

Significance Of Adult Literacy Programmes For The Nyishi Women Of Kra Daadi District Of Arunachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Arunachal Pradesh, a very little-known state by the rest of the country, lies in the northeast part of India. Land of the abundance of freshwater, pure air, mist, and virgin forests, Arunachal Pradesh will capture the attention of anyone. The land is home to several tribes, sub-tribes, and clans with their typical dialects, traditions, culinary, dress code, and mystery. The Nyishi tribe in the western part of the state is numerically the largest tribe. Due to their remoteness and lack of proper roads progress was slow in this region. However, in the recent past quick developments are noticed in the area. Yet much is to be desired. This article focuses on a study conducted among 400 Nyishi tribal married women from the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh. The researcher studied several issues related to the school-dropouts among them like - the reason why these women never went to school or when they dropped out of school, reasons for dropping out of school, and if they would like to study again if given an opportunity. The findings are aimed at further studies on the matter and direct the attention of the department of education in the state to take up remedial measures especially in the field of Adult Literacy Program, especially among women.

Keywords

Nyishi women, Adult Literacy, Dropout, Kra Daadi District, Arunachal Pradesh

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Introduction

The concept of Adult Education varies from country to country. The concept of adult education in India has changed over some time. Broadly speaking, in the pre-independence era, it mainly focused on 3R's that is reading, writing, and arithmetic. After independence, the concept of adult education changed from basic literacy to lifelong learning (MHRD, 2009). Initially, adult literacy aimed to give just the basics in literacy. However other aspects of education – in its broader sense, were added to the concept of adult literacy. Today the understanding of adult literacy is much broader in its concept.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the educational standards of the married Nyishi women in the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh
- To study the number of years the married Nyishi women in the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh have spent in educational institutions.
- To examine the causes of the dropouts of the married Nyishi women in the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh

- To assess the interest of the married Nyishi women in the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh to continue their education
- To bring to the notice of authorities the level of learning that is present among the married Nyishi women in the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh
- To suggest remedial measures in implementing the Adult Literacy Program in the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh, especially among the women folk.

Review of Literature

In the history of adult education, the concept has constantly modified and developed varied meanings. The key concept till 1947 was 'basic education'. Between 1949 and 1966, it was 'civic literacy'. It supported life-skills-oriented approach and centered on social education. Between 1967 and 1977, 'the functional' concept with work-oriented approach became the emphasis with farmer's education and '*Shramik Vidyapiths*'. From 1978 the 'developmental literacy' concept in adult literacy came to be accepted (Smrutisikha, n.d.).

As per the publication of the All India Education Board in 1949, "the aim and object of adult education are to educate the village adults especially those who have not had the advantage

of proper education, to lead a better, fuller and richer life, both as individuals and as social units... It is education for life and throughout life (Board, 1949).

For Radhika Kapur, lack of adult education and adult literacy would lead to barriers within the course of enrichment of the system of education and socio-economic growth and development of the nation (Kapur, 2019). As such, adult literacy plays an important role in the development of a nation.

Adult education plays a significant role in the educational as well as economic development of a nation. It can be said that without adult education and adult literacy, it supports to speed up the economic and social development. Because it is not possible to impart all types of education to various categories of learners, non-classroom education of adult learners has immense importance (Bank, 2020).

According to Paul J. Moon, the aims of adult education are the following: 1) Maturation: informational maturity (expanding one's fund of knowledge), cognitive processing maturity; interpersonal maturity; philosophical maturity (toward an elevated ability for abstract, non-linear thinking). 2) Enlightenment: on the issues of the plight of humanity, limits of human potential, the meanness of man's hubris, and source of resolution to the ills of human meanness. 3) Combating Nonage (lack of development, movement) (Moon, 2006).

Life-Long Learning (LLL) has been an integral part of Indian culture since the ancient days (from 2000 BC to 1200 AD). 'Learn as long as you live' to gain '*moksha*' or emancipation was rooted in a spiritual context, whereas learning exclusively for adults, or Adult Education as we call it today came much later (Mandal, 2019).

