

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN

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Abstract

The greatest indicator of a society's progression is the status of women. Despite the heritage of modern progression there is a lot that needs to be done. From the age of Vedas till today, women have been subject to a lot of demeaning practices, societal negligence and customs designed to confine them and often treated as commodities rather than a human. Women in any nation are the mirror of its civilization. They are the most precious part of the society. Women are the part of the society so they have the right to take part in every work of the society. Today women play the leading role in developing the society and it cannot be created without the active contribution of women.

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In recent years, there have been many positive developments in India's efforts to empower women. The government has implemented several programs and policies aimed at improving women's health, education, and economic opportunities. Education is the most important requirement and the fundamental right for any citizen. It helps the individual to reduce inequality and play a central role in human development that impacts the overall social development. A higher level of literacy and education leads to better attainment of health, nutritional status, economic growth, population control, and improvement of weaker sections and the community as a whole. Education of women is the best way to improve the health, nutrition and economic status of a household that constitutes a micro-unit of a nation's economy. The main problems in women's education are domestic duty, social factors, conservative mentality, child marriage and immature pregnancy, women trafficking etc. Illiteracy and ignorance exist more in women folk than men folk and their evils especially are seen in rural areas and backward communities. Though the government in recent times has been taken many steps to eradicate difficulties in education, condition, status and position of Indian women, still certain problems remain in their sector.

Status of Women in Manipur

The State of Manipur is situated on the North-eastern border of India. Its population is about 28.6 lakhs according to the 2011 census, of which the Meiteis comprise about 53 percent of the population. The other population is comprised mainly of the scheduled tribes (mostly Christians) and the minority is the Manipuri Muslims. Women in Manipur enjoy a unique status in society. The high social and economic status of women in Meitei society was frequently remarked upon by British colonial officers. The female literacy rate in the state is increasing from 39.6% (Census, 1991) to 70.26% (Census, 2011). Despite the patriarchal society women enjoy freedom and equal rights with men. Manipuri women's role in the socio-economic and cultural life is significant. Women controlled the food supplies and the markets, and were therefore a dominant economic force. From the beginning of the British period, they had shown themselves capable and organized enough to take mass action when occasion demanded (Parratt and Parratt, 2001). Women's empowerment is seen in the high economic participation rate of women, physically manifested in the myriad activities carried out in the economic sphere as evidenced in the Ima- Keitel, a market run almost exclusively by women. They are also in a better position as compared to that of women in the rest of India in the fact that there are no official figures of female foeticide, female infanticide, no dowry-related harassment, bride burning, etc. In the field of agriculture, women are regarded as

the backbone of Manipur. Women are actively participated in forest-based handicrafts and the cottage industry. Women are also taking part in the fishery and more than 90% of women take care of the fish market. Women of Manipur play a very significant role in the economic development of Manipur which includes agricultural production, fisheries, and handlooms industry, and their contribution to the market economy is undeniable.

Hiyangthang is a village in the state of Manipur. It is best known for the Hiayangthang Lairembi Temple, a Meitei shrine dedicated to the ancient Meitei goddess Irai leima. It is located in Imphal west district and it is 11 km from Imphal city. The number of population is 4778 and the female population percentage is 51.7%. The total literacy of the village is 72.9% and that of women is 34.5%. The main occupations of the people are agriculture, farming, weaving, carpenters, masons etc. Different seasonal vegetables, crops, fish, fruits, etc. are produced in the village. The village has two government schools and two private schools. It has one government-aided college for higher education. Despite having schools and colleges in the village, the women in this area do not have proper education. There is no facility of Primary Health Center or private hospital in the village. The nearest Primary Health Center is in Mekola and Samurou. During the serious illness of the people, they have to travel a long distance to diagnose the illness.

