

CHAPTER VI

UTILISATION OF THE FORMAL LEARNING

An important aspect of this study is to see the extent of utilisation of the education received by the local people. In order to see the changes in life ways and occupation associated with educational attainments twenty case studies of old students have been done. The old students have been traced with the help of the teachers of PHSS and by the local people. Then I went to their villages and interviewed them. In my twenty case studies only five are female and 15 males, who are engaged in different jobs. They belong to Hindu castes, Scheduled castes and Muslim community. Among them most of the students are S.F. passed or B.A.B.T. etc and the rest did not complete their education for various reasons.

The effect of formal learning may be seen in the spheres of one's own or familial circle and in the broader social level. The former comprises of change in occupation and income and resulting life style; whereas the latter is expected to include consciousness about education of the children as well as the adults and the physical, social and natural environment and conservation thereof.

As such, my enquiry included finding out from the old students the extent of utilisation of their education towards economic, educational and other aspects of life ways, their opinion regarding problems of education in the study area has also been recorded. These findings shall be presented under the broad headings of - [a] educational problems, [b] utilisation of education and [c] changes in life style.

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

Two aspects of problems of education in the study area are [a] the educational facilities available in the area at the time of their study and at present and [b] the difficulties faced by the respondents in pursuing their education.

The educational institutions were very few in the area when the respondents studied. Number of high schools being only one or two the students had to go long distances every day to attend school. This was difficult specially for the girls, whose guardians often decided against their studying. Sometimes the daughters were debarred from studying in the co-educational school.

At present the situation has improved quite a bit. Now many Junior High Schools and a few Madhyamik level High Schools have been established in different villages enabling the students to pursue education nearer to their own villages.

The number of teachers have now increased in the schools and number of subjects taught are also more. Choice of subjects was limited in the earlier times but the present students get the opportunity to study various subjects under science, commerce and arts streams in the PHSS. The respondents expressed their regret for their own disadvantageous situation, which often led to their disinterest in study and dropping out.

The communication system was very poor in the area. The respondents often had to walk a long distance. Now-a-days there are frequent bus services and the present students enjoy comfortable bus journey to school. This is specially important in case of the girls' education.

Female education and related problems in the past

First hand information regarding girls' education in this area could be learnt from the views expressed by the old students. Some of which is recorded here. Most of the exstudents told me that educational problems were more acute for the girl students than the boy students. To come to school from distant villages there were no arrangement of journey and the roads were lonely, so it was not possible for the girl students to come to school alone. On the other hand at that time most of the villagers were illiterate and did not want to improve their next generation. Other difficulty was that, in villages most of the people are Rajbansis so they used the Rajbansi language (which is called 'Desibhasa by them) and in school the medium of instruction was more sophisticated Bengali language. Thus language barrier became the main problem for their study. The other educational problem of the girl students was that in a very tender age the girl students were married off because the villagers did not want to spend for their daughter's education as for the marriage ceremony of the daughters the villagers were compelled to give them dowry. Moreover, most of the villagers depended on cultivation and their economic condition was not good.

So for economic problem sometimes the girl students were dropped out in any class but not the boy students because, the parents depend for their future on their sons and not on their daughters as they were to be married off.

Besides this, there were other difficulties for the girl students because the villagers think even today that if their daughter is higher educated then it would be difficult to find bridegroom for their marriage. Other difficulty was that most of the girl students were engaged in domestic works and they helped their mother in kitchen and sometimes they looked after their younger sisters or brothers thus they did not get sufficient time for study and their parents did not give them study help or private tutor help, thus they were not successful in the examination. After failing in the same class again and again they dropped out from the school. If they had stayed at hostel then probably they would have improved by having more time for their studies. A primary teacher, Dharendra Nath

Purbay, told me that if we want to solve the educational problem of the girl students then at first the mentality of the villagers should be changed and the government help is very necessary for their economic improvement. In distant villages girls' high school and girls' hostel are very necessary. He said that family planning also is very necessary in all the villages. In the villages the old villagers do not want to deviate from their old tradition of young age at marriage of the girls. Thus education is very necessary to bring about social change.