India has embarked on several ambitious plans to implement the growth of education in the country. Several plans and projects were initiated to ensure that education in the country is given a boost to ensure that the nation is on the path to progress. However, several of these well-worded plans did not find their proper completion. As such these excellent plans are seen with a pinch of skepticism from the developed countries as exercises in projecting a nation that is set on a quick

development plan. The reviews done at the end of such plans which are to be executed in the form of Five Year Plans point to this fact (Mullins, 1978)

Adult education indeed aims at increasing the literacy rate in India by putting illiterate people on the path of knowledge. It has higher aims of making the adults realize their rights as citizens and efficiently carrying out duties as citizens. In their turn, they are expected to spread the knowledge gained in this way to those who have less knowledge than them (Parents, 2017).

Adult literacy is not new to Indian history. It has deep-rooted existence in the country's ancient and rich oral tradition. It was used for the transmission of scriptural knowledge in the ancient Indian tradition. Emperor Asoka taught the teachings of the Buddha through inscriptions on rocks and pillars. Teachings were passed on to the scholars, saints, teachers, artists, and artisans for the spread of messages of peace and harmony in the medieval period (Balakrishnan, 2002)

Education Scenario of Arunachal Pradesh through the Census

Education in Arunachal Pradesh had a slow start owing to its location and remoteness. However, in recent past, the situation seems to be improving. It is alarming to note that the level of female literacy is very low in comparison to their male counterparts. Although there are a number of reasons that is directly or indirectly affecting it, serious study and appropriate remedial measures will go a long way in tackling the issue. Proper implementation of the Adult Literacy Program in the state could be a remedial measure that could change the picture for the better.

Census Year	Male%	Female%	Male-Female Disparity %
1961	12.5	1.2	11.08
1971	17.82	3.71	14.11
1981	35.12	14.02	21.1
1991	51.45	29.69	21.76
2001	64.07	44.24	19.83
2011	73.69	59.57	14.12

Source: Census Report of Arunachal Pradesh 1961-2011

Objectives of Continuing Education

The programs of Continuing Education should include objectives such as, to

1. enable the universities to establish the necessary linkages with the community
2. enrich higher education by integrating continuing and adult education programs and extension work in the system
3. provide opportunities for disseminating knowledge in all walks of life
4. cater to the self needs of all sections of society but especially to the needs of the less privileged and underprivileged sections
5. provide an opportunity to the faculty and the students for field experiences through faculty and student participation in extension research in selected areas concerning major problems of development in cooperation with the government (Kumari, n.d.)

This program can be conceived in four major categories:

1. awareness and development of general interest in contemporary affairs
2. imparting functional literacy and numeracy, post-literacy, and supplementary education through non-formal programs
3. imparting and improving professional skills through special training
4. developing curricular linkages between fieldwork and action

The target groups belonging to the less privileged and underprivileged sections of the society may include women, in particular women of rural and slum areas, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, drop-outs, unemployed and out of school youth, handicapped workers in the unorganized sectors, workers in organized sectors, teachers and handicapped children and university students from underprivileged rural groups and slums (Kumari, n.d.).

Thrust Areas for Adult Education in India

The UGC has suggested the following areas to receive emphasis in the Ninth Plan:

1. development of vocational skills and professional competencies through in-service programs
2. arrangements for remedial and bridge courses and programs for students from urban slums,

rural areas, tribal areas, handicapped and other weaker sections

3. organizing and conduct of pre-examination training and entry to professional and technical courses
4. promotion of self-employment and self-reliance activities
5. identification and organization of needs-based instructional programs for community development
6. training and extension packages for functionaries of various social development programs such as population education, legal literacy, science for the people, environmental education, rural development, and peace education (Kumari, n.d.).

The various categories of persons, who could be assigned instructional responsibility

To ensure the proper implementation of the adult literacy program, it was suggested that various categories of persons be involved in it. The government structures alone are not able to carry out effectively the required interventions for the well conduct of these programs. They suggested groups to get involved are:

(i) School teachers, (ii) Students, (iii) Unemployed village youth, (iv) Ex-Servicemen & other retired personnel, (v) Field-level Govt. and other functionaries, (vi) Voluntary social workers (Khan, n.d.)

Importance of Adult Literacy among the women in the Kra Daadi district of Arunachal Pradesh

As part of a research, a questionnaire was prepared to collect data from 400 married women, relating to their education. Among the questions were also those related to their level of education and the reason for which they had dropped out of school. The responses received are important data on which the adult literacy program in the district can be based. One of the questions and its response is seen in Table no: 1

1. Did you have primary education?

Table 1 Showing the table of Primary education, frequency, and percentage of the participants		
Primary Education	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	155	38.75
No	245	61.25

Table No:1

Among the 400 married women-participants in the survey, 38.75% had primary education, while 61.25% did not have the full primary education. The level of education among the mothers or married women in the district is evident from this data. The departments and governments need to take necessary remedial steps to tackle the situation of very poor literacy rate in the district, especially among women.

