

A Survey on Education of Girls at the Elementary Stage in Mokokchung Town

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Abstract

Socialization of the girl child in our country seems to have followed a set pattern where she has been trapped and molded by deep rooted combined cultures of Patriarchy and Hierarchy. In a society the education of the girl is as necessary as that of the boy. It has become a world-wide need and therefore, the girl child must be given all the means of participating in the building of the world. The need and importance of the study of the girls' elementary education is that, education alone can develop in a girl child the skill to appreciate her home, to recognize her duties and responsibilities, to appreciate the value of co-operative and democratic living. There is therefore a need to change in the perception of the social worth of girls and need to strengthen self image, self esteem and status of girls' education.

1. Introduction

Elementary education is one of the most important stages of teaching-learning process of a child's life, because it is a period of transition from childhood to adolescence. At this stage several physical, cognitive and emotional changes take place in a child, especially a girl child. They are also able to think logically in terms of all the hypothetical situations related to a particular problem. National commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the 6-14 years age group is now a Fundamental Right of every child in India after the passing of the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act in December, 2002. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or 'Education for All' programme recognizes that ensuring girl's education requires changes not only in the education system but also in the societal norms and attitudes. A two-pronged gender strategy has therefore been adopted, to make the education system responsive to the needs of the girls through targeted interventions which serve as a pull factor to enhance access and retention of girls in schools and on the other hand, to generate a community demand for girls' education through training and mobilization. In addition, to target pockets where girls' education is lagging behind, the Government of India has launched two focused interventions for girls- the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level(NPEGEL) and the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya(KGBV) to reach out the girls from marginalized social groups in over 3272 educationally backward blocks in the country where the female rural literacy is below the national average and the gender gap in literacy is above the national average.

A girl child in Nagaland is more privileged than any girl in India. They are given the needed freedom to lead their life and also in education there is as much liberty and equality as that of the boys. The education facilities and system are quite open to girls and in educating them. Many steps and efforts have been carried out by various organizations for the uplift of girls' education in Nagaland. The Nagaland Education Mission society has also administered schemes like the SSA, RMSA, Model schools schemes, Girls' hostel scheme and Mahila Samakhyas Scheme as a single mission. In 2010-11 Government has proposed to upgrade the 51 EGS (Education guarantee scheme) centers to GPS especially in urban areas in order to provide all children access to school as enshrined in the Right to Education Act. Today with the increasing number of educational institutions, the number of girls in all the levels and types of education has also increased during the last decades.

2 Importance of the study

Education is the most important asset we have because our knowledge is the type of wealth that will remain no matter what and the more we share it the more it increases. However, basic knowledge starts with elementary education which is very essential for the advancement to higher levels of education in the teaching-learning system. Elementary education in Nagaland comprises of Class 1 to class 8, covering primary school education (Class 1 to class 6) and middle school education (class 5 to class 8). Though there has been remarkable quantitative spread in education, elementary education is faced with alarming problems of untrained teachers, differences in rural and urban school performance, teachers accountability, poor achievements, poor maintenance of school infrastructure and quality education.

Among children in the age group of 6-14, a great number of them are not attending schools because of the differences of parents and that of poverty which compels the children to work at home. Since girls are more useful at home a good number of them are occupied in domestic work. If only girls' elementary education is rightly set up then, their retention in school will be longer and will go higher in their educational process. Thus, a well planned and properly implemented system of Elementary education plays a very significant role in laying down the proper foundation of child's cultural, emotional, ethical, intellectual, moral, physical, social and spiritual development. Keeping in view the importance and needs of girls' elementary education the study has been conducted to cater information and to bring out the most prevalent issues and find ways to overcome them.

3. Objectives of the study

The major objectives of the study are-

- To study the importance of girls' education at elementary stage in Mokokchung town
- To find out the number of girls' enrolment in the elementary stage
- To examine girl students' achievement at elementary stage
- To find out the availability of infrastructure and academic facilities meant for girls.
- To study the problems faced by girls at elementary stage
- To bring out suggestions for the improvement of girls' education in Mokokchung town

4. Research Design

A Descriptive method was adopted for the present study. Two sets of questionnaires were used, one for the head teacher and other for the teachers and an interview schedule for the parents/guardians. The investigator developed the tools keeping in view the main objectives of the study. Stratified random sampling method was followed where five (5) Government middle schools, five (5) Head Teachers, one hundred ten (110) School Teachers and forty (40) parents/guardians as representatives were drawn for the study. The data collected through questionnaires were analyzed categorically and percentage was used for analyzing the data

