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Identifying Bodo Women through Educational Empowerment with Special Reference to BTAD in Assam, India

Shiba Ram Narzary

Assistant Teacher, Gossainichina MV School, Assam, India

Abstract:

Bodo Women occupied significant position in Bodo society since the time immemorial. Their participation in every field is increasing over the times. They are hard-working of the society. But sometimes they are denied basic human rights, beaten, raped and killed by men. Like women of other communities, Bodo Women are also facing violence inside and outside their family as well as at the workplace. They are subordinated by the male counterpart as because of they are being women. Therefore, it is necessary to enables them through different processes of empowerment to realize their full identity and power for helping them in challenging the existing norms and culture in effectively promoting their well-being. This paper aimed at identifying Bodo women and their position in the society through empowerment to make them highlight all over the world.

Keywords: *Bodo women, women's position, empowerment of Bodo women, women and socio-economic development*

1. Introduction

While women population is the half of the world population, there must be equality in every sections of the society. These days of globalization teach us to maintain our livelihood through the sense of brotherhood. Everyone has equal rights to maintain whatever they need or desire to do. Therefore, Bodo community living in different parts of India as well as the world also have duty and responsibilities to make themselves blossom through maintaining sense of brotherhood and development. Now-a-days, Bodos are having better livelihood and maintaining better socio-economic development as compared to earlier days. The status of Bodo women is also good. They are hard-working of the Bodo society. Bodo women have been playing a significant role in moulding the socio-economic as well as cultural and political life of the Bodo people. Although, better knowledge should be provided to Bodo women towards the mainstream development and more empowerment must be given to them in diverse fields.

2. Literature Review

- Kameswar Brahma (1998) said that the status of women in the Bodo society is high. They can also enjoy property rights in case if there is no male child in the family. They can enjoy such property event after her marriage. But in some grounds it is witnessed that the Bodo women are facing social problems that show the low status of women in the society.
- Binoy Kumar Brahma (1989) suggested that the status of Bodo women can be understood through different roles they play in the family as well as in the society.
- Ritul Talukdar (2012) also said that due to the suffering of various social, economic and political problems in the society Bodo women are facing low status. There is economic backwardness, educational problems, negligence of women education, superstitious beliefs, and low infrastructural development in the area.

2.1. Objective of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) To study the present status of Bodo women and to give knowledge towards all round development through achieving education.
- 2) To empower Bodo women through identifying various initiatives of women empowerment towards the welfare of women.

3. Methodology

This paper is generally descriptive based on observational method of Primary data. The Secondary data is collected from various sources such as government records, books, reports, magazines, journals, internet, etc.

3.1. Significant of Empowerment

The societies continually change their structure to survive along with the changing environment (Hazoary 2002). The society of Bodo has also been changing over the times. The Bodos can touch the world now-a-days. In every aspects of human life as being human, the

Bodos are not weaker than others. Only that the Bodos are dominated and exploited by others. The Bodos must overcome from all those exploitations made by other communities all over the world. As a result of this the Bodoland Movement takes place. Therefore, it is well known fact that there must be equality in the society. All the members of the society must have same as well as equal status and they must do all their works, duties and responsibilities to the fullest development of the society. It is also known and witnessed that Bodo women are one of the hardworking women of tribal communities in North-Eastern states of India. They are playing significant role in the society. But in some areas, Bodo women are lacking behind of sufficient knowledge towards their all-round development. Therefore more and more empowerment should be given to them in diverse fields.

3.2. Importance of Education for Bodo Women

Jawaharlal Nehru says, "If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Woman empowerment means mother India empowerment"

Education is a very important agent of social change and development. Without education a society is in blind. The Bodos are educationally not so much developed. They are still in educationally backwardness. The Bodo women are not occupied significant status in the field of educational development. Bodo society is still maintaining education as more important than female. Bodo society is still maintaining education as more important for male than for female. The educational system is also providing inadequate facilities to female education. There are no equal opportunities to education for male and female in Bodo society. They are deprived of as they are being women. The Bodo girls are also thinking themselves as not capable for higher education. Some other thinks to depend on their husband and desired to become mere housewife. As a result of this maximum Bodo girls are not trying to compare themselves with male in achieving higher education. They are expected to do all the housework and take responsibility for child-care and therefore, they have fewer hours of free time than men. The women are deprived of better education as compared to male in the society. In order to develop and raise women education, adequate educational opportunities must be provided.

