

Impact of Education on Economic Empowerment of Women in Manipur

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The aim and objective of the present study is to investigate the impact of education on economic empowerment of women of Imphal Districts (Imphal East and Imphal west) of Manipur. The present sample was collected from 400 currently married women (women who have been married and are not either divorced, widowed or separated) aged between 21 and 70 yrs, out of which 200 were educated (women who passed high school at the minimum and above) and 200 were uneducated (women who have not attained high school) and out of 200 educated women, 100 from rural and 100 from urban areas, similarly out of 200 uneducated women, 100 from rural and 100 from urban areas of Imphal Districts (Imphal East and Imphal West) of Manipur. Interview method was used to collect primary data from the respondents using interview schedule. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants. For data analysis, we used descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and analytical statistics (t-test for between group's comparisons). The present study reveals the difference that brought by education among the women folk in relation to their economic empowerment. Educated women have greater own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others), more own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, exceeding in having saving bank account, increased in participation of micro-credit or savings programme and higher engage in paid work outside the home than uneducated women in both the urban and rural residents.

Keywords: Economic, Empowerment, Educated, Uneducated, Imphal districts, Manipur, Significant.

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INTRODUCTION

“Freedom depends on economic condition even more than political, if women are not economically free and self-earning, she has to depend on her husband or son or father or someone-else and dependents are never free” says Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

“Education is the key that opens the door to life, which is essentially social in character. Without a sound social philosophy, sound philosophy is impossible. Our educated philosophers have been social philosophers first” (Report of the National Committee on Women's Education). Unlike literacy, education is a broad process that enables a person to adopt a rational and questioning attitude and facilitate the recognition of new opportunities [1]. Keeping women illiterate clearly retards economic growth. Societies that do not invest in girls' education pay a price for it in terms of slower growth and reduced incomes. Investments in female education start a virtuous cycle that leads to improved levels of income, growth and gender equality. Inequality in education is like a distortionary tax that misallocates resources, thereby reducing economic

growth [2]. Education plays a role as a means for human resource development for sensitizing one's perceptions, awareness and for motivating and changing one's behavior to suit arising needs, demands and opportunities for survival, growth and development. Education is the greatest force for empowerment. The process of education will not be complete without value content. Empowerment can only be acquired through knowledge [3]. According to Dreze and Sen, education has five intrinsic values for improving social and economic conditions in Third World Countries, both benefits for communities and societies, as well as individual social benefits:

- First of all education gives personal benefits for the individual in terms of self-confidence leading to motivation and interest in society. Social interactions are easier when persons are capable of reading a newspaper about social and political issues in the community and the rest of the world.
- Secondly, education gives access to a wider range of job opportunities and in general enables persons to take advantage of economic

opportunities and to participate in local politics.

- Thirdly, a higher literacy rate facilitates public debates and demands for health care, social security and other needs. Public discussions enable people to hold politicians accountable for their promises of improvements in the social service sector. Information on ones society provides better possibilities for utilizing the service system.
- Fourthly, education indirectly prevents child labour, to the extent that implementation of legislation of basic education for all children, force parents to send their children to school which again gives less time for labour. Entering school broadens horizons for young people. This means that meeting other children and young people could result in new ideas of different opportunities in the future.
- The fifth effect of education and literacy enables oppressed groups in a society to become politically organised. Being a larger group makes it easier to insist on one's rights and demands concerning social and politically issues. An organized group achieves visibility in the society and is harder to oppress. The ability to resist operation not only concerns disadvantaged groups in society, but education does also have positive effects within families when girls are being educated [4].

The gender gap in the ownership and control of property is the most significant contributor to the gender gap in the economic well-being, social status and empowerment of women [5]. Economic security shows if a woman owns her house or homestead land, a productive asset and cash savings. Land ownership determines the economic and social conditions of people. Women having land feel more secured, which increase their participation in decision-making process of the household activities [6].

In India, the government and non-government organizations (NGOs) are playing an active role to improve the opportunities available to women, by focusing on empowerment strategies to move women from a state of dependency to a state of independence [7]. In spite of concerted efforts of constitutional provisions, enactment of laws, initiations of social reformers, efforts by the state and central governments and NGOs through different schemes and programmes and UNO's directives there are certain gaps. Women in India are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education and also reproductive healthcare. The pressure of traditional customs and norms, the patriarchy family system with religious mores and male dominated value systems are some of the main social

factors which are denying the empowerment, equality and social justice to women in the real sense.

