



A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS TOWARDS GIRL CHILD EDUCATION THROUGH SARVA SIKSHA ABHIYAN

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ABSTRACT-----

This study analyzed the opinions and perceptions of girl child, teacher, and parent respondents in schools under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. A descriptive research design was used, with a sample size of 206 respondents. A stratified random sampling technique was used, and data was collected through an interview schedule method with a structured questionnaire. The study found a significant difference in girl children's opinions towards infrastructural facilities in schools under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, while no significant difference was found in teachers' opinions towards the teaching-learning process. Additionally, there was a significant difference in parents' opinions towards girl child education in schools under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.

KEYWORDS: *perceptions of teachers and parents; girl child education; Government high schools, Krishna district.*-----

INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial tool for socio-economic development and women's empowerment, as emphasized by the UNCRC. India has made significant progress in accessing education, particularly for girls, since independence. Although enrollment is nearly universal, the rate of dropout is marginally higher than for boys. Efforts to maximize girl child retention have led to gender clarity at both primary and secondary levels. Despite being officially free in government schools, there is still a gender disparity and challenges in girl child education, particularly in rural areas. The recent statistical data at the national level shows the dropout rate among the girls at the primary level of education is 4.12 percent which increases to 16.86 percent at the secondary level of education and this is particularly high among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe girl children in the society.

Education is crucial for empowerment and emancipation, and India has been working towards universalizing education since its independence. The Constitution recognized the need for free and compulsory education, but the newly independent state had to include it in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV). Since then, various commissions have been appointed to achieve this goal, including the Radhakrishnan Commission (1949), Kothari Commission (1966), and

National Policy on Education (NPE 1986, 1992). The Kothari Commission aimed to eradicate illiteracy in India by 1986 and saw education as an instrument of change. India is also a signatory to international conventions, such as the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. The National Policy of Education 1986 ensures free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality for all children up to 14 years of age. The judiciary has shown commitment to upholding education, with the Unnikrishan judgement in 1993 stating that every child has a right to free education until they complete 14 years. The UN Millennium Development Goal (2000) binds countries to ensure all children complete primary schooling by 2015. However, India passed the 93rd Constitution Amendment Act in 2005, making education for all children aged 6-14 a fundamental right. From the decade of the 1980s, strengthening the quality of education at all educational levels, and more so at the primary level, become a part of the global agenda. Forums and Declarations pledged improvements in the quality of education. National commitment towards quality education has become



significant and visible since the late 1980s. Since then, the government has experimented with several initiatives and interventions to improve the quality of education.

Numerous social and economic factors, such as a low socioeconomic profile, a lack of adequate school infrastructure, safety and security concerns, health and hygiene issues, underequipped schools, insufficient school infrastructure, the location of government schools, and parental attitudes towards girl child education, all contribute to the negative attitudes that exist in society towards the idea of girl child education. The fact that barely one in three females in India completed their education is quite troubling. Thus, in the modern day, it is essential to analyse the current issues and future possibilities in female child education, particularly at the high school level, which is why this research study was conducted.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ganguly. M (2015) in his study concluded that there exists a significant relationship between achievement levels and socioeconomic status at the school level particularly among girl children.

Vineetha.T (2017) in her study revealed that the students from upper-income strata showed better achievement levels when compared to the students from lower-income groups and there is a strong correlation between the economic status and achievement levels of the children particularly at high school levels.

Rupadas (2017) in her study had concluded that the children at the school level whose parents are literate and educated showed better performance than the children with illiterate parents and the study further revealed that the performance of girl students was better than that of the boys students.

Sirin (2018) conducted the meta-analysis on the socioeconomic status and achievement levels of the students for a consecutive period and found that an average correlation exists between the academic performance and socio-economic conditions of the students.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To Study the perceptions of the teachers towards girl child education under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.
2. To Examine the perceptions of the parents towards girl child education under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.
3. To suggest policy measures for improving the girl child education under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Descriptive Research Design was applied to conduct this empirical study, which involved collecting primary and secondary data from government high schools in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. Primary data was collected through field surveys and secondary data from books, journals, articles, and published documents related to girl child education and the problems of girl child education under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. The sample frame consisted of 80 girl students, 34 teachers, 12 head teachers, and 80 parents. The sampling technique used was multi-stage stratified random sampling, with a total sample size of 206.

Primary data was collected through Interview Schedule with a Structured Questionnaire, followed by Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and observation methods to examine the in-depth feelings, opinions, perspectives, interests, and knowledge of the sample respondents and other concerned individuals. Variables identified in the study included socio-economic conditions, barriers to girl child education, enrollment trends, dropout factor, girl child involvement, facilities and support provided under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, teachers' perceptions and opinions, head teachers' opinions, and parents' perceptions. The empirical data was analyzed using statistical tools.

LIMITATIONS

Though the study extends to wider contours of the research aspects, it has the following limitations:

1. The study is limited to only one district in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
2. The responses given by the respondents are purely personal. Hence, they may be subjected to personal bias.



