and would not have to wait until the next time they came. If she only knew to read and write she thought that she would have known a lot more about the Bible than what she knows now. Now she has to depend on her pastor if she has questions and trust him that he tells her the truth or the correct answer. Her most favorite story in the Bible is of Job. She explains:

When Job was in trouble and sick, his wife did not support him. Job went through so many problems and loss, but he never gave up his faith and trust in God. Even though his wife told him to curse God, he respected God and did not curse Him. It is the same with me, Satan gave me so many troubles in my life through my husband but I did not have strong faith like Job even though my troubles were so much lesser than Job. I was like his wife and I had given up on life and wanted to die. But now that I found Jesus, my life has meaning and my faith is growing.

When I showed her the following four pictures, she smiled and reflected, “I work like that also.” That is their only source of income. Without education they cannot have any other job. This is the plight of the migrant girls who have no chance of education.

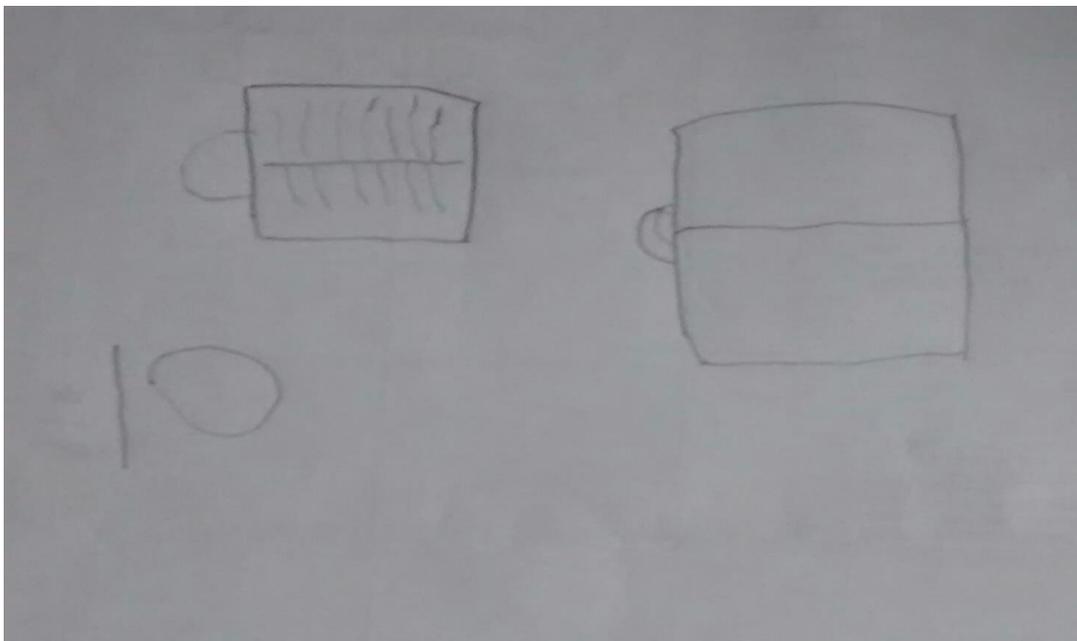




Most of the girls in her village do not go to school and therefore they work like that (doing dishes, washing clothes, sweeping, cleaning). The people these days in Goa are improved and so some of them send their girls to schools. But for Aarti, her parents and her brothers did not go to school at all. They did not like to. She said in a sad tone, “If I had an education I would be working in a very good place by now. I saw God’s goodness in my life when I was healed from my fever, when my husband stopped drinking alcohol and when we received eternal life. Now that I see my children change and behave in a godly manner I feel it is so much better than before.” With God’s knowledge and when they listen to God’s Word about what they should do and what they should not, they obey it very sincerely. They have that trust and fear of God.” Before she did not know how to discipline and how to teach or check their homework. Now her children are teaching her how to check the homework of her youngest child. She cannot check if he has done it properly or cannot teach him, but she can check if what the teacher has marked is right or wrong. Her elder daughter left school when her grandmother died. Her grandmother took care of everything, so Aarti’s daughter had to leave school in the village and was brought to Goa. She did not join school again as Aarti did not have that sense to send her. The family needed money and someone to take care of the younger siblings so they made her work and also take care of the younger ones. She described to me how tired she was of her life with these words, “There was one time, before I received Jesus Christ in my heart

that I had a thought of committing suicide. I was tired of life and felt like there was no peace in my house and in this world. There were small kids and my husband used to drink alcohol and spend all the money and beat us up.” She always asked her mother “Mom, why did you give me into marriage?” Her mother replied, “Because he (husband) was my brother’s son (Aarti’s cousin).” Now Aarti knows God’s peace that it is not what the world gives. Now she says that her life is good. She says that she is growing spiritually. She wakes up early morning with her family for devotions. She feels at peace when she hears the Word. It encourages her and makes her strong. She now memorizes Scriptures with the help of her children. She attends church because God has given her peace. She has faith in Him. From the beginning, this has been her church and therefore she attends this church. She received salvation through this church. She found her new life there. She further adds, “Our pastor is very good and teaches us many things so we do not need to go to another church.” When I reflect on Aarti’s spiritual life, I can feel that God is working not only on her own life but the lives of those around her.

#### Aarti’s Drawing



Before she began to draw, she was hesitant and did not want to draw at all. She said she never drew anything before. I encouraged her that I am not looking for anything professional, as even I am not good in drawing myself. She laughed and then began to draw. She did not lift up her face while drawing and concentrated on it. When she was done she was shy to show to me and was laughing by herself. After some time she showed it to me and hid her face. I gave her time to cool down and I talked off topic for few moments and then she began with her explanation. The first image she talked about her sickness that she had, before she met Jesus Christ. She recalls, “This is a bed and there is blanket and I am sleeping on it. When I had fever I felt cold and I had to cover up myself under the blanket.”

The next drawing she says represents now that she is growing in Jesus Christ. She says, “It is bed and there is no blanket as I am already healed now by God’s power and now I am growing spiritually in Jesus Christ.” In the third drawing, she had a big smile and said that through Jesus, now she is in the light with her family. The straight line is the light and the circle is her family. Hearing this story can make one’s heart happy knowing the difference that life in Christ reflects.

### **Case Study Two: Sunita**

This section presents the story of Sunita. The case study includes her demographic characteristics, her experiences as a non-literate person in terms of her physical, intellectual, and spiritual health.

#### **Sunita’s Demographic Characteristics**

Sunita is a young and beautiful girl from Karnataka. She does not remember her age but assumes she is 18. She is married and is working as a domestic worker, cleaning dishes. She says

that she is low as far as socio-economic status. Whatever she earns is not enough even for two people after paying the housing rent and other expenses. She grew up in a Hindu family. Her family were strong Hindu believers. Sunita never attended school in fact she never even saw a school from the inside. Her family was poor and so they could not afford to send her to school.

#### Sunita's Physical Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

Sunita's height is 4.5 feet and her weight is 40 kilograms. Her BMI is 21.2 which is normal weight for her age. Sunita got married when she was very young although she does not remember at what age she was married. She says it has been four years since she got married. She knew her husband as a child as they are cousins which is a common practice in many parts of India to marry their cousins. He used to come to her house very often. They got married through the arrangement of their parents. They do not have children and did not want to talk about it. After they got married she faced a lot of trouble from her husband. They fought every single day and it stressed her out. They did not eat their meals regularly because of the fights. Her husband came back to the house only a few times. She could hardly sleep as she used to be sick and stressed about her life. She responds, "I used to be sick with high fever very often. Going to the doctors never really helped. The medicine helped me only at the moment and the fever returned once the effect was gone. But as soon as I accepted Jesus Christ it went away." She was so amazed with this miracle in her life and now has strong faith in God and exclaims, "He is my Savior and my healer!" She sleeps well since her fever is gone, but her sleeping patterns are as soon as she eats dinner she falls asleep.

#### Sunita's Intellectual Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

Sunita knows to count accurately from number one to ten. She knows to read and write a little bit as her pastor's elder daughter taught some of the church members to read and write the

basic Hindi alphabet. Before she knew to read she had troubles in basic things like reading a signboard on the road, did not know how to make her own signature and she could not read Bible. Now she can read and feels strengthened. She feels that she does not have to rely so much on others as she had to before. She used to work in a quarry before her wedding. It was very difficult to work there in the hot sun. It was a very hard job for her. But she had no choice as it was her only means of survival. If she did not work she would not have money and therefore would not have anything to survive. This situation is like what Droszt wrote that it has been widely agreed that migration of women is primarily related to marital migration where wives follow the husband's migration (Droszt 2013, 14-15). The same thing happened with Sunita, after the wedding she worked in farms in Karnataka for a few months and then her husband brought her to Goa in search for jobs. After coming to Goa she now works as a domestic worker, washing people's clothes, dishes and cleaning houses. She had this dream of working in offices. She sighs, "Only if I had an education I would have worked in an office as a manager." She gave a huge smile while saying those words. When she goes to work she envies her boss who is a business man. She states, "I dream of getting dressed up in a very formal way and work in offices. I dream of holding those laptop bags and walking with chin up and not feel looked down upon by others." She realized that during those times when she did not know how to read yet, she could not study the Bible on her own. But now, she is so happy because she can read the Bible at her own pace and that she can now share it to others. She knows how to sign her name. She can read signs and directions on the roads. And that for her is a very important thing.