Ghosh, G.K. and Sukla Ghosh [8], states that education of women is a vital weapon in achieving desirable changes in the society. Lack of education among them is a major constraint in their response to change. Women's education leads to self dependence without being completely subordinate to men under any circumstances. Educated women should come out of their shackles of social, economic and religious evils and assert that they are equal to men. Agarwal, D. [9], finds that employment for women is not only the source of income but also gives economic independence and so many women are getting the self assurance for self employment. Some educated employed women are ready to create some jobs for the poor uneducated women who are living in and around their residence. Home based small scale industries are a boon for the jobless unemployed and uneducated women. Suguna, B. [10], highlights the multi dimensional role of the educated employed women in all walks of life. The empowered women are becoming self assertive, self disciplined, decisive, innovative, group oriented players and desire to improve their living conditions. They are trying to use the best available technologies and comforts in their families according to their income. Bhumisana Devi, R. K. [11], study explored and concentrate on the varied roles of the educated working women in the family and in the working place at the first instance. The study also revealed on the enjoyment of equal property right, participation in politics, reservation of seats, dowry system, provision of divorce, widow re-marriage etc. Another area of study was on the role of educated working women in the working place. Rani, et.al [12], express that education is one of the most essential factors to change the cultural norms and patterns of life of tribal women to make them economically independent, to organise themselves to form strong groups so as to analyse their situations and conditions of living, understand their rights and responsibilities and to enable them to participate and contribute to the development of women and the entire society. The study emphasises to provide more educational opportunities and provide the women with various skill training programmes. Thokchom, et.al [13] in their study pointed out that education brings about awareness to the women related to their social status, injustice and differentiation deliver out to them. Women in Manipur despite their major contributions in the socio-economic and political life of the state, they are not given their due position in society. Devi, Sh. [14] Female Education plays a very important role in the overall development of the State in the post Independence period. Education has revolutionized the life of women. As a result many changes are developed in their outlook, attitude, thought and belief etc. and the concepts of women empowerment and feminism are started to emphasize in the State.

The aim and objective of the present study is to investigate the impact of education on economic empowerment of women of Imphal Districts (Imphal East and Imphal west) of Manipur with reference to the following variables:-

- Own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others): To analyse whether there is any difference between the women of different educational status (educated and uneducated) in their own a house or any land,
- Own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc.: To examine the differences in their own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc. between the women of different educational status (educated and uneducated),
- Have a bank (saving) account that herself use: To investigate if there is any differences in having a bank (saving) account that herself use between the women of different educational status (educated and uneducated),
- Involve in any income generating activity: To study if there is any relationship between the educational status of women and involvement in any income generating activity,
- Participate in a micro-credit or savings programme: To ascertain that there is any relationship between the educational status of women and participation in a micro-credit or savings programme, and
- Engage in paid work outside the home: To determine whether there is any difference in the engage in paid work outside the home between the women of different educational status (educated and uneducated).

From the present study we can ascertain how far education can raise the economic status of the women and if there is any differences in status between the women of different educational levels (educated and uneducated) of Imphal Districts (Imphal East and Imphal west) of Manipur. Manipur is one of the seven states of Northeast India. The state is bounded on the east by Upper Myanmar, on the west by Cachar District of Assam, on the north by Nagaland and on the south by the Chin Hills of Myanmar and Mizoram. The population consists of 38 ethnic groups speaking different dialects following different religious, having diverse cultures and traditions. The four major ethnic groups of Manipur are the Meiteis, the Meitei Pangal, the Nagas and the Kuki-Chins. Jains, Sikhs and other unclassified groups were also found in Manipur, but their numbers were very small. The Meiteilon or Manipuri is the lingua franca of the state. Historically women in Manipur had a high social and economic status. The women were hard working and industrious. The role of Manipuri women in the agrarian economy of Manipur is a crucial one to reckon, right from the involvement in the production to the selling and marketing of food grains. They manage most of the