5. Findings of the Study

1. The study reveals that out of the five (5) GMS, two (2) schools have female head teachers and three (3) schools have male head teachers. All of them have vast teaching experiences but two among them were found to be untrained. Similarly, out of 110 teachers, majority of them i.e. 75% were untrained teachers and only 25% of them were found to be trained. All the teachers agree that the school is effective in imparting girls' education
2. The bio-data of parents revealed that 90% of parents/guardians were literate. All of them stated that they were aware about education for girls and thus they feel the need and importance of sending their daughters to school.
3. In regard to girls' enrolment, a total of 331 girls were enrolled in the five (5) GMS.
4. According to the head teachers and teachers more than 60% of girls do well in their studies while the rest of the girls' academic performances were average. It is

further highlighted that 73% of the teachers agree that girls do better in their academic achievement than boys. 55% of parents/guardians also responded that girls perform better.

5. It is also indicated that majority of the schools have sufficient teaching material, drinking water facility and satisfactory classroom infrastructure but at the same time most of the schools do not have separate toilet facilities for girls.
6. In regard to the curriculum both the head teachers and teachers feel that the present curriculum does not cover the need of the girls. Vocational training, games & sports and other extra-curricular activities were occasionally organized in the school for girls.
7. Major problems faced by the teachers in teaching girls were:
 - Irregularity in school
 - Lack of proper guidance and counseling at home
 - Less participation by girls in class room/ school activities
 - poor vocabulary of the English Language.
 - Due to domestic responsibility they are inattentive, restless and leave school early.
8. Suggestive measures for the improvement of girl education as revealed by the Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents/ guardians are;
 - Specific subjects like Health education, value education, Home science etc need to be included in the school curriculum
 - Government should provide sufficient Grant and aid/ Teaching Learning Material (TLM) to each GMS. In 2014 no TLM fund was given to teachers
 - More importance can be given to Life Skill Education by appointing a separate trained teacher in every GMS
 - During admission session enrolment drive for girls must be done by the VEC members, School boards, community leaders etc.
 - Guidance and counseling to girls should be given at the regular intervals by the teachers and school administrators
 - Girl friendly curriculum must be framed accordingly so that girl child will be retained longer in school with much motivation.

6 Suggestions

Basing on the findings of the study some suggestions are given below-

- Awareness needs to be generated among the menfolk regarding the necessity of giving higher education to girls so as to prepare them to effectively contribute to the socio-economic development.
- Curriculum needs to be revised by offering useful subjects like home science, Personal hygiene, fine arts, home economic, designing, health and beauty care etc. Such subjects should be introduced at the school in a comprehensive way.
- Vocational education should be encouraged among girls and the state government should initiate in appointing trained teachers to teach subjects like Life skill education to girls.
- A regular parents/guardian-teacher meeting on issues related to girl child education should be arranged.
- Sufficient Teaching Learning Materials(TLM) and other facilities should be provided to school by the government
- Facilities like separate toilet for girls, playroom, girl's common room, sanitary bins etc need to be provided for security and dignity.
- The study found that a good number of girls were employed as domestic helps. So the guardian should be aware of her studies and performance and spare time for her to study at home.
- Encourage girls to utilize leisure time by making use of her creativity and her talent
- Appointment of female teachers at all levels of education should be one of the aims of the State government because generally, women are considered better for teaching girl students.
- Facilities for part time self study and correspondence course should be provided to enable girls who are unable to join formal education
- Scholarships for girls can be awarded to those who perform well in the school.

7 Conclusion

At present, practically no distinction exists between the education of boys and that of girls in our State. The two sexes are taught the same subjects both at school and colleges but in fact, girls ought to receive a good general education. In the present study it was found that there

is lack of trained teachers, lack of vocational teachers and absence of parent-teacher meeting with reference to girl's education. Keeping in view about the needs and aspirations, government, community and stakeholders need to revive the policies and contribute towards girls' education. In today's scenario, we see that many parents have started to realize the need and importance of providing education to girls in spite of the traditional belief of male-dominated society. It is therefore being accepted that the education of girls is an investment for the family and community and that a girl child or women in general need to be viewed not as beneficiaries, but as an active participant in the process of decision making, development and change in the society. The education of girls, therefore, should be emphasized not only on grounds of social justice but also in accelerating economic and social transformation.

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