#### Sunita's Spiritual Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

She confessed with teary eyes how much pride she had before. She says, "I fought with every neighbor that I had. We moved to different rental houses many times a year, but

everywhere we moved, I fought with them.” She also fought with her husband every single day. After her husband brought her to Goa, she found Jesus Christ through the members of the local church that they now attend. It has been three years now that she has attended this church. When the church members who worked with her husband in the same construction business shared the Gospel to her husband and prayed for her, her husband saw that she was healed from the fever and so he believed in Jesus and the power of His name and so did she. She recollects: “Since then I left my pride and anger behind and followed Jesus Christ. We pray every morning and evening. I feel so good when Jesus answers my prayers. God is my heavenly Father and always protects me and provides my needs.” Jesus’ death and resurrection reminds her that she should not sin “but instead walk in God’s path which leads to eternal life” she says.

Being able to read the Bible helps her to understand her mistakes. She then asks for forgiveness from God. Being able to read helps her to check, read, and study what the pastor has preached. One of her favorite Scriptures is John 3:16. She explains:

It tells me about God’s love for me. Even though I am not worthy of that love, God sent His only Son for me. I see myself in the lowest place of all. I am nothing but dust of the earth, but with Jesus I am everything to Him and He is everything to me. The love that He gave me is incomparable. If God did not send His Son for me then I would have been dead by now from this earth and also doomed in hell. God’s goodness is immeasurable. He guides me from all the snares of the Devil. He heals me and keeps me safe. God is good to me when I have no one to share my troubles with. I can sit with Him and can pour out my heart to Him.

She knows for sure that He never gets tired of her, as He loves her so much. She witnessed the power of prayer when she was healed from her sickness. While doing out-reach ministry she saw how the demons ran away in Jesus’ name. When she went to her home town in Karnataka, she saw many more miracles in prayer. Her village people who do not know God were healed in Jesus’ name and some of them believed in Him. There were many times after her

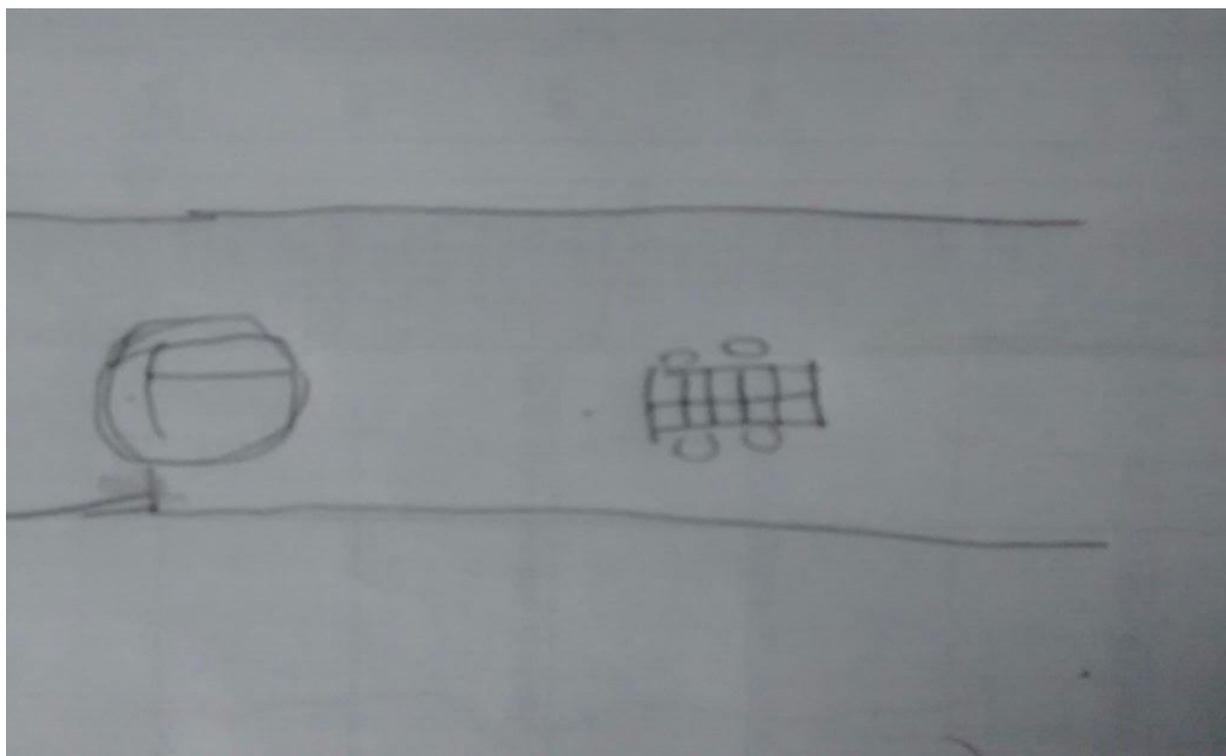
wedding that she thought of committing suicide, but she never got the courage to do it. She says it was God who stopped her every time that she thought of it. She had so many troubles in her past life without Jesus, but now with Jesus she feels strengthened. She testifies, “I am so happy that I am attending Bethesda Church and want to continue here. I found salvation through this church. I like to listen to the Gospel here. Our pastor tells Scriptures which helps us grow spiritually.” She further adds, “Even though other churches show the greed of money and material things and my church is poor and cannot afford for it, it is still rich in God’s Word unlike other churches. In those churches no one pays attention to the Gospel which is hardly preached as people come only to get the material things.” When I asked her how she knew all that, she answered that her previous church members who now go to those churches tried to convince her to attend their church and she got all the information through them.

When I showed her the following four pictures, she was silent for a moment and just kept looking at the pictures.



After a while she said that she sees herself in those pictures. She further added that only if they work can they get food. If those girls had a formal education, they would have worked in offices. In Bijapur, Karnataka from where she comes, there are many girls who do not go to school and therefore work like that. They have no choice as they do not have any education; they cannot choose any work, but have to finish whatever work is given to them.

#### Sunita's Drawing



She was active in drawing unlike the other respondents. At first she told me that she cannot draw, but when I explained to her that anything is acceptable as long she knew what she has drawn to explain it to me, it was fine. She began drawing with much effort and when she finished she laughed and said she cannot draw any better. I convinced her that is it okay and that I was not looking for anything better.

In this picture Sunita explains, “There is a road and a car on it and a person is driving it. Further ahead there is a sign board and a roundabout right in the middle of the road where the

cars go in different directions. Because I do not know to read and write properly and in fact does not have formal education, I cannot get a driver's license." She wishes to drive but she feels disappointed that she cannot. If she knew how to drive, it would be easier for her to go to places. She feels disappointed when she sees other ladies drive and has to go by bus herself. I feel she really has the passion to drive as she mentioned about driving quite a few times during the interview.

### **Case Study Three: Rekha**

This section presents the story of Rekha. The case study includes her demographic characteristics, her experiences as a non-literate person in terms of her physical, intellectual, and spiritual health.

#### **Rekha's Demographic Characteristics**

Rekha is the second wife of a 42-year old man who has a first wife which is my next respondent, Shanti. Rekha is eighteen now and was married when she was thirteen upon the will of her parents. UNICEF has this document which relates to Rekha's situation: "Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married before their 18th birthday. Girls who live in rural areas are more likely to become child brides than their urban counterparts. Households typically make decisions about girls' schooling and marriage jointly, not sequentially, and education tends to lose out. Accordingly, lower levels of education are found among women who married in childhood" (UNICEF 2014, 2-4).

Their socio-economic status is very low. She comes from a Hindu background from Andhra-Pradesh, India. Rekha never attended school in her entire life. She had a longing to go to school, but her parents never sent her. They never attended school either, so they did not know they had to send her. Every time she saw some of the village children holding their bags and

going to school, she wished she could go also. But her parents could not afford it and they made her work in the farms. She is the eldest daughter of the house and, therefore, responsible to take care of the younger siblings and work in the house during mornings to make lunch while parents work in the fields. Being born a female seems a curse when it is such a big blessing. Women are not given the opportunity to be educated, and are made to suffer their whole life where they cannot make any improvements for themselves. (Droszt 2013, 10). Their family often moved back and forth in two villages and, therefore, Rekha never really experienced what it was like to have a stable family. This made it even more difficult for her to join school.

#### Rekha's Physical Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

Rekha's height is 5.1 feet and weight is 50 kilograms. Her BMI is 20.8 which falls in the normal weight category. When she was thirteen her husband to-be who already had a wife of his own asked her to marry him for two reasons. The first reason was: his friends placed a bet on him if he could persuade her to marry him and the second reason was: he wanted to have a child as his first wife could not bear a child. He has a very high position as he is the local political minister of the village. Rekha's parents at once said yes to the proposal and so they were married.

After her wedding, the first year of married life was really good to her. Her husband took good care of her and they had no problem even with the presence of the first wife under the same roof. No one complained about anything. Later they realized they cannot have a child, so her husband began beating her and his first wife. He began to drink alcohol, gamble, and come home late at night. He cursed them all the time for giving him no children.

After a few years this man heard the Gospel and believed in Jesus with his whole heart. Immediately, he stopped all the bad things that he had been doing and since then life has really

been good to everyone. This was also the turning point in Rekha's life. She also came to know Christ together with her husband.

After she accepted Christ, she began to have a new perception towards her situation. She started to accept the fact that she just cannot have children. She says, "I cannot really do anything about it. If it is God's will then let it be." There are times when she feels sad about having no children when she sees her younger siblings, relatives, neighbors having children just nine months after their wedding. But with her new faith in Christ, she now has the strength to say, "It is in God's hands and I have faith that someday God will give me a child." Right now she had adopted her sister's son who treats her as his mother. However, there is a downside to this adoption. She had adopted him and this gave her the chance to have someone help her in begging from people in the streets. In Goa, people almost always show pity when there is a child hanging on a mother's back. So this provided for her some extra income. Since she accepted Jesus Christ she does not beg anymore.

