

Innovative Pedagogical Interventions for Female Education: Training Imperatives for Future Generation Teachers

Dr. Renu Nanda
Sr Associate Professor
P.G. Department of Education
University of Jammu, Jammu -180006.
Email : listenrenu@yahoo.com

Abstract

In the emerging world order, a nation's well-being and prosperity linked to the knowledge base it has been able to accumulate over the period of time. Broad basing knowledge domain in the societal milieu requires now requires a paradigm shift from conventional modes of teaching to technology driven pedagogy. This therefore necessitates a purposeful review of present mode of promoting literacy. Reorientation of education has to be examined in context of its relevance in productively exploiting societal resources to help trigger socio-economic transformation of the society. In view of the above, the present paper, therefore, examines the existing institutional arrangements imparting education, to females living in rural and backward areas of Jammu & Kashmir State in India. Objective has been to suggest policy measures and options for generating better access to income employment opportunities for the educated youth. .

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- Sr Associate Professor,

Introduction:

This paper has attempted to bring out a positive correlation between education and employment avenues that could be generated on the basis of diverse vocational pursuits embedded in teaching curricula in the local milieu. In Indian context this could help to arrest labor migration from rural to urban agglomerations, which has resulted in abject poverty and 'ghetto' life for millions of people who are moving from one place to another in search of jobs and secure living. Integrating local skills with education makes it possible to develop an approach of 'earning while learning'. The focus of the paper therefore examines the outcomes and efficacy of innovative programs being launched by the government both at the state and central level as well as by various non-governmental organizations especially for female learners. The results of this experiment in the long run could help in suggesting a framework gainful income and employment career pursuits, not withstanding socio-economic cum religious opposition top women education and economic empowerment.

Emphasis on the promotion of women education now has to be re-examined in facilitating their socio-economic empowerment ,especially when they constitute fifty percent of population spread over vast mass of rural and backward areas of India. Teaching - learning processes have to blend knowledge of learners in achieving quality life supported with pragmatic understanding of the changes occurring at national and global level.

This paper has investigated how vocational education has created better income and employment opportunities for women at grass root level. Present research study was carried out to make an impact assessment whereof integrating local skills with education for “earning while learning”, among the women was made in **craft based literacy programs** in the rural areas of J&K State. The paper discusses in details this novel approach for the promotion and spread of education.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objectives of the present study therefore are as following:

- 1 To examine scope of local resources in broad basing innovative teaching learning programs.
2. To undertake inventory mapping of traditional skills, crafts and competencies so that teaching pedagogy could be customized to local pursuits.
3. To suggest policy options to link traditional skills and crafts with vocational education.

Concept

The conventional pedagogy of formal education has not been able to generate knowledge which could effectively help to exploit life avenues especially in rural and non-industrialized regions. In-fact in quite a few states of India unemployment among the educated youth has witnessed socio-economic unrest in different forms with different intensities. It is high time that pedagogical tools are re-conceptualized in imparting not only education but skills, so to generate employment opportunities and economic well being on sustainable basis among the women. The present paper therefore suggests a pedagogical model which helps to reduce socio-economic deprivations being suffered by the women.

Study Area

State of J&K represents a frontier state of Indian union, having borders with Pakistan, Afghanistan and China. The process of economic development and industrialization in this mountainous belt of Himalayan region has not up till now resulted in a significant industrialization and even till now is predominantly agrarian in character. Demographic trends portray an upward swing as a consequence of which incidence of unemployment among the educated youth is registering an increase day by day. The present educational system *per se* does not provide job specific orientation, especially for women thereby limiting their opportunities in seeking employment in different career avenues within the state and outside. The geo-economic profile of J&K State, in the prevailing circumstances has limited scope to generate sufficient employment avenues for educated women, who come out from schools, colleges and universities in pursuit of purposeful career opportunities. Therefore, relating education to employability within the local spatio-temporal context to be examined in-depth so as to elevate economic well being of the learners.

Sample Area

A field study was carried out among the select clusters of Jammu region of J&K state, which are famous for their traditional arts and crafts. The villages under the focus of the present study reveal that they have abundance of resources which can sustain economic activities which enjoy very good market demand, especially for the handicraft products like crochet making, bamboo products, joinery artifacts (wood and non-wood based products), paper machine (handicrafts), spinning and weaving.

For this purpose, three villages were identified on account of favorable resources and the skills profile of the local population. 100, 45 and 75 female learners of Bajalta (Samba Tehsil), Chanduchak (R.S.Pura Tehsil) and Domana (Akhnoor Tehsil) respectively of Jammu District of J&K State comprised the universe of the sample size. A structured questionnaire was designed and administered among the selected respondents for data collection.