Women in this area are mostly disadvantaged groups. Most of the women are weavers, low-paid workers, vegetable sellers, street vendors, farmers, shopkeepers etc. During the night women of the village stay in the Meira-shangs to look after the youths from consuming alcohol and other substances. They participate in social, economic, political and cultural activities and play a key role in the development of the village. The study tries to identify the educational and social status of women in Hiayangthang and to give some of remedial measures to their problems. Women as a pillar for the total progress of the nation has been strongly realized and accepted by the society. The importance of women's education and socio-economic characteristics is felt necessary in the nation-building. However, women in the Hiayangthang Gram Panchayat ward no.4 have been suffering a lot in various aspects of livelihood. They remain a disadvantaged group in the society due to lack of proper education, fewer income-generating activities, health issues and other problems. Keeping these facts in view, the study is quite necessary which will help to find out the issues related to the educational and social status of women in the area and also help to provide some of the remedial measures to their problems.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the educational status of women in Hiayangthang Gram Panchayat ward no. 4.

2. To study the different sources of income.
3. To examine the health issues faced by the women.
4. To study the different problems faced by the women.

Methodology

Considering the nature of the research problem at hand, the investigator felt that the descriptive method would be one of the most appropriate. For the study both the primary and secondary data were collected through questionnaires by personal interview and from the latest electoral roll of Hiyangthang Gram Panchayat ward number 4 and 422 women of the area were taken as the population. For the present study, 102 women between 18-65 years were selected by using Stratified Random Sampling Techniques. Self-developed questionnaires were used.

Result and Discussion

Table No. 1: Age Distribution of Women

Age Group	Number of Women	Percent
18-30	22	21.56%
30-42	33	32.35%
42-54	32	31.37%
54-65	15	14.70%
Total	102	

**Compiled from survey data*

From the above table no.1, it is found that the age groups of 18 – 32 years have 22 women (21.56%), 30 – 40 years have 33 women (32.35%), 42 – 54 years have 32 women (31.37%) and 54 – 65 years have 15 women (14.70%) respectively.

Thus, from the above analysis, it may be concluded that most of the women belong to the age group of 30-42 which is 32.35%.

Table No. 2: Educational Qualification of Women

Age group	18-30	30-42	42-54	54-65	Total	Percent
Under 10 th	-	2	4	1	7	6.86%
10 th passed	3	12	8	-	23	22.54%
12 th passed	8	5	3	2	18	17.64%
Graduate	9	12	10	1	32	31.37%
Master & above	2	2	1	-	5	4.9%
Illiterate	-	-	6	11	17	16.67%
Total	22	33	32	15	102	

**Compiled from survey data*

From the above table no. 2, it is found that the number of women who are under class 10th is 7 (6.86%); 10th passed is 23 (22.54%); 12th passed is 18 (17.64%); Graduate is 32 (31.37%); Master & above is 5; and illiterate is 17 (16.67%).

Thus, from the above analysis, it may be concluded that most of the women qualify to graduate.

Table No. 3: Occupation or Sources of Income of Women

Occupation/Source of Income	Number of Women	Percent
Dairy & livestock farming	4	3.92%
Government employee	11	10.78%
Private sector jobs	9	8.82%
Shopkeeper	6	5.88%
Vegetables & fruit sellers	8	7.84%
Weavers	30	29.41%
Tailoring	3	2.94%
Poultry farming	6	5.88%
Only homemaker	7	6.86%
Others	18	17.64%

**Compiled from survey data*

From the above table no. 3, it is found that the number of women in dairy and livestock farming is 4 which is 3.92%, the number of government employees is 11 i.e. 10.78%, the number of women working in private sectors are 9 i.e. 8.82%, the number of women who are shopkeeper is 6 i.e. 5.88%, the number of weavers are 30 i.e. 29.41%, the number of tailors are 3 i.e. 2.94%, the number of women who engaged in poultry farming is 6 which i.e. 5.88%, the number of women who work other jobs are 7 i.e. 6.86%, the number of women who are only homemaker is 18 i.e. 17.64%.

Thus, from the above analysis, it may be inferred that most of the women were engaged in the work of weaving.

