

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

G. Amaresan¹ & G. Sundharavadivel²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Adult & Continuing Education, School of Social Sciences,
University of Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Adult & Continuing Education, School of Social Sciences,
University of Madras, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Received: 03 Jul 2018

Accepted: 09 Jul 2018

Published: 12 Jul 2018

ABSTRACT

India has made great strides educationally. In 1951 the literacy rate was 16.6 per cent, while in 1971 it had increased to 29.45 per cent. The percentage of literacy among men was 39.5 per cent while among women it was only 18.5 per cent. However, facilities for education do not keep pace with the rise in population. Hence within this twenty year period, the illiterates have increased by eighty-eight million (Manorama Year Book, 1978).

In many states education is free, but a majority of poor children have to choose between basic needs and education. In addition school attendance means clean clothes, books, and other expenses. Sickness or death of father or mother means an end to schooling for many children at a tender age.

Children in such areas do not get any education at all. Unfortunately, many children from the villages and slum areas find that they do not fit into the culture of the school. In certain areas, teachers coming from middle-class backgrounds look down upon poor children, particularly from the low castes. Sometimes children are beaten for bad behavior. This frightens them away from school forever. Thus the social distance between the educated and the uneducated grows.

In many rural and jungle areas, schools are far away from home, hence parents are reluctant to send girls to school without someone to protect them. The purdah system also keeps Muslim and Hindu girls from receiving an education, particularly in northern India. Often schools are co-educational; therefore many girls are pulled out of school after the fourth or fifth standard.

In education institutions the proportion of girls to boys at the primary level is 2:5, at the secondary level it is 1:3 and at the university level it is 1:4. Unless this changes rapidly the social distance between girls and boys will only widen the cultural gap between them.

In some areas in India illiteracy among adults is almost one hundred per cent. In most areas, women are worse off than men. Many girls drop out of school for domestic reasons. Among many communities, girls are not sent out of the house after attaining puberty. A marriage of teenage girls means an end to their education. Hence the great need for non-formal education.

- *The Network Approach used in the districts of Raigarh and Surguja of Madhya Pradesh and in the Ranchi, Palamau and Hazaribagh districts of Bihar.*
- *The Centre Approach used at the Adult Education Centre in Venoor, South Kanara district of Karnataka, and at Trumarikop in the same state. At Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu and Lilipur in Andhra Pradesh too the same approach is used.*
- *The Mini Mobile Team Approach used by the Sarvajani Seva Samaj (SSS) in Chattisgarh district of Madhya Pradesh.*
- *The Live-in Village Approach used by the Sarvangin Gram Vikas (SGV) in Palamau district, Bihar and in Haryana. Several others use it in other states.*

KEYWORDS: *Children, Educationally, Clean Clothes, Books and Other Expenses. Sickness or Death*

INTRODUCTION

The discovery of the grihini training programme was made by the Chotanagpur Project Team of the Indian Social Institute during 1966-68 in Bihar. It aroused the author's interest. The programme aimed at the development of a much neglected group of girls - those who remained illiterate due to many responsibilities placed on them by poverty and their families. Time was therefore taken to visit and study several grihini centers in Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

To spread the idea of non-formal education for young, rural and tribal illiterate girls, some articles were written for newspapers and magazines. As the demand for more information grew and the sharing of experiences became necessary, the first booklet on 'Grihini Schools' was planned and printed in 1968.

But it was soon out of print. Meanwhile, similar programmes aimed at other groups of girls were studied. This led to the publishing of another edition called 'Grihini Training in India' by the Family Life Centre of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, in 1970, primarily due to the encouragement of Anthony D'Souza, the then Director of the Institute

This second edition was instrumental in spreading the idea of the grihini programme far and wide in India and overseas. Many grihini centers and modified programmes sprang up in different states in the country. Several new approaches developed. Since the second edition too had exhausted it seemed timely to work on yet another book on the subject.

The government and voluntary bodies spend much more money on the education of the socio-economically well-to-do than the outlay for the poor who cannot take advantage of the formal educational system. A large portion of the budget allocated for the poor is spent on salaries of the educated, who often do not function adequately. Therefore the grihini training programme, which focusses attention on poor girls in tribal, rural and slum areas, should be encouraged and spread. Then the greatly neglected, yet mostly needy of India's girls and women will get a chance to dispel ignorance and face life with self-confidence and enlightenment.

Women and girls must have a say in the type of life they will lead. At present, our poorest women work outside the home full time to maintain their families. In addition they take primary responsibility for childrearing and housekeeping. More and more middle and upper-class women are seeking employment to maintain themselves or to help

raise the standard of life of their families. In addition, they take primary responsibility for child-rearing and housekeeping. More and more middle and upper-class women are seeking employment to maintain themselves or to help raise the standard of life of their families. Even most of the upper-class women who can afford domestic workers have to supervise them

Many Indian women are justly proud of their homemaking skills and take on their double burden cheerfully. In spite of their jobs, family life has a great meaning and a strong hold on them. It is hoped that as more and more women bring home their pay packets, more men will assume the responsibility of sharing household tasks and rearing children.