As for her sleeping patterns, she replies, "I always sleep at 9:00 pm just after I eat my dinner and I wake up at 5:00 am every morning for family devotions." This is her usual routine each day. Physically, she is not very healthy. She says, "I often get colds or fever every time I drink something cold." And she thinks she has a very low immune system.

#### Rekha's Intellectual Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

She can read the basic letters of the alphabet and can count up to the number ten. She says "I know to say 100, 200, 500, 1000, but cannot count in order." She can read very basic letters of the alphabet and is trying to read the Bible. If she goes to the market and the vendor returns to her the balance money then she has to trust the vendor that he gave her the correct amount of money. Jackson documents that without literacy skills, the abilities to read, write, do

math, solve problems, or to access and use technology, today's adults will struggle to take part in the world around them and fail to reach their full potential as parents, community members, and employees (Jackson 2014). This is also true in Rekha's life.

When she did not know how to read and write even a little bit, she felt very sad and disappointed. When she saw other church members reading the Bible in church she wanted to read too and felt sad that she could not read. She cannot make a list of things to buy at the market and she always has to try hard to memorize. She cannot read the descriptions on the things that she wants to buy. She cannot read the date of expiration on medicine and other food products. When she visits hospitals, she cannot fill out the forms and has to ask people to help her with these papers. It greatly concerns her sometimes as in hospitals people are stressed and busy with their own burdens and most of the time she gets rejected when she asks for help.

Her job till today has only been in offices to sweep, clean the floors, and wash dishes. She also worked on a farm in her village. If she had a formal education she would not be a sweeper and cleaner but would be working in a decent office. She quips, "Just because I did not have education, I have no choice and, therefore, I have to work like this." One can surmise from her quick reply the difficulty of acquiring decent and well-paying jobs without proper education.

#### Rekha's Spiritual Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

It has been nine years since she received Christ. She reflects, "When I heard the Gospel through the pastor and he prayed and shared about the peace of Jesus Christ, I believed in it and came to church and things changed eventually." She learned that the Hindu religion was nonsense, but with God nothing is impossible. She understood that He is a true God when He answered her prayers. In Hindu religion they had to offer many things to the gods but she found out that she does not have to offer anything in Christian life. She says, "We only have to come to

Him with a true heart and He gives us our requests.” She also adds, “Every time I pray to Him with a sincere heart He hears my prayers.”

After knowing God she prayed to Him for her husband and God changed him and now they are together living happily. When she first heard about the death of Jesus Christ, she was surprised because in Hindu religion none of the gods has ever done this kind of thing for another person. When she learned more about how Jesus died on the cross for her sins, she felt guilty about it but at the same time happy also because she was cleansed from her sins. Now she lives her life as much as possible in a better way as it should be pleasing to God. She confesses, “If God did so much for me then why can I not do even a little thing for Him?” This is how she lives her life now to please God in all the ways she can. She smiles and says, “If I can read and write very well like others do in the church I would be very happy. It would change me more and more as I could learn God’s Word on my own more often and I would just ask questions to my pastor on whatever issues I could not understand.” In this way she would be able to even memorize Scriptures and would not have a problem when other people would question her.

When I asked her if she remembers a story or Scripture to share, she says she cannot remember anything. But when I gave her some time she told me about John 3:16—that this is how much Jesus loves her that He even left heaven just to wash the sins away from her. She sees herself as the greatest sinner in this world.

When I showed her the following four pictures, she laughed immediately and felt shy and covered her mouth.



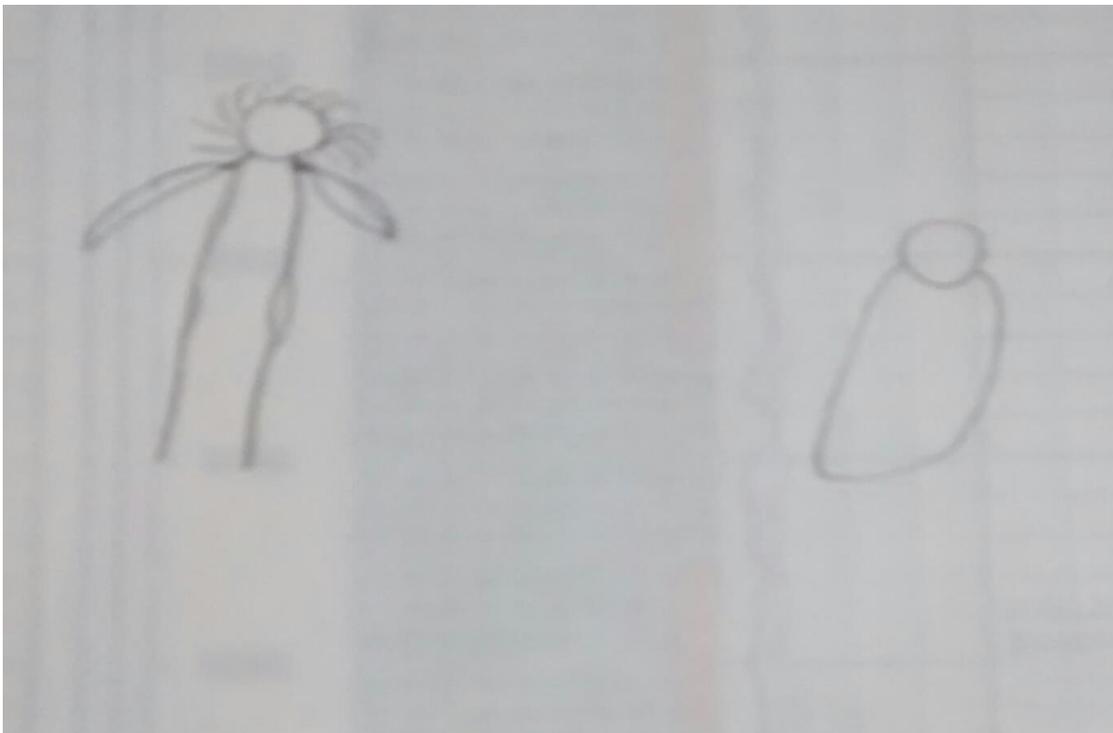
She shared her experience as working like the women in this pictures. She had a hard time working like them while the other children from the village went to school. Having no education left her with no choice but to work as a domestic worker or in the farms. Thengal also found the same in his research, “They take any job that is offered to them in order to survive in a place where no one values them, and a place which is much more developed from their native place. India has a quite unsatisfactory socio-economic condition due to the high rate of illiteracy among her people” (Thengal 2013, 124). Most of the time she has to go to work with her adopted son. He does not like to go to school as he is not so active in studying. Her son does not see that education is much valued in their family circle, so he tends not to care for learning either.

But her life took a good turn when Christ came into their lives. She experienced God’s goodness when her husband received Jesus Christ as His Savior. This proved beneficial for her because after he accepted Christ, she reported that he stopped both drinking alcohol and

gambling altogether. Rekha exclaims with light in her eyes, “He stopped beating us and he began to work hard in his small business of selling peanuts. He comes home early and we eat every meal together as a family.” One cannot really underestimate the power of a changed life.

Rekha thinks her life is very important now. Before she felt that her life was meaningless with the all the sufferings. There was no joy to her life. She did not want to live anymore but this all changed when she received Christ. She explains, “God’s power saved me and nothing can harm me now. My Christian life is pretty good, but it would be better and I know I would grow more in God’s Word if I knew how to read and write.” She confesses that every day, she is trying to go deeper in relationship with God. She goes to church eagerly because she says she wants to know more of Christ. She admits, “If this is where I found God’s love, then I want to stay here and be more in love with God and His people who shared the good news to me.”

#### Rekha’s Drawing



Rekha had to be assisted in her drawing. She did not even want to hold the pencil. After much encouragement, she finally agreed to draw with a condition that my sister will stand beside her while she drew it to see if what she drew was right. She wanted be acknowledged that what she drew was right. After she finished her drawing with much effort, she explained to me what she drew. In the drawing, she says, is herself and a bottle of medicine. She reflects, “Every time that I am sick I have to take medicine, but I am unable to read the description on the medicine bottle. Sometime I am so scared that it might be already expired or it might be the wrong one. I have to try to remember the drawing on the bottle or the color of the bottle.” She has to trust her memory that she is taking the right medicine. What a challenge to live this kind of existence. Myers rightly said when he wrote, “They do not know or have any skills. They may not understand the basics of nutrition, the need to boil water, the importance of child spacing, how to read the instructions on a packet of food, or improved seeds or medicine. They do not know the importance about sustainable agriculture, running a small business, the importance of saving money” (Myers 2011, 114). This is the challenge for those who want to make a difference in the lives of non-literate persons.

#### **Case Study Four: Shanti**

This section presents the story of Shanti. The case study includes her demographic characteristics, her experiences as a non-literate person in terms of her physical, intellectual, and spiritual health.

##### **Shanti’s Demographic Characteristics**

Shanti is wife of a man who has a second wife whose name is Rekha, my third respondent. This is common in the place of the migrants. Shanti looks younger than what she assumes her age as 25. I used the word “assume” because these girls do not have birth

certificates. It is not unusual for migrant girls not to have a birth certificate. When I asked her about her socio-economic status, her reply came out with a sad voice saying, “Oh, whatever I earn, it is never enough.” Even though her husband earns and her husband’s second wife also earns, it is still not enough to take care of all the expenses in the whole household. She grew up in a Hindu family. She never attended school since her parents did not send her. She says “My parents did not go to school, so they did not allow us to study either.” Martinez and Fernandez mentioned that, “The educational capital of the household is essential to a child’s physical and social development. Such development is unquestionably limited among children whose parents have not acquired basic reading and writing skills” (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 7). This is similar to what is happening in Shanti’s life. When she was three, her mother died so her father married another woman and then gave birth to a daughter and a son. Since she was the eldest she had to take care of all of them and also work together with the parents.