Districts	Person		Male		Female	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Kokrajhar	52.29	66.63	61.01	73.44	43.06	59.54
Chirang	52.61	64.71	61.82	71.35	42.87	57.87
Baksa	59.57	70.53	70.32	78.55	48.33	62.23
Udalguri	56.40	66.60	65.94	73.79	46.34	59.17

Table 1: Literacy rate by Sex of BTAD in Assam, 2001 and 2011

Source: Census of India 2011 (Assam Series 19)

From the above data, it is seen that there is a gender differences in terms of education in the districts of B.T.A.D. areas of Assam. The literacy rate for men is higher than women; the proportion of male rate is 71.78 percent and 59.70 percent for women. Education is fundamental to women's empowerment and way to eliminate gender disparity in the socio-economic aspects of life.

3.3. Free and Compulsory Education for All

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE), is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on 4 August 2009, describes the modalities of the significant of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 years of age in India under Article 21A (86th Amendment) of the Constitution of India. The act came into force on 1 April 2010.

3.4. Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)

RMSA is a centrally sponsored scheme for Universalization of access to and improvement of quality education at Secondary stage was implemented during 11th five-year plan period. The goal of RMSA is to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young students in the age group 15-16 years (classes IX and X).

3.5. Government Initiatives

The knowledge of some of the significant Government initiatives should focus to the Students to encourage their learning; such as

- Chief Minister's Special Scheme of Free distribution of ladies Bicycle to BPL Girls Students up to Class X in Assam

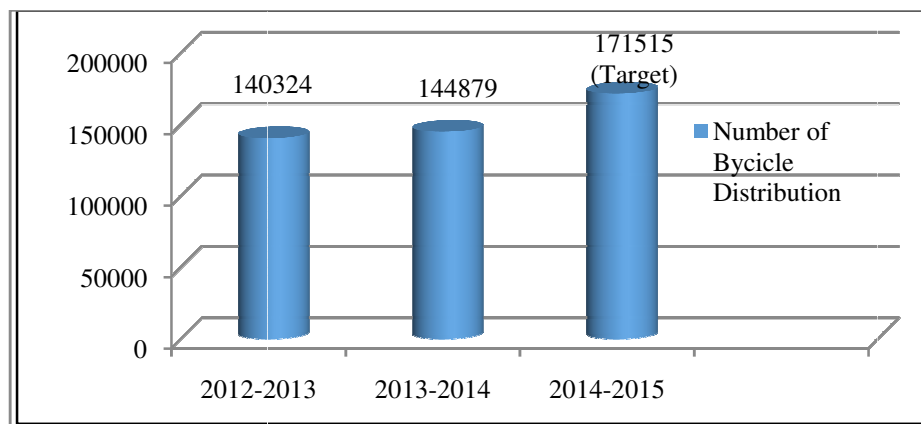


Figure 1

Source: Janasanjog/13726/15 (Director of Secondary Education Assam)

➤ Anundoram Barooah Award Scheme

The first programme of Anundoram Barooah Award was launched on 14th September, 2005 to encourage students and to help them in the IT sector of education. Under this Scheme, total 2, 63,458 computers and laptops have been provided to students who secured 1st division in the HSLC, Assam high Madrassa and Sanskrit Praveshika examinations till date.

➤ Free Computer Education

Free Computer education in Government High Schools, Higher Secondary and High Madrassa Schools is provided under Rajiv Gandhi Computer Literacy Programme (RGCLP).

➤ Sports Sector encouragement

535 Table Tennis boards, 23,998 Footballs, 17,999 Volleyballs provided to High School and Higher Secondary Schools under Chief Minister's Assam Bikash Yojana 2009-10. The students can acquire skills in games and sports as well as co-curricular activities with the help of this initiative.

