

Uncovering The Treasure Of Women Empowerment Through The Education Among The Tai Khampti People Of Arunachal Pradesh

Miss Pallabi Hazarika¹, Prof. Seema Verma²

¹Ph.D Scholar Dept. of Sociology
Dibrugarh University

²Professor Dept. of Sociology Dibrugarh University
pallabihazarika15@gmail.com

Abstract

Women empowerment is the multifaceted concept in the contemporary world. The Tai Khampti tribe is one of the major tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. One general conception is that the tribal society women are more marginalized and educationally backward rest of the other society. In the Tai Khamti society most of the women are educated and all the women are very hardworking. In this study try to discuss the educational and employment status of women in the Tai Khamti society. Apart from that it also try to find out the relation between education and empowerment of the Tai khamti women in Arunachal Pradesh. This study completely based on primary sources of data collection.

Key Words: Education, Employment, Tribal, Women, Tai Khamti.

Introduction

Education is a crucial apparatus for changing of women's subjugated position in society. In contemporary time education is the basic necessity of human life. Education and empowerment both are interconnected in contemporary society. A least of the women became empowered without education in contemporary world. Women education has occupied very important pace in society. Through the education one individual can fulfill all the needs of his or her life. Various organizations of the Globe have launched various schemes and programs to

promote and educate in each and every corner of the society.

Empowerment literally means "give power to" or "to invest with power". The most comprehensive definition of empowerment and the most apt for this study, is proposed by Batliwala (1995) who defined empowerment as "the process, and the outcome of the process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of society". Individual empowerment includes both control over resources (extrinsic) and ideology (intrinsic). Inherent in this definition are two important ideas, first that empowerment is not just the power over others, but power to achieve goals and ends so as to challenge the ideology of patriarchy and gender-based discrimination against women. Additionally, the growing intrinsic capability, greater self-confidence, and the inner transformation of women's consciousness, enable them to overcome external barriers (Batliwala, 1995). Women empowerment is one of the most crucial part of the women upliftment in contemporary world. Government and different kind organisations have taken various schemes for women empowerment. Despite of these schemes most of the tribal communities are being remain backward and subordinate by the other community people in our society.

The Khamti Tribe is the major tribe of Arunachal Pradesh among the 26 tribes of the Arunachal Pradesh. Tribal community all over India has been deprived from the different sectors. Those people are called tribes which are economically backward rest of the other people of the society. The Tai Khamti tribes are one of the dominant tribal community in Arunachal Pradesh.

Ethnicity is one of the primary elements in the rich history of human civilization. Ethnicity is not limited to that part of human civilization which is culturally manifest, but includes every aspect of human life and a way of living. Former President of Liberia and Nobel Peace laureate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was also a staunch activist in favour of ethnic communities of Africa, had remarked, "Ethnicity should enrich us; it should make us a unique people in our diversity and not be used to divide us." (Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Speaks on Governance, Elections and Other Issues". Interview with

Abdoulaye W. Dukulé, www.the_perspective.org. May 6, 2005.)

The development of science and technology and the changing economies that have shaped the modern world and established culturally evolved civilizations have greatly influenced human groups, especially those small ethnic groups that had hitherto maintained their unique cultural identity since prehistoric times. Ethnic groups can neither accept nor reject the wave of modernity in its entirety. On one hand, they fear that embracing modernity will haul them into a crisis of identity as they will lose their singular ethnicity, on the other hand they fear that if they do not keep pace with the modern way of life they are bound to face crisis of existence in a different form. However, following the demands of time and circumstances, most of the ancient ethnic groups in the world have tried to protect the two worlds. The Tai-Khamtis of India's North-East are a foremost example amongst ethnic groups of the world who have tried to strike this balance between embracing modernity and preserving their ethnicity and ancient heritage. Arunachal Pradesh alone hosts half of the one million Tai-Khamti population living in this part of India, mainly in Namchai and Changla districts. It is pertinent to note that out of over fifty different indigenous ethnic groups in Arunachal Pradesh, the Khamtis are the 11th most populous group. The Khamtis, who migrated to the area around the 12th century and settled there, are the largest group of the original Tai dynasty.

