

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN EMPOWERMENT OF WEAKER SECTION IN THE ECONOMY OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

Education is a life long process and it is a birth right of every child. Education can be considered as the important instrument or tool for socio-economic, cultural and political change in the society. It provides knowledge and skills to individuals to live a better life. Educational level of an individual determines the level of employment and the level of employment decides their economic conditions and social status which in turn decide their position in a society. This study helps to know the role of education in empowerment of weaker sections. Education plays an important role in socio-economic development, vocational efficiency, self dependent, use of resources and to aware the people about rights and duties etc. This paper also helps to know the reasons behind the educational backwardness of the weaker sections. The percentage of weaker sections in higher level education is very low and so that their representation is also low in jobs of high status. Educational backwardness of the weaker section occurs mainly due to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, insufficient income, wastage and stagnation, lack of schools, negative attitudes of parents etc. The Government had committed to giving many policies and programmes at all levels to encourage educational participation of the socially disadvantaged group. But still there existed a gap among the weaker sections at all levels when compared to the general population. The study of this paper is descriptive in nature. And the information and data placed on this paper based on secondary sources such as journal, articles, newspaper etc.

Keywords: Education, Weaker sections, Disparity, Government, Economy, Assam

INTRODUCTION

Indian society is a good example of having a large part of population of the weaker sections even in the 21st century. India is the largest democracy of the world that has large section of society as weak and marginalized. In the context of Indian society, the marginalized or weaker sections is not only defined in terms of caste but also in terms of education, economy, religion, culture etc. They were women, children, specially-abled person, refugees, migrants, Scheduled castes, scheduled Tribes, minorities and economically backward classes and many others. The term weaker sections refers to the section of the population who are socially, educationally, economically and politically backward than the other societies of population. They are all those groups or classes who are today in search of an identity, security and basic amenities of life. Since independence, there are set of efforts to strengthen the position of weaker sections of society. Constitutional provisions like Article 14, 15 and 17, ensure that there is no discrimination against weaker sections. Education is seen as an essential requirement and right for citizens of all nations. It is a significant instrument for eliminating inequality since it allows people to become self-sufficient. It is a significant turning point for the weaker sections because it allows them to face challenges, question their traditional roles, and transform their lives and social positions. Education helps weaker sections to aware about their rights, duties and provisions for their development.

OBJECTIVE

- To know the role of education in empowerment of weaker sections.
- To know the reason behind educational backwardness of weaker sections in Assam.
- To know the Government initiative for the development of education of weaker sections in Assam

METHODOLOGY

The study of this research paper is descriptive methods and here an attempt to know about the role of education in empowerment of weaker sections and also tried to know the reasons behind educational backwardness of this group. This study will helps to know government initiative for the development of education of weaker sections. The study is a discussion based on secondary data gathered from journals, reports, research papers, Google scholar, newspaper, internet etc.

DISCUSSION

The Role of Education in Empowerment of Weaker Sections

The term weaker sections refers to the section of the population who are socially, educationally, economically and politically backward than the other societies of population. They are all those groups or classes who are today in search of an identity, security and basic amenities of life. Education is seen as an essential requirement and right for citizens of all nations. It is a significant instrument for eliminating inequality since it allows people to become self-sufficient. It is a

significant milestone for the weaker sections because it allows them to face challenges, question their traditional roles, and transform their lives and social positions. Education helps weaker sections to be aware about their rights, duties and provisions for their development. Through education, the people can develop knowledge, skills and understanding and thinking. Ultimately, education helps to improve or uplift their living standards in the society. Weaker sections can attain their full development in social and economic sector through education. Education enhances their knowledge and understanding for the available resources for their development. Through education, persons become self-confident and self-reliant and aware about their rights, duties and responsibilities needed to live in society. Education helps to improve the living standards of the weaker sections. Empowerment of weaker sections through education helps to achieve universalization of education, nation integration and socio-economic development in an economy.

The Reason behind Educational Backwardness of Weaker Sections in Assam

- **Economic Problems:** weaker sections face the problem of poverty and exploitation, economic and technological backwardness. This is because of lack of education to enable them to apply for jobs, non-utilization of reservation and vacancies in government jobs and also prejudices and partialities in appointment and promotion in private sector in some cases.
- **Social Discrimination:** Weaker sections faced social discrimination like superior and inferior. They were discouraged to go to school because of discrimination. Weaker sections do not enjoy adequate social facilities because of the social set-up.
- **Unaware of educational facilities:** The marginalized or socially disadvantaged group are not aware about the educational facilities provided by the government. Therefore, they were backward educationally.
- **Language problem:** language poses another challenge for tribal education. Tribals normally speak local dialect rather than the main language of the state. Tribal students feel alienated when the teachers are not well trained to communicate in their tribal dialect.
- **Negative attitude of parents:** The attitude of parents is negative. They do not like to send the children to school. Parents want their children to involve in agricultural activities and other allied activities in which parents work.
- **Lack of motivation:** lack of motivation is one of the reasons of educational backwardness of weaker sections. They do not take interest in education because of lack of motivation.
- **Wastage and stagnation:** wastage and stagnation is another problem of education of weaker sections in Assam. Wastage means dropout of students before completing the course. Stagnation means failure in the class that is repetition of classes by the students. Wastage and stagnation in school is seen mainly among weaker sections.
- **Uneducated parents:** Most of the parents are seen uneducated in the weaker sections. They do not take interest in the education of their children. They were reluctant in keeping their children in schools. They do not understand the importance of education.
- **Inequality:** Inequality is another problem faced by weaker sections. Because of inequality, they discouraged themselves to have education.

