

Gender difference in academic socialization of children in tea communities of Assam

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■ **ABSTRACT :** In today's modern world parents give equal importance on the education of their children irrespective of the gender. In this modern era, education is an important tool of power to achieve success and dignity in life. In many societies, family members prefer mainly boys to get good education than girls. They provide all the educational materials to their boy child than girls and are less involved in girl's education. The present study was an attempt to find out gender difference in academic socialization of children in tea communities. The sample consisted of 100 parents who had children studying in either lower primary or secondary school. From the total 100 samples, 50 respondents having girl child and 50 respondents having boy were selected randomly. Samples were selected on the basis of stratified random sampling from the tea gardens of Jorhat district of Assam. An interview schedule was used to assess the measure of academic socialization of boys and girls. The result revealed that there was no significant gender difference in academic socialization of children among tea communities of Assam.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Academic socialization, Tea communities

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Education is the building block for success in life. Education is a continuous process of learning throughout the life. Children inculcate the value and importance of education depending on how parents socialize their children towards education and involves in their education (Bakker and Denessen, 2007; Barnard, 2004 and Eccles *et al.*, 1982). Children are often socialized based on the norms and values acceptable in the society. Children are thought to be the future citizen for the development of a country. Therefore recognizing the importance of education, government has made

provision of educational facilities to children of all section of the society. Even though government has taken many steps such as scholarships for girls, introduction of some special courses to attract the girls, appointment of female teachers etc., to improve the literacy of girl child but their enrolment in school is still low. The girl drop-out rate is also higher in schools and colleges than that of the boys.

In many backward areas or societies, people discriminate between girls and boys in terms of education. In tea community also, the rate of literacy among them

is comparatively low despite of having basic schooling facilities in most of the tea gardens of Assam. Moreover, literacy rate among women workers is very low in comparison to their male counterparts. Tea community represents the tribal people of different ethnic groups having their own dialects and different culture. They constitute the most important part in Assamese society. People mainly prefer to work in the tea garden to earn their livelihood. Most of the girls from very young age engage themselves in the tea garden or look after their younger siblings. Also, they get married at an early age, and so very less importance is given to education, especially higher education. Parents also give less importance and are less involved in their children’s education due to lack of time and also because of their limited capacity. They are preoccupied with the mindset that their children will be employed in tea gardens after their retirement even though they do not have good qualification (Fatima *et al.*, 2013 and Grolnick and Slowiaczek, 1994).

But in societies where parents understand the value and need of education gives equal preference to both girls and boys and are involved in their education. Parents can involve directly or indirectly in children’s education. Directly they can involve by attending PTA meetings, discussing about their child progress in academics, school functions etc. and indirectly by monitoring their children’s homework, discussing with them about the importance of education etc. Children’s education can be influenced by parent’s expectation and aspiration, intergenerational influence, involvement in school and home based activities. If the parent’s attitude is positive regarding education they socialize their children positively and encourage accordingly and if parents hold negative attitude towards education they give less importance to their children’s education (Hill, 2001 and Hill and Tyson, 2009). The present study was undertaken with the objective:

To find out gender difference in academic socialization of children in tea communities of Assam

Null hypothesis:

There is no gender difference in academic socialization of children in tea communities of Assam.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The present study was conducted in Jorhat district of Assam. The sample consisted of 100 parents who had children studying in either lower primary or secondary school standards. From the total sample of 100, 50 respondent parents having girls and 50 respondents having boys as their children were selected randomly. Samples were selected from the tea gardens on the basis of stratified random sampling from the tea gardens of Jorhat district of Assam. An interview schedule was used in the study to collect information regarding academic socialization of children and scores were given against the responses. After data collection, mean, standard deviation and t-score values were computerized in the view of the findings and the results were interpreted. Data was collected during the calendar year 2018.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data were examined to assess the gender difference in academic socialization of children and the response received has been presented in the form of Table 1.

The Table 1 highlights the results of gender differences in academic socialization of children. The table values shows that the calculated value of $t(98) = 1.926$ and $p > .05$ (2 tailed) which indicates that the result is statistically not significant. Hence, the Null hypothesis is accepted. It can be interpreted that there does not exist any gender difference in academic socialization of children.

While comparing the mean score of academic socialization of girls (48.64) with the boys (46.18), it can be observed that even though there is not much difference in academic socialization between girls and boys but a slight difference exists. The reason for no significant gender difference may be because most of the women of tea community are economically independent and they contribute to their family income.

Table 1 : Gender difference in academic socialization of children						
Categories	N	Mean	Std. deviation	t value	df	p value
Girls	50	48.64	5.660	1.926*	98	0.057
Boys	50	46.18	7.041			

* indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Hence they don't show gender difference in terms of education as well. As there are provision of free and compulsory elementary education to all children, so there is similarity in providing education to both boys and girls at primary levels. When children grow up the opportunities for boys and girls to engage themselves in traditional tea garden works or involving in other activities to become economically independent is equal. These may be the reason behind the result that there is no gender difference in academic socialization of children in tea communities. Similar work related to the present investigation was also carried out by Akhtar (2013); Basumatari and Goyari (2013); Fan and Chen (2001); Gogoi and Handique (2014); Kurmi (2014); Nath and Nath (2014) and Rajam and Malarvizhi (2011).

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that parents of tea communities are also aware about the importance of their involvement in children's education irrespective of the gender. They give equal importance to both girls and boys and are involved in their education equally. In most cases, women in tea gardens contribute to the family income to a greater extent and so they do not make gender difference in academically socializing their children.

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