In-fact an effort was made to develop a course curriculum which could facilitate female school children to acquire and sharpen skills in local crafts thereby enabling them to start such ventures which lead to self employment and sustainable income generation activities.

Research Findings

Findings of the present study have been formulated on the basis of responses elicited from on girl learners who had to drop out on account of economic compulsions

and as well as due to the belief that education necessarily would not result in gainful employment even if they continued with it. 220 such girl dropouts from three villages were interviewed for identifying the reasons discontinuing their studies. The main reasons attributed for dropping out of schools were :-

- a) The present system of education does not provide for vocational pursuits for 'earning while learning'.
- b) Courses of study do not address the needs of the children at individual and group levels.
- c) Illiteracy and backwardness of parents acts as an inhibiting factor for recognizing the importance of girl child education.
- d) The present formal school education does not relate to the local art and crafts which could strengthen and enrich the skills so as to enhance the pursuits of gainful employment subsequently.
- e) Most of the families work collectively to share the economic and domestic activities irrespective of age and sex. In poor families, therefore girl child is often called upon to assist in domestic chores, thereby, depriving her of opportunities to seek formal education.
- f) Gender discrimination still being prevalent in rural areas often discourages girl child to study in co-educational institutions.
- g) A perception of education being of little use in the rural agrarian employment structures, children are not encouraged to continue with education beyond primary level or so. This is more predominant in case of girl child.
- h) Due to early marriages and extensive participation in day to day household activities education for girl child is considered of very little use.
- i) Financial constraints and abject poverty among most of the rural households prove an obstacle for girl child education; therefore, preference is given to the male child education keeping in view the limited means, to sustain expenses incurred in this regard.
- j) Lack of job opportunities with very little focus on co-curricular activities, the education for girl child is not considered very important vis-a-vis the future life and career options.

Inferences and Conclusions

On the basis of the above research findings, the present study therefore suggests measures which can promote girl child education and as well as link it to enhanced self employment initiatives :-

- a) Formal teaching at primary level should strengthen the foundational and conceptual understanding of the pupils.
- b) At secondary level economic and demographic information systems of the local area/region must be a part of curricula. This is to generate awareness among the students community pertaining to the local/regional resource endowments and potentialities.
- c) At high school level education curricula must provide and enhance such skills which relate to the local/regional crafts and skills. This should facilitate 'earning while learning' aspect of education.
- d) Various institutional support inputs and linkages must be identified to help students to become self starters with the premise that high school education would become a terminal point, for majority of students.
- e) It should be possible to develop an integrated approach to educational delivery packages which can enhance earning prospects of the learners. For this the role of community participation, governmental agencies and non governmental agencies should be defined to support 'earning while learning' initiatives.
- f) Present study demonstrates that economic activities can be initiated at a broader scale provided local art and crafts become part of the academic curricula. As it would not only brighten the self employment prospects but it would also unleash creativity and innovative temper among the learners who essentially would be in their formative years of learning.

References

The present study was motivated by being involved with various non-governmental organizations and support groups which are actively engaged in promotion of girl child education. Paper has references to studies carried out by agencies like NABARD, Indian Red Cross Society, Department of Social Welfare, National Service Scheme and Bharat Scouts and Guides in region of J&K state.

Educational Implications

The specific educational implications of present paper focus on the desirability of evolving vocational pursuits at the primary, secondary and high school level. This is to suggest that the terminal point for most of the learners could be high school after which earning pursuits become the necessity of life. Added to this is the fact that in rural areas most of the learners especially the girl child do not exhibit mobility for seeking higher education or job avenues, as a consequence of which this strata of learners have to be provided means and opportunities within the areas of their habitat . Education has

therefore to become inclusive and holistic in not only spreading formal education but orienting learners in seeking better income and employment avenues. Course curricula and the delivery of learning processes have to be redesigned to go beyond restricting itself only to the spread of formal education.

Utility for Teachers & Students

Teachers and the teaching institutions in rural areas need to develop variety of course packages which have a very high focus on vocational character. Teachers themselves need to go for such training programmes which equip them with expertise for promoting local skills and crafts. This is intended to develop a symbiotic relationship of teaching to the growth potentialities of the region so as to make education relevant to the local economic potentialities. Jammu and Kashmir government recently trained physical training instructors at school and college level in yoga. The purpose of doing so is to help students in coping with stress and tension arising out of need to perform at a very high level in academics besides introducing courses in entrepreneurship at school, college and university level.

Financial Implications

The provision for creating such infrastructural facilities within the institutions of learning would require one time capital investment. Thereafter recurring expenses could be part of the fee chargeable from the students. Capital costs can be met by number of such governmental agencies which provide liberal funding for creating the necessary infrastructure in shape of laboratories, workshops or even incubation centers for hatching such business activities which are sustainable within the local/regional area.

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