

A STUDY ON PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS GIRL CHILD EDUCATION AT SECONDARY LEVEL IN CHUMOUKEDIMA TOWN OF NAGALAND

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Abstract: The present study consisted of a sample 50 parents with girl child at secondary level in Chumoukedima town of Nagaland randomly selected. The present study found that parents in Chumoukedima town demonstrate a predominantly favourable attitude towards girl child education at secondary level. The findings revealed no significant difference was found between illiterate and literate parents' attitude towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima town. Parents generally acknowledged the importance of educating girls for their personal growth, independence, and future career prospects. Overall, the findings indicate a community that is transitioning towards more progressive and equitable views on girls' education.

Keywords: Girl child education, attitude, parents, secondary level

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the National policy for children 2013, a child is any person below the age of eighteen years. The Girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to 18 years of age. The education of the girl child in India has emerged as a pivotal concern within the broader discourse on gender equality and socio-economic development. Despite significant policy advancement and initiatives aimed at promoting universal education, gender disparities persist, particularly at higher levels of education. Over the past few decades, India has made notable progress in increasing the enrolment of girls in primary education. According to the Ministry of Education (2021), the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for girls at the primary level has reached 96.3%, nearly equal to that of boys. This achievement can be attributed to various government initiatives, such as the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme, which emphasizes the importance of education for girls (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2019). However, this parity in enrolment diminishes as girls' progress to higher levels of education. The GER for girls in secondary education drops to 79.5%, reflecting the myriad barriers they face (UNESCO, 2022).

The challenges to girl child education are deeply rooted in socio-economic and cultural factors. Poverty remains a significant barrier, as families with limited financial resources often prioritize the education of boys over girls (Kabeer, 2005). Girls are frequently expected to contribute to household chores and care giving responsibilities, which limit their time and energy for academic pursuits. Additionally, cultural norms and practices, such as early marriage, further impede girls' education attainment.

Girl child education in Nagaland has been steadily improving over the years, although there are still significant gender disparities that need to be addressed. Historically, girls in Nagaland have faced several barriers to accessing education, including poverty, cultural beliefs, and traditional gender roles. Meanwhile, the Government of Nagaland has implemented multiple policies and initiatives such as scholarships, adolescent girls' club, Mission Shakti, to promote girls' education and increase their enrolment and retention rates in schools. As a result of these efforts, the gender gap in enrolment rates has been narrowing in the recent years. There has been an increase in the enrolment of girls in primary schools, indicating a positive trend in their access to early education as well as growing emphasis on higher education for women in urban areas, with more girls pursuing college degrees and professional courses.

This research primarily focused on parents' attitude towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima town of Nagaland. Focusing on parents' attitude towards girl child education is important because parents play a central role in shaping a child's educational opportunities, motivation, and overall academic trajectory. Understanding parents' attitude will help researchers to identify the underlying factors that either promote or hinder girl's access to schooling. It will also reveal whether parents value girls' education equally, are willing to invest in their learning, and support their aspirations at the secondary level, which is a critical stage for future career and life choices.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Fatima and Rind (2023) examined the attitude of parents towards girls in secondary education. The study found no significant differences in the attitude towards secondary education of girls between employed and unemployed parents, as well as parents with transportation and non- transportation facilities. However, educated parents were found to have higher positive attitude towards girls' education than the uneducated parents. The study suggested raising parents' awareness towards girls' education and encouraging parents and communities to play an active role in supporting and valuing education for both girls and boys.

Gyasi et al. (2020) assessed the parental consciousness and involvement in the education of their girl child in Ashaiman Municipality. The study found poverty, lack of awareness, negative behaviours of household heads towards female education as prominent causes for increase in girls' dropout from school in the community. The study suggested for creating awareness, provision of financial resources and adequate teaching and learning materials, eliminating retrogressive cultural practices etc.

Usman et al. (2019) examined factors influencing parental attitude towards girl child education in Sokoto state, Nigeria. The findings revealed that religious belief had maximum influence on parental attitude towards girls' education. Sokoto is an Islamic dominated state and majority of the parents still believed that western education prevents people from following Islamic doctrines. Therefore, majority of the parents preferred to send their boys to school. The study also revealed the cultural beliefs such that girls are weak and therefore should not be sent to school for security reasons and the belief that educating a girl is a waste of resource contributes to some extent for parents having negative attitude on girls education. It also pointed out that poverty was the highest socio economic factor preventing parents from enrolling their girls in schools.

Onoyase (2018) conducted a study on attitude of parents towards female – child secondary education in Sokoto, Nigeria. The study pointed out that parents were not positive towards the education of the girl child at secondary level. The study recommended that government should make education free up to secondary level, scholarship for girls and that parents should treat all children equally and provide the same opportunity for them.

