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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BARRIERS TO GIRL CHILD EDUCATION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AT SECONDARY LEVEL IN KOHIMA DISTRICT OF NAGALAND

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Abstract

In realization of the importance of the girl child, concerted efforts were mounted by the Governments at various levels to improve girl's participation in education and redress the gender inequalities in education enrolment and retention. Therefore, the study was undertaken to analyze the psychological and institutional barriers that hinders girl child education at secondary level in Kohima district of Nagaland. The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research. The self developed tool used for the study was a closed form of questionnaire on barriers to girls schooling at secondary level where the girls have to either tick 'yes' or 'no'. The instrument was validated by ten experts in Faculty of Education and the same was administered to 500 girl students. In Kohima, there are five EBRCs (Educational Block Resource Centres) and from each EBRC, 100 students from secondary level were selected randomly both from private and government schools. The data collected were analyzed and interpreted in the light of the objective of the study by using percentage analysis. The study reveals that most of the girls feel safe, comfortable and secure to go to school. They also said that there is no gender discrimination and they prefer to study in co-educational institution. The study also reveals that most of the schools have the facilities that are necessary for running a school efficiently and effectively. The study concluded that most of the girls in Kohima do not face barriers in getting education. However, there are few girls who have negative attitude towards education and their school which might be due to cultural beliefs and practices, poverty, poor academic performance, etc. which are quite negligible when compare with the barriers faced by girls in some other communities.

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Introduction:-

Education is a fundamental human right as well as the most important tool for the total development of a person in particular and the society and nation in general. It is an essential means to bridge gender imbalances and empower women with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate fully in the process of development. Education of the

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girl child is critical in shaping the future of the nation because it has multiple benefits not only for the girl but for the entire nation. Educated girls are likely to marry late, lead healthy and productive live, earn higher incomes, participate in decision making and build better future for themselves, their families and their nation at large. Thus the importance of girl child education cannot be underestimated and so the saying goes... "If you educate a man, you educate a person, but if you educate a woman you educate the whole family."

Realising the importance of girl child education, the government of India has initiated many policies and programmes to ensure that girls get quality education as well as to bridge the disparities between man and women. As a result, the lives of women and girls are changing but it is not significant. Women and girls still continues to face multiple barriers in getting quality education mainly due to patriarchal norms, cultural beliefs and practices and poverty especially those from rural areas and low income communities.

Secondary education is an important level in the entire educational system. At this level, it prepares young men and women to persuit higher education, as well as makes them to adjust with their practical live meaningfully and productively. It is also a level in which students enters the adolescent stage which is the most crucial stage in their lives. Therefore the education at this level should make sure that it helps the girls and boys to accept the realities of life and to go through this stage of education successfully.

Brief profile about Kohima, Nagaland:

Kohima is the capital district of the state of Nagaland, which is one of the North Eastern State of India. According to the census of 2011, the literacy rate of Nagaland was 77.55% in which the literacy rate of male stands at 82.75% and literacy rate of female stands at 76.11%. According to the same year census of i.e. 2011, the literacy rate of Kohima district was 90.9% of which male are 92.26% and females 87.74% respectively. There are 16 major tribes in sNagaland and Kohima is the home to the Anagmi Naga tribe. The district has five Educational Block Resource Centres (EBRC) namely 1.L.Khel, Kohima EBRC 2. Viswema EBRC 3. Chiephobozou EBRC 4. Sechu/ Zubza EBRC and 5. Tseminyu EBRC.

Kofi Annan (2001) says "No development strategy is better than the one that involves women as central players. It has immediate benefits for nutrition, health, saving and re-investment at the family, community and ultimately country level. In other words, educating girls is a social development policy that works. It is a long-term investment that yields on exceptionally high returns." The above statement very clearly states about the importance of and benefits of investing in girl child education. Basing on these statements, the study was taken to study the psychological and institutional barriers to girl child education at secondary level in Kohima district of Nagaland.

Review of Literature:-

Min Bista (2004) reviewed researched literatures on girls' education in Nepal. The reviews include a total of 20 research reports. Eighteen (18) out of twenty (20) studies were funded by external agencies i.e. UNESCO, UNICEF and bilateral and multilateral doner agencies. The major areas of studies include barriers to girls schooling, role of women teacher, gender disparity in education and scholarship and incentives for girls. Base on the report many of the recommendations are part of the policy in Nepal, some of which are introducing alternative school programmes, providing increased incentives, establish schools at walkable distance and at least appointing one woman teacher in to every primary school.

