



A Study on Empowerment of women education through policies and schemes, with special reference to marginalized and disadvantage sections of Sikkim State

*Mrs. Kinzang Bhutia

**Dr.SankaraRao Kocherla

**Research Scholar, Department of Arts in Education, Arunodaya University, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, India e- mail: kinzang.bhutia@gmail.com mob No 7908894335

**Research Supervisor Department of Arts in Education, Arunodaya University, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, India e-mail: kotcherlasankarrao@gmail.com, Mobile No- 9490948969

ABSTRACT: The involvement of both men and women is absolute necessary for the development of nation as well as livelihood. The demand for gender equality and equal representation of women in all activities, including education and employment has been critical issue in the discourse development. Education, particularly higher and technical education, is the means to achieve human resource development and capacity building which can bring women employment, economic self-reliant and contribute enormously to their empowerment. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (1995) states: 'investing in women capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choice is not only valuable in itself, but is also surest way to economic growth and development'. The report further states; Human development is impossible without gender equality. The National Commission on Self-Employed (1987) acknowledges education as an important instrument for enhancing the chance of women's employability and for empowering them. This also been acknowledged by the Indian Government in the National Policy on Education ,1986 where it has been mentioned that education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women.

Keywords: Education, Women Education, Schemes and Policies.

Introduction

Sikkim, nestled in the northeastern region of India, became the country's 22nd state in 1975. Since then, it has witnessed steady socio-economic development, with a particular focus on human resource development through education. The government has prioritized expanding educational institutions in both public and private

sectors, leading to increased opportunities for women, especially in employment and administration. However, the status of women in Sikkim varies across communities, influenced by cultural practices and traditions. For instance, some tribal societies like the Khasi of Meghalaya follow a matrilineal system, while others like the Nagas are patriarchal. Historically, education was limited to privileged groups, with missionary efforts playing a pivotal role in bringing literacy to marginalized communities, including women. Though Sikkim shows fewer gender disparities in education compared to many Indian states, challenges persist—particularly in higher education and employment due to sociocultural norms. Still, significant progress has been made, with literacy rising from under 7% in 1951 to 82% in 2011, reflecting increased access and gender parity in education

Literacy data of Sikkim ,1981-2011

Year	Total literacy%	Male%	Female%
1981	41.6%	53.0%	27.4%
1991	54.39%	63.44%	44.06%
2001	68.8%	76%	60.4%
2011	82.20%	87.29%	76.43%

Present Educational Scenario of Girls' Education in Sikkim

Since the establishment of its first education directorate in 1954, Sikkim has made significant strides in improving education, particularly for girls. By 2004, there were 783 government schools, with many upgraded under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. In alignment with the Millennium Development Goals, the state has focused on universal primary education and reducing gender disparity. Special measures have been introduced for marginalized girls (ST/SC/OBC), including separate toilets, appointment of female teachers, provision of mid-day meals, and scholarships. The 'Purna Scheme' rewards meritorious girl students at various education levels, and 33% of government jobs are reserved for women to encourage higher education. Additional central and state schemes like Mahila Samridhi Yojana and Balika Samridhi Yojana also promote female education and welfare. The Small Family Scheme incentivizes delayed marriage and education for adolescent girls.

Despite progressive policies, challenges remain in participation and representation, particularly in Panchayats. Continued efforts are needed to integrate gender concerns into development planning, encourage public debate, and engage stakeholders. The establishment of the State Women's Commission is a positive step toward advancing gender equality in Sikkim.

Schemes and policies for girls' education in secondary education and higher education:

The state Government and central government of India has taken several steps to promote girl child education in the country. These schemes and programs provide financial support, scholarships, and other incentives to families and girls to encourage them to continue their education. The schemes also aimed to the declining the child sex ratio, promoting girl-child education, and providing education to girls from disadvantaged sections of society.

Therefore, it is important to note that the implementation and reach of these schemes still need improvement. There is a need for more awareness about these schemes and better access to them for families and girls in need.

Some of the program are highlighted below:

Samagra Shiksha, Sikkim starts Self-defence Training for girls' students Identification, Assessment and Screening Camps for CWSNs/Person with Disabilities: The program was organised for conduct of self-defence training for girls' students of elementary and secondary level students of all the government schools began at government girls' secondary school Mangan, Mangan district on November 18th, 2019. The training programme is funded by Samagra Shiksha and its implementation in collaboration with the sports and youth Affairs Department, Government of Sikkim, as per the guidelines of MHRD. The training is aimed to impart the basic techniques of self-defence for school going girls during their way to school, at school and in the society for their personal safety. The trained personnel from various sports disciplines are entrusted with the responsibilities of achieving those simple techniques of self-defence to all the girls of Government schools. A total of 114 such trainers have been assigned to conduct the training sessions in all the schools of Sikkim.

Inclusive Education Initiatives in Sikkim

Under the Samagra Shiksha scheme, in collaboration with Kalpataru Pratisthan and various government departments, Sikkim has been conducting Identification, Assessment, and Screening Camps for Children with Special Needs (CWSNs) across all four districts. From November 11 to 26, 2019, 26 camps were organized in hospitals across the state to identify and assess disabilities among school-going children (KG to Class 12), out-of-school children, and those receiving Home-Based Education.

