

Women Literacy and Empowerment in India with Reference to Non-Formal Education Model

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Abstract – *Much as knowledge is rationally perceived as power with ability to construct identity, and facilitate social interaction, most women in rural areas in Ghana are unable to read or write in a local language as they missed out on schooling for socio-cultural and structural reasons. Yet, literacy is discounted as an element of personal transformations well as a skill to possibly and cogently bridge the gender-parity gap in education through empowerment projects. The reason being; non-formal education programmes which engender acquisition of literacy skills is disparaged as an alternative form of learning in education planning at the detriment of marginalized populations and women in particular. But how can one read the world without the word (Freire & Macedo, 1987)?*

This study primarily identifies the linkage between literacy and women's empowerment; interrogates the prognosis between literacy and personal transformation; and examines the methods employed by Non Formal Education Division to systematize learning to achieve this goal in Ghana. It is an empirical qualitative multi-sited research conducted in four rural locations in Accra to critically investigate how non-formal education is represented in social development. The study's analytical framework is set within a feminist methodology and grounded theory, and draws on transformative learning Mezirow (2000) and empowerment Stromquist (1995) as conceptual frameworks to explore the epistemology and subjective change respectively.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Education is most important for women empowerment. With regard to the health and social awareness, education plays a vital role. In our Indian culture generally women manage the home business, day to day economic affairs and control the family budget. In this sense, if they are educated they might be able to manage the budget more efficiently which finally effects on their economic growth and overall development. They can plan very well and contribute in national development as well. Hence we need to focus on more women literacy programs and their education. Education can bring a lot of change and happiness in their life. Women empowerment and education need of time now.

2. LITERACY AND ISSUES:

It is important to understand the present form of non-formal education system in our country where Out of School children and illiterate adults especially women are unable to read and write. They do not find time to go to school because of various reasons

and become disadvantaged of government or private education systems.

This is fact that a large number of illiterate populations belong to women sector that are unprivileged from basic education. The reason behind this may be many but practically these are because of the following; a. They are daily-worker and go for work in the morning come back to home in the evening thereafter they miss the school and education opportunity. Women have other family responsibilities to take care of their children and family members. In the early morning they wake up and start their home exercise first; cleaning, dish washing, cooking for children and family members and then going somewhere else for daily job either for farming or any business unit nearby. In the evening after coming back to home again they have to go through same exercise. So there is a big challenge for them that when would attend the school, even if they are interested in learning. Suppose if they find even two hrs leisure time and which could be utilized for learning purpose but the question arises that they cannot leave their job because they need bread to survive in life and if

they do not do their job and home exercises , family will not accept them. Women in our Indian society and culture have to take family responsibilities also hence the basic schooling is ignored. This is biggest issue and reason of increased number of women illiteracy in India. Not only is this, women illiteracy increases various problems in society for which further research required.

3. IMPORTANT AREAS

Important areas we need to focus seriously which affects empowerment and economic development;

a. Education :

To overcome the situation where women need to be empowered it is most important that they should be literate first. Literacy is the first step which would make a woman powerful in the terms of their prosperity and happy life. Without education it is difficult for them to understand the family management system. Family management is such an important factor which affects women empowerment.

b. Family management system:

Family management system (FMS) is a kind of self-learning school in which a woman learn theoretically as well as practically managing the entire home-management. In this step general management, financial management, health management, social management, political management and behavior science etc, all are somehow as in the part of daily routine life a woman has to go through and learn the real issues, their solutions and finally a refined knowledge is gained which makes a family happy. A happy family is the aim of Family Management system. If the family is a happy, the whole purpose of the women empowerment is served.

c. Health Education:

Health education for women empowerment is known as one of the important factor. An educated person may have more awareness of different types of health issues and their remedies, precautions, vaccinations etc. Economic development is concerned with these issues. Generally it has been seen that illiterate persons are not keeping themselves abreast of health problems and because of this reason suddenly they face health issues and spend a huge amount of saved money on diseases. In many cases they borrow loans from local business men, sell their properties arrange from some other sources. It is very painful exercise in urgent medical situation and for this a heavy cost is put on family head. Finally economic condition of the family affected. An educated man or woman may avoid this unwanted financial burden.

d. Social Awareness:

Illiteracy enlarges social problems, social bye cuts and differences among people in the society. A small issue even takes a vast and serious form of social problem which finally defaces the value in society and disturbs the whole chain of social life, culture and economic growth; hence social awareness is one of the important issues for women empowerment in India. Needs to be spread at large in the society.

4. NON-FORMAL LITERACY PROGRAM MODEL MUST ADDRESS THESE ISSUES:

Comparison based on the following;

1. Management issues
2. Financial: cost of expenditures
3. Monitoring problem
4. Ownership issues
5. Social issues for women learners
6. Learners' issues- do not come in school during day time or evening because they go for job to anywhere or in the evening work for their house responsibilities.
7. Maintenance issue.
8. Security issues
9. Safety issues.
10. Easy to learn
11. Easy to operate
12. Easy to manage
13. Flexible timing
14. Job opportunities
15. Free from beaurocracy
16. Easy to run by anyone
17. Free from complications like bank accounts, funds, lease, rent, etc.
18. Easy lesson
19. Easy model discovered by us
20. Open for all groups of male and female

5. CONCLUSION:

India is a fast growing country where women participation cannot be ignored in the sense of economic growth therefore it paramount important that they must be literate. With this aim we need to come forward to make every woman literate it would be biggest contribution to the nation building.

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