3. The study is limited to only girl children studying in government high schools. Hence, the results may not be generalised to a greater extent.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Perception of Teachers towards Girl Child Education

- The result shows that the majority (79.7%) of the teacher respondents had agreed that the local community is fully aware of the importance of girl child education.
- The result shows that the majority (95.3%) of the teacher respondents had felt that encouragement is to be given to the girl child education and there is every need to promote the girl child education.
- The result shows that the majority (62.5%) of the teacher respondents had agreed that the local community extends their cooperation in school-related matters.
- The result shows that the majority (54.2%) of the teacher respondents had opined that the reason for the non-co-operation of the local community in school-related matters is that the local community perceives school as a source to get things and not an entity that requires support.
- The majority of the teacher respondents had opined that parents give assurance of sending their girl child during their visits, but the girl child doesn't turn up.
- The majority of the teachers respondents had opined that the girl child's parents express helplessness saying that despite repeated persuasions, the girl child is not ready to attend school.
- 90.6 per cent of the teacher respondents felt that parents believe that their girl child will get a proper education.

Perception of Parents on Girl Child Education

- 71.9 per cent of the girl child parents had opined that primary education is enough for girl children.
- A major chunk of the girl child parents had opined that girls should take college education.
- 69.8 per cent of the parents had disclosed that girl children are not comfortable with science, mathematics and English subjects.
- 78.2 per cent of the parents are willing to send their girl child to another place for higher education.
- 75 per cent of the parents had disclosed that education is more important for their boy child as well as for their girl child on an equitable basis. They felt that education is important for both genders in modern society.
- 63.5 per cent of the parents had opined that there is no need for their elder girl child to take care of their younger siblings at home even at the cost of their school attendance.

CONCLUSION

The study analyzed the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding girl child education, revealing a balanced enrollment process for high school girls. However, the main issue lies in the retention phase of already enrolled girls and the significant dropout rate. Girls from marginalized and deprived social groups often drop out of primary or secondary school. Factors contributing to this issue include social, cultural, political, and economic factors. Education universalization should not be misconstrued as mere literacy; it should be interpreted as a means for social change, empowering individuals to understand themselves, develop skills, and enjoy privileges and rights in society.

The study concludes that a change in society's mindset towards girl child education is necessary, and social mechanisms must provide the best possible education for girls. Modern Indian society is positively contributing to the promotion of girl child education, but efforts must be made to emphasize economic needs and social status. Gender disparities must be suppressed, and the girl child status of equality must be precisely established in society. To achieve participatory and inclusive growth, the Indian State must adopt the Rawlsian approach and Amartya Sen's discourse on development. Rawls emphasizes the equitable distribution of resources, while Amartya Sen aims to transform resources into freedoms by enhancing individual capabilities. The Indian State must aim to increase resources and capacity-building through education to achieve this goal.



SUGGESTIONS

- Awareness programmes are to be conducted for the girl children to promote their awareness levels towards the importance of education in terms of individual and social approaches.
- Awareness programmes are to be conducted for the parent community of girl children to foster positive perspectives among them and elevate their positive approaches towards girl child education and academic achievements.
- Several research findings show that the government schools lack the minimum infrastructure needed for imparting education, particularly to the girl child. Better infrastructure facilities and other supporting logistics are to be provided by the corresponding authorities to overcome the problems of girl child education under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.
- Special financial support services are to be provided by the government in the form of additional scholarships to school-going girl children because many research findings show that poverty is the basic reason for the increasing dropout rates among girl children.
- Vocational training programmes are to be conducted for girl children, making them additionally competent apart from their regular mode of academic activities, and the provision of skills development courses will certainly make them efficient and productive in terms of innovative thinking and a moderate approach.
- There is every need to formulate innovative teaching methodologies for communication to reach the girl students from low socio-economic profiles.
- Soft teaching manners and approaches, effective communication methods, and other pedagogy strategies are to be implemented in the classroom environment to make the girls feel tension-free and free from school phobia.
- A special focus on subjects like languages, especially the English subject, followed by mathematics and science subjects is to be made by the teaching community to make the girl children have a lighter and easier receiving mode and put them at ease in learning the difficult subjects. Many research studies have inferred that the above-mentioned subjects were the aspects commonly felt tough to learn by girls at the high school level.
- There is every reason to provide better transport facilities for the girl children, as most of the government schools are located in rural and semi-urban areas.
- The mode of transportation has been acting as a hindrance for the girl children to reach out to their schools, and hence, necessary steps are to be taken by the government transportation authorities to enhance the transportation facilities, especially for the girl children.
- There is every need to maintain a free flow of communication from the school authorities to the parental community of the girl children, thereby providing them with a continuous channel of feedback mechanisms on their attendance levels, achievement levels, and behavioural patterns.
- The corresponding authorities are to formulate and execute special drives to promote the enrollment of girl children in a specified academic year under different academic slots.
- Special programmes are to be designed by the government authorities to get back the dropout girl children from high schools by providing economic relaxations in terms of fee waivers and relaxation of passing marks to make them synchronise with the ongoing situation in the academic environment. These steps will help in decreasing the dropout rate among the girl children under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.

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