

Impact of Literacy on Social Capital Formation Among Women



Education

KEYWORDS : Literacy-Saakshar Bharat Learners-Social Capital Formation

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| Prof. K. Sudharani | Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Sri Venkateswara University, TIRUPATI -517 502 A P |
| Mr. G. UMAPATHI | RESEARCH SCHOLAR, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Sri Venkateswara University, TIRUPATI -517 502 A P |
| Mrs. M. KRISHNAVENI | Research Scholar, Department of History, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India-517 502 |

ABSTRACT

Social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable collective action. It encompasses institutions, relationships and customs that shape the quality and quantity of society's social interactions. Social capital when enhanced in a positive manner, can improve effectiveness among the individuals and sustainability in the society. It promotes community's capacity to work together to address their common needs, fostering greater inclusion and cohesion, and increasing transparency and accountability. Literacy provides the basis to the community to empower themselves by building social capital formation among them. Recognizing this, a study was conducted to know the impact literacy on social capital formation among the women learners attending the saakshar bharat centres in Chittoor district and the findings were presented in the paper.

Human resource development is one of the factors which determine the development of the country. In India a lot of efforts have been made to improve the people's capability by various strategies. Implementation of adult literacy programmes is one of such efforts which are intended to achieve social sustainability by increasing the abilities of the people to create a sense of belonging, concrete experience of social networks and great benefits to the people. Without literacy skills i.e., the abilities to read, to write, to do math's, to solve problems and to access & use technology, today's adults will struggle to take part in the world around them and fail to reach their full potential as parents, community members, and employees. Thus literacy as a qualitative attribute of the population is one of the most important indicators and major component of the human resource development and is thus basic to any programme of social and economic development. In synergy with Government's umbrella programme of Bharat Nirman, the Government has launched a country wide literacy programme by the name Saakshar Bharat in 365 low literacy districts to create a literate society through a variety of teaching learning programmes for non-literate and neo-literate adults in the age group of 15 years and above with prime focus on women. Recognizing the importance of literacy in social capital formation, the present study was focused on the influence of literacy on social capital formation among women learners of Saakshar Bharat Centers.

Objectives of the study:

- To know the profile of the sample
- To study attainment of literacy among the sample
- To study the impact of literacy on social capital formation among the sample
- To suggest measures to promote social capital formation among the sample.

Methodology:

The study was conducted in Chittoor District. The district has three revenue divisions, 66 Mandals and 1380 Panchayats. For the present study 66 panchayats from 66 mandals of the three revenue divisions were randomly selected at the first stage. 10 women learners from each selected panchayat (10x66=660) were randomly selected as the sample. Thus the sample constitutes 660 learners. As the study intended to know the impact of literacy on social capital formation, pre and post data was collected after attending the centers. In order to collect the data from the sample, rating scale on collective action, schedule on formation of networks and information & communication, and an evaluation tool on writing, reading and numeracy skills was developed. The Saakshar Bharat programme in Chittoor district was launched on 15th August, 2010. In the first phase 80,000 women were enrolled and made literate. In the second phase

87,000 women learners were enrolled. The centers were functioning since November 1st 2011. During the first week of November pre test was conducted and the data was collected from the sample. After the completion of the six months of attending the centers post test was conducted to know the attainment of literacy among the learners and social capital formation among them.' t' test was applied to know the difference in the social capital formation among them.

Findings of the study: The collected data was analyzed as per the objectives and findings were presented below.

Table.1.Profile of the Sample

| S.no | Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Age | | |
| | 15-30 | 238 | 30.06 |
| | 31-50 | 300 | 45.45 |
| | 51-70 | 122 | 18.48 |
| 2 | Caste | | |
| | SC | 618 | 93.63 |
| | ST | 42 | 6.36 |
| 3 | Income | | |
| | 10000-20000 | 188 | 28.48 |
| | 20001-30000 | 344 | 52.12 |
| | 30001-40000 | 128 | 19.39 |
| 4 | Occupation | | |
| | Coolie | 601 | 91.06 |
| | Business | 59 | 8.93 |

The sample was divided as three age groups i.e., 15-30, 31-50 and 51-70. It is clear from the above table that 30.06 percent of the sample was of 15-30 age groups. 45.45 percent belongs to 31-50 age group and 18.48 percent were of 51-70 age group. In terms of caste, 93.63 percent of the sample belongs to SC caste and 6.36 percent to scheduled tribes. 28.48 percent of non-literate belong to the income level of Rs.10000-20000, 52.12 percent were of annual income below Rs. 20001-30000. Only 19.39 percent of the learners were of above Rs.30001- 40000 income. Majority of the sample were (91.06 percent) coolies and 8.93 percent were business people.

Attainment of literacy:

The literacy centers were established, literacy educators were selected and training programmes were organized to them to teach the learners. Primers were distributed to the learners and the classes were organized to the learners one hour every day for six months. A test was conducted to know the attainment of literacy among the sample. The test was for 100 Marks and the

weight ages attached to each of the sub units were reading-40 marks, writing-30 marks and numeracy-30 marks. In conformity with the National Literacy Norms the adult learners who have secured 70 marks in aggregate with minimum 50 marks in each of the components were considered as literate. All the 660 learners got above 70 marks and were considered as literate.

Impact of literacy on social capital formation:

Social capital is the concept that has significant implications for enhancing of the quality and sustainability. It refers to the norms and networks that enable collective action. In order to apply the concept of social capital at a practical and operational level, it can be broken down into five key dimensions. Groups and networks collections of individuals that promote and protect personal relationships which improve welfare; Trust and Solidarity- elements of interpersonal behavior which fosters greater cohesion and more robust collective action; Collective action and cooperation -ability of people to work together toward resolving communal issues, social cohesion and inclusion-mitigates the risk of conflict and promotes equitable access to benefits of development by enhancing participation of the marginalized ;and Information and Communication- breaks down negative social capital and also enables positive social capital by improving access to information. The present study was focused on three dimensions i.e., collective action and cooperation, formation of groups & networks and information & communication. The information was collected from the sample as per the objectives and the findings were discussed below.

Table: 2. Impact of literacy on social capital formation:

| S. No | Item | Mean (Before attainment of literacy) | Mean (After attainment of literacy) | T value |
|-------|----------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | Low | 347.33 | 289.66 | 6.65 |
| 2. | Moderate | 215 | 238.66 | 6.80 |
| 3. | High | 97.66 | 131.66 | 3.09 |

Before attending the literacy centers, the investigator found low levels of social capital formation among majority of the learners and high level of social capital formation among few learners. After the attainment of literacy in the Saakshar Bharat centers there was significant change in the social capital formation among the learners. The obtained mean values shows that there was decrease in the mean value of learners having low social capital formation and increase in the mean value of learners having moderate and high levels of social capital formation. Thus the findings of the study proved that the literacy has significant impact on the social capital formation.

Suggestions:

- The literacy educators should take the steps to improve Social Capital Formation among neo-literates which are the base for sustainable development.
- The neo-literates should be motivated to inculcate the habit of news paper reading to acquire information.
- The neo-literates should be encouraged to be the members of people's organizations to promote collective Action among them.
- The village coordinators have to facilitate networking capacity among the neo-literates with NGO's, Mandal level officials, Political leaders etc.

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