

A Study of Girl Child Education: Awareness of Mothers in Rural Areas of Kamalapur Mandal, Hanamkonda District

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of Indian women has been over the years mainly confined to that of a house wife and child bearer. In almost all the religions the image of women in India was more or less the same. She was completely depended upon men economically, socially, politically and in religious rituals. Added to these few things, more restrictive norms were prescribed for women since Manu's days. She was prevented from participating in a number of activities or expressing herself as a full-fledged individual.

In the recent years, it seems that there is a considerable change in the status of women in our society. Even though, the change is not uniform among all the sections of the women. The change in their status differs from section to section. The overall impact of such change has touched the women of different sections differently.

The role and functions of women like of other members of the society also got modified in accordance with changing situations and cultural settings. The existing cultural pattern and women's position decide her social role at a given period.

Education is one of the most powerful instruments in bringing desirable changes in a society. Generally in any society, women constitute half of its total population. In our Indian society, the literacy percentage among women is comparatively low. There is a general feeling that educated mother will help her wards in their education. And they will have

preference, in terms of the education of their child.

The situation of Indian child is all the more pathetic because of the majority of parents are illiterate especially in rural areas. They do not give importance and seriousness to the education of their children.

Psychologists believed that for a child the first acquaintance is mother. But because a large majority of mothers are illiterate, they fail to show any concern towards the educational development of their children in general and the girl child in particular.

Despite substantial progress in providing equal educational opportunities over the past few decades, girls' access to education lags behind boys'. The dropout rate at all levels is higher for girls than for boys. Several reasons are proposed for this state of affairs. The cultural definition of women as wives and mother, such an imperative to marry and have children minimizes the necessity of formal education.

Most of the rural families live in poverty or near to poverty level. In such families, it is a must that both the men and women work outside to earn for family, obviously girl children in the family will help the elders or take the responsibility of whole house hold work thus have a lesser chance to have the schooling.

Factors Responsible for Poor Female Literacy Rate Especially in Rural Areas

Historically, a variety of reasons have been stated to be responsible for poor female literacy

- Gender based inequality

- Social discrimination and economic exploitation
- Occupation of girl child in domestic chores
- Low enrollment of girls in school
- Traditional barriers towards girl child education
- Low retention rate and high dropout rate
- Lack of awareness towards girl child education
- Non-adoption of family planning measures in the family
- Lack of toilet facilities in the schools for girls
- Lack of encouragement in the family

Female Literacy – Changing Attitudes

Education is the “*Kundalini Shakti*” of female’s advancement in the society. Bharat must blush as long as these gender invidiousness persons over ethos. The door to enter and achieve excellence, the route to move and reach power are today barred defect when female claim certain offices and opportunities. The importance of literacy is widely recognized all over the world. It is responsible for the recognition of a large section of people in the field of economic and social development.

The UNESCO survey of 1966 revealed that half of the population of the world is illiterate. The figures of illiteracy show that it is concentrated in underdeveloped countries. As a part of minimum needs program, education was introduced in this country in 1977, the aim was to achieve certain level of literacy among large number illiterates. Since it was based on innumerable studies and observation that illiteracy is one of the major impediments of the development. This is more relevant for females.

Illiteracy is an obstacle for socio-economic progress of rural communities. Education is expected to aim at providing immediate benefits of social consciousness. The growth of literacy since 1901 has been extremely slow. At present, out of every three persons in India, two are illiterate. Illiteracy is the highest among females and in rural areas.

Mahila Samakya and Girls’ Education Interface

The National Policy on Education (NPE) – 1986 envisages that education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women in order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past; there will be a well-conceived edge favor of women. This will be an act of faith and social engineering. The entire national education system would gear to plan, and to play, a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. Since education for women’s equality is a vital component of the overall strategy of securing equity and social justice in education. The revised Programme of Action (POA) – 1992 emphasizes the provision of special support services and removal of factors which result in discrimination against women at all levels of education. Indeed what come out clearly in the POA-1992 are the need for will to implement and the need for institutional mechanisms to ensure that gender sensitivity is reflected in the very implementation of educational programmes across the nation.

