

Educational Scenario of Women and Girls in the North East India In a Changing Milieu

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Today, in the age of globalization, the role of women is very significant to form a new society which is an aware, alert and advance. The women has played the key role in literature and life both. Sometimes, women were elevated as goddess and sometimes as object or maid. The complete picture of Indian women is portrayed well in Indian literature.

The inherent strength of the society, culture and system is judged by the way its women are treated and the important assignment to them by the society, Swami Vivekananda the great socio-religion revolutionary saint observed that the country, which had no respect for womanhood could never become great. Today we may be proud that the country has made remarkable achievements in many fields. However, in spite of such progress, over more than sixty seven years after independence, our country still has a large number of illiterates in the world.

Nations all over the world have omitted themselves to achieve gender equality and equality of cherished goal that ensures human face of development. This commitment has once again been reiterated by 192 signatory countries for achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2010. The MDG has stressed upon gender equality and women's empowerment, an agenda that needs to be prioritized by all countries (A seminar proceeding) at Budha College of Education, Haryana.

The constitution of India not grants equality to women but empowers the state to adopt affirmative measures in favour of women. The preamble to the constitution resolves to secure to all its citizens, justice, socio-economics, political and liberty of thought and expression.

The great Indian reforms like Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda, Vivekananda had expressed the role women in Indian society. They expressed that in her role of mother; a woman not only undergoes the ordeal of maternity but also faces daunting problems nurturing her children. Motherhood is an assertion of a woman's creative power as the pinnacle of her glory. It is said that the father is a hundred times more venerable than the teacher, but the mother is a thousand times more venerable than father.

The North-Eastern states of India have a unique geographical location nestled in the lap of Eastern Himalaya range. They are rich reservoir of natural resources flora and fauna and known for its mineral wealth, coal, gas and petroleum. Majority of population are engaged in agriculture, handicraft, weaving and allied sectors. The region has sizable tribal population. The growing forces of globalization and consumerism have impacted the rigid boundaries of family system, specially the status of girls and woman in the family, workplace, and in the society. There are many complex factors that have overtly and covertly impact the pictures egalitarian landscape of the North- Eastern states. It is observed that women of North- East increasing participation in education and service sectors which changes the women status.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to analyze the girls and woman's educational scenario specially primary and upper primary school of the North-East Indian and explain a changing milieu.

Analysis of Education:

It is notable that in the North-East the educated mothers and daughters are considered as an economic and social assert to the family. Females have always participated in any work specially in agriculture which has resulted in economic development of women leading to favourable sex ratio. Therefore, it is seen that the birth of girl child is not a problematic issue neither burden to the family specially in Assam, Arunachal, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya.

Form the **Table-I**, it appears that male and female literacy in the North-East in relatively good. The different between male and female literacy rate except for Arunachal and Assam is narrow. In Meghalaya, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh male literacy is less than the national overage of male literate. It is more interesting, the female literacy of the North-East is considerably high. The female literacy rate in the North East seems to be quite satisfactory and in majority of the cases it is above the national average except Arunachal Pradesh.

Table-I: Literacy Rates in North-East states of India by Sex, 2011(%)

States/India	Persons	Male	Female
Assam	73.18	78.81	67.27
Arunachal Pradesh	66.95	73.69	59.57
Nagaland	80.11	83.29	76.69
Manipur	79.85	86.49	73.17
Mizoram	91.58	93.72	89.40
Meghalaya	75.48	77.17	73.78
India	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source: Census of Indian, 2011

The Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (SSA) flagship programme of govt of India 2002-2003. Under this programme numbers of primary and upper primary schools have been opened in the country. It is result accessible to more and more children to school. Over 98% children are estimated to have access to primary schooling within 1Km. Of their habitant and 92% to and upper primary school within 3Km of their habitant. Such a facility has improved the schooling scenario in the North-East region. The Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is also improved the educational facilities in primary and upper primary level in this area. Programme of Action (POA) introduce in 1992. It envisaged an upper primary school for every set of two primary schools. Lower ration means availability of upper primary schools for the existing primary schools.

Table-2 shows the ration of primary to upper primary schools. In Arunachal Pradesh, one upper primary school for every set of more than four primary schools. In Assam the ratio is three. But in Mizoram, an upper primary school for every set of less than two primary schools. It impacts both access and retention of children.

Table-2:

Ratio of Primary and Upper Primary schools in the North-East States

State	Ratio
Arunachal Pradesh	4.2
Assam	3.00
Manipur	2.6
Meghalaya	3.1
Mizoram	1.4
Nagaland	2.2

Source: University News Vol-51, No.12,2013; G. Srivastava and M.Yadav

Enrolment Scenario:

The Table-3 shows the enrolment position of primary and upper primary school managed by government the gender disparities is minimal Manipur, Nagaland and Meghalaya have more girls enrolled from I- VIII classes, which indicates there is no bias in sending girls to school in these states.