#### Shanti’s Physical Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

Shanti’s height is 4.8 feet and her weight is 45 kilograms. Her BMI is 21.5 which is in the range of normal weight. When I asked her about her sleeping patterns, she says, “I eat dinner at 9:00 pm and then sleep at 9:30 pm. I would then wake up at 5:30 am for my morning devotions.” One can appreciate this girl’s devotion to the Lord. Shanti is not at all healthy in the real sense of the word. She confesses, “I get colds very often and the effect of the medicine that the doctor gives lasts only for a short period and then I feel sick again.”

She remembers that she got married at a very young age. She recalls, “There was a man in our village that I saw only a few times. My father really liked him but I don’t; however, even though I did not know him nor like him, I was forced to marry this man. In addition, his own family liked me for some reason, so without delay, I got married in a simple wedding

ceremony.” In India, even if a woman does not like the man, she has no choice but to marry him because the tradition is: whatever the elders say, the younger people have to agree. They have to obey their parents in all circumstances. The mindset of the people, especially the elders of the village, regarding their unnecessary boundaries and limits for these girls needs to be altered. Change needs to come so women will be respected, that they realize that consent belongs to the women, and the right as to how she dresses and speaks belong to her (Udwin, 2015). But women have no say in this because they do not know that it belongs to them. Most of the uneducated parents have their own thoughts in mind, which they have learned from generations before them.

After they got married he seemed to be good and beat her up only when he was angry which was very rare. After few months since they realized they could not have children he got married again and in less than a year he began to drink alcohol. That is when life began to change. Shanti recalls, “He started beating us all up and hurled all manner of curse words to us. One night, he brought his workmates home for dinner and alcohol and he made us cook for all of them. If we rejected his orders then he would beat us with belt or pull our hair and slap us.”

Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya document that “In India, violence within the home is universal across culture, religion, class, and ethnicity. Girls face violence at the hands of their husbands, fathers, brothers, and uncles in their homes. The abuse is generally overlooked by social custom and considered a part and parcel of marital life” (Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 214). An outsider looking in would be disheartened with this practice; however, for many Indian women, they have almost always thought that this is actually part of life.

As I said above, Shanti’s husband got married again because they did not have children. When she thinks of this she told me, “I cannot do anything about it. It is, of course, embarrassing when people say to me that I cannot have children but then what can I do?” she just says to them,

“What should I do if I do not have children?” Because of this, Shanti’s husband had the courage to consult a doctor about their situation. The doctor told them that he should stop drinking alcohol and should begin taking medicines. Shanti reflects, “My husband stopped drinking alcohol all right, but he continued on his gambling and did not take his medicines regularly. And this thing did not affect him at all. He only keeps himself busy with work and gambling.” So till this day they do not have any children.

### Shanti’s Intellectual Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

Shanti is able to count numbers from one to five. She never went to school and never did she ever try to learn from others even the basic things of reading or counting. So for not having any formal education she goes through many difficulties in life and did not really have the opportunity to lead an independent life. In India, mostly, a woman in her young age depends on her father, in the middle age, she depends on her husband and in the older age she depends on her son. A woman always depends on somebody for her livelihood hence, independence in economical aspects are imperative for women’s development. Economic independence will free the women from the slavery position and boost the self-confidence. Economic independence of women also helps in the national economic development (Sivakumar 2008, 10). She cannot use a cell phone or any other phones. She explains, “If I needed to call someone, I had to have them write their number on a piece of paper. And then whenever I have to call them, I would go to the pay phone and ask people there to dial the numbers for me.” She cannot trace the numbers either. When she goes to the market, and if the vendor has to give her the balance money, she cannot do anything but trust the vendor to give her the correct amount.

Shanti tells me, “My husband always gets upset that I do not know how to count because he says that people can fool me too easily. And I know that he is right.” The only thing that she

knows is how to receive a call. She does not go to any place where she has to do paper work unless someone educated is with her to help. When it is really required to go to offices for signatures, she just does thumb prints. She never went to a school so she cannot read or write. So all these years she has been working as a domestic worker and also in offices to clean up, dress sofas in furniture shops, serve coffee to customers, mop the floor and work in the farm.

As I reflected on her story, I wondered what if she had a formal education and studied very well? Perhaps, she would have loved to work in offices, not as a cleaner but as a manager. Perhaps she would be the one to manage the offices and would use computers and would have one laptop of her own, too. Maybe life would be so easy then and she would not have any problem using gadgets, buying vegetables, going to places where she has to do paper work, and other important errands in life. Maybe she would not have been married at an early age and would have had a decent husband. But because she did not get a good education, this is what her life looks like. Schneider's words are true in the lives of these migrant girls: "Without education, the quality of life of the girls is very different from those with education. There is no physical development as they did not experience childhood" (Schneider 2008, 15).

#### Shanti's Spiritual Health in Light of Being Non-Literate

It has been eight beautiful years since she believed in Jesus Christ. She heard the Gospel through her pastor and he prayed and shared about the peace of Jesus Christ. She found it interesting but joined the church just because it was a command from her husband. But eventually as days went by she received Jesus in her heart and now joins church regularly. Knowing Christ has shown her the true meaning of love. She shares with me, "I am so amazed that my home is now in peace. We do not have violent conflicts like we had before. I wished I had found Christ sooner." For her, prayer means a lot. She recounts:

God gives me what I need even if I do not pray. But most of the time I am happy when God answers my prayers. God has given me so much in my life that nothing compares to His love for me. I wake up early in the morning to pray just like Jesus did. I am happy that Jesus died for me and took away my sins otherwise I would have perished in hell.

For Shanti, reading the Bible herself would help her grow more mature in Christ and be closer to Him. There are many times that when she shares the Word, people ask her where it is written or how does she know if it is true. Instead of convincing them and telling them the truth, she gets trapped into their snare when she cannot defend herself concerning the issues that she is sharing to them. They tell her that the Christians tried to fool her because she does not know to read. She said that almost every time she shares the Word of God, people would say to her, “How do you know? You do not even know to read.” These words are so painful for her. When I asked her if she could share with me any story of Scripture from the Bible, all she said was, “Everything is good and God loves me.”

When I showed her the following pictures she had a different look, like these pictures look familiar. She smiled and I asked her why she was smiling. She said to me I work like this, also. She said she has done all kinds of jobs that are in these pictures.



She confesses to me, “I see myself in those pictures. I do the same kind of work that they do. If only I had gone to school then life would have been different and I probably would have gotten a good job in offices; I would be much happier.” They have to stand like that for hours to finish all the dishes in the house and then wash so many clothes of all the family and clean their big houses, too. After working so hard also, the payment is never enough for their family to cover all the expenses. When I asked about God’s goodness in her life, she explains:

God is always good and has done many good things in my life as well as my husband’s life. He chose me and brought me out of the darkness (Hindu religion). He gave me a peaceful life. In Hindu religion when I prayed, I never received any answer for my prayers, but now in Jesus I receive all my needs. In Hindu religion I had to give coconuts, money, flowers, sweets and many other things to the gods, but now it is God who gives me everything. When I pray, I receive healing in His name.

That is how she sees the power of prayer. Her life is very meaningful to her now unlike before when it was meaningless and she had nothing but pain and sorrow in life. She adds, “I think I am not a mature Christian because I cannot study the Bible on my own and I could hardly understand everything the pastor preaches. But all I know is: Jesus died for my sins and now I am clean.” What a beautiful testimony. She attends Bethesda Church because it is where she received salvation and baptism. She likes the atmosphere of the church and she is happy that she is treated equally like the others; there is no discrimination just because she is uneducated.

### Shanti's Drawing



She drew this drawing with a lot of effort and lot of encouragement. She didn't believe in herself and said "I never drew anything before, how can I draw now?" After she was convinced that she could do it as I wasn't looking for an artistic drawing, she began with her drawing. Once she was done she explained it to me "in this drawing, I have drawn myself. This is me when I was without Jesus Christ. It is my past life when I had many sins and when I had lot of sickness. My life was messed up with pain, sin and sorrow. Now Jesus came into my life and have saved me. I am a new person now and I am clean from my sin and healed from my sickness." She was so happy when she was done with the explanation. She laughed and I perceived she was shy because she was hiding from me on Skype and she was covering her mouth.

### **Integrated Summary on Illiteracy and the Four Migrant Girls in Porvorim, Goa, India**

This study explored whether or not illiteracy affected the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India. This section contains the integrated summary of all the respondents' perceptions to the problem at hand.

#### **Demographic Characteristics of the Four Migrant Girls in Porvorim, Goa, India**

All the four respondents are between the ages of 17-25, of which three girls out of four do not remember their age. They assume that they were married at the age of eleven to thirteen years old. Their socio-economic status is low as the money that they earn is only enough for them to pay the rent and buy food. All four come from Hindu background and did not complete any grade. Their parents never sent them to school as their parents never went to school either. They did not know that they had to go to school. Their parents made them work in the fields and farms and look after younger siblings. They were poor too, which adds to the reason for not attending school. As a case in point, Aarti got spanked on the first day of school and her brother felt bad about it and so he brought her home and they both never went to school again. They felt like going to school when they saw other village children go to school. All of them felt they could have become better persons had they persisted on going to school.

#### **Illiteracy and the Physical Health of the Four Migrant Non-Literate Girls in Porvorim, Goa, India**

Their height is in the range of 4.8 ft to 5.1 ft. and their weight is in the range of 45 kilograms to 60 kilograms. Three of them have normal weight, whereas Aarti is overweight but has no issue with it. All four of them are married and were married at a very young age (eleven

to thirteen) where two of them got married to their cousins from the same village and two of them got married to the same person. They did not have a good married life in the beginning until they met Jesus and their life was changed. They were heart broken and wanted to die. All the husbands of the four respondents used to come home being drunk and beat them up and said curse words to them. For this reason, they could not have proper meals and neither could they have good night's sleep. Even though both husband and wife had jobs, the husband spent all the money on alcohol and tobacco, betel nut, and gambling. The wife, on the other hand, had to take care of all the expenses added up with beatings.

