



Role of Jan Shikshan Sansthan in the empowerment of women: a case study of Boko development block of Kamrup, Assam.

Bijaya Deka¹ and Bibhuti Bhusan Panda²

1. Department of Education, Jawaharlal Nehru College, Boko, India

2. Bimala Prasad Chaliha College, Nagarbera, India

Abstract

The index of women's status in society is measured through the parameters of their level of income, employment, education, health, fertility, efficiency of work etc. These enable women to play their role effectively within family, community and society. Factors contributing to the negligible status of women of our society are economic backwardness, illiteracy, poverty, superstitions etc. Thus empowering women is an appropriate step to bring them at par with their male counterpart in the society. The purpose of this paper is to exhibit the role played by Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), Kamrup in the field of empowerment of women. The study is based on primary and secondary data. There is a positive impact of JSS, Kamrup on women empowerment in Boko Development Block under Kamrup District of Assam.

Keywords: empowerment, occupational skill, dignity, Jan Shikshan Sansthans.

1. Introduction

In spite of having enormous capabilities to demonstrate their talent and skills in multiple levels, the women hardly get any scope to express and expose themselves in the society. It is due to the lack of recognition from within the family and outside society which deprived the women of their development. Women are often unmindful and unaware of their own potentialities for which they fail to come out of their status firmly in the society. The need of the hour is to empower women in order to make them progressive by making use of their efficiency.

To improve the standard of living of women the Govt. has undertaken several measures and schemes since independence. With the passage of time many Non Govt. Organizations (NGO) like Assam Mahila Samata Society, Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Assam, Santi Sadhana Ashram, Kasturba National Trust, Assam Sector, Prayas, Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Assam etc.

have laid down special emphasis to help the women in empowering them socially and economically for enhancing their skills. The activities of Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Kamrup are exemplary in empowering women.

2. The concept of empowerment

The concept of empowerment follows that of power which means capability to do anything. In the social context 'power' is understood as authority, right to command, right to govern or rule, capability to influence etc. It simply means vesting power where it does not exist or exist inadequately. "Power means being able to make a contribution at all levels of society" (Griffen, 1987).

United Nations declared 1975 as 'International Women's Year.' An International Conference was organized in Nairobi (1985) which defined 'Women Empowerment as a redistribution of social power and

control resources in favour of women'. Empowerment is a process that enables a powerless women to develop autonomy, self control and self confidence. It means equal status to women, opportunity and freedom to develop oneself (Gangrade). In other sense empowerment of women means economically independent, self-reliant, have a positive self-esteem to enable them to face difficult situation, make them capable of participating in developmental activities. It makes an individual efficient for taking a good decision at the right time and in the right place. In deed empowerment is a multifaceted, multidimensional and multilayered concept which includes internal and external qualities of a person. It may be categorized as economic, social, political and legal.

3. Origin of Jan Shikshan Sansthan

Formerly Jan Shikshan Sansthan was known as Shramik Vidyapeeth. In 1967 the then Ministry of Education and Culture (now Ministry of Human Resource Development), Government of India, had launched a scheme named as Shramik Vidyapeeth (SVP) at Worli, Mumbai. The aims of the institution were to meet the need of deprived and marginalized section of the society and to improve the vocational skills and quality of life of industrial workers and their family members.

The scheme of Shramik Vidyapeeth was rename as Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) in April 2000 (Jena:12). It is a unique scheme crafted by the Government of India .It is an Institutes of People's Education (IPS).

3.1 Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Kamrup

The Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Kamrup came into existence in the year 2003 under the aegis of Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Assam. JSS, Kamrup aims to promote educational, vocational and occupational development of illiterate, neo-literate and semiliterate persons like other JSS of other parts of the county. It provides vocational trainings and also other trainings including awareness programmes for the benefit of trainees. It has been offering various courses for skill up gradation. Over the years JSS, Kamrup has taken up a number of activities and programmes viz. – cutting and tailoring, weaving, traditional weaving, motor driving, food processing, flower and doll making, candle production, embossing, painting, beauty culture and health care etc. to develop the occupational skill, awareness and promote continuing education among the underprivileged particularly of weaker section of

women. Since its inception JSS, Kamrup has provided vocational training to near about 30000 beneficiaries making them self-sufficient. They are engaged in many sectors like self-employment, wage employment, some are, though not earning directly, providing helping hand in domestic affairs in indirect way. Besides these training programmes JSS, Kamrup is actively working in Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), Post Literacy and Continuing Education. Moreover it has been focusing on AIDS Awareness and Life Enrichment Education including Right to Information Act, 2005, Panchayati raj Awareness, Women and Child Health, Nutrition, National Integration, Rights and Duties of Indian Citizen. Eradication of Superstition, Environmental Education, Consumer Awareness, Eye Care, Sanitation, Breast Feeding, First AID etc. are also major programmes executed by JSS. As a result more women are able to take part in socio-political and cultural activities. As they are equipped from almost all sides in comparison to their earlier positions they are now able to take part in decision making process not only in their family but also in social life.