Sivakumar, I and Anitha, M. (2012) conducted study on education and girl children in Puducherry region, which is a small union territory on the East Coast of India. The main objective of the study was to find out the status of girl children and examine gender discrimination and socio economic factors associated with girl children education. The study reveals that girls drop out of school were mainly due to family compulsion such as early marriage, household chores, looking after siblings, preference for male son/ gender discrimination etc. Some parents think that educating girls/ daughters does not bring any direct benefit their as their earning through education goes to their husband after she gets married, illiterate parents etc.

Bunza, Kebba (2014) studied on the problems and challenges of girl-child education in Nigeria. The main objective of the study was to identify the major problems or factors responsible for low girl child enrolment in schools. The study found that religious misconception, cultural practices, poverty, early marriage, illiteracy, inadequate school infrastructure are some of the main barriers to girl child education. The study recommends among other things that

government, NGOs, parents, traditional and religious leaders to join hands in the enlightenment campaign for the benefits and need to educate a girl child.

Saryal, Sutapa (2014) did a research on women's right in India and the problems and prospects. The main objective of the study is to evolve strategies to empower women uniformly like men. The study found they one of the United Nations Millennium goal i.e. Gender equality and women empowerment is far from being realised in India due to domestic violence, sati, preference for male son, female foeticide, child marriage, right to education, sexual harassment, gender discrimination etc. Therefore, the study concluded that only when the negative cultural and traditional practices are eliminated, the millennium goal of gender equality and women empowerment can become a reality in India.

Sahoo, Sanjukta (2016) conducted a study on "Girls education in India: Status and Challenges." The objective of the study was to know the recent status and challenges of girl's education in India and to provide suggestions to overcome the challenges of girl's education in India. The study pointed out that girls' education is in a poor condition especially at elementary and secondary stage comparing with the higher education and the main reasons for it are parental negative attitude, lack of infrastructure, lack of security, superstitions related to girls, poor socio-economic conditions of parent etc are the major challenges for promoting girls education in India. The paper suggested that the government, NGOs, community members and all citizens if India must join hands to put an end to all types of barriers that prevent girls from getting education.

From the review of related literature, it was found that most of the studies on girls education were done through qualitative research method and mostly related to the status of girls in the society and in the field of education. Studies have pointed out that girls are not treated equally with boys in most of the communities especially in developing countries. Some of the main reasons for discriminating girls are due to cultural and traditional practices and beliefs, property inheritance, poverty. It was also found that many researches on girl's education are done abroad as well as in India but no study on girls education was done in Nagaland. Hence the present study is a humble effort on the part of the researcher to study the barriers that prevents girls from getting education in Kohima district of Nagaland.

Statement of the problem:

It is very important that girls receive secondary education. According to UNICEF – when we invest in girl's secondary education the results are : the lifetime earning of girls dramatically increases, national growth rates rise, child marriage rates decline, child mortality rates fall. Thus the importance of girl child education cannot be underestimated. Therefore, the statement of the problem is "**Barriers to Girl child education: An Empirical study at Secondary Level in Kohima district of Nagaland.**"

Objectives of the study:-

1. To study the barriers to girl child education at secondary level in Kohima district of Nagaland under the following dimensions:
(a) Psychological barriers (b) Institutional barriers.
2. To suggest measures for the improvement of girl child education in Kohima district of Nagaland.

Research Questions:

1. What are the psychological and institutional barriers to girl child education at secondary level in Kohima district of Nagaland?
2. What are suggesting measures/recommendations to overcome the barriers that hinder girl child education in Kohima district of Nagaland?

Methodology:-

The study employed qualitative research method using simple random technique. The study was conducted in Kohima district of Nagaland to study the barriers to girl child education at secondary level. The tool used for the study was a close form of questionnaire develop by the researcher herself under the guidance of research supervisor where the students have to tick either 'yes' or 'no'. The questionnaire was titled barriers to Girl child education at secondary level in Kohima district of Nagaland where there are two dimensions – psychological and institutional barriers. The instrument was validated by ten experts from the faculty of education. The questionnaire was

administered to 500 girls studying at secondary level in Kohima to study the psychological and institutional barriers that prevents girls from getting quality education at secondary level. In Kohima, there is Five Educational Block Resource Centres (EBRC) and from each centre 100 girls at secondary level were selected randomly. For the collection of data the researcher visited both private and government schools by herself and administered the tool/questionnaire to the girls personally. The collected data were analysed and interpreted in accordance to the objective of the study using simple percentage method.

Analysis of the data:

Table 1:- Frequencies and percentage analysis on Psychological barriers to girl child education at secondary level.