Mahila Samakya

Mahila Samakya is a movement of empowerment of women funded by the Central Government. It provides an important space for girls’ education. Mahila Samakya has played a significant role in total literacy campaigns in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Objectives

- Enhancing the self-image and self-confidence of women;
- Providing women necessary support structures which care for women’s pace and rhythm of learning in the context of their multiple household and agricultural priorities;
- Building mechanism to enable working adolescent girls whether informal or formal sectors, to get opportunities for formal and non-formal education;
- Revitalizing the existing educational structure and building mechanism for ensuring that women monitor their own education and that of their children;

- Creating a cadre of educated rural women through Mahila Samoochs for prompting an environment supportive to the goals of a women's programmed;
- Improving people's capacity to absorb various educational inputs as a result of effective mobilization for education.

As the Mahila Samakya approaches to women, empowerment moves towards attaining these objectives, it has sought guidance from following inviolable negotiable principles

- Women participants in the village determine the norm, nature content and timing of all activities in their village; first, an "environment of learning is to be created;
- Education is understood as a process which enables women to question conceptualize seek answers, act and reflect on their actions, and raise new questions; it short education is not to be confused with mere literacy;
- Women's priorities for learning must always be respected; what women decide to learn first may not be necessarily reading and writing; acceptance that given the time, support and catalysts for such reflection, women seek knowledge with which to gain greater control over their lives;
- The educational process and methodology must be based on respect for women's existing knowledge, experience and skill;
- A participatory selection process is followed to ensure that project functionaries at all levels are free of caste and/or community prejudices and are committed to working among poor women

Sita Marhi Case Study

Objectives, methodology although the present case study is qualitative in scope and nature, an attempt is made to find out through quantitative techniques the diverse constituents which form the integral structure of the interface between Mahila Samakya and development of girls' education by means on following objectives and methodologies.

Objectives of Mahila Samakya

- To study the process of constitution of Mahila Samakya at various levels.
- To find out the scope for and role of Mahila Samakya in influencing girls' education and find out how much Mahila Samakya is consciously providing for girls' education.
- To ascertain the change and improvement brought out by Mahila Samakya and enrolment and attendance of girls in primary schools.
- To examine the specific role of Jag Jagi Kendras in promoting girls' education in rural areas.

1.2. Need of the Study

Education plays a vital role in ensuring a better quality of life for all children and a better world for all people. But if girls are left behind, those goals can never be achieved.

Century after century, educating girls, yields spectacular social benefits for the current generation and those to come. An educated girl tends to marry later and have fewer children. The children she desires will have the higher rate of survival. They will be better nourished and better educated. She will be more productive at home and better paid in the work place and assume a more active role in social, economic and political decision making throughout her life.

Enrollment and retention in schools are considered today as crucial factors for a literate society. In the case of girls, both initial enrolments as well as retention are major problems. In rural areas, girls are busy at home in sibling and household care, in fetching fuels fodder and water or in earning a day's wage. Therefore, the problem of education of women is not only access, uniform curriculum and education facilities but it also a problem that is closely related with our tradition and socio-economic structure of the society.

Thus, the integrated learning programs for women have to be universalized which will not only emphasis on literacy but also on

empowering mother's through awareness building on the necessity of education girls, social issues, bring about attitudinal change, promoting skill training for employment.

The biggest challenge before the government and NGO's is to create awareness and sensitization among people at all levels, especially in rural areas, about the special needs of women and girls, and that imparting education to women is great service to society as this vital section of society remained deprived and neglected from the very beginning. There is a need to initiate affirmative and real action in favor of women which will ensure the women to right to food, shelter, health, education and employment.

Statement of the Problem

The present study entitled as "A Study of Girl Child Education: Awareness of Mothers in Rural Areas of Kamalapur Mandal, Hanamkonda District".