Harimohan Debnath who is a farmer has passed from Phansidewa Higher Secondary School in 1946-47. He said that at present proportion of the girl students pursuing education has increased but at that time when he was a student of class VII in 1946-47 then only one girl student was studying at Phansidewa High School. If they get assured government service then education among the girl students would surely increase. At present the land-man ratio is declining and the production is less. Now most of the boys and the girl students drop out from school and go to town in search of job. So they are eager to get the class VIII passed certificate from the school and be ready for the job market.

Sometimes the guardian has no capacity to spend on education of their wards as they have many children. For this reasons all the guardians try to educate their wards upto the primary stage or higher classes (Upto VIII) only.

At present many Rajbansi girl students enjoy government stipend but this is not adequate. Thus one of the old students think that government stipend should be increased. If the general educational percentage is increased then the number of educated female also will increase.

Another old student, Harekrishna Nath, who is a L.M.F. doctor and passed from Phansidewa M.E. School in 1922, told me that at his time there was no girl student in this school. Only boy students came from distant villages with their teachers or alone. He also said that there was forest near the school and sometimes he has seen tigers. At present this Phansidewa High School has been changed into a co-educational school and other girls' high schools have been established also. He thinks that if the girl students get sufficient government help and assurance of government job and also teacher's help then they can be improved in future.

Difficulties faced by the respondents in pursuing their studies included, besides the distance and commuting problems, economic constraints and lack of guidance in their studies. The present facilities provided by the government was not there. Now all the students of primary stage get books and ration from the government. There are now educated persons in the villages who can provide necessary guidance in study. Most of the high school students have private tutors. The students of lower classes get help either from the private tutors or from their guardians. In earlier times there were so few educated persons in these villages that this help was not available to the respondents.

A summary of the responses regarding problems of education has been presented in the following table.

TABLE - 6.1
Problems of education and help received in studies.

Sl No.	Problem of Education	Govt. help	Help in studies	
			Family help	Others
1.	Economic problem	—	Grand Father	—
2.	Illness, Economic problem & flood	Stipend	Father & Brother	—
3.	—	Scholarship	—	—
4.	—	Stipend	—	Teachers help without out fees
5.	Illness	Stipend & Scholarship	—	—
6.	Brother's death & economic problem	—	—	—
7.	Naxal problem & journey problem	—	—	—
8.	Father's death & economic problem	—	—	—
9.	Economic problem	—	—	—
10.	Father's illness and for cultivation	—	Father	—
11.	—	Stipend	Father	—
12.	Economic problem & for cultivation	Stipend	—	—
13.	Economic problem	—	—	—
14.	Economic problem & for cultivation	—	—	—
15.	For cultivation	Stipend	—	—
16.	Break for marriage	Stipend	—	—
17.	For cultivation	—	—	—
18.	For cultivation	—	—	—
19.	For joining the post of peon	—	—	—
20.	For helping in father's business	—	—	—

From the table no. 6.1 it is found that about 50% of the respondents had to give up study due to economic problems. one student gave up study due to his own illness at the time of annual examination of class 1X but resumed his studies later as he was a good student and had received district scholarship as well as government stipend. Another gave up studies because of the problem of journey to school coupled with Naxalite problem. Death or illness of father or elder brother were the causes of not studying further for three students. Besides these, the need to assume responsibility in the family's economic pursuit – cultivation or business – was the cause of dropping out for six students. One of the respondents after passing class VIII got a job of library assistant and gave up studies. Thus in general economic reasons were the main deterrants of pursuing studies.

Only 8 (40%) had received stipend or district scholarship. Most of the respondents had to study by themselves. Only four respondents had the good fortune to be tutored by their family members and one had free coaching from the school teachers.

The educational levels finally attained by the respondents are as follows---

<u>Educational level</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Below School Final	7	2	9
School Final	5	-	5
Above School Final	3	3	6
Total	15	5	20

UTILISATION OF EDUCATION

The utilisation of the formal education received by the respondents has been studied in the contexts of (a) their present occupation, (b) their contributions in spreading education, and (c) their awareness about conservation of environment, health, political and economic development programmes, etc.

Table-6.2

Primary occupation and educational level of the old students

Occupation	Educational level						Total
	Below S.F.		S.F.		Above S. F		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Doctor	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Teacher	1	-	3	-	2	2	8
Clerk	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Peon (library)	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
Private tutor	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Business	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Machine-Knitting	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Cultivation	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Housewife	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	7	2	5	-	3	3	20

All the twenty respondents are engaged in different occupations. Eleven are in service as teacher, clerk or Library peon. One is a L.M.F. doctor. Another earns by giving private tuition, a woman earns by knitting woollen garments in machine. Of the remaining six three are cultivators, two are doing business and one woman is a house wife.