Sl.No	Statements		Yes	No
A). Psychological barriers				
1	Do you feel safe and secure to go to school?		476(95.2%)	24(4.8%)
2	Is the school environment comfortable for you?		470(94%)	30(6%)
3	(a).Do you think that going to school is wastage of time and energy?		12 (2.4%)	488(97.6%)
	(b). If no, do you think that education will help you to live an independent life in your future?		485(97%)	15(3%)
4	Do you think gender discrimination is there in your school?		54(10.8%)	446(89.2%)
5	Are you being bullied and looked down on because you are a girl?		55(11%)	445(89%)
6	Do you have difficulty adjusting with boys in your class?		92(18.4%)	408(81.6%)
7	Do you prefer studying in girls educational institutional rather than in co-educational institutions?		137(27.4%)	363(72.6%)
8	Do you think that you are inferior to boys?		82 (16.4%)	418(83.6%)
9	(a) Is your school a girl friendly school?		440 (88%)	60 (12%)
	(b). If no, does that discourage you to go to school?		22(36.67%)	38(63.33%)
10	Are girl's privacy protected in your school?		407(81.4%)	93(18.6%)
11	(a). Are majority of your teachers male ?		86(17.2%)	414(82.8%)
	(b). If yes, does that discourage you to go to school?		8(9.30%)	78(90.60%)
12	The presence of lady teachers in the school makes you feel	(a) Secure	328(65.6%)	172(34.4%)
		(b) comfortable	435(87%)	65(13%)
13	(a) Are you a first generation learner in your family?		62(12.4%)	438(97.6%)
	(b) If yes, does that discourage you to continue education?		11(17.74%)	51(82.26%)

From the psychological barriers table, it is observed that highly significant majority (more than 94%) of the girls feel safe and secure to go to school as well as feel comfortable with the school environment. Also more than 97% of the girls positively affirmed that going to school is not wastage of time and energy as well as agreed that education will help them to lead an independent life in their future. Significant majority (89% and above) of the girls agreed that their schools are girl friendly schools, that there is no gender discrimination in their school and that they are not

being bullied or looked down because they are girls nor do they feel inferior or have difficulty in adjusting with boys as well as with their male teachers. High majority (more than 70%) of the girls prefer to study in co educational institutions rather than in girls educational institution which indicate that majority of the girls feel free and comfortable to study with boys. It is also noticed that more than 80% of the stated that majority of their teachers are not male nor the presence of male teachers discourages them to go to school. Again more than 60% of the girls replied positively that the presence of lady teacher makes them feel secure and comfortable and the reason might be due to the reason that they feel freer to share personal problems with them. Out of 500 students, 62 students are first generation learner but most of them i.e. 82.26% of them are not discourage to continue with their studies though they are first generation learners.

On the other side there are some few percentages of students who negatively affirmed to the statements. Some of the reasons which causes girls to have negative attitude towards education and their schools might be due to schools located at far off places, may be children of over protective parents or due to bullying and sexual harassment. It is also likely for them to have inferiority complex due to first generation learner, poverty, poor academic performance etc. as of these girls are from poor families and from the villages.

Table 2:- Frequencies and percentage analysis on institutional barriers to girl child education at secondary level.

B). Institutional Barriers			Yes	No
1	Is the school timing convenient for you?		404(80.8%)	96(19.2%)
2	(a). Is your school a male dominated school?		35(7%)	465(93%)
	(b). If yes, does that makes you feel insecure to go to school?		5(14.29%)	30(85.71%)
3	(a). Are there hostel facilities for girls in your school premises?		193(38.6%)	307 (61.4%)
	(b). If no, does that hamper your studies?		28 (9.12%)	279(90.88%)
4	(a). Is the number of students in the class very high?		99(15.8%)	421(84.2%)
	(b).If yes, can you learn and understand what is taught in the class?		50(63.29%)	29(36.71%)
5	Is your school located in a good environment?		460(92%)	40(8%)
6	Is there sufficient numbers of classrooms?		418(83.6%)	82(16.4%)
7	Does your school help the girl’s to develop in the following areas/skills	(a)Self protection	335(97%)	165(33%)
		(b)Life skills	423(84.6%)	77(15.4%)
		(c)Self/personality development	328(65.6%)	172(34.4%)
8	Does your school have Physical Education teacher?		347(69.4%)	153(30.6%)
9	Are there enough female teachers in your school to support you in your studies?		444(88.8%)	56 (11.2%)
10	Does your school have the following facilities?		308(61.6%)	192(38.4%)
	a.	afe drinking water		
	b.	eparate toilet for girls	474(94.8%)	26(5.2%)
	c.	anitary and water facilities in the toilets	351(70.2%)	149(29.8%)
	d.	ufficient bench and desk in the class-room to study	471(94.2%)	29(5.8%)
	e.	ell ventilated and lighted class-rooms	388(77.6%)	112(22.4%)
	f.	ibrary with text and reference books	171(34.2%)	329(65.8%)
	g.	lectricity in the class-rooms	379(75.8%)	121(24.2%)
	h.		221(44.2%)	279(55.8%)

