



INTERVENTIONS AND PROBLEMS OF GIRLS EDUCATION AT ELEMENTARY STAGE OF EDUCATION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH: A BIRDS EYE VIEW

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Abstract

The state of Arunachal Pradesh is a tribal dominated area. Majority of the population of state is Schedule Tribes and there are 26 major tribes along with many sub-tribes living in the state. The state joined very lately in the field of education so it takes a long time to maintain its position in the field of education along with other states and still lagging behind at the national scenario. During the British period, they left the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh more or less to themselves. The policy of the foreign rulers had nothing to do with the spread of education in this area. Moreover, the historical circumstances and geographical factors had compelled the people to live within the confine of their hill abodes in the state of isolation and negligence. Regarding female education the state is having poor records from the time of educational development in the state. In the state if we look into the previous records of enrolment and literacy percentage which indicates the status of education, generally the male were dominated over the female in the past. But it is also true that male were given the preference to get education by their parents and society which may be the reason of male advantage over female in the field of education. But soon after the implementation of SSA in the state there is a ray of hope that the girls' education will also get proper attention through various programme and policies which works in favour of girls' education. State government is providing many facilities for the educational upliftment of girls' student which is very encouraging. In this paper, the author intends to highlight on the various interventions of the state government for development of girls' education.

Keywords: *Intervention, Cluster Schools, Tribe, Girls.*



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Introduction

In the state of Arunachal Pradesh the tribal girls are having distinct status in the society. They play tremendous role in the socio-economic development of the society and family. In the olden days due to hostility among the different tribes of the state, the women were treated weak in comparison to their male counterpart. They were bound to live under the male protection. Men in comparison to women because of their stronger nature posses higher

position in the tribal society. The territory of the tribal society was defended by the men and the women were mostly engaged to look after the household work and bringing up of children. The nature of the role played by the men and the demand of situation during ancient time always keep the position of men higher in comparison to women. This trend has a big impact on the modern day also in tribal society of Arunachal Pradesh, due to which men are getting more advantages over the women in every fields.

With the striking of modern era there seems to be a lots of changes in the role played by female members of Arunachal Pradesh. Many female members of almost every society in the state are now educated and engaged in Government jobs and serving many departments of the state. But due to hilly and large numbers of forest covered areas there are no spectacular changes in the status of women in the rural areas. Unlike the general women of other parts of the country the tribal women of the state like Arunachal Pradesh have to take extra burden of earning to run families along with many responsibilities.

Role Played by Women in Tribal Society

The tribal women are playing a varied role in the society in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Although there are some changes being observed in their role with the striking of modern era but they are mostly engaged in:

1. Collecting firewood from the jungles to cook meal for families.
2. Look after children at home, cooking food for family and also to wash utensils and cloths.
3. Collecting wild edible leaves and forest products for vegetable purpose from jungle.
4. Selling vegetables and meat in the market to run families.
5. Weaving or making handicrafts in which they are experts.
6. Sowing paddy in the agricultural field.
7. Engaged in shifting cultivation in which many crops are grown for own consumption and for commercial purposes.
8. Preparations of rice beer (locally made liquor) generally drink on certain occasion by male members of society.

The above mentioned are some of the roles generally played by the tribal women of the state. But there are some roles played by them which are generally unnoticed and we forget these important roles played by them e.g. they wake up early in the morning to prepare breakfast for whole family, serve the guest when they come, cleaning house-hold and surrounding, fetches water from distance source etc. Besides the above roles played, the women are also engaged in government jobs in the state and serving the state as officers,

clerks and peons etc. but they constitute a very small percentage of the total population of the state.

Table-1: Sex-Ratio of State from 1961 to 2011

Number of Females Per 1000 Males					
1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
894	861	862	859	893	920

Source: Census 2011.

The table-1 highlights the sex ratio of the state from 1961 to 2011, according to the table-1 there was a gradual increase and decrease of sex ratio in the state. In the year 1961 female ratio was 894 against 1000 males and in 1971 it was decrease to 861, but it again rose to ratio of 893 per 1000 males. The latest data of 2011 shows that there was an increase in the female ratio in state which is a good symptom, it rise up-to 920 female against 1000 males the figure which was never reach since the year 1961.

Female Literacy Ratio Scenario in Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh, being a late starter in the field of education has always remained in the bottom of literacy rate at the national scenario. If we look into the development of education in the state in general it is very poor and the female literacy rate is always in lower position in comparison to male. The male members of the society who are considered as a dominant group are given priority by the parents in sending their children to the school. So in the enrolment of children in the state male enrolments are outnumbering the female and male literacy rate always bettered females. Despite remarkable progress and expansion in the field of education in the country in general and Arunachal Pradesh in particular in last fifty years still large gaps are to be fill-up for differences in male and female enrolment and literacy rates. The one of the main problems of the female education is the presence of large numbers of drop-out from the schools. The table-2 depicts the year wise development and gap of Male and Female literacy rate of Arunachal Pradesh from 1961 to 2011.