When Rekha got married, she knew that her to-be-husband already had a wife but since he wanted to have children she got married to him in obedience to the order from her parents. He used to bring his workmates home to drink and make both of his wives cook for all of them; if they rejected they had to take the beating and curse words. But since they came to know Jesus Christ, the husband left all those bad deeds behind and now they are at peace.

Three of the respondents do not have children and have just accepted the fact of not having any. Their responses are "What can I do?" Even though they have accepted the fact and have left it in the hands of God, as human beings they feel sad when they see their younger siblings, relatives, and neighbors having children as they give birth even after just one year of marriage. Aarti was not happy having children before she became a Christian. She was tired of everything and troubled in heart for having four children. They did not have any planning to give birth to children and her husband did not support her in taking care of the children either. But now since she knows Jesus, she is very happy about having children.

All four respondents did not have good sleeping patterns. They had sicknesses like fever and colds. Their physical health was not good which was healed after they believed in Jesus

Christ as the respondents indicated. Their sleeping time is just after they eat their dinner and they wake up regularly at 5:00 am or 6:00 am in the morning for devotions. This dramatic change in their lives came after they received Christ as their personal Savior.

#### Illiteracy and the Intellectual Health of the Four Migrant Non-Literate Girls in Porvorim, Goa, India

All four of the respondents cannot count accurately. At the most they know numbers from 1 to 10 and how to round up numbers like 50, 100, 1000 but cannot count in order. They have difficulties in doing shopping, reading medicine prescriptions, signing their names, reading signboards, filling out forms, and cannot make a call. They do not have a formal education as they did not complete any grade and do not know much vocabulary (let alone learn English as the international medium of instruction). Rekha and Shanti cannot read and write while Sunita is still learning with the help of her pastor's elder daughter and Aarti is learning from her own children.

All four respondents work as cleaners and do manual labor. They sweep, mop the floors in offices and houses, wash other people's clothes, take care of the houses, work at the quarry and work in the farm. All four respondents indicated that if only they had a formal education they would have loved to work in offices as managers or computer engineers. They shared that if they had good jobs, they would have enough money to live in a decent house, to take care of families, and build a proper home for their families in their own villages. They also reflected that if they had a good education they would not be sweepers or cleaners, but now they do not have any choice but to earn a living with whatever job that comes their way.

All four respondents realized that if they had only attended school, they would not have gotten married at an early age and would not have receive inhumane beatings from their husbands. All four respondents thought that with a decent job in a nice place, their lives would

be better. They would be able to read the bus number in case of emergencies, talk to people in polite ways and with manners, would know to count money and use cell phones, they would know how to read the signs and directions on the board, they would know how to sign papers, and most of all, they wished they would know how to read the Bible and share the Gospel more effectively.

### Illiteracy and the Spiritual Health of the Four Migrant Non-Literate Girls in Porvorim, Goa, India

At the time of the interview, all four respondents have been Christians for at least three to nine years. Aarti became a Christian five years ago, Rekha became a Christian for the past three years, Sunita became a Christian for the past 9 years and Shanti became a Christian for around 8 years. They came to know Christ through Bethesda Church in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India. All four of them realized that the Hindu religion is nonsense, but with God everything is possible. They realized that in the Hindu religion they had to give offerings to their gods but in Jesus, He grants us our requests. They felt at peace when they heard the Gospel. Aarti and Sunita used to have fever every night for around two years and doctors could not do anything about it. Within a week of attending church, they were healed. Sunita's husband saw that she was healed and he believed also. Knowing Christ has given them peace. Before they had only sickness and sadness, but now they have peace in their house. Sunita had pride in her heart and often fought with her husband and neighbors, but now she is being calm and at peace. Hindu religion only gave them beatings from their husband, but Jesus Christ took away that beating and gave them the true peace that no one can take away.

All four respondents spend a lot of time in prayer. They all wake up early morning to pray. They feel so good and happy when their prayers are answered and know that God will

never say no to their needs when they ask with a true heart. The death and resurrection of Jesus reminds them not to walk in sin but in God's ways. All of them acknowledged that if Jesus did not die for them then they would not be happy and would die being trapped in this world.

All four respondents indicated that it would be very helpful if they knew to read and write as it would help them to grow spiritually. They said it would be easier to share the Gospel as they would understand even deeper when they read and studied the Scriptures by themselves. They would also be able to reflect on the sermon of the preachers. Reading and writing would help them to talk to cults who show up in their houses. They would be able to answer to them directly and not wait for their pastor to give them answers. If they knew to read they would read some Scriptures to defend our faith right at the first time. They would know more about the Word of God. Now they have to depend on the pastor for every question they have and trust the pastor that everything he says is right.

Aarti told about the story of Job that it is one of her favorite stories because God took care of Job even though Satan took everything from him. She wants to be like Job and have faith like him. As a non-Christian she saw herself as Job's wife who told Job to give up on God. Sometimes she felt like giving up everything and dying too. Sunita and Rekha said that they love John 3:16 that says that Jesus came into the world because of God's great love for them. Both respondents believe that Jesus left heaven for their sake and they see themselves as the biggest sinners in the world, but God loved them so much. Shanti could not answer anything.

All four respondents were shown the four pictures. Some of them were shy when they saw these pictures while some laughed or gave a big smile as they saw themselves in the pictures. All four of them indicated they saw themselves in the pictures. Most of the girls in their village do not go to school and therefore they work like that (dish washing, sweeping, washing

clothes). Some people also do not send their sons to school. Their parents and their brothers did not go to school either. Martinez and Fernandez write that “illiterate parents tend to have lower educational expectations and aspirations for themselves and for their children. Poor families often place work before education, due to the opportunity costs of the latter. Thus, children of parents who have failed to complete primary education tend to do the same. A close link has also been found to exist between parents’ schooling and the academic performance of their children (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 8). It seems like this is the case with the family of Aarti as well.

They all have experienced the goodness of God in their lives when He healed them and their husbands stopped drinking alcohol and they received eternal life from God. Aarti also saw the change in her children’s behavior and they are so much better than before, she said. God is teaching her how to take care of her children, especially in their studies. They see the power of prayer when they go for ministry and in their day-to-day life. They saw that Satan is afraid of prayer and how possessed people are healed. They experienced the power of prayer through healing of their family and how God provides for their needs.

All four of them had a thought of committing suicide before they came to know Christ. They felt like dying because they did not have any peace in their house. Every day and every night their husbands used to get drunk and come home, sometimes with friends to party. They got beatings from their husbands and life seemed like hell. But now their life is so good. They are growing spiritually. They wake up early morning for devotions. They feel at peace when they hear the word of God as it gives them strength and encourages them. They memorize Scriptures through the Pastor’s help. They attend Bethesda Church because that is where they received their salvation. They like the church and the pastor as he encourages them. They say that even though the other churches give material things, they like this church as material things will not take

them to heaven. They get to learn a lot about Jesus here and they get a lot of love through the church members which they will not get in the other churches.

#### Perception of the Respondents Based on their Drawings

All four of them were hesitant to draw. They thought to themselves that they could not draw since they had never drawn anything before. After much encouragement they were convinced to make an attempt and were successful at drawing and interpreting their own drawings. Most of them drew about their health before they became Christians. It was not good and had sickness all the time in life. Being sick wasn't the only issue. But meeting the doctor and still not feeling better was one problem while another problem was having difficulty in reading the expiration date on the medicine and also identifying which medicine to take. Illiteracy also left them being unable to achieve what they desire to have in life. Being able to drive a car and have a license is out of their hands. Being unable to read the signboards is disappointing to their lives. They were provided with colored pencils, crayons, glitter, stick figures, erasers, pencils, etc. all they used was just paper and pen. I believe they used only pen and pencil because they were not confident about their drawings. Having to color what we draw takes more effort to think about using the correct colors and the correct shades. Since they have never drawn anything before, they accomplished it with just paper and pen.

All the four case studies had indicated that indeed illiteracy *does* affect the lives of the selected migrant girls in terms of their physical, intellectual, and spiritual health. This chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of data. The next chapter will discuss the summary, findings, conclusion, and recommendations for the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on the summary, findings, conclusion and the recommendations the researcher derived from the data gathered. The summary begins with the identification of the demographic characteristics of the respondents and then goes on to include the major aspects of the literature review that influenced this study. The findings identified the fact that first and foremost, illiteracy *does* affect the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the respondents based on their responses in the conduct of the interviews, their interpretation of the pictures, and their drawings. The findings also identified the consequences of illiteracy as shared by the respondents. The conclusions identified several interpretations based on the findings of the study. Finally, the recommendations indicated specific ways on how the church can provide holistic ministry with the migrant girls who are non-literate in Porvorim, Goa, India and recommendations for further study.

#### **Summary**

This research aims to answer the question: whether illiteracy affects or does not affect the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India? To investigate the physical aspects, I researched about appropriate height, appropriate weight, marital status, prenatal care, sleeping patterns, sickness and BMI. To investigate the intellectual aspects, I

researched about skills in numeracy, level of formal education, skills in reading and writing, work experience, and the difference in life by knowing to read and write. To investigate about their spiritual health, I researched about the age when they came to faith in Christ, how they came to know Christ, the difference in life in knowing Christ, the power of prayer, affect in life with the knowledge of death and resurrection of Christ, how reading and writing would help in life with Christ, how it would help in gaining knowledge about the Bible, important Bible stories or Scriptures in their life, how they responded to the pictures of migrant girls' working, goodness of God, power of God, sense of meaningfulness in life, their Christian life and participation in the church.

