



Role of education in the empowerment of sumi teachers in Zunheboto district, Nagaland

Y Inaholi Kiba¹, Sunny Joseph²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Education, St. Joseph University, Dimapur, Nagaland, India

² Department of Education, St. Joseph University, Dimapur, Nagaland, India

Abstract

Education and empowerment of women is one of the key elements in understanding the status of women. Education contributes to a higher awareness, development, and equipping of women, empowering them and guiding them to greater control over their life choices, since it allows for the development of the intellect, as well as training in logical and analytical thinking. This paper focuses on the role of education in the empowerment of Sumi teachers in Zunheboto district of Nagaland. It found out that majority of the respondents feel that higher education leads to greater involvement in decision making. Majority of them were also found to be engaged in community organizations and groups. In addition it was also found that majority of them agreed that education had a positive impact on the family/community and also that they contribute towards the welfare of the society.

Keywords: education, empowerment, sumi, teachers

Introduction

One of the most important aspects of recognising women's position is their education and empowerment. Education contributes to a higher awareness, development, and equipping of women, empowering them and guiding them to greater control over their life choices, since it allows for the development of the intellect, as well as training in logical and analytical thinking. It is a critical aspect in women's empowerment since it allows them to respond to problems by confronting their traditional roles and imbibing modernity. People live in a society that is built on gender stereotypes. Women must overcome all of these obstacles in order to get a foothold in a society that requires authority. Such strength comes from the empowerment process, and empowerment will come from education.

In the Indian constitution and preamble, the principle of gender equality is incorporated. The constitution not only guarantees women's equality, but also authorises the state to take positive discrimination measures in their favour. Despite this, women remain one of the most marginalised groups in India. Despite the government's efforts to provide women with educational opportunities, gender imbalance persists in rural areas and among underprivileged populations. At the national level, there is a 16.68 per cent discrepancy between male and female literacy rates. The literacy rate for men is 82.14 per cent, while the literacy rate for women is 65.46 per cent. (Census 2011) ^[1]

The 1975 International Women's Year generated a strong awareness of women's rights struggles around the world, particularly in India. In recent years, women's empowerment has been recognised as a critical factor in defining their status. The national commission for women was established in 1990 by an act of parliament to protect women's rights and legal entitlements. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution (1993) provided for the reservation of seats for women in Panchayats and Municipalities, creating a firm framework for female participation in local decision-making. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001) ^[2] envisages equal access to education for women and girls

with special measures taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls, and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as the development of occupation-vocational or technical skills (Government of India: Ministry of Women and Child development 2015). The goal of women empowerment is to connect women's potential to development and progress, as well as to give women more influence so that desired overall development and gender equality can be achieved. One of the key goals of the National Policy for Women's Empowerment is to give equal quality education to men and women.

Empowerment is a multi-faceted process that promotes women's self-worth, ability to make their own decisions, and right to influence social change for themselves and society. Women must be empowered so that they can participate equally in education, society, the economy, and politics. Empowerment elevates women's position and allows them to enjoy equal rights and privileges. It instils in them the impression that they are on par with everyone else and have the same rights. This needs to spread throughout society. Men must change their mindset as well; empowerment must be earned, not given, so that it is truly empowerment and not an endowment that men believe can be taken away.

Literacy promotes social and economic growth, and women's literacy is critical not only for social fairness but also for social revolution. Women's education can help them attain social and human development as well as gender equality. Women's education and empowerment are indicators of a society's progress and development.

Sumi Naga tribe is one of the major tribe in Nagaland. The traditions and customs practiced by Sumi's distinguish itself among other Naga tribes. Sumi have patriarchal family system where the patrilineal ideology determines the succession pattern. Zunheboto district is the home of the Sumi Naga that lies in the heart of Nagaland. The population of Zunheboto district according to 2011 census stands at 1,40,757 out of which male constitutes 71,217 and female

69,540. The literate population of Zunheboto district is 1,02,881 out of which 53,504 is male and 49,377 is female. The literacy rate in the district according to 2011 census is 85.26 per cent out of which 87.85 per cent is male and 82.62 per cent is female (Nagaland Statistical Handbook 2020)

Methodology

This section highlights a review of the research design:

Sources of Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in collecting data. Primary data were obtained from questionnaire administration. Data derived through questionnaire administration was supplemented by data collected by interviewing key informants. Secondary data were generated on the basis of extensive literature survey and sources such as books, journals, reports and newspapers.

Sample Design

Stratified Random Sampling method was applied for the selection of appropriate sample for the present study. For the present study, teachers comprise of Sumi women teaching in 9 higher secondary schools, 2 theological colleges, 1 professional institution, 1 general college, 14 departments of Nagaland University. Altogether a total of 400 respondents (200 urban and 200 rural) were randomly selected and data was collected using standard structured questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from survey was analysed using simple method of calculation. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews was transcribed, translated and analysed.

Findings

Education has a significant impact on women's decision-making, which is a key indicator of women's empowerment. Higher education is widely acknowledged as playing a vital role in facilitating women's social and economic advancement and decision-making ability. Table 1 reveals that 79 per cent are in agreement that having higher educational qualification gives greater say in the decision making process.

Table 1: Higher educational qualification and decision making

Higher educational qualification and decision making	Percentage
Yes	79
No	21

Source: Field work, 2021

Today, many of the organisations are realizing that involvement of women not only brings important benefits but they are also irreplaceable. As such many organisations and groups include women in the decision making process. Table 2 shows 54 per cent of the teachers agree that they involve themselves with organisations and groups in the society whereas 46 per cent does not.

Table 2: Organisation/group involvement

Organization/group involvement	Percentage
Yes	54
No	46

Source: Field work, 2021

Women are critical to the family's long-term development and quality of life. Wife, leader, administrator, manager of family income, and last but not least, mother are the various roles that women play in the family. As a result, education becomes critical in attaining this ideal. The study reveals that 95 per cent of teachers agree to have positive impact on family and community of being a women teacher. They are the backbone of the society and family and are role model to their children. They inculcate values and are the pillar of family and community's strength.

Table 3: Positive impact on family/community

Positive impact on family/community	Percentage
Yes	95
No	5

Source: Field work, 2021

Women play a big role in the sustainability of any community. Unfortunately, for many years their importance has been overlooked. However in recent times this has been changing due to the empowerment of women in the community and they are actively participating in the community development process. Table 4 shows that 89 per cent of teachers which constitutes the highest agree that their level of contribution as teacher towards community is good while 11 per cent feels that their contribution is poor.

Table 4: Contribution towards community

Contribution towards community	Percentage
Good	89
Poor	11

Source: Field work, 2021

Conclusion

Based on the study of data, the following conclusion was reached. It demonstrates that as women are educated, their decision making authority grows. Though numerous factors influence women's ability to participate in decision making, education is a critical factor. Furthermore, education enables women to participate in voluntary organisations and make a positive contribution to society. As a result, the practical implications of this research are clear based on the findings of this study. It is advised that policymakers at all levels of government pay attention to women's education and employment. The study also implies that interventions are important, particularly for women who have less decision making flexibility and power. These programmes aim to improve women's access to education and earning opportunities, hence improving their decision making authority and empowerment. This support will eventually lead to women's empowerment and a better community.

References

1. Census of India. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2011.
2. National Policy for the Empowerment of Women. Government of India: Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2001.
3. Statistical Handbook of Nagaland. Directorate of Economics and Statistics. Government of Nagaland. Kohima, 2020.