

Women Agriculture Workforce's Educational Demand for Their Children- A Case Study of *Karbi Anglong* District (Assam)

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Abstract

Karbi Anglong District of Assam is purely an agriculture-based district. The majority of the population of the district are from tribal communities. Women from almost all households are directly or indirectly engaged in agricultural work. The present study, "Women Agriculture Workforce's Educational Demand for their Children – A Case Study of *Karbi Anglong* District," is undertaken to shed light on the educational demand for children in the women's workforce. Agriculture is the district's primary source of earnings. Education is an essential tool for the development of any area. Regarding the district's literacy rate, a significant disparity was visible between males and females in the 2011 census. It is a matter of great concern because education is essential for human resource development and the district's development.

Keywords: Education, agriculture, demand, workforce, literacy rate

Introduction

Human capital formation plays a significant role in a country's economic development. Better education leads to higher individual income and is a necessary pre-condition for long-term economic growth (IIASA 2008). Three channels were suggested by the World Economic Forum 2016, through which a country's productivity can be affected. First, it increases the collective ability of the workforce to carry out existing tasks more quickly. Second, secondary and tertiary education facilitates the transfer of knowledge about new information, products and technologies created by others (Barro and Lee, 2010). Finally, increasing creativity boosts a country's capacity to develop new knowledge, products and technologies¹.

Definition of Education

Education is the stock of skills, competencies, and other productivity-enhancing characteristics' (WEF). It is a critical component of a country's human capital, increases each worker's efficiency, and helps economies move up the value chain beyond manual tasks or simple production processes (WEF 2016).

Primary Education:- the first stage of education, between early childhood and secondary education, is called primary education and is compulsory.

Secondary Education:- Started after six years of primary education and continues up to higher education, vocational training and employment

Tertiary Education The World Bank, for example, defines tertiary education as including universities and institutions that teach specific capacities of higher learning, such as colleges, technical training institutions, community centres of excellence, and distance learning centres². Tertiary education generally starts after school completion and provides secondary education. It is also known as third-level and post-secondary education.

Rural Women and Agriculture

After so many years of independence, India is still an agricultural economy with the engagement of more than half (54.6%) of the workforce in agriculture activities. The extensive involvement of women is noticeable in India's agricultural activities. From time immemorial, agriculture and

allied sectors have been the primary source of livelihood for rural people, including a significant share (80%) of economically active women. Rural women's engagement in agriculture, as opposed to urban women, is slightly higher. In all the agricultural value chain

1. K4D Helpdesk Report (2017), "The Contribution of Education to Economic Growth." Catherine Grant, Institution of Development Studies.
2. K4D Helpdesk Report (2017), "The Contribution of Education to Economic Growth." Catherine Grant, Institution of Development Studies.

Research Problem

During my field survey in Karbi Anglong district (Assam) for my PhD study, I encountered various problems that most struck my mind: the pattern of education demand for their girl child by the women agriculture workforce participant. The involvement of women in

agricultural activity keeps them away from their homes for the majority of the day. Without a mother, their girl children usually take all the household responsibilities. So they need more time for education and other activities for their all-round development. Again, the income pattern of parents affects their attainment of education. My idea to study the income and education demand patterns also comes from a journal paper written by Jyotismita Goswami named “Educational Demand For Children by Rubber Growers of *Karbi Anglong* District of Assam (India)- A Case Study.”

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to study the relation between the household incomes of women workforce participants and their demand patterns for education for their girl children.

Research Gap

Various research works have been conducted earlier based on the educational demand of any particular workforce for their children. Hare's study considered the educational demand for girls and children by women in the agriculture workforce. A study considering girls' educational demands is yet to be available. Therefore, the present study will help us understand various unknown facts and provide us with the scope to think differently and face new probable circumstances.

Literature Review

Literature on educational demand for girls arises from the relationship between parents' income and their educational demand, parents' education and its relation to their attitude towards girls' education, and social attitude towards girls' education attainment.

Dreze and Kingdon (2000) supported the correlation between the parent's attitude towards girl child education and girls' education attainment in their paper *School Participation in Rural India* by examining The Public Report on Basic Education in India (PROBE) survey results.

Miller K Sheila (2007) mentioned the impact or relation of various factors like socio-economic characteristics, caste, marriage prospects, household wealth, and the educational attainment of female children. The researcher used the probit model to prove the hypothesis.

Goswami Jyotismita (2016) examined the demand pattern of education by rubber growers for their children. The researcher used the Chi-square test to check the hypothesis. The study established the relationship between the occupational security of parents and female education.

Methodology

Both primary and secondary data have been used in the study. Various published sources were used for the secondary data research department website. A questionnaire was prepared to collect primary data, followed by an interview method. A total of 100 households were selected randomly for collecting information. Out of 100 households, 210 students were chosen as the sample size. Simple statistical procedures and percentage tables were used to analyse the data.

Findings of the Study

Households were divided into three groups depending upon their monthly income: Small Income Group (SIG), Medium Income Group (MIG), and Large Income Group (LIG). Out of 210 students, 101 were female students, of whom 54 were from SIG, 28 were from MIG, and 19 were from LIG. Again, education attainment is also divided into three groups: primary level, Upper Primary level, and Graduation and above. The following table represents the education of girl children with their household income.

Household Income and Educational Demand for Girl Child

| Households | Attainment of Education (in percentage) | | | Total |
|------------|---|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| | Primary | Upper Primary to HS level | Graduation and above | |
| SIG | 43 (79.63%) | 6 (11.11%) | 5 (9.26) | 54 (53.47 %) |
| MIG | 5 (17.86%) | 17 (60.71%) | 6 (21.43%) | 28 (27.72%) |
| LIG | 1 (5.26%) | 3 (15.79%) | 15 (78.95%) | 19 (18.81%) |
| Total | 49 (48.51) | 26 (25.74%) | 26 (25.75%) | 101 (100%) |

Source: Field survey

The monthly income of the SIG category ranges between Rs 10000 and Rs 20000, MIG income is from Rs. 20000 up to Rs. 40000, and LIG's monthly household income is Rs 40000 and above. The above table shows that the majority (79.63%) of the girl children from the SIG category attained only primary education. In contrast, the majority (60.71%) of the MIG category girl children attained upper primary to HS level. On the other hand, the majority of the female children from the LIG category attained a graduate degree or above. We can also observe that out of 101 female children, the majority (48.51%) have only achieved primary education. I want to mention here that some exceptions were visible during the field survey, which were totally because of willingness. Attaining education is also a matter of willingness. Therefore, here, we only considered those students who were willing to achieve education and the impact of their household income on their desire.

Conclusion

Various factors affected the educational demand of parents for their girls' children. Though the engagement of women in any economic activity increases household income, which has a positive impact on one hand, on the other hand, the absence of a mother at home increases the chance of girls' involvement in household work at a very early age. The patriarchal society also negatively affects educational demand, especially in rural areas.

The government has started schemes such as *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*, *Sukanya Samridhi Yojana*, and Scheme for Adolescent Girls to provide opportunities for higher education and women empowerment. However, implementing such schemes in rural areas like *Karbi Anglong* was complex. People need to be made aware of such facilities. Government awareness programmes should be organised, especially in rural areas.

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