Table-2: Growth of Literacy Rate of Arunachal Pradesh from 1961 to 2011

Year	Persons	Males	Females	Gap
1961	7.13	12.25	1.42	10.83
1971	11.29	17.82	3.71	14.11
1981	25.55	35.12	14.02	21.11
1991	41.59	51.45	29.69	21.76
2001	54.34	63.83	43.53	18.3
2011	66.95	73.69	59.57	14.12

Source: Census 2011.

*Note: Literacy rates for 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged five years and above.

*The rates for the years 1981 to 2011 relate to the population aged seven years and above.

The above table-2 shows that during 1961 the literacy rate of Arunachal Pradesh was 7.13% which was very low but at the same time female literacy rate was worst. It was just 1.42% in comparison to male literacy rate of 12.25% and created a gap of 10.83. During 1971 there was a little growth of female literacy rate when it reaches 3.71% against male literacy rate of 17.82 and created a gap of 14.11. The year 1981 also did not brought any major breakthrough in female literacy rate, it was only in the year 2001 after two decades it reached up-to 43.53% but here also male and female literacy gap was 18.3 which indicate the low rate of educational growth among the female members in the state. The latest census report 2011 indicates that still there is lot of steps to be taken in the female education because their literacy rate (59.57) is still lagging behind the male literacy rate (73.69%) and created a gap of 14.12 which is a big margin. From the table it is also clear that male were always staying ahead of female in the field of education. But it is also true to the extent that parents and society give more preference to the male education than their female counterpart.

Though the above table-2 indicates the slow educational growth of the Arunachal Pradesh it also shows that the literacy rate of state is increasing every decade steadily. It also shows the progress of female education in the state along with male members which also indicates the needs of some inducement for female education in the state.

Major Initiatives taken by the State Government to Promote Girls Education

To enhance the female education in the state especially at school stage Central and State Government have implemented various policies and programmes in Arunachal Pradesh under which some extra facilities are given to the female students over male students. Some of them are:

1. National Programme for Education of Girl at Elementary Level (NPEGEL): The NPEGEL was launched in the state in the year 2004-05 by establishing a four Model Cluster School at Pipu, Hawaii, Wakro, and Pangin in East Kameng, Anjaw, Lohit and East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. Similarly other Model Cluster Schools were opened in the years 2005-06 and 2006-07.

Table-3: Status of NPEGEL Model Cluster Schools in Arunachal Pradesh.

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Blocks	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1.	East kameng	Pipu	1	0	0
2.	Anjaw	Hawaii	1	0	0
		Hayulliang	0	0	1

3.	Lohit	Wakro	1	0	0
4.	East Siang	Pangin	1	0	0
		Thrizino	0	1	0
5.	West kameng	Kalaktang	0	1	1
		Dirang	0	1	0
6.	L/ Dibang Valley	Hunli	0	1	0
		Lazu	0	1	0
7.	Tirap	Naiausa	0	0	0
		Namsay	0	1	1
		Yingkiong	0	1	0
8.	Upper Siang	Jengging	0	0	0
9.	Tawang	Mukto	0	0	1
		Changlang	0	0	1
10.	Changlang	Khogam Mio	0	0	1
		Bordumsa Diyu	0	0	1
11.	West Siang	Rumgong	0	0	1
12.	Kurung Kumey	Chanmbang	0	0	1
	Total		04	07	09
	Grand Total		20		

Source: SSA Rajya Mission, Itanagar.

National Programme for Education of Girl at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) was also launched in the state to focus intervention aimed at enhancing girl's education. The table-3 shows that there are 20 Model Cluster Schools in operation to facilitate the under privilege / disadvantage girls of the 20 educationally backward blocks of 12 districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The existing 20 Model Cluster Schools have contributed a lot in the enhancement of girls' education in those blocks and clusters in the state. NPEGEL programme has shown great impact on the attitude of parents towards girls education in the state which has been realised by looking at the increasing girls enrolment at elementary level of education. In view of the effectiveness of NPEGEL by having 20 Model Cluster Schools, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh has proposed another 33 numbers of Model Cluster Schools for 33 educationally backward blocks in the year 2012-13.

2. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV): In the state there were 47 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalaya (KGBV) residential schools were established in the year 2004-05 to 2009-10 for girls' education in 15 districts with an intake capacity of 100 girls in each school which is depicted in table-4. This initiative is also taken to encourage the girls' education in the state and to bridge the gap of male female education scenario of the state.

Table-4: Status of KGBV in Arunachal Pradesh (2004-05 to 2009-10).