The meaning of the word 'Khamti' (inhabitants of the land of gold, Kham: gold, Ti: land) is a testament to the rich heritage of the people. Possessing an advanced language with its own script, the Khamatis are more advanced than the other communities of Arunachal. Most of the Khamti people can speak Assamese simultaneously their own dialects. According to the official data of the state. Of this ancient Mongoloid stock community enriched with age-old traditional knowledge systems, it is not only the men who are drawn towards modern education, even the new generation of women are moving shoulder to shoulder with the men. Like the men, the Khamti women are getting enrolled in schools and colleges under the tutelage of society and parents, getting themselves a job or entering into business for the sake of self-reliance. Economic empowerment has led to the empowerment of women in

society, and it has also contributed to the development of a larger feminist community. As Khamti women become more financially independent as a result of acquiring modern education, their place in society has improved and their responsibility towards their family and society has increased. The need for modern women's education in the field of economic development of the society at large and the family in particular has been gradually realized by the people themselves. The new generation of educated women is beginning to take their own weaving industry, indigenous food stocks, traditional music and other cottage industries to the outside world. These efforts help the community in asserting and establishing its unique identity before the world and earn them a distinctive name. In this way, Khamti women have stepped out of the old social milieu and have established their distinct cultural identity in a changed world, simultaneously paving for themselves the path of self-reliance. It is important to note that despite being a patriarchy, the Khamti women enjoy a privileged status in their society. It is because Khamti women enjoy equal rights as men that they are entrusted with this significant responsibility of preserving tradition and culture. In other words, the Khamti way of life is being preserved because of the cultural and ethnic consciousness of the women of the community.

Despite of all these positive attributes of Khamti women, there are obstacles for which they have not been able to make as much progress as expected. Some of these barriers are within themselves; some may be within the social system. Through this study tries to established the relation between education and empowerment among the Tai Khamti women in Arunachal Pradesh.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the study are mentioned as below:

- i) To examine the socio economic background of the respondents
- ii) To understand the barriers and enablers of education among the Tai Khamti women
- iii) To discuss the employment structure of Tai Khamti women

Methodology

Methodology of this study intends in both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary sources are collected by the female respondents of the Tai Khamti community from the Namsai and Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The data were collected through the purposive and snowball sampling method of data collection.

Analysis

The Tai Khamti tribe is one of the major tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. One general

conception is that in the tribal society women are more vulnerable and marginalize section rest of the other society. Education of girls is critical in reducing the gender disparities in other spheres of life. Hence, the reduction of gender disparities in education is a necessary condition to reduce gender disparities in other spheres of life. Achievement in female education is an important step towards 'women empowerment - a process of capacity building to facilitate women's freedom, open up opportunities for women to participate in decision making process in more effective way both within and outside the family.

Theories of human capital predict that an increase in skills would provide women a greater opportunity to earn higher wages, and this in turn would increase women's labor force participation (Smith and Ward 1985; Goldin 1990; England, Garcia-Beaulieu, and Ross 2004). In most developed countries, increases in education cause an increase in women's labor force participation (Cain 1966; Tienda, Donato, and Cordero-Guzman 1992; England, Gornick, and Shafer 2012). Interestingly, however, the story is often quite different in the low and middle-income countries. In Peru, King (1990) reported that while education was associated with a decline in women's labor force participation, it did increase the proportion of women in paid employment. On the other hand, in Ecuador, Jakubson and Psacharopoulos (1992) find that schooling has a positive effect on women's labor force participation, even though the effect is small.