Table No. 4: Incomes of Women

Income Range	Number of Women	Percent
No income	18	17.64%
1-6000	28	27.45%
6000-12000	31	30.39%
12000-18000	8	7.84%
18000-24000	4	3.92%
24000-30000	5	4.9%
30000-36000	2	1.96%
36000-42000	5	4.9%
42000-above	1	0.98%

**Compiled from survey data*

From the above table no.4, it is found that the number of women who have no source of income is 18 i.e. 17.64%, the number of women who have income range from Re1–Rs.6000 is 28 i.e. 27.45%, the number of women who have income range from Rs.6000–Rs.12000 are 31 i.e. 30.39%, the number of women who have income range from Rs.12000 – Rs.18000 are 8 i.e. 7.84%, the number of women who have income range from Rs.18000 – Rs.24000 are 4 i.e. 3.92%, the number of women who have income range from Rs.24000 – Rs.30000 are 5 i.e. 4.9%, the number of women who have income range from Rs.30000 – Rs.36000 is 2 i.e. 1.96%, the number of women who have income range from Rs.36000 – Rs.42000 are 5 i.e. 4.9%, the number of women who have income range from Rs.42000 and above is 1 i.e. 0.98%.

Thus, from the above analysis, it may be concluded that most of the women have income between Rs6000 to Rs12000. And 82.35% of women in the area have some source of income.

Table No. 5: Major Health Issues of Women

Health Issues	Number of Women	Percent
No issues	55	53.92%
Diabetes	7	6.86%
Arthritis	7	6.86%
Thyroid	2	1.96%
Breast cancer	2	1.96%
Infertility	5	4.9%
Back pain	6	5.88%
Blood pressure	11	10.78%
Others	7	6.86%

**Compiled from survey data*

From the above Table No. 5, it is found that the number of women who have no health issues is 55 which is 92%, number of women who have blood pressure is 11 which is 10.78%, number of women who have diabetes and the the the the arthritis are 7 which is 6.86%, number of women who have thyroid are 2 which is 1.96%, number of women who have breast cancer are 2 which is 1.96%, number of women who have infertility problem are 5 which is 4.9%, number of women who have back pain are 6 which is 5.88%, number of women who have other health issues are 7 which is 6.86%.

Thus, from the above analysis, it may be concluded that most of the women have no health issues. The most common health issue among the women is blood pressure.

Table No. 6: Problems faced by the women

Problems	Number of Women	Percent
No problems	94	92.16%
Domestic violence	6	5.88%
Dowry related harassment	-	-
Sexual abuse	-	-
Gender pay gap	2	1.96%
Gender inequality	-	-
Others	-	-

**Compiled from survey data*

From the above table no.6, it is found that 94 (92.16%) women do not have any problems. The number of women who have problems with domestic violence and the gender pay gap is 6 (5.98%) and 2 (1.96%) respectively.

Thus, from the above analysis, it may be inferred that most of the women do not have any problems related to domestic violence, dowry-related harassment, sexual abuse, gender inequality, etc.

Conclusion

Women's education is very important for the development of a country. An educated- woman can contribute to the economic, social, political, cultural and environmental development of the nation. In the study, the female of Hiyangthang Gram Panchayat ward number 4 has a remarkable rate of literacy and most of the women have access to education. However there is still a need for some efforts from the government and people to achieve 100% literacy. The earning women will build the economic condition of a family. They do not depend on the financial support of their husband rather they work for their financial independence. The local leaders and government should provide different income-generating activities and markets to enhance their incomes. Women's health encompasses a broad spectrum of issues that are unique to females. But more than half of women in the area have no health issues. Some common health issues of women are high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, back pain, infertility, etc. Most of the women in the locality do not face domestic violence, sexual abuse, gender inequality etc. Their husbands, relatives and neighbors are supportive and passionate about them. The educational and social

status of women in Hiyangthang Gram Panchayat ward number 4 will be improved by different programs like literacy programs, vocational training programs, and awareness programs on health issues and domestic violence. Thus, the government, local leaders and people of the locality need to work together to improve the status of women in Hiyangthang Gram Panchayat ward number 4. In the changing world, the role of women does not change with the passage of time. They play many roles in the well-being of the family and the society. Their contribution to the nation's economy, culture, environment, sports, politics, etc. will bring a change in the society.

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