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Total Number of KGBV	Total Number of Girls Enrolled in each KGBV	Total Number of Girls Enrolled in all KGBV
1.	East Siang	10	100	1000
2.	West Siang	1	100	100
3.	West Kameng	1	100	100
4.	Tawang	3	100	300
5.	East Kameng	4	100	400
6.	Kurung Kumey	6	100	600
7.	Lohit	2	100	200
8.	Anjaw	2	100	200
9.	L/ Dibang Valley	2	100	200
10	Changlang	4	100	400
11	Tirap	4	100	400
12	Upper Subansiri	4	100	400
13	Lower Subansiri	1	100	100
14	Papum Pare	1	100	100
15	Upper Siang	2	100	200
Total		47		4700

Source: SSA Rajya Mission, Itanagar.

The KGBVs are having a great bearing on the improvement of girls' education in the educationally backward blocks of the state. Looking at the impact of KGBVs on the girls educational the state government has proposed more numbers of KGBVs in the state. In the state due to educational backwardness most of the blocks are eligible for establishment of KGBV. So it is expected that more numbers of KGBVs will be established in educationally backward blocks in near future .

Apart from the above mentioned interventions to enhance girls' education in the State of Arunachal Pradesh other existing facilities available for the girls' education are:

1. Disbursing free textbook up-to Elementary school stage.
2. Granting stipends in the school to encourage girl's education.
3. To increase the competition among Tribal girls education in the state, a Pratibha Khoj scheme is carried out in the state on the basis of which a 50 girls are selected from each districts on the merit basis and some financial assistance are given to them for their studies with some conditions. The amount is given to the students in addition to the stipend already available to Arunachal Pradesh Schedule Tribe girls.
4. SSA programme is running in the state with a full pace since 2001-02 whose one of the main objective is to bridge all gender gap and bring equality of male and female enrolment, literacy rate etc. in the state very smoothly in all districts.

5. Anganwadi are also established in most of the villages where the educated female members of village are appointed as teacher to teach the children before admitted to the regular school.

The above mentioned programmes and policies are some of the strides taken by the state Government to enhance girls' education in the state. It is a matter of great concern that female members are playing major roles and bearing more responsibilities in the tribal societies of Arunachal Pradesh. Regarding the education of female member due to illiteracy and remote areas most of the female members and their parents are unaware of the educational facilities provided to them by the state government. It need mass awareness campaign and Governmental efforts to make people aware of their rights and to avail facilities given to them.

Problems faced by Girls Students

In comparison to the male students there are many problems faced by the female students to attain education. These problems are generally neglected or ignored by the society because it is mostly faced by the female students only. Some of the problems faced by female students are:

1. Lack of toilet facilities in schools generally made girls' students to feel inconvenience to attend the schools. They generally skip classes and shows disinterest which ultimately result in drop-out from educational institution.
2. Indifferent attitude of parents towards girls' education and give preference to male children in the family and society is one of the major problems faced by female children in the society. It creates a lot of mental disturbances among the female children who are interested in studies but due to lack of parents support withdrawn or drop-out from school.
3. Early marriage which is still prevailing in some society of the state is a big issue. After getting married at very young age by arranged marriage the girls were mostly forced to discontinue their education career at teenage stage.
4. Lack of lady teachers in educational institution who can understand them in a better way and encourage them to stay in schools/ institution for long time and with whom they can share their problems.
5. Lack of renowned female role model in the state which is dominated by male member also discourage female in many ways.
6. To cover long distance to achieve further education also discourages the family member and the female students to attain higher education.

7. Lack of accommodation in the educational institution also creates a lot of difficulties among the female students in attaining further education. They generally feel unsafe when there is no proper facility for girls' accommodation in the institution which is a big problem.

The above mentioned are the some of the problems faced by the female students to attain education almost everywhere. Generally authority and the male members do not bother about these problems but it creates a lot of difficulties for the enhancement of girls' education. Also there are lots of problems which come in front of female education but they are never noticed by us, only we can feel it and bear the consequences in terms of drop-out or failures in school.

Conclusion

We cannot deny that girls are the bearing the major responsibilities in the tribal societies of Arunachal Pradesh. But they were also bearing the pain of negligence from the society and family regarding the education since the earliest times. The growth of literacy rates in Arunachal Pradesh itself indicates that more effort should be given to female education in the state so that there should not be created any gap in male female literacy rates. The state Government should drive mass awareness campaign on the importance of girls' education with the help of community members and NGOs to decrease the drop-out rate and to increase enrolment ratio of girls. Also there is need to increase the numbers of female teachers in the schools of Arunachal Pradesh and to recruit more trained teacher for the enhancement of tribal education. It also indicates that the Arunachal Pradesh has to go a miles before taking rest in the field of education in general and female education in particular.

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