The Tai community people inhabit certain widely scattered pockets in China, Thailand, Myanmar, India etc. In India only six Tai groups are basically comprised i.e., Tai

Ahom, Tai Khamti, Tai Turung, Tai Phake, Tai Khamiyang and Tai Aiton. All of them are concentrated in North East India especially Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. In Assam Tai community people are settled in Lakhimpur, Tinisukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar etc. And in the Arunachal Pradesh the Tai Khamti people are dispersed especially in Namsai and Chaglang district. The Tai-Khamti tribe is one of the major tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. The tribal people are still deprived of different sectors including education and employment. In the era of development of science and technology the changing economies that have shaped the modern world and established culturally evolved civilizations have greatly influenced human groups, especially those small ethnic groups that had hitherto maintained their unique cultural identity since prehistoric times. Ethnic groups can neither accept nor reject the wave of modernity in its entirety.

Educational Qualification:

Table 1.1 (a):Village wise distribution of the respondents (Namsai District)

Sl.No	Name of the villages	Selected Respondents
1	Manmoo	25
2	Sengsap	18
3	Lathao1	20
4	Sulungtung	25
5	Chongkham 1	35
6	Momong	30
7	Piyong 1	28
8	Impong	25
9	Old Mohong	20
10	Silatoo Khamti	20
Total		246

Table 1.1(b): Village wise distribution of the respondents (Changlang District)

Sl. No	Name of the villages of Changlang District	Respondents

1	Sengmai	15
2	Mudoi Gaon	03
3	Enau Khamti	20
4	Namleng	16
Total		54

Table 1.1 (a) and 1.1(b) divulges that circle wise distribution of the sample for this study. Among the 12 Circles, 10 circles were selected from the Namsai district and two circles were selected from the Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. And both district's circles were selected through the purposive sampling method. Because among the 26 districts of Arunachal Pradesh, the Tai Khamti people are scattered only this two districts of Aunachal Pradesh. Majority of the Tai Khamti people are habituated in Namsai district. Whereas, Only a few number of the khamti population found in Chanlang district of Arunachal Pradesh during the field work. That is why out of the total 300 respondents, only 54 respondents were selected from the Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Table 1.2: Educational Qualification of the respondents

Sl. No	Educational Qualification	Respondents	
		Frequency	%
1	I-V	25	8.33
2	VI-X	60	20
3	Under Matric	20	6.67
4	H.S.L.C	20	6.67
5	H.S	80	26.66
6	Graduate	56	18.67
7	Post- Graduate	20	6.66
8	Ph.D	5	1.67
9	M.B.B.S	2	0.67
10	Any other	11	3.67
Total		300	100

The table 1.2 reveals that out of the total 300 respondents 25(8.33%) respondents have studied till class I –V , out of the total respondents 60(20%) respondents have studied VI-X, 10(10%) respondents, another 20(6.67%) same number of the respondents are matriculate. The highest numbers of respondents are higher secondary passed. That

is 80(26.66%). Another 56(18.67%) respondents are completed graduation and 20(6.67%) respondents are post graduate. Only 5(1.67%) respondents have Ph. D degree and 2(0.67%) respondent are M.B.B.S and rest 11(3.67%) number of the respondents are belonged to any other educational qualifications. Any other qualifications included B.SC in Fashion designing, Make up artist, ITI, ANM, GNM etc.

Employment status of the respondents

Work is determining one's economic condition. When one individual engage with any kind of paid work then it may call employment. Whether it may be permanent or contractual, Govt. or private. One's societal status also to some extent depends on work. Work is a physical or mental activities, it may be paid or unpaid. Here, only paid activities are considered as work. And those peoples are considered as workers who perform this activities. In all cultures or societies, work is the basis of the economy or economic system. All kind of production systems are depends on work. Karl Marx was the first social theorist to really examine the conditions of work in factories that were popping up during the industrial revolution, looking at how the transition from independent craftwork to working boss in a factory resulted in alienation and deskilling. According to Karl Marx, "work is the production of goods and services- holds the key to human happiness and fulfilment." (Haralambos, 1980)

Due to modern education tribal women also get privileges on education. And through education they take advantages on engage themselves as employed. In the present society, majority of the tribal women are engaged on various occupation. It may be govt. or private. They are trying to engage themselves as employed. In the Arunachal Pradesh the Tai Khamti women are very hardworking and worchoholic. The employment status of the Tai Khamti women reveals below Table No 1.3.