internal trade of food and clothing and they hold a free standard of living in the society. Gender otherness is less in Manipur according to all-India figures. Yet there are very strict gender rules and norms that define the roles, responsibilities and ascribes to women. Over time the patriarchal nature of society often limits the space available for women to exercise their rights and women have been relegated to a subordinate position.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was basically descriptive and analytical in nature. The present sample was collected from 400 currently married women (women who have been married and are not either divorced, widowed or separated) aged between 21 and 70 yrs, out of which 200 were educated (women who passed high school at the minimum and above) and 200 were uneducated (women who have not attained high school) and out of 200 educated women, 100 from rural and 100 from urban areas, similarly out of 200 uneducated women, 100 from rural and 100 from urban areas of Imphal Districts (Imphal East and Imphal West). The data collection for the present study took place between October 2015 and December 2016. In this research, convenient stratified random sampling method was used based on inclusion criteria. Interview method was used to collect primary data from the respondents using interview schedule consisting of six (6) questions. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants. The place and time of interview were fixed according to the convenience of the respondents. In order to enable to investigate and bring an analytical study on the problem statistical applications were made. For data analysis, we used descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and analytical statistics (t-test for between group's comparisons).

This study examines the relationship between:

1. Women's educational status and own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others),
2. Women's educational status and own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc.,
3. Women's educational status and have a bank (saving) account that herself use,
4. Women's educational status and involved in any income generating activity,
5. Women's educational status and participate in a micro-credit or savings programme and
6. Women's educational status and engage in paid work outside the home.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The dependent variable is women's economic empowerment which is divided up into following sub-groups: own a house or any land, own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items etc., have a bank (saving) account that herself use, involve in any income generating activity, participate in

a micro-credit or savings programme and engage in paid work outside the home. These variables range from 0 to 1 where 0 is not empowered and 1 is empowered. Thus higher values indicate a greater empowerment.

The mean values and standard deviation of economic empowerment of urban educated women

respondents is set out in Table No. 1. It is evident from the Table No. 1 that the economic empowerment variable's average with the lowest value is involve in income generating activity (.37) which is followed by owning a house or any land (.39). The other economic empowerment variables average exceeds 50 percent.

Table- 1: Economic empowerment of urban educated women respondents (N=100)

A. Economic security – survey questions and descriptive statistics					
Questions asked	Obs.	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min.	Max.
Do you own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others)?	100	.39	.489	0	1
Do you personally own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc.?	100	.91	.287	0	1
Do you have a bank (saving) account that you yourselves use?	100	.90	.301	0	1
Do you involved in any income generating activity?	100	.37	.484	0	1
Do you participate in a micro-credit or savings programme?	100	.62	.486	0	1
Do you engage in paid work outside the home?	100	.57	.496	0	1
Total	100	.626	.423	0	1

The mean values and standard deviation of economic empowerment of urban uneducated women respondents is set out in Table No. 2. It is observed from the Table No. 2 that the economic empowerment variable's average with the lowest value is owning a

house or any land (.15) which is followed by engage in paid work outside the home (.21) and involve in income generating activity (.40) respectively. The other economic empowerment variables average exceeds 50 percent.

Table- 2: Economic empowerment of urban uneducated women respondents (N=100)

A. Economic security – survey questions and descriptive statistics					
Questions asked	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Do you own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others)?	100	.15	.358	0	1
Do you personally own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc.?	100	.75	.435	0	1
Do you have a bank (saving) account that you yourselves use?	100	.77	.422	0	1
Do you involved in any income generating activity?	100	.40	.492	0	1
Do you participate in a micro-credit or savings programme?	100	.56	.498	0	1
Do you engage in paid work outside the home?	100	.21	.409	0	1
Total	100	.473	.435	0	1

The comparison between economic empowerment of urban educated and urban uneducated women respondents is presented in Table No. 3. It is evident from the Table No. 3 that only the involment in any income generating activity is lower in urban educated women respondents. However all other

empowerment variables lag behind in urban uneducated women respondents. The total score of women's economic empowerment in urban educated women is .626 and urban uneducated women is .473 respectively. Educated women have better situation when it comes to own a house or any land, the probability of women's

empowerment with .39 showing that the urban educated women have more than twice as high possibility of owning a house or any land compared to urban uneducated women (.15). Again engage in paid work outside the home also the probability of women's empowerment with .57 showing that the urban educated women have more than twice as high possibility of

engage in paid work outside the home compared to urban uneducated women (.21). The significant t-test value between the urban educated and urban uneducated women ($t = 2.593$) indicates that there is difference in economic empowerment between the different educational status (educated and uneducated) women respondents.