The respondents of the study were four non-literate migrant girls, namely Aarti, Sunita, Rekha and Shanti (not their real names) who reside in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India and attend Bethesda Church in the community for more than a year. Their willingness to share about the consequences of illiteracy in their life have given me a new way to look at them. Their expressions, their cries and their apparent shyness while pouring out their hearts to me has inspired me in a different way.

The respondents were interviewed with an open-ended questionnaire and also with a drawing technique. The interview was in the Hindi language and then was transcribed and translated into English and coded to find the consequences of illiteracy on their physical, intellectual, and spiritual health. The research methodology applied was useful in gathering data. The open-ended interview helped the researcher to have a comfortable conversation with the respondents. The researcher was able to gather detailed information by asking more questions beyond the questionnaire. Doing recording was helpful as the researcher could have a direct conversation without having to take

notes. This helped me to see the facial expressions and other reactions given by the respondents. Showing the pictures of migrant girls working in Goa which were similar to the work done by these respondents helped the researcher to see how they see themselves. It helped me as a researcher to understand their feelings about working in those kind of areas rather than having good jobs like they dream of having. Finally, the drawing technique, even though the respondents hesitated to draw, helped me to understand the consequences of illiteracy in another way than that of the interviews. It also helped me to communicate to them that they, in fact, were able to draw.

The New Testament gives abundant evidence that girls and women are now, along with their male counterparts, equal recipients of God's gracious redemption. Jesus found both sexes equally sinful, but also with equal access to God's forgiveness and redemption. For God so loved the world (including the girl child) that He gave His only Son that whoever (girl child included) believes in Him might have eternal life (John 3:16, NIV) (McDermid 2008, 26-27). The respondents know that God forgave their sins and loves them, too. India is a male dominant society and gender discrimination is customized habitually (Sivakumar 2008, 2). Girls born in cultures where they are devalued are especially at risk (Kilbourn 2008, 146). Being made or considered of no value, the girls face different kinds of injustice from their families as well as from their husbands. Women are far behind men in most areas of culture and learning, and they are the saddest victims of this mental and spiritual development (Mangalwadi 1999, 27- 28). Having no education, they feel so unimportant in life for not being able to cope in today's world. Girls inherit their mother's domestic chores and adopt stereotypical gender roles. Low self-esteem and low self-worth are common. After marriage, her husband and

in-laws control her life. Consequently, the girls enter a state of silence (cited in Rao, Vidya, and Sriramya 2015, 212). It was reported as true in the case of these respondents that they have to obey everything that their husband tells them to do. This leads to effects on physical health. If they do not listen then they get beaten up physically by their husbands and which may also cause mental issues. Illiteracy also leads to poor health diets. Poor families often give more importance on earning than education due to the opportunity cost of the latter. The pressing need to work in order to supplement their families is the chief cause of school dropout among young people (Thengal 2013, 130). They are made to work and also take care of their younger siblings. They lack the basic tools of reading and writing that enables them to mature and grow intellectually (Bates 2008, 114). It becomes so difficult for them to read, write and learn the Bible by themselves.

### **Findings**

This study explored whether or not illiteracy affected the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India. In relation to this research, the demographic characteristics, how illiteracy affects the physical, intellectual and the spiritual health of the selected respondents was investigated.

This study consisted of four respondents, migrants from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh (states of India) to Goa. This study was qualitative employing a multiple case study approach. Data was gathered through a semi-structured interview on Skype with each selected respondent in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India. Aside from the interview

responses, another source of data was the drawings of the respondents about their experiences related to their illiteracy in their day-to-day life. The following summarizes how illiteracy affects the physical, intellectual and spiritual health of the selected respondents.

The major finding in the study lies in the fact that illiteracy *does* affect the physical, intellectual, and spiritual life of the migrant girls. The following are the identified consequences of illiteracy based on the self-perceptions of the respondents, their own drawings, and their responses to the four pictures I showed to them.

First, on the consequences of illiteracy on the physical health of the respondents, the following are the aspects identified: (a) illiteracy affected their physical health by getting married at an early age. Based on all their comments, if they had only finished school, then they definitely would not have gotten married so early in life and also would be saved from alcoholic husbands and from their bad treatment. They would not have had children at a young age when they had no idea how to take care of them and had to depend on their parents; (b) As per standard health requirement (as mentioned by my family's doctor, Dr. Nitin Dhupdale and also Beck 2012, 1), persons are supposed to sleep in three hours after we have our meal but all the respondents sleep right after their meal is finished. This leads in improper digestion; (c) they often have colds and fever due to the cold drink that they drink which is a superstition. Illiteracy is an obstacle in their daily life which can affect their health being unable to read the description or the expiry date on the medicines. It hinders their desire to achieve what they want to have in life; and (d) three of them are normal weight, while one is overweight, but is not so troubled by it.

Second, on the consequences of illiteracy on the intellectual health of the respondents, the following are the aspects identified: (a) having no proper education on basic literacy, the respondents were without the knowledge of knowing how to read, write or count. They could count almost until 10 and could identify numbers like 100, 500, 1000 etc. This makes them unable to count money when it comes to buying something or using a pay phone; (b) without proper knowledge on technical things, the respondents felt helpless when it comes to paper work, signatures and using cell phone to make a call or even receive a call; (c) illiteracy shattered their dreams of working in offices. All of the four respondents indicated that had they been educated properly, they would not have to work as sweepers or cleaners but as office managers or computer engineers; (d) illiteracy puts the respondents in danger of not being able to read the public vehicles number in case of emergencies like kidnapping or other such cases. It also puts them in danger when they need to call someone urgently through phone call, it does not allow them to read the sign or directions on the boards on the road, let alone dial the numbers of those they wanted to call; and (e) being educated would also help them in learning to be decent and talk with manners to others.

Third, on the consequences of illiteracy on the spiritual health of the respondents, the following are the aspects identified: (a) illiteracy does not hinder the respondents' coming to Christ. All four of the respondents heard the Gospel through the church members of Bethesda Church. It has been 3 to 9 years since they became Christians. All of them come from Hindu background and have realized that the Hindu religion is nonsense; (b) being unable to read and write makes them to feel that their spiritual growth is stunted. It is difficult for them to study God's Word by themselves, to share the

Gospel without any difficulty, to answer questions that people ask them when they share the Gospel. They cannot read the Bible on their own and have to rely on others even for some simple doctrines of the Bible. They think their life is meaningless and most of the time because of helplessness, they wanted to give up. But meeting Christ does make all the difference in their lives; (c) they all know that Jesus loves them so much and know that they are sinful. They know that when their faith isn't that strong enough, even then Jesus loves them; (d) seeing the pictures, which they relate to themselves, made them feel awkward. They know that they do not have any option but to work as domestic workers or in other areas as quarries or constructions. Illiteracy affects how they see themselves with no self-confidence and low self-esteem. They want to choose not to work in such places but being left with no choice they have to and feel embarrassed about it. Initially they were not ready to do drawing, which showed that they lacked self confidence that they could do it. They felt shy to show me the drawing with lack of self-esteem thinking that they had not done a good job in their drawings; (e) they all have seen God's goodness in their lives through their salvation and the change in their husbands. They experienced it with healing, too. Likewise they also saw power in prayer through casting out demons in Jesus name, through healing and when they received answer for their prayers; (f) meeting Christ has given them a new life and they do not think that their life is meaningless anymore. They know that it is very important as they have peace in Jesus Christ. They have been healed of their sicknesses and have to worry no more; (g) to them, their Christina life is good. They say only if they knew how to read and write they would grow spiritually. But not knowing how to read and write is an obstacle for them to increase in their Christian life; and (h) they attend their current church because that's

where they received their salvation and also get to listen to God's Word better than other churches in the area.

Fourth, on the consequences of illiteracy on the physical, intellectual and spiritual health of the respondents, following are the aspects identified through their drawings: (a) without Christ, Aarti's life was full of sickness. She had no knowledge of God; (b) Illiteracy has kept Sunita from being able to drive a car by herself. Illiteracy has left her handicapped. She is not being able to fulfill her dreams and desires; (c) Being sick is not easy but at the same time, not being able to read the descriptions on medicine makes it worse. Illiteracy has made Rekha open to the dangers of risking life; and (d) Shanti, had a messed up life before she met Jesus Christ. Nothing was good in her life until she became a Christian.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the research conducted, illiteracy did affect in many ways the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the migrant girls in Porvorim, Goa. The following are the conclusions that this study brought forth:

Illiteracy affects the childhood of girls by giving them early into marriage. It pushes them into troubles which they had never thought of before. It gives them bad health issues which then puts their life in danger where they have to take medicine, but cannot read the important things on the medicine. Having no education leads them to be dependent on others and unable to have a free life. It becomes an obstacle to grow in God's Word and learn the Scriptures and study them by themselves.

Illiteracy reduces the income an individual could potentially receive over the course of his or her working life. Lacking the necessary skills and schooling, illiterate

persons are barred from better paying positions or jobs (Martinez and Fernandez 2010, 11). Illiteracy affects income and awareness of rights, and also leads to poor nutrition and health. They lack strength because of poor health and inadequate nutrition.

Illiteracy affects the quality of life of girls without education. They cannot experience childhood as they are made to work in the house and are given into marriage at a very early age. They have to look after their siblings while their parents go for jobs, and are made to work as domestic laborers to supplement their family's income (Schneider 2008, 15).

Illiteracy makes them dependent on others almost all of their life even for basic things like making a call, buying vegetables, reading the Bible, filling out forms, etc. Without education they are deprived of intellectual and cultural development. It makes them dependent and vulnerable to oppression, exploitation and enslavement (Mangalwadi 1999, 39). Denying girls an education is an effective way of silencing them (Schneider 2008, 13).