The aim is to evaluate disability levels, issue ID cards, and ensure appropriate educational support so that no child is deprived of their right to education. For severely disabled children unable to attend school, Home-Based Education is provided by Special Educators. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate to ensure full inclusion.

ISIT Education and scholarships for marginalise section of the society:

Education and scholarships for women in Sikkim are pivotal to the state's efforts toward gender equality and empowerment. With one of the highest female literacy rates in India, Sikkim emphasizes access to quality education for girls through initiatives like free primary and secondary education in government schools and financial incentives for higher studies. Specialized scholarships, such as the Chief Minister's Merit Scholarship Scheme and other government-sponsored programs, encourage women to pursue education in fields like science, technology, and vocational training. These schemes also support marginalized and economically disadvantaged women, ensuring no one is left behind. By enabling women to excel academically and

professionally, these educational initiatives contribute to the overall progress and empowerment of women in Sikkim.

Objectives

1. Assess awareness and accessibility of education-related schemes among diverse groups (gender, sector, tribal status, location).
2. Analyze how such schemes correlate with educational attainment and empowerment indicators.
3. Examine differences in outcomes across strata of society (e.g., tribal vs. non-tribal, urban vs. rural).
4. Offer policy recommendations for enhancing the educational empowerment of disadvantaged women.

Hypotheses

- **H₁:** Women aware of and utilizing schemes (such as Aama, Bahini, scholarships) exhibit higher educational attainment and empowerment.
- **H₂:** Tribal, rural, and government-sector women face greater barriers to scheme access compared to their urban or private-sector counterparts.
- **H₃:** Programs like scholarships and SHGs significantly enhance empowerment metrics for marginalized women.

Data Collection

- **Sample:** 180 participants, equally representing male/female, urban/rural, tribal/non-tribal, and government/private-sector backgrounds.
- **Method:** Structured questionnaires capturing socio-demographics, awareness and use of schemes, education levels, and empowerment indicators (decision-making, financial autonomy, aspirations).
- **Procedure:** Mixed-mode data collection via field surveys in urban and rural areas, ensuring tribal representation.

Data Analysis

- **Quantitative:** Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies), cross-tabulations (e.g., scheme awareness by gender/location), and inferential tests (chi-square, t-tests, logistic regression for empowerment outcomes).
- **Qualitative** (if applicable): Thematic analysis of open-ended responses detailing perceived challenges and scheme effectiveness.

Data Interpretation

- Examine correlations between scheme awareness/use and empowerment indicators.
- Compare educational outcomes between subgroups—does tribal or rural status affect access and empowerment?
- Evaluate which schemes are most effective and where awareness or access gaps remain.

Findings (Hypothetical Examples)

- **High awareness:** 85% aware of Aama Scheme; usage significantly correlated with educational progress among women ($p < 0.05$).
- **Access disparities:** Tribal rural women showed lower access to scholarships (45%) compared to urban non-tribal (70%).

- **Impactful interventions:** Those participating in SHGs or skill trainings reported stronger financial autonomy and educational aspirations.
- **Barriers:** Lack of information, bureaucratic hurdles, and social norms continued to impede access among disadvantaged groups

Conclusion:

Education plays a significant role in shaping the lives of schedule tribe women in Sikkim, influencing not only their personal growth but also important aspects of community and societal well-being, particularly in educational sector. Through schemes and policies women get more empower than male, so education empower schedule tribe women by providing then with proper opportunities to learn and develop critical thinking skills. This empowerment enables them to make informed decision and open doors to economic opportunities by acquiring skills and quantification so, that they can pursue better jobs and contribute financially to their households. By investing in education for these women, we not only improve their individual's lives but also contribute to border societal goals of sustainable development. policies and program that prioritize educational access and quality for schedule tribe women can lead to positive outcome and improved overall well-being for communities in Sikkim and beyond.

REFERENCES

- 1.Sikkim-Human Development Report. 2001. p.33.
- 2.Annual Report 2023-24: <https://tribal.nic.in/KnowledgeHub.aspx>
3. ST in India revealed in Census 2011 report: <https://tribal.nic.in/downloads/statistics/3-STinindiaascensus2011.pdf>
<https://adiprasaran.tribal.gov.in/pm-janman01/man.aspx>
- 3.Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (Manthan Shivir) September 2024: <https://adiprasaran.tribal.gov.in/pm-janman/photoAlbumjjgd1.aspx>
<https://tribal.nic.in/EMRS.aspx>
<https://tribal.nic.in/KnowledgeHub.aspx>
- 4.Guidelines: <https://adiprasaran.tribal.gov.in/pm-janman/photoAlbumjjgd1.aspx>
<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2036245>
<https://pib.gov.in/FeaturesDeatils.aspx?NoteId=151692®=3&lang=1>
<https://dashboard.tribal.gov.in/>