Finally, persons vitally concerned with women's development on the administrative level of the programme could benefit immensely by the mini library on women. To meet the needs of such readers a short list of books with a paragraph or two on each of them is included as

THE NETWORK APPROACH

From a single, isolated weekend attempt at teaching illiterate girls a Gholeng, the next step was a network of grihini programmes. No further experimentation was done. Instead, due to the insistence of the regional religious head, a grihini programme was started in every place where a formal school for girls was conducted under his sponsorship. Thus in Raigarh and Suguja districts of Madhya Pradesh, ten programmes began simultaneously. Planning was done centrally. Teachers were trained. For implementation, support came from the locality and the center. Coordination from the center helped to maintain standards and sustain the educational process under very difficult conditions.

In a region when a number of grihini programmes are planned and implemented simultaneously. With coordinated efforts coming from the center, along with educational, professional and financial support, it is termed the Network Approach. Expansion of the programme is greatly facilitated by this approach.

The Aims: The objectives of the programme are to prepare girls to fulfill adequately their future roles as housewives, mothers and community leaders. The reasons that prompted the starting of the programme are summarized as follows:

- The ignorance of the rural women, caused by their lack of learning opportunities.
- Their inability to cope with simple tasks needed in a changing society and economy.
- The need felt to prepare them for their future as women in the home and community.
- The widening gap between those who get a formal education and those who do not.

Preparation of Staff: Two young women who have a high school education or more are selected for orientation and training from each center. They are trained in adult education methods. The content of this training course includes the subjects of the grihini syllabus. They are taught to prepare teaching aids, write out lesson plans and give demonstration classes. Different tasks involved in conducting the programme are explained.

Conducting the Programmed: Each center is managed by the centre in -charge for day to day matters. Two or three times a year all the teachers of the centers meet in one place to evaluate the programme and to plan for the next few months. The coordinator, who is a woman, visits and helps the centers with any problems that may arise.

To assist her in the work a team of programme reviewers is formed. This team consists of six men and women from the local organizations. The function of this team is not so much to inspect and see how much the girls have learnt but to help staff and grihinis get a sense of achievement, and to give encouragement to the grihinis before they disperse. Anything that may give the girls a sense of failure is avoided. Hence when the team visits, the girls are given a chance to demonstrate what they have learnt. This they do cheerfully and with confidence.

THE CENTRE APPROACH

The Problem: People in South Kanara District of the state of Karnataka

Mariyola Picardo and Shanti Lobo, Grihini Programme at Venoor Adult Education Centre, Mangalore 1979. (Unpublished). Are a little better off educationally than in most other parts of India. The literacy rate is 43.45 per cent. For males, it is 52.34 per cent and for females, it is 35.04 per cent. But many adult women are still illiterate. Several young girls are too poor to go to school.

Illiteracy cannot be tackled in isolation. Young people have to be prepared to function well in life. To do this all -round education is necessary. To impart such an education to the mostly needy girls, the Adult Education Centre (AEC) was opened at the end of 1975 in Vendor Village.

Planning Phase: Planning for the programme started two years in advance. In 1973 the goals and objectives of the grihini training were first clarified. The primary goal of the programme is to educate illiterate girls of South Kanara and other districts of Karnataka, so that they can play their part as useful citizens of the country. The objective of the programme is to prepare young women on the threshold of marriage for life in the home and in the community.

MINI MOBILE TEAM APPROACH

The Problem: SS made a study of the area and ascertained the facts and assessed the situation. They found.

That Chattisgarh is large and inhabited by tribals and others. It is rich in minerals and forest products. It was once the rice bowl of Madhya Pradesh. However, the local people are unable to develop the resources while immigrants from other parts of India have grown rich. They exploit the people. Industries have sprung up. They do not benefit the poor but add to the wealth of the rich.

The caste system is strong. The higher castes do not give a chance to the lower castes to improve them. They do not want them to be educated because the lower castes will demand just wages for their work. The lower class families are mostly Gandas. They are illiterate and extremely ignorant. Adult education seems to be the crying need in the area.

Changing people's Customs and way of living and thinking is not easy. Unless mothers are educated they cannot bring up their children well. Therefore it is important to work with them. Mothers can improve their homes. Families improve the village through which the country will improve.

REFERENCES

1. *Baby and Childcare*, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Pocket Books, New York, 1968
2. *Childcare*, Padmasini Asuri, UNICEF, New Delhi, 1976.
3. *Childcare: Feeding your Baby*, Padmasini Asuri, UNICEF, New Delhi, 1976.
4. *Love and Life*, Serena Canada, 55 Parkdale Ave. Ottawa, Canada K1Y, IE5 1975.
5. *Plain Talks on Marriage*, Fulgence Meyer, St. Francis Book shop Cincinnati, Ohio, 1927.
6. *Home Science (Kannada)*, E. Bhangera, J. Bhapate Madhilvala, Dharwar, 1961.
7. *Home Science (Kannada)*, K. Vinodhini Nayak, The Mangalore Trading Association Private Mangalore, Tasty Recipes, narayani V. Nayak, Canara Bank House, Basavanagudi, Bangalore, 1970
8. D. Sumathi, *Women Empowerment in India*, *IMPACT: International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature (IMPACT: IJRHAL)*, Volume 6, Issue 3, March 2018, pp. 287-292
9. *First -aid and Nursing*, Mukta Bandhu, Universal Publication, New Delhi, 1972.
10. *Where there is No Doctor*, David H. Werner, Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi, 1980
11. *Manual of Child Nutrition in Rural India*, Cecile de Sweemer, Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi, 1978.