Sahoo (2016) analysed girl's education status in India and its challenges. The study found that 58.65% of the total population is constituted by girls but the literacy rate of the girls is 65.5% whereas boys have a literacy rate of 82.1% (census report 2011). It revealed that negative parental attitude for girls, forced early marriage, household responsibilities, poverty, health issues and sanitary conditions, lack of awareness and enthusiasm were some challenges faced in girls' education, which need to be met and dealt with by various government policies and Acts and resolutions.

Ramana and Rani (2015) analyzed the discrimination against girl child in Tirupati Rural Mandal in Chittoor district and pointed out that growing insecurity among girls and increasing violence against them, adolescent pregnancy, ignorance about sex, sibling care, poor school facilities, domestic chores, poverty etc., resulted in high dropout of girls from the school.

Saza and Zetsuvi (2013) conducted a research on Societal Attitude towards Education of the girl child in the state of Manipur. The study concluded that the policy makers, teachers and parents had positive attitude towards girl child education. Some of the challenges pointed out towards girl child education were – Poverty, household works, parent's education, traditions and customs, lack of dedicated teachers and infrastructure.

Hibo (2012) undertook a research on education and empowerment of Angami women in which some of the major findings related to education of female children were that in rural areas older female children had to drop – out of studies in order to look after their younger siblings, help parents in paddy fields and household chores etc. Due to the influence of patriarchy and poverty, rural women send their male children to private schools for efficient schooling while female children were often send to government schools just to let them learn how to write their names or count money. On the other side, educated women do not make any gender discrimination in the education of their children and give them equal treatment.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i.To find out the attitude of parents towards girl child education.
- ii.To find out illiterate and literate parents' attitude towards girl child education.

4. HYPOTHESES

- i. There is no significant difference between female and male parents' attitude towards girl child education.
- ii. There is no significant difference between illiterate and literate ' attitude towards girl child education.

5. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- i. The study was delimited to Chumoukedima town of Nagaland.
- ii. The study was delimited to the parents of secondary students (girl) under Chumoukedima town of Nagaland.

6. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

6.1. POPULATION AND SAMPLE: The population of the present study constituted all the parents with daughters at secondary level (class 9 & 10) in Chumoukedima town, Nagaland, during the academic session 2025. The sample consisted of 50 parents with girl child at secondary level in Chumoukedima town of Nagaland was randomly selected.

6.2. TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES: Questionnaire developed by Dr. Khriezonuo Belho, SCTE, Kohima, was used to collect data and measure the attitude of parents towards girl child education at secondary level. The questionnaire is based on 3 (three) point scale: Agree, Undecided and Disagree. It consisted of 20 positive statements and 20 negative statements. The minimum and maximum range of possible raw score is 1-120. Data was analyzed using statistical techniques such as Mean, percentage, S.D., and T test.

7. ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Objective 1: To find out the attitude of parents towards girl child education.

Table 1: Table showing N, M and SD of illiterate and literate female and male parents towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima.

Sl.no	Category	N	M	SD
1	Female Illiterate	12	108.08	4.52
2	Female Literate	13	110.77	4.02
3	Male Illiterate	13	90.54	18.12
4	Male Literate	12	108.08	5.09

From above Table 1, it can be observed that female literate parents have the highest mean score with $M = 110.77$, followed closely by female illiterate parents with a mean score of 108.08. This indicates that both illiterate and literate mothers hold positive attitude towards girl child education. The low Standard Deviation values 4.52 and 4.02 suggest that their opinions are relatively consistent. While on the other hand, the mean score of literate male parents $M = 108.08$ is considerably higher than that of the illiterate male parents with $M = 90.54$. The Standard Deviation of the illiterate male parents $SD = 18.12$ is notably high, indicating a wide variation in their responses. On the other hand, literate male parents $SD = 5.09$ show a more consistent and favourable attitude.

Table 2: Showing illiterate and literate female and male parents' attitude towards girl child education at secondary level in percentage (%).

Sl.no	Category	Percentage (%)			
		Female Illiterate	Female Literate	Male Illiterate	Male Literate
1	Agree	75.61	79.55	48.22	74.19
2	Undecided	12.40	11.07	24.39	15.24
3	Disagree	11.99	9.38	27.39	10.57
	Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2 presents the attitude of both illiterate and literate female and male parents' attitude towards girl child education at the secondary level. The data reveal that a large proportion of both female illiterate 75.61% and female literate 79.55% hold a positive attitude towards girl child education. Only a small portion of female respondents 12.40% illiterate and 11.07% literate remained undecided, while 11.99% of illiterate and 9.38% of literate female parents fall in disagreed category. In contrast, among male respondents 48.22% illiterate and 74.19% literate agreed with the need for girl child education at secondary level. A higher proportion of illiterate male parents 24.39% were either undecided or disagreed 27.39%, compared to literate counterparts 15.24% undecided and 10.57% disagree. It may be stated that this group of individual have strong belief in traditional gender role, fear that secondary schooling exposes girls to risks or corrupts morals leading to a decision to keep them home, perception of education as high financial burden or lack of economic resources.