Table- 3 Comparison between economic empowerment of urban educated and urban uneducated women respondents

A. Economic security – survey questions and descriptive statistics						
Questions asked	Obs.	Urban educated women		Urban uneducated women		t - test value
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Do you own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others)?	100	.39	.489	.15	.358	t = 2.593 Significant at p<.05
Do you personally own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc.?	100	.91	.287	.75	.435	
Do you have a bank (saving) account that you yourselves use?	100	.90	.301	.77	.422	
Do you involved in any income generating activity?	100	.37	.484	.40	.492	
Do you participate in a micro-credit or savings programme?	100	.62	.486	.56	.498	
Do you engage in paid work outside the home?	100	.57	.496	.21	.409	
Total	100	.626	.423	.473	.435	

Table No. 4 shows the mean values and standard deviation of economic empowerment of rural educated women respondents. It is evident from the Table No. 4 that the economic empowerment variable's average with the lowest value is owning a house or any

land (.29) which is followed by involved in income generating activity (.42) and engage in paid work outside the home (.48). The other economic empowerment variables average exceeds 50 percent.

Table -4: Economic empowerment of rural educated women respondents (N=100)

A. Economic security – survey questions and descriptive statistics					
Questions asked	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Do you own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others)?	100	.29	.455	0	1
Do you personally own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc.?	100	.90	.301	0	1
Do you have a bank (saving) account that you yourselves use?	100	.90	.301	0	1
Do you involved in any income generating activity?	100	.42	.495	0	1
Do you participate in a micro-credit or savings programme?	100	.58	.495	0	1
Do you engage in paid work outside the home?	100	.48	.502	0	1
Total	100	.595	.424	0	1

Table No. 5 shows the mean values and standard deviation of economic empowerment of rural

uneducated women respondents. It is observed from the Table No. 5 that the economic empowerment variable's

average with the lowest value is owning a house or any land (.12) which is followed by engage in paid work outside the home (.15) and involved in income

generating activity (.46) respectively. The other economic empowerment variables average exceeds 50 percent.

Table- 5: Economic empowerment of rural uneducated women respondents (N=100)

A. Economic security – survey questions and descriptive statistics					
Questions asked	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Do you own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others)?	100	.12	.326	0	1
Do you personally own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc.?	100	.76	.429	0	1
Do you have a bank (saving) account that you yourselves use?	100	.80	.401	0	1
Do you involved in any income generating activity?	100	.46	.500	0	1
Do you participate in a micro-credit or savings programme?	100	.53	.501	0	1
Do you engage in paid work outside the home?	100	.15	.358	0	1
Total	100	.470	.419	0	1

The comparison between economic empowerment of rural educated and rural uneducated women respondents is shown in Table No. 6. A similar trend of Table No. 3 is existed in Table No. 6 too. It is observed from Table No. 6 that only the involment in any income generating activity is lower in rural educated women respondents. However all other empowerment variables lag behind in rural uneducated women respondents. The total score of women's economic empowerment in rural educated women is .595 and rural uneducated women is .470 respectively. Educated women have better situation when it comes to own a house or any land, the probability of women's empowerment with .29 showing that the rural educated

women have more than twice as high possibility of owning a house or any land compared to rural uneducated women (.12). Again engage in paid work outside the home also the probability of women's empowerment with .48 showing that the rural educated women have more than thrice as high possibility of engage in paid work outside the home compared to rural uneducated women (.15). The significant t-test value between the rural educated and rural uneducated women ($t = 2.155$) indicates that there is difference in economic empowerment between the different educational status (educated and uneducated) women respondents.

Table -6 Comparison between economic empowerment of rural educated and rural uneducated women respondents

A. Economic security – survey questions and descriptive statistics						
Questions asked	Obs.	Rural educated women		Rural uneducated women		t - test value
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Do you own a house or any land (alone or jointly with others)?	100	.29	.455	.12	.326	t = 2.155 Significant at p<.05
Do you personally own any other property or valuables such as jewellery, gold/silver items, etc.?	100	.90	.301	.76	.429	
Do you have a bank (saving) account that you yourselves use?	100	.90	.301	.80	.401	

Do you involved in any income generating activity?	100	.42	.495	.46	.500
Do you participate in a micro-credit or savings programme?	100	.58	.495	.53	.501
Do you engage in paid work outside the home?	100	.48	.502	.15	.358
Total	100	.595	.424	.470	.419

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the economic empowerment of women by addressing six variables. From the above findings, economic empowerment is relatively influenced by the respondent's educational qualification. Education can inter-relate with the women's empowerment. Hence, it is of foremost importance to raise the level of education amongst women in Manipur.

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