Table 1.3: Employment Status of the respondents

Table 1.3: Employment status of the respondents:

	Employed			Unemploye d
	Govt.		Private	Self Relience

Total			Semi-Govt.		Organised		Un-Organised		Entrepreneur		Small Business		Commercial Cultivation			
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%
	55	18.33%	29	9.67%	40	13.33%	35	11.67%	23	7.67%	28	9.33%	65	21.67%	25	8.33%
	55	18.33%	29	9.67%	40+35=75(25%)				23+28+65=116(38.67%)						25(8.33%)	
	55+29+75+116=275 (91.67%)														25(8.33%)	

Table 1.3 reveals that out of the total 300 respondents, 275(91.67%) of the respondents are employed while only 25(8.33%) respondents are unemployed.

It is clearly seen that maximum percentage of the respondents are belonged to employed category. Out of the total employed respondent's majority of the respondents are engaged as self reliance. Only 55(18.33%) respondents are govt. employee, 29 (9.67%) of the respondents are working as semi govt. employee and another 75(25%) respondents are engaged in private sector.

In the Arunachal Pradesh the 90% females are engaged as employed. Majority of the women are believe in self reliance. In the Arunachal Pradesh majority of the tribal women are believe on economic hardship. In comparision to earlier society, tribal society make themselves in developed.

In this study tries to find out the relationship between education and employment of the Tai Khamti women in Arunachal Pradesh.

Table 1.4: Monthly Income of the Employed respondent

Sl. No	Monthly Income	Respondents	
		Nos.	%
1	Below 10,000	50	18.18%
2	10,000-20,000	54	19.63%
3	20,000-30,000	75	27.27%
4	30,000-40,000	20	7.27%
5	40,000-50,000	35	12.72%
6	50,000-60,000	25	9.09%
7	60,000-70,000	05	1.81%
8	80,000 and above	11	4%
Total		275	100

Table 1.4 reveals that income of the employed Tai khamti women of Arunachal Pradesh. The table divulges that out of the total 275 employed women there are 50(18.18%) females belong to the income group of below 10,000 while 54(19.63%) numbers of the respondents monthly income was between Rs.10,000-20,000. There are 75(27.27%) employed women belong to 20,000-30,000. 20(7.27%) respondents monthly income in between 40,000-50,000 And 25(9.09%) respondents belong to the income group of Rs.50,000-60,000 and 05(1.81%) respondents monthly income in between 60,000-70,000 and remaining 11(4%) respondents belong to income group of Rs. 60,000 above.

Reasons of being unemployed:

In the contemporary era the tribal women are not uneducated, vulnerable and underemployed. Most of the tribal women are well settled than men. The women are busy with their household chores as well as professional or official chores. During the field work it was observed that only a few number of the respondents are uneducated and unemployed. The main reasons are mentioned as below :

- i) Early Marriage
- ii) Taking Responsibility of their younger's siblings:
- iii) Parental education
- iv) Family Issue
- v) Lack of education

Relation between education and Women empowerment

In the Tai Khamti society it is clearly seen that those women are empowered who has education. It is true that uneducated women are also empowered but the economic status of educated women are quite better than less educated women. In this research it is clearly seen that educated women are very active in economic hardship.

Conclusion:

The Tai Khamti women are hardworking, empowered and energetic. They are very aware on their education, employment as well as empowerment. Majority of the Tai Khamti women are taking the responsibility of their childrens. In this research it is seen that parental education is one of the most important factor of female education. Those women are empowered who has a good academic qualification. But it is true that those who has good academic career they got best opportunity to engaged themselves as empowered. On the otherhand those who has not good academic qualifications, most of them are engaged as employed in private sector and Self reliance. Hence, in this research it is established that education and empowerment are closely related and the Tai Khamti women are educated and empowered.

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