Thus, altogether thirteen (65%) are directly benefitted by their education the rest are also indirectly reaping benefit of their education.

The accounting is easier for the businessmen. The cultivators have learnt modern agricultural technology. The woman who is doing machine-knitting is also learning type-writing with ambition for future job. The house wife looks after her children's studies.

Almost all of the respondents are utilizing their formal education for various other purposes. Foremost of which is their providing coaching or tuition to their own children or other children of the village. From table 6.3 it may be seen that 16 respondents help their children or brothers and sisters in their study. We have noted with special interest that all the five female respondents teach their family members (children/brothers/sisters).

Table-6.3

The use of education in different works by the ex-students

Sl.No.	Jobs	Education of their children or brothers, sisters	Cultivation	Writing letters/ official works	Social works	Family works
1.	1	1	1	1	1	-
2.	-	1	1	1	1	-
3.	1	1	-	1	1	-
4.	-	1	-	1	-	1
5.	1	-	-	1	1	1
6.	1	1	-	1	-	1
7.	1	1	-	-	1	-
8.	1	1	-	-	1	1
9.	1	1	-	1	-	-
10.	-	1	-	1	1	-
11.	1	1	1	1	1	-
12.	-	1	1	1	-	-
13.	1	1	-	1	-	1
14.	1	1	1	1	1	1
15.	1	-	1	1	1	-
16.	-	-	1	1	1	-
17.	-	-	1	1	1	-
18.	1	1	-	1	1	-
19.	-	1	-	1	1	-
20.	-	1	-	1	-	1
Total	12	16	8	18	14	7

Formal learning has helped the cultivators in reading information pamphlets regarding different fertilizers and pesticides for different crops. The respondents stated that they write letters for others and help them also in carrying out various official works. They have found their learning useful for different family works also.

Besides family work 14 respondents carry on social works. One respondent provides voluntary service to the local library. Reading out property documents and explaining those is another form of helping the less educated or illiterate villagers. Their role in mediating village conflicts is more acceptable to the villagers because of their educational level.

CHANGES IN LIFE STYLE

Education has increased awareness about health, sanitation and environment. The homes and surroundings are kept neat and clean. The health of the children and immunisation are taken well care of. The domestic animals are taken to the veterinary health centre for regular check up. In all these they are also aided by mass media.

News paper reading habit has developed among the majority of my respondents. They not only read the news papers themselves but also read aloud to other non-literate or less educated villagers.

The change in their life style is manifested in their dress and use of modern equipments. All the respondents have electric fan, gas oven, pressure cooker, radio and television. Three primary school teachers have refrigerators and electric iron. One woman respondent is the wife of a primary school teacher. She herself provides private tuition and looks after the agricultural activities on their land .

The cultivators own water pump machine and auto- vans for marketing purpose. Almost all the respondents have bicycle. Scooters are owned by some of the teachers. Five respondents have telephones installed in their homes. Use of knitting machine by a woman has already been mentioned.

Some of the respondents are educating their children in English medium schools. Their interest in music, art and various games is manifested by sending their children to learn these in various schools.

Both men and women were found to be politically quite aware. The women said that they exercise their franchise and attend political meetings in the locality. But none of them directly participate in the Panchayat activities.

Summing Up

To sum up the findings from the old students it may be pointed out that all of them have mentioned economic condition of the family as the major hindrance in their studies. The attitude towards the girls' education and marriage was also stated as problematic. These problems are still there, though undergoing some modifications.

The other problems coming in the way of their education were distance to school and non-availability of help in studies, which are reduced to a great extent now.

All the ex-students are utilizing their education in different manner. Although all are not directly benefitted by their educational attainment, but they are indirectly benefitting themselves, their family and the community.

Changes in their life style is also observed from their use of modern gadgets and equipments. Changes in their outlook is manifested through their endeavours to equip their children in diverse fields of activities, to keep their environment clean, to keep in

touch with the broader society and polity through mass media and participation in political exercises. All of them are economically better-off.

Thus impact of formal learning is quite apparent in their occupation and changed life style.