**Table-3: Shows enrolment of the boys and girls in primary and upper primary school
(managed by Govt)**

States/India	Class I-VIII(%)	
	Boys	Girls
Assam	50.34	49.66
Arunachal Pradesh	51.57	48.43
Nagaland	49.31	50.69
Manipur	48.38	51.62
Mizoram	51.27	48.73
Meghalaya	49.34	50.66
India	50.45	49.55

Source: Elementary Education in India, P-88, 2008-09, NUEPA, New Delhi

In private managed school, gender disparities in enrolment are low. Parents in the North-East prefer to send their sons to private school than daughter. However, in Meghalaya and Assam the position is slightly different. The enrolment of girls is slightly higher than boys in these two states as shown in the Table-4

**Table-4: Shows the enrolment of boys and girls in Primary and Upper Primary school, 2008-09
(Private School)**

States/India	Class I-VIII (%)	
	Boys	Girls
Assam	49.82	50.18
Arunachal Pradesh	55.47	44.53
Nagaland	52.41	47.59
Manipur	51.31	48.69
Mizoram	51.64	48.36
Meghalaya	48.85	51.15
India	55.26	44.74

Challenges in Women's Education in North-East:

Women in North-East India enjoy more mobility and economic freedom than women in the other parts of the country though sons are more preferable than daughter in case of offering education. It is observed from the Table-5, the mother and the father gives more preference on sons than daughter for education. But, in Meghalaya, mother gives more preference to daughter than son. In Assam and Manipur percentage of father and mother offering education to girl child is very minimal. Though, it is slight greater than country as a whole in case of father side.

Table-5: Shows the Father and the Mother who give more preference sons than daughter for education.

States/India	Mother		Father	
	<i>More preference To sons than Daughter %</i>	<i>More preference To sons than sons%</i>	<i>More preference To sons than Daughter %</i>	<i>More preference To sons than sons%</i>
<i>Assam</i>	24.1	2.1	17.9	2.8
<i>Arunachal</i>	28.3	5.0	30.3	3.2
<i>Manipur</i>	28.5	4.2	34.7	3.3
<i>Mizoram</i>	29.0	22.7	43.5	14.7
<i>Meghalaya</i>	11.9	17.0	21.5	13.5
<i>Nagaland</i>	21.4	9.8	28.4	5.0
<i>India</i>	22.4	2.6	20.0	2.0

Source: Statistics on Women in India, 2010, National Institution of Public Corporation and Child Development, Page-117

Dropout Rate :

The dropout rate is gradually decreased in North East states, though this dropout process is going on from class I to XII. The table -6 shows the high percentage of dropout students in megalaya , Nagaland, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh . It is observed that the boy students are not interested to go to schooldue to their social environment. The girls students drop their school mainly because of go for wage earning, looking after siblings , domestic activities and financial constraints.

The table -6 shows the dropout of students rate fro class I to XII(%)

States/India	Class I-XII (%)	
	Boys	Girls
Assam	77.41	77.82
Arunachal Pradesh	65	64.7
Nagaland	75.69	73.97
Manipur	57.82	55.71
Mizoram	64.79	60.72
Meghalaya	79.31	76.46
India	53.38	51.97

Source: Statistics of school Education 2009-10,Dept. Of Higher Education, NHRD, New Delhi ,P-60

Best practices in North East:

North East states there are existing good practices that can be emulated and adopted as per requirement. There is an organization, North east Network that works towards empowerment and raising the status of girls and women. It works towards inclusion of women in all development discourses and governances.

The activities of national literacy mission have played a key role in promotion of literacy among the people of north east . this programme was introduced in 1988, to impart functional literacy to literates inclusive of male and female population.

Conclusion:

The educational scenario in the North East , it is seen that minimal gender disparity and relatively better participation of girls in all level of education. Though there is still a need for addressing quality concerns. Some of the motivational schemes have crucial impact on access, enrolment and retention are textbooks, scholarship, uniform and attendance scholarship. These schemes have to be revisited to ensure timely availability, better quality, enhancement in quantity keeping in tune with cost of living index , difficult terrain and local food habits of people. Improving the skill based (vocational) education at the secondary level and link with cottage, handicraft industries for self employment.

A resource group should be sent to the North East states for monitoring, from center , state and districts. It may be provide better implementation of schemes that focus on overall development of girls and women. This resource group could also deliberate upon social and cultural impediments that adversely impact the status of women. In this context . efforts could be made to evolve strategies that are drawn from people's perspective in providing sustainable solution.

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