Illiteracy lowers their self-expectations, it gives them negative attitudes toward themselves and they lack initiative in life. They have no confidence in making decisions in life. It makes them to be dependent on others. Without education, they do not have knowledge of their personal history, or knowledge of the Bible and other great literature. They lack the basic tools of reading and writing that enables them to mature and grow intellectually (Bates 2008, 114).

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are identified to the church and for further study.

### Recommendations to the Church

For their physical needs, the church could engage on the following programs for the enhancement of their health. First, the church could conduct monthly check-ups by a local doctor sponsored by the church since this group of people do not have the funds to pay for a professional. Second, the church could start a “wellness” program which could be holistic in approach. The program can be packaged in such a way that it includes, but are not limited to, the following suggestions: how to take care of babies, “what-to-expect-when-you’re-expecting” (from conception to giving birth) information, whole growth (physical, intellectual stimulation and emotional development), health and hygiene, basic first aid tips and demonstrations, family planning techniques, food preparation, physical fitness, as well as socio-emotional workshops dealing with self-esteem, communication skills, and positive thinking.

For their intellectual needs, the church could start a ministry that would provide opportunities to teach these migrant girls how to read, write, and count. This program should be centered on the learners and not on accomplishing the curriculum. The teachers could be trained first on the characteristics of these migrant girls before they engage in teaching because these types of learners have distinct needs. This program could be after-school classes that could be conducted at night because during the day, these migrant girls are busy with their work. In addition to this, the church could also partner with an organization and gain help to build a school and train teachers to train more young girls. Furthermore, the church may also have vocational activities which can help the migrant girls to be creative and make and sell things on their leisure time apart from their regular work and this can later become their own business.

For their spiritual needs, the respondents indicated that they are happy with the ongoing prayer meetings in the church, but they also said that it would be more beneficial if first they are trained how to read so they could study the Scriptures on their own. The church could also conduct a Vacation Bible School or similar event for young people which could include tutorials for reading and writing to them overcome obstacles such as reading the Bible, taking down notes, filling out forms, signing their names, reading sign boards, counting money, etc. Teaching with visual aids can be a great method for them to learn easily in addition to simple techniques on how to study the Bible and also to share the Gospel more effectively.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

After conducting this research, I realize that there needs to be further studies on the following topics:

- (a) A qualitative study on the best practices on how to teach basic literacy to non-literate girls in areas like Goa;
- (b) A quantitative study on the relationship between illiteracy and the self-esteem of non-literate girls in various states in India;
- (c) A combination of qualitative and quantitative study on how to overcome religious illiteracy among teenagers in Goa;
- (d) A survey on the causes and impact of illiteracy on the lives of at least a thousand non-literate Indian girls for a broader scope.

## APPENDIX A

## Letter to the Selected Respondents

December 2015

Dear ...

Socorro, Porvorim

Goa- India

Dear ... :

Greeting in the name of Jesus Christ!

I hope you are all doing well there. It has been almost two years that I have been away from you. By the grace of God I will finish my studies here in the Philippines.

During my studies, I came across how girls in India suffer by getting no education. I believe you are all eager to learn to read and write and, therefore, I decided to do my study about whether or not illiteracy affects your life in one way or another. The title of my thesis is: “Illiteracy among Selected Migrant Girls in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India: Implications for Holistic Ministry in the Church.” This study is in pursuit of the degree of Master of Arts in Religious Education – Holistic Child Development at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. I hope that through this study our church can engage in a better ministry with you so that with God’s help, you can engage in activities that will enhance your life.

This letter serves as request for permission from you to allow me to interview you about your experiences of illiteracy through Skype. The gathered data will only be used for the purpose of the research and discussed in the thesis. Information from the interviews will be kept confidential by not using your actual names in the thesis. If you have questions about the research and the use of the findings, contact me by asking my sister and I will quickly respond to you.

Your favorable response in this request is highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Riphath Rodrigues

Master of Arts in Religious Education Student

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

## APPENDIX B

## Letter to the Selected Respondents' Husbands

December 2015

Dear ...

Socorro, Porvorim

Goa, India

Dear ... :

Greetings!

I hope you are all doing well there. It has been almost two years I have been away from you. By the grace of God I will finish my studies here in the Philippines.

During my studies I came across how girls in India suffer by getting no education. I believe you are all eager to learn to read and write and so are your wives and, therefore, I decided to do my study whether or not illiteracy affects their life in one way or another. The title of my thesis is: "Illiteracy among Selected Migrant Girls in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India: Implications for Holistic Ministry in the Church." This study is in pursuit of the degree of Master of Arts in Religious Education – Holistic Child Development at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. I hope that through this study, our church can engage in a better ministry with you so that with God's help, you can engage in activities that will enhance your life.

This letter serves as request for permission from you to allow me to interview your wife about her experiences in regard to illiteracy through Skype. The gathered data will only be used for the purpose of the research and discussed in the thesis. Information from the interviews will be kept confidential by not using your actual names in the thesis. If you have questions about the research and the use of the findings, contact me by asking my sister and I will quickly respond to you.

Your favorable response in this request is highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Riphath Rodrigues  
Master of Arts in Religious Education Student  
Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

## APPENDIX C

## Letter to the Selected Respondents' Pastor

December 2015

Dear ...

Socorro, Porvorim

Goa, India

Dear ... :

Greetings in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ!

I hope you are all doing well there. It's been almost two years I have been away from you. By the grace of God I will finish my studies here in the Philippines.

During my studies I came across how girls in India suffer by getting no education. I believe that your church members especially the girls, are eager to learn to read and write and, therefore, I decided to do my study whether or not illiteracy affects their life in one way or another. The title of my thesis is: "Illiteracy among Selected Migrant Girls in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India: Implications for Holistic Ministry in the Church." This study is in pursuit of the degree of Master of Arts in Religious Education – Holistic Child Development at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. I hope that through this study, your church can engage in a better ministry with you so that with God's help, you can engage in activities that will enhance your life.

This letter serves as request for permission from you to allow me to interview the girls in your church about their experiences of illiteracy through Skype. The gathered data will only be used for the purpose of the research and discussed in the thesis. Information from the interviews will be kept confidential by not using your actual names in the thesis. If you have questions about the research and the use of the findings, contact me by asking my sister and I will quickly respond to you.

Your favorable response in this request is highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Riphath Rodrigues

Master of Arts in Religious Education Student

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

## APPENDIX D

## OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GIRLS

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the selected migrant girls?
  - a. Age
  - b. Marital status
  - c. Socio-economic status in terms of income
  - d. Religious Background
  - e. Highest educational grade completed

The first part of the interview questions, which consist of questions about the respondents' physical health. The questions were the following:

2. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the physical health of the selected migrant girls between the age of eleven to eighteen in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India, in terms of?
  - a. What is your height?
  - b. What is your weight?
  - c. Are you married?
    1. At what age were you married?
    2. Can you share with me a bit about how you met your husband?
    3. Can you tell me a bit about how married life has been for you?
  - d. Do you have any children?
    1. Can you talk a bit about your experiences during your pregnancies and childbirth? This question will answer about delivering first baby, abortions, breastfeeding and how many children as we get along discussing on it.

2. How regularly did you have check-ups with the doctor?
3. How many children are surviving?
4. How do you feel about having children? Or, has it been hard for you to not yet have children?
5. How did you manage breast feeding?
  - e. What are your sleeping patterns?
  - f. How often do you have sickness (colds, fever)?

The second part of the interview questions, which consist of questions about the respondents' intellectual health. The questions were the following:

3. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the intellectual health of the selected migrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India, in terms of the following?
  - a. How many numbers can you count or identify?
  - b. Can you share a bit about any formal educational experiences you may have had?
  - c. We've talked before about situations that were difficult for you because you could not read or write. Can you share with me about two or three of those experiences?
  - d. What has been some of your work experiences? If you could read and write, what kinds of work would you like to do?
  - e. What kinds of differences do you feel/think that your ability to read and write would have made in each of those situations? How would that have changed things?

The third part of the interview questions, which consist of questions about the respondents' spiritual health. The questions were the following:

4. Does illiteracy affect or not affect the spiritual health of the selected migrant girls between the age of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India, in terms of the following?
  - a. Can you share a bit about when you came to believe in Jesus Christ?
  - b. Can you share a bit about how you came to believe in Jesus Christ?
  - c. What differences has knowing Christ made in your life?
  - d. How have prayer made a difference in your life?
  - e. How has learning about his death and resurrection affected how you live your life?
  - f. How would the ability to read and write help you in your life with Christ?
  - g. What differences compared to now, would reading and writing make in your understanding of the Bible?
  - h. What Bible stories or Scriptures have been important for you to learn about how much Jesus loves and cares for you? How did you see yourself in the story?
  - i. The interviewee will be shown two or three photos or drawings that might show a scene from the life of a migrant girl in Goa. She will be asked to describe what she sees or to tell a story about the picture and then talk about how learning to read or write might change the picture. Or the photo could show a scene in her place and she could be asked to tell how she would fit into it. What would she be doing in that scene?

- j. How have you experienced the goodness of God in your life?
- k. How have you felt the power of God working in your life?
- l. How important do you think is your life?
- m. How would you describe your Christian life now?
- n. Why do you attend your present church?

Finally, the fourth part of the interview questions, which consist of questions about the recommendation for the church. The questions were the following:

- 5. What recommendations can be offered for holistic ministry to the local church in terms of the following:
  - a. What would you suggest to the church to improve the physical health needs?
  - b. Are there any areas where you think the church can help you grow intellectually?
  - c. What can the church do to improve your spiritual needs?