However, the situation has changed with time. Due to the efforts of various social reformers, one of whom is B.R. Ambedkar, who proposed for the first time in the Indian constitution some special reservation for the benefit of such weaker sections of the population in terms of education, politics, economics, and so on (Agarwal, 2005 & S.B., 1985). Following independence, the Indian constitution's principles of equality, democracy, freedom, and secularism have provided tremendous security to all sections of India and Assam (Bhakta, 1986). The expansion of India's education, economics, and morals created a significant shift in the people's mindset, and now everyone is treated fairly (Chaube, 1994 & SK., 2000).

The Government Initiative for the Development of Education of Weaker Sections in Assam

Government provides various schemes for the weaker sections of society to improve the conditions of their lives by offering them educational facilities, employment opportunities, affordable health care access, livelihood and other necessary amenities.

The government of Assam has taken the following initiative for the development of education of weaker sections in Assam. These initiatives motivate and encourage the students of weaker sections to go to schools and help parents to remove negative attitude about education. And helps the marginalized group to empower themselves through education.

- **Waiving of admission fees of the students:** Government of Assam decided that, no Govt. and provincialized school of Assam will take fees including admission fees, tuition fees and any other fees from the students provided that income of their parents is below or Rs. 1.00 lakh only per annum from all sources.
- **Pre and Post-matric Scholarship for the weaker sections:** Government of Assam provides scholarship to the weaker sections including Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes every year
- **Distribution of free Text Books:** Government of Assam provides free textbooks to the students from Anganwadi to the Secondary level of school. It helps the weaker sections to access education.

- **Distribution of free school uniform and bags:**Weakersections unable to afford school uniform and bags. Therefore, distribution of free school uniform and bagsmotivate the pupils to go to school.
- **AnundoramBarooh Cash or Laptop Award:** Assam government is providing laptops and cash award in lieu of laptops to the meritorious students securing first division with star marks in the HSLC examination held under Board of secondary education, State Madrassa Education Board and Sanskrit Board of Assam. This scheme was planned for motivating and inspiring the students for better performance and to have first hand experience with information and communication technology.
- **Free distribution of ladies bicycle:** With an objective of reducing dropout rate of girls students at secondary level and to increase enrollment of girls, Government of Assam providing free bicycle to school going girls up to class-X studying in government and provincialized High/higher Secondary schools. Increasing mobility and socialization are positive outcomes that has been observed amongst the school going girls. This has resulted in easy transportation for the girls.
- **AAROHAN Scheme:** This ‘AAROHAN’ schemesis for the identification of talented students from the remote, rural and poor families for the mentoring and monitoring of their academic careers.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme:**Theobjective of Mid -Day Meal scheme is to boost students enrolment. And to provide hot cooked food meal with high nutritional value and attracting children who are reluctant to go to school.

The Government of India has focused on the weaker sections of the society through its many schemes, in both the rural and urban areas. Through schemes such as JananiShishuSurakshaKaryakram, JananiSurakshaYojana and RashtriyaBalSwasthyaKaryakram it has provided healthcare benefits to newborn and small children, and pregnant and feeding mothers. Small children are provided nutritious food and pre-school education in the Anganwadis. Children of the weaker sections are provided education through the Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalayas, JawaharNavodayaVidyalaya. Also, the Mid-day Meal scheme provides free schooling for the children going to primary schools. The Central Government has provided lakhs of pre and post-matric scholarships to students from the backward areas and weaker sections. With the DBT scheme now, these benefits are being deposited directly in their bank accounts. Students are also provided free hostels and free coaching for higher studies. Women from the weaker sections without adequate means are given small loans from schemes such as the RashtriyaMahilaKosh to start their own small businesses. Schemes such as “Ajeevika” help them to enhance their skills and create more opportunities for better jobs. They also get houses under the Indira AwaasYojana, and Rahjiv Gandhi AwaasYojana. With the BPL card and now the Aadhaar card, the weaker sections can get many benefits delivered directly to them. The weaker sections also get reservation in government jobs, and reservation in gram panchayat posts. This has helped in their economic and political empowerment.

SUGGESTIONS

- The government must check whether the scheme are implemented fully or not.
- The awareness programme must be created for the socially disadvantages group.
- Discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, race, sex etc. must be eliminated.
- Encouraging and motivating programme must be undertaken to attract the weaker sections to have education.
- Social orthodoxies must removedand co-education must grow.
- Reservation in government employment will enhance returns to educate weaker sections.
- Primary Education can enhance the earning potential for weaker sections because they will eligible for lower level government jobs instead of relying on manual labor in private sector.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that education is an important milestone for empowerment of weaker sections because it enables them to face the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life and positions in the society. The government has worked efficiently in recent years to protect, promote, and raise the socially disadvantaged group of the society and steps have been taken to bridge the gap between the weaker sections and the remaining population. The empowerment of this disadvantaged groups has been aimportant topic of discussion among politicians, policymakers, and socialists. The weaker sections mustbe strengthened on social, educational, economic, and political levels. When it comes to educational and monetary upliftment of the poorer groups, the government must be careful.

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