The response to the question – how many years of education they had – lets us know a lot more about the situation at hand. It is described in Table no:2. Those who had some sort of education for less than 5 years make up 60% of the total sample collected. Only 17% of the samples have been studied for more than 10 years.

2. How many years did you study?

Table 2 Showing the table of the number of years studied, frequency, and percentage of the participants		
Did you Study	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5	240	60
6-8	52	13
9-10	40	10
More than 10	46	11.5
Nil	22	5.5

Table No: 2

Table 2 shows that 60% had studied below 5 years and 13% from 6-8 years and 10% from 9-10 and 11.5% had studied more than 10 years. 5.5% did not attend any class. This finding can be attributed to the level of primary education or the students attend the primary classes, once they move on they are deprived of education. This implicates the need to strengthen primary education. It also shows the level at which the sensitization programs are to be done that educating the people at the primary level on the importance of higher education.

3. At what class you left the school?

Table 3 Showing the table of Left the school, frequency, and percentage of the participants		
Left the School	Frequency	Percentage
Nil	22	5.5
1-5	240	60
6-10	87	21.75
11&12	41	10.25
Above 12	10	2.5

Table No: 3

The table 3 shows that of 5.5% never attended school, 60% left school from classes 1 to 5, 21.75% at 6-10, 10.25%, at 11&12 and 2.5% above class12 left the school. This again shows that 60% of the sample has left studies at primary level therefore, strengthening of educational standards at that level requires effort and concentration. When primary education is strengthened, the dropout rates in the district could be curtailed and higher educational levels could be strengthened.

4. Why did you leave the school?

Table 4 Showing the table of Reasons to leave the school, frequency, and percentage of the participants		
Leave the school	Frequency	Percentage
Marriage	145	36.25
Financial Problem	13	3.25
Failure	2	0.5
Love Marriage	9	2.25
Household work	1	0.25
Pregnancy	84	21
Not good at study	146	36.5

Table No: 4

Table 4 shows that Marriage was the reason to leave school for 36.25% of the sample, Financial Problem for 3.25%, Failure for 0.5%, Love Marriage for 2.25%, Household work for 0.25 %, pregnancy for 21%, and Not good at study for 36.5%. It is interesting to find that both marriage (marriage – 36.25%, love marriage – 2.25% and pregnancy – 21% - that is a total of 59.5%) and poor academic record are the reason for school dropouts. The findings insist on the need to provide quality education and motivation for the students to continue their education. Marriage-related issues contribute 59.5% of the reasons for dropouts among women – therefore remedial measures in ensuring that dropout rates are at the

minimal, remedial measures to prevent early marriages among girls also need to be taken up.

5. If you are given an opportunity, do you wish to study now?

Table 5 Showing the table of - Do you wish to study now, frequency and percentage of the participants		
To study now?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	293	73.25
No	107	26.75

Table No: 5

Although dropout occurred due to marriage-related issues in a majority of cases, the desire to learn and study is still strong among them. Table 5 shows 73.25% wish to study even now, 26.75% are not interested to learn more.

Suggestions and Conclusion

Male and female literacy rate in all India as per 1991 census was 64.13% and 39.29%; and as per 2001 census was 75.85% and 54.16% respectively. Again as per as 2011 census in India overall literacy rate was 72.99% wherein 80.89% for male and 64.64% for female literacy (Mihin, 2018). However considering the growth in the rate of literacy since 1961 gives us hope. However greater attention is needed to be given to:

- Monitoring of educational policies and plans especially with regard to the Adult Literacy Program
- Proper follow-up of the fund allocation specifically for Adult Literacy Program and its utilization
- Utilization of various agencies to implement the policies of Adult Literacy
- Training and utilization of various categories of people in the implementation of the programs
- Strengthening education at various levels so that dropout can be prevented or reduced
- Awareness campaigns to be held to encourage education, even adult education
- Provide incentives to adults to get back to learning and continue their studies
- Provide job or placement opportunities for adults who continue education at various levels.

As adult education is an important element in the over-all growth of the state and that of the nation, it is imperative that adequate steps are taken to encourage and promote adult education.

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