

Impact of Female Literacy on the Development of Education among the Dimasa People of Diyungbra Block, Dima Hasao District, Assam- A Case Study

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Abstract: Literacy plays an important role in socio-economic development. Governmental efforts towards eradication of illiteracy also have borne fruit to a larger extent. In these days of cut throat competition no progress could be made unless the children are educated. The liberate women play an important role in the development of education. The problem of children can't be solved unless efforts are made simultaneously to solve the women's education.

Relevant to our study, it is found that the villages are situated in hilly area. The settlement pattern indicates that only Rajbari village is agglomerated and another four villages- Baraima, Chotowashiling, Prabdisa and Washibil are dispersed and isolated villages are non-existent. The study indicated that the sample villages are well connected with the district headquarters by public transport system.

Progress in educational sphere is noticed at least from the existence of L.P. School in all surveyed villages as well as from the figures of enrolment in the educational institution. The awareness towards educating the children is visibly noticed in case of Dimasa villages of the block. Drop out from the educational institution is still a problem in the villages under study. The study showed that drop out figure among the Dimasa students of illiterate mothers are more than the literate mothers.

We have come to know about the impact of many things in socio-economic development of Dimasa people through the survey of Diyungbra Block and it is found that female literacy plays a vital role in this regard.

It is seen from the surveyed villages, there is a lot of improvement in various field such as education, transportation and economy etc. as compared within some decades.

Keywords- Literacy, Dimasa, Socio-economic development.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is an effective weapon for socio-economic development. It is defined in the census operation as the ability to read and write with understanding in any language. Any formal education or minimum educational standard is not necessary to be considered literate. In the census of 2001 the literacy rate in India is 64.84% as against 52.21% in 1991.

Literacy in India is a key for socio-economic progress and the Indian literacy rate has grown to 74% (figure 2011) from 12% at the end of British rule in 1947. Although this was a greater than six fold improvement, the level is below the world average literacy rate of 84% and of all nations, India currently has largest illiterate population. There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India effective literacy rates (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women. The low female literacy rate has had a dramatically negative impact on family planning and population stabilization efforts in India.

Women's access to education has been recognized as a fundamental right and increasing female education is a central policy aim of the international development community and most developing country governments. However, while the benefit of education girls and women for societies in general and their families more specially are well understood, the case for education serving as a catalyst in reducing gender inequality or benefiting women themselves is less clearly established. It is often assumed that education enhances women's well being and gives them a greater autonomy to determine the conditions of their lives, improve opportunities to participate in community affairs and the labour market. To what extent there is broad based empirical support for this assumption is not well known.

THE DIMASA TRIBE:

The *Dimasa* is a scheduled tribe in the Autonomous Hills District, Dima Hasao of Assam in India and their sizeable population is found in the neighbouring districts such as Hojai, Karbi Anglong, Cachar and Hailakandi in Assam.

The term 'Dimasa' literally means the children or decedents of a big river meaning the Brahmaputra. 'Di' means water, 'Ma' means big and 'Sa' means children. The *Ahoms* called the people of this tribe '*Timisa*' and according to Sir Gait, the great historian, it was clearly a corruption of the term *Dimasa* can't but be the children of the Brahmaputra. A good number of principal tributaries of the Brahmaputra bear the syllable 'Di' such as *Dibong*, *Digaru*, *Dibru*, *Dihing*, *Dikhon*, *Disang*, *Dikrai*, *Diphu* etc. This signifies the fact that Dimasa might have lived once on the banks of the rivers prior to their establishment of the Capital at Dimapur now in present Nagaland.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The location of study:

Assam is situated in the north east corner of India. The state is located between 90°-96° East latitude and 22°-28° North latitude, Dima Hasao district is situated southern part of Assam while Diyungbra block is located in the northern part of West Karbi Anglong district. Moreover, the location of the study is within about 18 km. from the Lanka Town of Hojai district in Assam. There are various communities live in the Diyungbra block but the Dimasa population is majority in this block. Mainly, the people of Diyungbra block get many facilities such as medical, education, marketing etc. at the Lanka town. They also easily communicate through railway to Guwahati from Lanka railway station.

The livelihood of Dimasa Tribe:

The majority of the Dimasa tribe of its adjoining villages is dependent mainly on agricultural activities throughout the year. While men remain busy in outdoor agriculture and allied activities,

women folk also indulge themselves in maintaining the household activities like cooking, bringing water, rearing poultry, weaving clothes, collecting firewood. The children above 10 years also used to work in domestic works. The aged men and women also assist the young household members in various activities such as looking after the young children doing cane and bamboo works and other petty jobs which do not require physical exercises.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY:

The community based survey was carried out among the Dimasa people of Diyungbra block in the district of Dima Hasao, Assam in India. The selection of the sample of the study was entirely based on the concentration of the tribe and a satisfied strategy was adopted to choose the sample. All the household members above the 18 years were eligible to participate following voluntary consent. The table 1 represents the members of participant from the location of our study.

Table.1

Sl. No.	Village	Population	Total		Literacy Rate %
			Male	Female	
1	Rajbari	126	120	246	75%
2	Baraima	105	102	201	57.9%
3	Chotowashl ing	95	88	183	71%
4	Probdisa	96	102	198	68%
5	Washibil	83	91	174	63.7%

The participants were randomly selected and the survey questionnaires were designed on the basis of multiple choice questions as well as Yes/No responses depending upon the need of particular information. Thus survey included demographic information such as age, ethnicity level of education, occupation and household income in particular.

