

Educational Challenges of Fisher Women

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Abstract

Many studies are indicating that the educational constraints for the girls among fishermen communities are relatively more as women are forced to work due to poverty. After the implementation of globalization and liberalization policies, the minimum expenditures of families have increased abnormally due to hike in prices of common and essential commodities; hence, women are also rather compelled to work earning some additional income to meet the growing expenditures of their households. All these conditions are significantly responsible for increase in the share of women as a workforce. Keeping the above aspects in view, an attempt is made in this paper to assess the education status of fisher women in visakhapatnam district.

1. Introduction

Fisher is one of the dominant fishermen communities of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. The Fisher are the traditional sea-fishermen whose primary occupation is fishing. The name Fisher is derived from a Sanskrit word Jala, a "Net". According to E.Thurston (1909) "the Fisher are Telugu fishermen, palaquin bearers and cultivators in Ganjam and Visakhapatnam districts. Some are fresh water fishermen, while others fish with cast-net (visuru vala) from the seashore or on the open sea. They are also known as Ganga Vamsamu (Dy nasty of Ganga)". Many studies are indicating that the educational constraints for the girls among fishermen communities are relatively more as women are forced to work due to poverty. After the implementation of globalization and liberalization policies, the minimum expenditures of families have increased abnormally due to hike in prices of common and essential commodities; hence, women are also rather compelled to work earning some additional income to meet the growing expenditures of their households. All these conditions are significantly responsible for increase in the share of women as a workforce.

This sort of transformation is very high in case of fishing communities. Keeping the above aspects in

view, an attempt is made in this paper to assess the education status of fisher women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

More specifically, the objectives are:

1. To study the educational constraints among the Fishers.
2. To examine education status of fisher women.
3. To analyze age wise and sex wise educational status of fishers.

2. Methodology

The data for the present study were collected from wide range of sources, which include primary and secondary sources. The researcher has taken sufficient care on the validity and reliability of the data. Much of the data were collected by census schedule and informal interviews employing non-participant observation method.

EDUCATIONAL CONSTRAINTS AMONG THE WOMEN OF FISHERPETA:

The researcher conducted number of informal interviews to study the educational constraints among the Fishers. Related to children's

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education, the interviews revealed certain significant educational constraints.

3. Parental Indifference

There is a considerable gap between the way how educationists think about and the parents look at education. According to the educationists a child is looked at as a “potential learner” than a potential earner. The parents’ usually think otherwise. When people are suffering from poverty, it is quite natural to think about the immediate need satisfactions than the long earn benefits. The some attitude is expressed by many of the parents of Jajaripeta. To remedy the situation making education compulsory by statutes is the only way.

As the fishermen economy involves the women in significant roles there is naturally a preference for casting women in economic roles which fetch certain amounts of daily income. As it is already pointed out, the fishermen catch the fish and the fisherwomen sell the fish in the markets. Selling the fish in the market is entirely the responsibility of the women only

1 LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES

All though there is an elementary school for secondary education they have to go to distant places. When secondary schools and colleges are present within a reasonable distance then they have less number of problems to attend.

2 ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

Teachers posted in the schools should have proper commitment and devotion to impart education on the children usually, teachers from other communities tended to lookdown fishermen children. Therefore, posting teachers from their own community is always desirable.

3 ECONOMIC ROLES

The fisherwomen assume two different roles in marketing the fish, one wholer while the other is retailer. The former is called by a name ‘marakathe’ while the later is referred to as ‘berakarthe’. Once the fish lands on the shore the marakathe buys fish in lots and in turn sells it to retailer barakathe. The merchants from other communities also come to the shore and buy large quantities of fish by getting into bargaining transactions. On the whole the entire fishing community is involved in all the transactions that take place on the shore.

The Role of Women:

The retailers take head loads of fish to the local markets distributed all over the city. Thus all financial transactions are carried out exclusive by women and they act as consolidars of their family income to the extent that the men folk have to ask them for money for their petty necessities like busying alcohol, cigars, going to movies, etc.

In this way when we look at the status of women among Fisheress, it is evident that women play a very significant role in their economic life. So far, so good. But other areas of life such as their education become serious causalities in this process as they are more interested in ‘earning’ than ‘learning’.

Education of women is crucial for the development of any country. However, in many of the under-developed countries girl-child education is neglected. The following table-1 gives the educational status of the Fisher women.

TABLE – 1 Distribution of fisher women according to their education:

Educational status	Female	Male	Total	Percentage
Illiterate	114	129	243	51.37
Primary	107	55	162	34.25
Secondary	42	24	66	13.95
College	1	1	2	0.43

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Total	264	209	473	100.00
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Source: Field Survey

Table 1 gives the overall educational status among the Fisheres. From this Table it can be seen that educational status among the females is better than their male counterparts, who have primary education to almost double (107) away the females than the males (55). Incase of secondary education also females (42) out number males (24). There are only two college going students, one each from males and females.

The higher percentage of education among the females corresponds to the population distribution as there are more no. of females (264) than their male counter parts (209) with regard to primary education females out no. in every age group with a sole exception of the age group 36-45 where there are two males against one female. In case of secondary education also the same trend would be observed that in all age group females out number the males.

However it has to be born in mind that inferences drawn out of this table although favor females in terms of their educational status the overall scenario is not that encourage. Has to be content with education among the women infact Fisheres beat male or female tend to be indifferent to education as their interest more in immediate benefits than the long term benefits education beings into their lives.

It is found from Table 1 that 51.37 percent of fisherwomen are illiterates, where as 34.25 percent have primary education and 13.95 percent have secondary education and 0.43 percent having college education respectively.

As for the table - 1 almost half of them are illiterates and in the remaining half, about three fourths have primary education and only 1 of them is of college level.

TABLE – 2 Age-wise and sex-wise educational status of sample Fisheres

Age group	Primary		Secondary		Collage		Illiterates	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0 – 5	–	–	–	–	–	–	22	16
6 – 15	38	88	3	3	–	–	13	18
16 – 25	9	14	20	38	1	1	8	13
26 – 35	5	4	–	1	–	–	42	52
36 – 45	3	1	1	–	–	–	29	9
46 – 55	–	–	–	–	–	–	15	6
Total	55	107	24	42	1	1	129	114

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 gives the educational status of the children of fisherwomen respondents. This table confirms as lightly better status of women compare to men in all the segments namely primary, secondary, colligate. This could be partly due to the numerical superiority of females than the males in the sample population. Table 2 gives a break up of figures into age wise & sex wise distribution.

As in many developing countries population explosion, resource utilization, equitable distribution of resources, poverty alleviation are some of the important social problems in India. These problems are further exacerbated by caste religion, region and other parochial consideration.

To change the scenario and to achieve significant development and all these areas there is a need to bring about change in the people's aptitude and

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outlook. People should imbibe social values such as equality fraternity and also should cultivate scientific temperament with changes in some of their customary practices. In this context, education plays a very important role in bringing about such changes. Accordingly in the cities and towns we are able to see some change but in villages where still more than 70% of our population lives, the situation has to improve a lot.

Even in cities and towns where there are certain occupational groups like the barbers, carpenters, blacksmiths and fishermen, who show very low levels of education. The problems are the same and the constraints to education for them are almost similar.

The results of the study are showing that there is a higher degree of illiteracy among the fishermen community, which in turn is responsible for all their suffering and backwardness. Further, majority of the fishermen do not send their children to the schools. It can be seen that in the present scenario education is more important to the fisherwomen to improve their socio-economic conditions by adopting and availing all the resources in reasonable degree. Hence, it is essential to create awareness regarding direct and indirect benefits of education among the fisherwomen.

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