3.6. BJP Government's Initiatives

The newly formed BJP government's announcement after long years of Congress Rule, to help student are the new one to encourage students to learn more. Some of the initiatives are:

1. Free admission for BPL students in government and provincialized higher secondary schools and colleges.
2. Good financial help to students of higher studies including UPSC Exam aspirants.
3. Distribution of Scooty to girl students who are admitted in the educational institution of 15 km long distances.

3.7. Empowerment through Open and Distance Education

Distance Education is the ideal way for Women to access education that allows them from anywhere to study even living in their home. As the maximum Bodo women have been involving in the housework and take responsibility for child care, they have fewer hours than men to study more. There are many Bodo women who are compelled to discontinue their studies in the formal system. This may be because of financial, geographical, academic or medical reasons. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system is meant for them. In this system the learner can learn through lessons sent by the institutions of distance learning without attending classes. These students can keep themselves engaged in service or business while studying. The learner is not in direct touch with the teacher. He is at a distance mode. Open and Distance Education at present offers both secondary (Class X), senior secondary (Class XII) education and higher Studies viz. NIOS, SOS, IGNOU, IDOL in AHSEC, Gauhati University, KKHSOU etc. These institutions will go a long way in taking education to every Indian citizen who may not have been able to continue with the regular stream of education. The national goals of development, integration, excellence and equality in the sphere of education can be fulfilled only when every child in the country crosses a minimum threshold of educational attainment.

3.8. Education in socio-Economic Development

The role of Bodo women in Socio-economic development is mostly related to the goal of comprehensive socio economic development. If the socio-economic of a society is not good, human development of a nation cannot take place. Human development could be achieved only when both sex equally work together. Hence, women are considered important part of the society. Education plays significant role in the field of socio economic development. But it is seen that there is a gender differences in terms of education in the districts of B.T.A.D. areas of Assam. Bodo women are lagging behind sufficient knowledge of economic development. Domestic workers are mostly illiterate. The female literary rate is also lower than the male literacy rate. Although Bodo women made significant contribution to the society and economy, more empowerment should be done to them. Bodo women must be regarded as the hard worker of the society and must be considered as an economic asset. The Bodo women were generally engaged in activities like child-caring, kitchen activities, washing clothes, weaving, collecting firewood, health of the family members, fishing and various agricultural activities as well as social cultural performance. But improvement in women's economic status in the main stream of development like agriculture forestry, industry etc. has not yet been properly taken care of.

Educating a women lead to better and faster socio-economic growth. Education is fundamental to women's empowerment and way to eliminate gender disparity in the socio-economic aspects of life. But mere attainment of primary education of women cannot leads to women empowerment and elimination of gender disparity. There should be a focus to give quality higher education to women, which will in turn result to a sustainable economic growth and better society.

3.9. Women Education in Political Development

There is in need of political socialization in the Bodo society. It is the process by which political cultures are maintained and change. It is through political socialization that an individual is inducted into political culture. It is due to the fact of lagging behind the lack of education Bodo are suffering from inadequate knowledge of political matters. More and more awareness should be done to Bodo women based on the idea of giving them knowledge relating to political socialization. Because large number of Bodo women do not know about how to participate in political activities. Besides, there is lack of women leaders in Bodo society. They are not interested on it. On the country to that Male psyche also does not want women in top posts because most of the males are not mentally prepared to serve under female bosses. There is also the culture of power hungry among the Bodo groups.

4. Conclusion

Identifying women through education is not a new one. Women should be educationally aware so that they can maintain their livelihood comparing to that of their male counterpart. Equal rights and opportunities should be given to them. As per as we know that women are half of the total population in the world must possesses every works of their life along with the male population. Women must have good and quality education if not entire world will be miserable. It is the world of educationally aware population. Only educated and civilized people can keep their eye to the surrounding of the environment. Likewise, women must identify themselves through acquiring better and quality education. Bodo women must follow the world of education.

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