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

Education is an important instrument in the socio-economic development of the community. It is quite well known that India has made progress in education, but not enough and definitely not at a pace we would have liked to see. Even after half a century of India's independence, almost 60% of girl/women are not literate. Most of them have never been to school or any other educational programme.

It has been shown that the literacy rate of Dimasa people of Diyungbra block is very low because of communication problem. The Dimasa population is the highest in this block of Dima Hasao district. Both men and women of Dimasa community are very laborious. The main occupation of Dimasa people of the district is agriculture. The Dimasa women participate in transplantation, sowing and harvesting operation. They are very active both in indoor and outdoor activities.

The educational facilities of this block are not satisfactory. The present survey indicated that there are 5 nos. of pre-primary/ Anganwadi schools one each in 5 nos. of surveyed villages. Similarly, all the surveyed villages have L.P. schools located within the villages and run by Government. There is one L.P. and one M.E. school in each surveyed village. Among the five surveyed villages only three

villages have High school. There is one private H.S. school in Rajbari village. In comparison with pre-independence period, this development is not worthy. The study shows that the Dimasa people face the problem for higher education. There are only 3 colleges in the whole district- one government aided, one government and another one is Private College.

It is interesting to note that number of girl students in L.P. classes in the Rajbari village is more as compared to boys while other four villages witness almost same number of girls and boys student. It indicates that much awareness among the people towards the necessity of female education. Details of educational facilities are shown in Table No.2.

Unlike their forefathers, the present generations of the villages of Diyungbra block are not apathetic towards education of their children. The awareness created by media has been noticed. Children are provided educational facilities by the parents and the parents are realizing the necessity of education. The Dimasa people who were not eager to educate their children two or three decades earlier, are no longer disinterested to send their wards to the school. Thus today, we find a very encouraging picture if we compare the status of enrolment in L.P. schools in Dimasa Villages.

Table No. 2

Sl. No.	Village	Type of School	Distance from Village	Total no of school	No. of students	No. of Boys	No. of Girls
1	Rajbari	L.P.	1.5 km.	1	86	41	45
		M.E.	½ km.	1	64	30	34
		High School	2 km.	1	100	53	47
		H.S.S.S		1	130	66	64
2	Baraima	L.P.	2 km.	1	90	46	44
		M.E	2.5km	1	76	39	37
3	Prabdisa	L.P.	1 km.	1	66	34	32
		M.E.	½ km	1	58	36	22
		High School	2 km.	1	64	30	34
4	Chotowas hiling	L.P.	½ km	1	96	47	49
		M.E.	1 km.	1	100	55	45
		High School	2 km.	1	90	47	43
5	Washibil	L.P.	1 km.	1	130	65	65
		M.E.	1km.	1	98	48	50
		High School	1km.	1	76	38	38

Similarly, in M.E. , H.S. and H.S.S. a very encouraging picture has been noticed.. The literate Dimasa women play an important role in the development of education. The educated women provide proper educational facilities to their children. They also provide adequate educational environment at home. Most of literate women send their children out of the village for further education. Details of the above are shown in Table No. 3.

Table No. 3

Sl No.	Village	No. of household	Qualification of mother	Total no. of children	No. of school going	No. of Higher education
1	Rajbari	1	HSLC	2	1	1
		2	HS	2	-	2
		3	BA	2	-	2
		4	HS	2	2	-
		5	VIII	3	2	1
		6	X	2	1	1
		7	HSLC	4	1	2
		8	VI	2	-	1
		9	BA	2	2	-
		10	VII	2	-	1
2	Baraima	11	X	3	-	2
		12	VII	5	-	2
		13	VI	5	2	-
		14	X	4	-	2
		15	V	5	-	2
		16	VI	4	-	2
		17	X	2	1	1
		18	HS	3	2	1
		19	X	3	-	1
		20	VII	4	2	2
3	Probdisa	21	IX	2	-	1
		22	VIII	3	-	2
		23	HSLC	2	-	2
		24	HS	2	-	1
		25	IV	6	-	3
		26	VI	4	-	4
		27	IX	3	-	2
		28	VII	2	-	2
		29	HS	2	-	2
		30	HSLC	2	-	2
4	Chotowa shiling	31	IX	4	-	2
		32	IX	3	-	3
		33	HS	3	1	2
		34	HSLC	2	2	-
		35	VIII	4	-	2
		36	BA	2	2	-
		37	IV	5	-	3
		38	VII	4	-	2
		39	IV	5	-	2
		40	HSLC	3	2	1
		41	HS	2	-	2
		42	X	3	-	2
		43	IX	1	-	1

5	Washibil	44	V	5	-	5
		45	VIII	4	-	4
		46	IV	5	-	2
		47	HSLC	2	2	-
		48	IV	6	-	3
		49	HS	2	-	2
		50	IV	5	-	2

The awareness towards educating the children is visibly noticed in case of Dimasa villages of the block. The enrolment of pre-primary, L.P, & M.E. is considerably over the past few years among the Dimasa people.

Drop out from the educational institution is still a problem in the villages under study. The study showed that drop-out figures among the Dimasa students of illiterate mothers are more in L.P., M.E. than the literate mothers.

CONCLUSION

The study included fifty households of five villages- 10 households each village. The block is located in the border of West Karbi Anglong district. There is a development block office. Dimasa population is the majority in this block. Almost 77% of them are cultivator. There is mutual amity and good neighbouring relationship among the people of Diyungbra block. The literate Dimasa women play an important role in the development of education. The educated women provides adequate educational environment at home. Most of literate women send their children out of the village for further education. The present study has revealed that drop-out figures among the Dimasa students of illiterate mothers are more in L.P., M.E. and H.S. than literate mothers. The Dimasa women can realize the need and importance of education in the present day context.

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