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The present research has undertaken with the following objectives

- To ascertain the importance given by rural women to the educational needs of their girl child.
- To ascertain the level of awareness among women and their attitude towards girl child education.
- To study the relationship between social status of women and their attitude towards girl child education.
- To study the relationship between economic status of women and their attitude towards girl child education.
- To study the relationship of mothers' education with that of their educational aspiration towards their girl child.

1.6. Hypotheses

- The rural mothers have higher level of awareness with regard to their male children's education over the female children's education.

- Mothers with high socio-economic status have better educational awareness girl on their girl child's education.
- Mothers with higher educational qualifications have better educational awareness regarding their children than the less educated mothers.
- Mothers with more family income have better educational awareness regarding their girl child education over the mothers with low family income.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Girl Education in Rural Areas (*Devendra. K*) (Girl Child and Social Change)

Constitutional articles and laws relating to protection of women and a girl child before birth, a female child is at risk of fetal death. After birth a girl child is at risk of child care of younger siblings, house work, and lack of education. The SAARC summit declared 1990 the year of girl child. UN conventions and a world summit focused on the rights of the child. A child has a right to freedom from exploitation, neglect and abuse, and access to food and health care, and education.

Articles 14, 15 & 16 of India's Constitution guarantee protection from discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth and equality of opportunity in public employment. Article 23 prohibits trafficking in humans and forced labor.

Article 24 prohibits child labors under the age of 14 years. Article 39 assures economic pressure to work in jobs unsuitable to a child's age and strength. Article 51 prohibits derogatory practices against women. Article 325 & 326 prohibits sex discrimination.

Mothers' Awareness towards Girl Child Education

In rural areas, the mothers are the main work sharers in the family, most of the mothers preferred the highest positions for their male child and only inferior position to their first female child.

Most of the mothers in rural areas are illiterates; they undertook the major portion of the girls earlier

work burden. In the segment of household activities, it is observed that mothers shared majority of kitchen related activities.

A National Plan of Action for the girl child for 2011-2021 has been drawn up by the government. The plan recognizes the rights of girl child to equal opportunity to be free from hunger illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation. as the decade of girl child in order to increase *public awareness* and *parental awareness*, for the value of girl child education to ensure their participation in programmes of child development, health, nutrition and education and to create a positive environment to allow girls to develop into productive young women.

Reasons for never attending / dropping out of girl child: age group of 6 to 17 years in rural areas

	Reasons	Girls in Rural Areas
I	Never attended school	
	%	25.7
	School far away	25.2
	Education not necessary	13.1
	Required for work at home	24.5
	Cost too much	23.8
	Not interested in studies	15.9
	Other	15.4
	Don't know	2.1
	Total	100.0
II	Dropped out of school	
	%	12.6
	School far away	7.5
	Education not necessary	4.3
	Required for work at home/outside	26.2
	Cost too much	11.4
	Not interested in studies	24.8
	Repeated failure	3.7
	Other (Don't know)	22.2
	Total	100.0

3.SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

On the whole, the present study revealed that the mothers in rural areas are not uniform in their aspiration levels with regard to the education of their children.

The factors affecting educational opportunities are numerous and cross-cutting. Possibly the firmest generalization regarding social selectivity in the education of girls is that socio-economic status of parents has more influence on the schooling of girls than of boys. This clearly reflects the secondary position that is accorded to the female children even by their own mothers. This influence is widely seen in the rural localities in general and more particularly among disadvantaged ethnic groups. This requires a thorough scrutiny in order to improve the status of women in the society.

The gap in girl's education is attributed to apathy and resistances of parents, unfavorable attitudes towards coeducation, poverty of parents, shortage of schools, and poor quality of instruction are considered to be impediments. Girl's continuing education should be ensured by incentives such as free books and cloths etc. School timings are to be conducive to the work schedules of the parents and seasons. Communities need to create a demand for rural girl children's education (as a prerequisite for the overall development of the society).

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