## APPENDIX E

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Illiteracy and the Selected Immigrant Girls in Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India:  
Implications for Holistic Ministry in the Church

## Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to identify how illiteracy affects or does not affect the physical, intellectual, and spiritual health of the selected immigrant girls between the ages of eleven to eighteen in Porvorim, Goa, India.

## Friendly Greeting!

- I began with talking to my assistant and made sure that she had everything in place (drawing paper, pencil/pen, coloring markers, crayons, and eraser, and other drawing materials).
- Then I began with my respondent with some friendly conversation to put her at ease. I reassured her that I was not looking for “right answers.” What we wanted to know is what she thought about the questions.
- And then I did a test of the video recorder. I asked her about the following: name, age, marital status, socio-economic status in terms of income, religious background; highest educational grade completed and about how she is doing. I asked these in a non-invasive way.
- Then I rewound and listened to the recording to be sure the recorder was picking up her voice clearly.
- I kept the recorders going to catch all her comments (unless she drew or wrote quietly for several minutes).

- Then I began with my research questions which are indicated in Appendix D of this paper. Since it is an open-ended questionnaire I asked more questions depending on the replies that I received from her.

## APPENDIX F

## Letter to the Selected Respondents in Hindi

December, 2015

Priya ...  
Socorro, Porvorim  
Goa- India

Priya ... :

Yesu Masih Ke naam mein salaam!

Aasha rakhti hu ki aap sab tikh hai. Yahan aaye huye toh kariban do saal ho gaye. Yesu ki krupa se mein meir padayi Philippines mein puri kar sakti hu.

Mere sikne ke samay mein mhuje malum padha ki Bharat mein ladkiyan kitne mushkil ke din guzarte hai. Mein manti hu ki aap sabko padne aur likne mein bahut umid hai, isliye meine nischay liya hai ki mein apni padayi “niraksharta hamare jivan mein kya prabhav karti hai” ispar karungi. Mere thesis ka shirshak hai “Niraksharta chune hui aapravasi ladkiyo ke bich, Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India: Kalisiya mein Samagrah mantralay ke Nihitharth. Ye padayi mere masters of Arts in Religious Education, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary main puri karne ke liye hai. Mein aasha rakhti hu ki is padayi ke douran hamari kalisiya aur bhi acche kaam kar sakti hai taki aap Prabhu ke aadhar mein dusre dusre kriyayem mein bhag le sakein aur aapka jivit behtar ho sake.

Ye khat mein aapki anumati lene ke liye likhti hu, taki mein apka sashaktar, Skype par karu, apke niraksharta ke anubhav ke bhare main. Aapki sab baatein hamare bich rahengi aur sirf mere thesis mein istamal kiye jayenge. Aap jo bhi mujhe batayenge, vo sab gupit rahega aur aapka naam istamal nahi kiya jayega. Agar aapko kuch prashna hai mere padayi ke bhare mein to krupa karti hu ki aap mere behen Flovina se puchiye aur mein aapke saval ka uttar jaldi dene ki koshish karungi.

Is anurodh mein aapke anukul pratikriya atyadhik sarahna ki hai.

Aapki,

Riphath Rodrigues  
Master of Arts in Religious Education Student  
Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

## APPENDIX G

## Letter to the Selected Respondents' Husbands in Hindi

December, 2015

Priya

Socorro, Porvorim

Goa- India

Priya bhayi

Salaam!

Aasha rakhti hu ki aap sab tikh hai. Yahan aaye huye toh kariban do saal ho gaye. Yeshu ki krupa se mein meir padayi Philippines mein puri kar sakti hu.

Mere sikne ke samay mein mhujhe malum padha ki Bharat mein ladkiyan kitne mushkil ke din guzarte hai. Mein manti hu ki aapko aur aapki patni ko padne aur likne mein bahut umid hai, isliye meine nischay liya hai ki mein apni padayi "niraksharta hamare jivan mein kya prabhav karti hai" ispar karungi. Mere thesis ka shirshak hai "Niraksharta chune hui aapravasi ladkiyo ke bich, Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India: Kalisiya mein Samagrah mantralay ke Nihitharth. Ye padayi mere masters of Arts in Religious Education, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary main puri karne ke liye hai. Mein aasha rakhti hu ki is padayi ke douran hamari kalisiya aur bhi acche kaam kar sakti hai taki aap Prabhu ke aadhar mein dusre dusre kriyayem mein bhag le sakein aur aapka jivit behtar ho sake.

Ye khat mein aapki anumati lene ke liye likhti hu, taki mein apka sashaktar Skype par aapke bhivi se karu, uske niraksharta ke anubhav ke bhare main. Uski sab baatein hamare bich rahengi aur sirf mere thesis mein istamal kiye jayage. Vo jo bhi mujhe batayengi, vo sab gupit rahega aur uska naam istamal nahi kiya jayega. Agar aapko kuch prashna hai mere padayi ke bhare mein to krupa karti hu ki aap mere behen Flovina se puchiye aur mein aapke saval ka uttar jaldi dene ki koshish karungi.

Is anurodh mein aapke anukul pratikriya atyadhik sarahna ki hai.

Aapki,

Riphath Rodrigues  
Master of Arts in Religious Education Student  
Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

## APPENDIX H

## OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GIRLS IN HINDI

1. Apravasi ladkiyo ki janasanakhyikey lakshan kya hai?
  - a. Umar
  - b. Vaivahik stithi
  - c. aay ke maamale men saamaajik-aarthik sthiti
  - d. Dharmik prushtbhoomi
  - e. Acchatam shakshi gred pura?
  
2. Niraksharta kis hadh tak, gyara se atahra saal ki umra ke bich apravasi ladkiyo, Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India sharirik swasthai ke mamle mein prabhavit karta ya nahi karta hai?
  - a. Aap ki uchayi kya hai?
  - b. Aapka vajan kya hai?
  - c. Kya aap shadi shuda hai?
    - a. Aap ki umra kya ti shadi ke samay?
    - b. Aap apne pati se kaise mili?
    - c. Aapka shadi-shuda jivan kaisa hai?
  - d. Aapke koi bacchhe hai?
    - a. Aapke garbhadhaaran aur prasav ka anubhav kaisa tha? Yah prashna pehle bachhe ka janm, garbhapaat, stanapaan, aur kitne bacche hai/the iska jawab dega.

- b. Gharbadhaaran ke samay aap dactar se niyमित मिली?
  - c. आप के किने बच्चे जिंदगी हैं?
  - d. आप को बच्चे हैं इसीलिए कैसा लगता है? आपको बच्चे नहीं हैं इसीलिए आपको कोई दुःख है?
  - e. आपने स्तनपाण कैसे किया?
- e. आपके सोने का और जगने का समय क्या है?
  - f. आप किनी बार बीमार होती हो?
3. निरक्षरता किस हद तक, ग्यारह से अठारह साल की उमर के बीच अग्रवासी लड़कियों, Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India भौतिक स्वस्थता के मामले में प्रभावित करता या नहीं करता है?
- a. आप किनी संख्या गिन सकती हो?
  - b. आपका औपचारिक शिक्षण क्या है?
  - c. आपको किनी तकलीफ होती है पढ़ने और लिखने को न आने से?
  - d. आपने कौन कौनसा काम किया है? आपका अनुभव बतायेंगे? अगर आपको पढ़ना लिखना आता तो आप कौनसा काम करती थीं?
  - e. आपके पढ़ने और लिखने की योग्यता होने में, क्या अंतर होता उन चीजों में? कैसे चीजों में बदलाव होता?
4. निरक्षरता किस हद तक, ग्यारह से अठारह साल की उमर के बीच अग्रवासी लड़कियों, Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, India आध्यात्मिक स्वस्थता के मामले में प्रभावित करता या नहीं करता है?
- a. आप कब मसीह में विश्वास करने के लिए आयी थीं?
  - b. आप कब मसीह में विश्वास करने के लिए आयी थीं?

- c. Yeshu masih ko pehchankar aapka jivan kaise badla?
  - d. Prathna aapke jivan mein kya badlav laya?
  - e. Uske marne aur ji utne se aapke jivan ko kaise prabhavit kya?
  - f. Padne aur likne ki योग्यता masihi jivan mein kya aadhar karti?
  - g. Padne aur likneki jaankari, Prabhu ke vachan ko samajne mein kya tulana hai?
  - h. Kaunsi Bible kahani ya varse, Prabhu ke pyar ke bare mein, aapke jivan mein mahatvapurn hai? Aapne aako us kahani mein kaise dekha?
  - i. Eusko ek pravaasee mahila ke jeevan se ek drshy dikha ke do ya teen tasveeren dikhayege. Voh jo tasveer mein kya dikta hai uska varnan karne ke liye batao aur baad mein padna aur likna us tasveer ko kaise badal sakti hai, ye batao. Wo tasveer uska gau dika sakti hai. Usko pucho voh us tasveer mein kya kar rahi hoti?
  - j. Aapne Parmeshwar ki acchayi kaise anubhav kiya?
  - k. Aap Paarmeshwar ki shakti ka anubhav kaise kiya?
  - l. Aapka jivan kitna mahatvapurnn hai aapko lagta hai?
  - m. Aapka Chriti jivan aap kaise varnan karegi?
  - n. Aap apne vartman kalisiya mein kyun bhag le rahi ho?
5. Kalisiya ko kaise anushanshye, samagr mantralay ke liye de sakte hai?
- a. Aap shaareerik svaasthy jarooraton ko sudhaar karane ke lie kalisiya ke lie kya sujhaav hai?
  - b. Aap bhautik svaasthy jarooraton ko sudhaar karane ke lie kalisiya ke lie kya sujhaav hai?

- c. Aap adhyatmik svaasthy jarooraton ko sudhaar karane ke lie kalisiya ke lie kya sujhaav hai?

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