	computer for students		
i.	subject wise laboratory	04(18%)	496(99.2%)
j.	school kitchens	328(65.6%)	172(34.45%)
k.	boundary walls for the school	341(68.2%)	159(31.8%)
l.	playground within the school premises	369(73.8%)	131(26.2%)
m.	girl's common room	09(1.8%)	491(89.2%)
n.	guidance and counselling cell	151(30.2%)	349(69.8%)

On analyzing the table of institutional barriers to girl child education, it is learned significant majority (more than 80%) of the girls positively affirmed that the school timing is convenient for them, that the no. of students in their class are not very high and that there are sufficient no. of classrooms as well as enough female teachers to support them in their studies. Highly significant majority (more than 90%) of the girls stated that their schools are located in good environment and disagreed that their schools are not male dominated schools nor the presence of male teachers make them feel insecure to go to school. It is revealed by fair majority (61.4%) of the girls said there are no hostel facilities in their schools, but out of which majority of them said that it does not hamper their studies. A fair majority (69.4%) of the girls stated that their schools have physical education teachers. It is also interesting to note that the schools helps the girls in the following areas i.e. 97% of them said 'yes' to self protection, 84.6% said 'yes' to life skills and 65.6% said 'yes' to self/personality development.

Regarding the facilities available in the schools, highly significant majority (90% and above) of the girls positively affirmed that there are sufficient bench and desk in the class room to study and that there are separate toilet for girls. High majority (70% to 76%) of them stated that there is electricity in their class rooms and that their classrooms are well ventilated and lighted. They also affirmed that there is playground within the school premises as well as sanitary and water facilities are available in the toilets. Fair majority (60% and above) of the girls stated that there is safe drinking water, school kitchen and boundary wall for the school.

There are some girls who negatively responded/some facts to most of the school facilities and the most notable ones are library with text and reference books (65.8%), computer for students (55.8%), subject wise laboratory (99.2%), girl's common room (89.2%), guidance and counselling cell (69.8%) etc.

Findings of the study:

1. Highly significant majority (90% and above) of the girls feel safe and secure to go to school as well as feel comfortable with the school environment.
2. Significant majority (80% and above) of the girls knows that going to school is not a wastage of time and energy and that education will help them to lead an independent life in future.
3. Significant majority (80% and above) of the girls affirmed that their schools are girl friendly schools and that there is no gender discrimination, bullying and do they have difficulty in adjusting with boys nor with the male teachers.
4. High majority (70% and above) of the girls prefer studying in co educational institution rather than in girls educational institution.
5. Significant majority (80% and above) of the girls affirmed that most of the teachers are female and their presence makes them more secure and comfortable.
6. The study found that highly significant majority (97.6%) of the girls is not first generation learners.
7. Significant majority (80% and above) of the girls affirmed that the school timing is convenient for them, that there are sufficient number of class rooms and the number of students in a class is not very high.
8. A fair majority of the girls (60% and above) of the girls said that there are no hostel facilities but that does not hamper their studies
9. Majority of the girls also affirmed that they are helped in the areas of self protection, life skills and self/personality development.

10. Majority of the girls also agreed that their schools have almost all the basic facilities to run the schools in an effective manner.

Conclusion:-

In conclusion, it can be said that almost all girls studying at secondary level in Kohima district of Nagaland do not face psychological and institutional barriers in getting education as they feel safe and secure to go to school and feel comfortable with the school environment too. Most of the girls do not feel inferior to boys because there is no gender discrimination and everyone is given the same treatment. However, there are few girls who negatively affirmed about education and their school which might be due to cultural beliefs and practices, poverty, children of over protective parents, poor academic performance etc. which are quite negligible when compared with the barriers faced by girls for getting education in many other communities.

Suggestion /Recommendations:-

1. Social- cultural practices that work as barriers to girl child education and empowerment of women should be done away with at the earliest.
2. Government as well as NGOs should work further for the upliftment of the rural poor and the low income communities because poverty is the main barrier for girls in getting quality education.
3. Government as well as the community should work together to make sure that all the girls receive education at least up to secondary level.
4. Parent- teachers meeting should be held at least two times in a year to update the parents about performance of their girls.
5. All the teachers should have knowledge of educational psychology as well as attend workshops/ seminars related to teaching and learning from time to time for their professional growth as well as to understand and handle the students especially the girls more efficiently.

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