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Parent's Attitude Towards Schooling and Education of Children

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Introduction:

The 21st centuries' growth in various sectors has led our country towards achieving the distinction of one of the growing nations in the world. Various efforts have been made by the Government as well as Non-Government Organizations but the literacy rate is increased if we compare it with the few decades back, but the cent percent literacy is not achieved till today. The literacy rate of the disadvantaged community is still poor.

Parental attitude is a measure or an index of parental involvement. A child, brought up with affection and care in the least restrictive environment would be able to cope up better with the sighted world. Therefore, the family shapes the social integration of the child more than a formal school. Turnbull (1983) has identified four basic parental roles- parents as educational decision makers; parents as parents; parents as teachers and parents as advocates. Since the parent's attitude is so important, it is essential that the home and school work closely together, especially for children with disabilities. The Warnock Report (1978) stresses the importance of parents being partners in the education of their children. The role of parents should actively support and enrich the educational processes.

Even if India has a long and rich heritage of education in both pre and post-independence era, education of the minority communities has remained a sensitive issue. Under the Buddhist influence, education was available to virtually everyone who wanted it. During 11th century, the Muslims established elementary and secondary schools, Madrasas or colleges and universities. When the British came to India the educational system continued to flourish along with the prominence of English language. Through the Act of India in 1835 and the Woods Despatch in 1854, a basis for a properly coordinated system of English education was determined. This has been briefly discussed below prior to that of factors affecting minority education in India.

Education in India: Post Independence period:

During the time of Independence, India's education system was characterized by regional, gender, caste and structural imbalances. Only 14 per cent of the population was literate and only one out of three children were enrolled in primary schools (Government of India, Ministry of I & B, (1996), India 1995, P.79).

The Constitution of India and Education:

The constitution of India was framed in 1950 with an objective to guarantee social, political and economic justice to all irrespective of caste, creed and religion. It was well visualized that, development in education along with other allied sectors would play a vital role in bringing about desirable changes in the country. It was planned that the backward sections of the Indian population i.e. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes must be provided opportunity

in education to develop critical thinking and self-determination and contribute to the progress of the country. These promises laid the foundation for the attempt of Universalization of Primary Education in India. In 1950, target was set to universalize primary education among the entire eligible category of children within the age group of 6-14 years of age within a span of 10 years. During that period a great deal of expansion in education facilities was achieved. However, universalization was still a distant dream.

Right to Education 2010:

In April 2010, universal, free and compulsory education, was stated as the 8th Fundamental Right and according to it, throughout the country children under the age group of 6 to 14 would receive free and compulsory education. India is considered as the 135th country imparting free and compulsory education within the age group of six to fourteen years.

Women Education:

As regards the enrollment of girls and their retention, it is interwoven with the perception of society about women and their role. Their position in the community is nowhere near what it was in the early Vedic times which is considered a golden era. Slowly, their status started to slide down and perhaps this is the starting point of the yawning gap between women's and men's literacy, a legacy which we are trying to battle with even today. Several steps had taken during the British period and since Independence to promote women's education. Yet because enrolment of girls is poorer than that of boys in a situation of similar socio-economic background almost everywhere, it is pulling down the results of achievement of universal primary education. To bring more and more girls in to schools and see that they are there for an essential minimum period requires the backing of the community and a host of support services. The parliament Committee on Empowerment of women in its 14th Report tabled in August 2003, which expressed concern that 35 million girls were still out of school, said that 'the need for superior academic achievement is greater for girls as compared to boys as the future of the girl child rests squarely on her educational achievement and economic independence. India will not only miss the Dakar goal of attaining gender parity-equal enrolment of boys and girls-by 2005, but in all likelihood will not get there a decade later by when the world is to achieve gender equality in education. This dismal forecast is stated in the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report for EFA released in Delhi in November 2003.

Attitude and Behavior:

An attitude is "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols" (Hogg & Vaughan 2005, p. 150). Attitude is the feeling or mental disposition of an individual which influences the human behaviour. Attitude is a vital ingredient for the success or failure of children in their optimum development. Attitudes structure can be described in terms of three components.

- Affective component: this involves a person's feelings / emotions about the attitude object. For example: "I am scared of spiders".
- Behavioral (or conative) component: the way the attitude we have influences how we act or behave. For example: "I will avoid spiders and scream if I see one".
- Cognitive component: this involves a person's belief / knowledge about an attitude object. For example: "I believe spiders are dangerous".

Parents' Perception of Children's Future Education and Related Issues:

Parents, had high expectation from school authorities regarding facilities they wanted their child should avail in school, such as adequate library, adequate furniture and equipment, and if possible, laboratories and workshops with reasonable facilities for vocational training like computer application. Provision for the girl child, they opined, to learn different types of co-curricular activities such as tailoring, and painting, besides education, would go a long way in making them self-sufficient in future. There are several social prejudices, social customs and norms which constrain access of women to education in general and higher education in particular. The age old customs and beliefs such as i) the seclusion and veiling of women and ii) world of woman as separate from men iii) women eventually getting married and futility of investment on their education, are significant factors in the attitude of parents, especially uneducated parents, towards the education of women. The disparate levels of socio-economic development and social stratification adversely affect the position of women. Spurious development leads to poverty and the poverty and illiteracy maps usually coincide. Poverty affects the female education, as the first thing that is dropped is the investment on females. The objectives of boys and girls education differ in society. Though education of male is looked upon as an investment for the future source of income for the family, the education of female is more an obligation and is the obligation first to be ignored in case of crisis. However, in this study, evidence was not found regarding any constraints for the girl child in attending school. Irrespective of whether the child is a boy or a girl, parents wanted their children to attend schools regularly.

Conclusion:

The overall favorable attitude, found in the study, among the parents in the rural community towards their children's education is indicative of the success of Government endeavors towards Universal education. Mass media and information technology revolution has helped in shaping the attitude of people across culture and socio-economic status of families. Encouraging girl child to attend school is again another positive sign. However, more improvement can be witnessed if schools could be successful in generating parental involvement as well as work upon their feedback on running applied courses and vocational training for students.

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