Table 3: Level of attitude of illiterate and literate female and male parents towards girl child education at secondary level.

Level	Range of total score	Female Illiterate		Female Literate		Male Illiterate		Male Literate	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High level	111 – 143	5	41.67	7	53.85	1	7.69	5	41.67
Average level	76 – 110	7	58.33	6	46.15	9	69.23	7	58.33
Low level	41 - 75	0	0	0	0	3	23.08	0	0
Total		12	100	13	100	13	100	12	100

The above Table 3 presents the attitude levels (High, Average, Low) of four groups of parents – Female illiterate, Female literate, Male illiterate, and Male literate towards girl child education at secondary level. Among the illiterate parents, 58.33% of females and 69.23% of male illiterates showed an average attitude, while 41.67% of female illiterates and only 7.69% of male illiterates displayed a high attitude. None of the female illiterate showed a low attitude, though 23.08% of illiterate males showed a low attitude. Similarly, among literate parents, both males and females reflected favorable attitude, with 58.33% of literate males and 46.15% of females showing an average level of attitude, and 41.67% of male and 53.85% of female literates showing high level of attitude. None of the literate male and female parents showed a low attitude.

Objective 2: To analyze illiterate and literate parents attitude towards girl child education.

Table 4: Showing illiterate and literate parents attitude towards girl child education at secondary level in N, M and SD respectively.

Sl.no	Category	N	M	SD
1	Illiterate Parents	25	98.96	15.93
2	Literate Parents	25	109.48	4.67

The data presented in Table 4 highlights the attitude of illiterate and literate parents towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima town. The mean attitude score of literate parents is 109.48 which is higher than that of the illiterate parents with a mean score of 98.96, indicating that the literate parents hold more favorable attitude towards the education of girl child. Furthermore, the Standard Deviation of literate parents is 4.67 which is lower compared to that of the illiterate parents with 15.93, suggesting that literate parents' responses are more consistent, while the attitude of the illiterate parents vary considerably.

Table 5: Showing illiterate and literate parents' attitude towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima town in percentage (%).

Sl.No.	Category	Percentage (%)	
		Illiterate parents	Literate parents
1	Agree	61.37	76.98
2	Undecided	18.63	13.07
3	Disagree	20	9.95

The above Table 5 represents the comparative attitude of illiterate and literate parents towards girl child education at the secondary level in Chumoukedima town. It is evident from the data that majority of both illiterate and literate parents agree with the importance of educating girl child. However, the degree of agreement is higher among literate parents with 76.98% as compared to illiterate parents with 61.37%. A small proportion of parents remained undecided, constituting 18.63% of illiterate parents and 13.07% of literate parents. The percentage of parents who disagree is higher among the illiterate parents with 20%, while only 9.95% of literate parents disagreed. It may be stated that limited educational exposure may contribute to hesitation or traditional beliefs that undervalue girls' education. Illiterate parents may also lack awareness of long-term benefits of girls' education, such as improved socio-economic opportunities and empowerment, which can result in uncertainty

or resistance. Overall, the table suggests that literacy directly influences parental perceptions by broadening awareness, reducing traditional biases, and fostering a more progressive attitude towards girls' education.

Table 6: Level of attitude of illiterate and literate parents' towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima town.

Level	Range of total score	Illiterate Parents		Literate Parents	
		N	%	N	%
High level	111 – 143	6	24	12	48
Average level	76 – 110	16	64	13	52
Low level	41 - 75	3	12	0	0
Total		25	100	25	100

Table 6 shows the level of attitude of illiterate and literate parents towards girl child education at the secondary level in Chumoukedima town. The data reveal that among illiterate parents, 24% show a high level of positive attitude towards girl child education, while among literate parents, a higher proportion of 48% demonstrate a high level attitude. The majority of illiterate parents with 64% fall under the average level of attitude. Similarly, 52% of literate parents are in the average category. A small percentage of 12% of illiterate parents exhibit a low level of attitude, while none of the literate parents fall under the low level category.

HYPOTHESIS - 1: There is no significant difference between illiterate and literate parents' attitude towards girl child education.

Table 7: Showing illiterate and literate parents' attitude towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima town (Dimension wise).

Dimensions	Category	N	M	SD	T-Score
Cognitive Dimension	Illiterate	25	33.72	5.38	0.025
	Literate	25	36.32	1.67	
Affective Dimension	Illiterate	25	35	6.04	0.004
	Literate	25	38.84	2.17	
Economic Dimension	Illiterate	25	13.48	3.36	0.006
	Literate	25	15.64	1.75	
Institutional Dimension	Illiterate	25	16.76	3.23	0.016
	Literate	25	18.68	2.09	

The above Table 7 presents the comparison of illiterate and literate parents' attitude towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima town based on four dimensions – Cognitive, Affective, Economic, and Institutional.

In the **cognitive dimension**, the mean score of literate parents (M-36.32) is higher than that of the illiterate parents (M-33.72), indicating that literate parents possess stronger knowledge and more informed perspective about the value of educating girls. But the t-score 0.025 shows that this difference is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

In **affective dimension**, literate parents scored significantly higher (M-38.84) compared to illiterate parents (M-35), implying that literate parents show more positive emotional orientation and supportive attitudes toward the educational progress of their daughters than illiterate parents. However obtained t-score 0.004 indicates a highly insignificant difference.

In **economic dimension**, literate parents again show a higher mean score (M-16.76) compared to illiterate parents (M-15.64), indicating that literate parents are more willing to allocate financial resources and perceive girls' education as a valuable long-

term investment, unlike many illiterate parents who may view education as an economic burden. However the difference is not statistically significant with t-score 0.006.

In the **institutional dimension**, literate parents obtained a higher mean score (M-18.68) relative to illiterate parents (M-16.76). This suggests that literate parents have greater confidence in institutional support system and are more aware of how schools contribute to girls' education development. But the t-score 0.016 confirms that there is no significant difference between the two groups.

Although literate parents show slightly higher mean score than the illiterate parents in all dimensions, the corresponding t-score indicates that these differences are not statistically significant.

Thus, the hypothesis tested is H_0 : There is no significant difference between illiterate and literate parents' attitude towards girl child education at secondary level in Chumoukedima town.

8. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study carry several important educational implications for schools, policymakers, parents, and the wider community in Chumoukedima town and beyond as follows:

1. **Strengthening gender-sensitive educational planning:** The generally positive attitudes of parents highlight an opportunity for schools and education authorities to strengthen gender-sensitive planning. Since parents value the education of their daughters, schools can build on this support by ensuring equal access to learning resources, participation in academic and co-curricular activities, and leadership opportunities for girls.
2. **Need for awareness and sensitization programmes:** Although parents hold favourable attitudes, some still express concerns related to safety, societal expectations, and early responsibilities given to girls. Educational institutions and NGOs can design targeted awareness programmes focusing on gender equality, the long-term benefits of girls' education, and the importance of supporting girls through secondary schooling.
3. **Enhancing school safety and support system:** Parental concerns about safety suggest the need for improved school environments. Schools should ensure safe transportation, strict anti-bullying policies, functional grievance redressal system, and adequate supervision. Creating safe school spaces can further encourage parents to allow their daughters to pursue education confidently.
4. **Economic support and scholarship intervention:** Financial constraints remain a limiting factor for some families. Therefore, strengthened financial interventions- such as scholarships, fee waivers, government schemes, or community-based support can significantly reduce dropout risks.
5. **Encouraging parental involvement in the educational process:** Since parents already demonstrate interest in their daughters' education, schools can engage them more systematically through parent-teacher meetings, counseling sessions, and awareness drives. Increased parental participation leads to better educational outcomes and reinforces positive attitudes.
6. **Community engagement:** Churches, community leaders, women's groups, and youth organizations in Chumoukedima town can play an instrumental role in promoting gender equity and challenging stereotypes that might limit educational opportunities for girls.

9. CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that parents in Chumoukedima town generally demonstrated a favourable and supportive attitude towards the education of their children at the secondary level. The positive orientation of the parents indicates growing awareness of the long-term benefits of girls' education, particularly with regard to empowerment, improved social standing, and enhanced career opportunities. Despite this positive trend, some practical challenges still influence parental decisions. Economic limitations, safety concerns, and traditional expectations continue to act as moderating factors. However, these issues do not overshadow the broader acceptance of girls' education.

In conclusion, the study affirms that the attitudes of parents in Chumoukedima town are largely aligned with national and global efforts to promote girls' education. Strengthening awareness programmes, providing financial support systems, improving school safety, and engaging the community can further enhance the educational prospects of girls. The positive attitudes of parents observed in this study offer a strong foundation for future interventions aimed at ensuring that every girl in Chumoukedima town can access and complete secondary education without barriers.

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