JSS, Kamrup has been working in 17 Blocks of Kamrup District including Boko Development Block.

4. Significance of the study

Boko development block comprises of people of diverse communities and ethnic groups. Women of these groups have some knowledge in the field of agriculture, sericulture, weaving, traditional dress making etc. But due to lack of scientific knowledge and proper guidance they are not able to capitalize their knowledge effectively. In this regard there is greater need of vocational education through which unskilled women and unorganized workers can get vocational education and upgrade their skill and make them self-reliant. In this context NGO's and Govt. organizations have a major role to play in giving training for their skill up gradation.

Jan Shikshan Sansthan has strived hard to ameliorate the conditions of the women folk in the spirit of NGO's with a missionary zeal.

5.1 Statement of the problem

On the basis of the discussion held so far the present study is entitled as "Role of Jan Shikshan Sansthan in the Empowerment of women : A Case Study of Boko Development Block of Kamrup, Assam."

5.2. Objectives

(i) To find out the role of JSS, Kamrup in the of

women particularly in developing occupational skills and technical knowledge of Boko development block of Kamrup district, Assam.

- (ii) To examine the role of JSS in enhancing socio-political empowerment awareness among women.

5.3. Research questions

- (i) What has been the role of JSS, Kamrup in developing occupational skills and technical knowledge ?
- (ii) What role JSS, Kamrup has been playing in enhancing socio-political awareness among women ?

5.4. Study area

Boko development block is situated in the south Kamrup district of Assam and south bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra. It is about 51k.m. West from Jalukbari, Guwahati. The Block is bounded by Chamaria revenue circle land on the North and Chhaygaon revenue circle land in the East, by Maghalaya state on the south and by Goalpara district on the west.

5.5. Delimitations

1. The study is confined to Boko development block only.
2. The study is confined to 98 women aged 15 to 35 years.
3. The study is confined to skill development and socio-political empowerment only.

6. Review of related literature

Deka (2008) conducted a study on *Women in Public Sphere: A study of Women's empowerment Amongst the Bodo Community in North Kamrup Area, Assam*. The investigator reported that

- (i) Bodo women have been able to achieve a significant status in the economic front.
- (ii) Religious trait has been able to improve the educational and socio cultural life of the Bodo women.
- (iii) Bodo women are now socially conscious about a better and dignified living condition.
- (iv) The presence of the Bodo women in the public that is outside of home is widely felt which is an indication of empowerment.

Mahanta (2008) conducted a study on *Women Empowerment in Assam: A Human Development Approach*. The study revealed that

- (i) Women are in disadvantageous position both in absolute sense and relative to men in the area of access to education, employment and exposure to media.
- (ii) Most of the women do not have household decision making power particularly in large household purchases
- (iii) Women of Assam enjoy somewhat low status in absolute term and much lower relative to men.
- (iv) Most of the women do not have freedom of movement.

Dev (2009) in the study *Women Empowerment and Emergence of Leadership Through Panchayati Raj Institution in Kamrup, Assam Since 1985*. The investigator reported that-

- (i) Women leaders are not fully involved in the decision making process. The board base of women's participation is severely limited due to a nexus of traditional factors like caste, class, family structure etc. which work in favour of men against women.
- (ii) Women leaders are not able to decide how much money would be allocated to each programme. They have to depend upon the bureaucrats.

7. Design of the study

7.1. Method

For the study the investigator used Descriptive – Survey methods.

7.2. Sample

The sample of the study consists of 98 beneficiaries. For that purpose first of all a list of vocational training programme executed by JSS, Kamrup during 2007-12 were collected from the office of JSS, Kamrup. Then the investigator selected 4 vocational training programmes from the concerned villages under Boko Development Block like Dakuapara, Barpara, Raipara, Turukpara, Bandapara, Sakhati and Gopalpur.. Regarding the selection of beneficiaries, only those beneficiaries were considered who have been recognized as deprived and underprivileged group of the society. Most of them belong to ST, SC, OBC and women.

Table 1: Details of selected vocational courses, number of sample beneficiaries and duration

Sl. No	Name of the vocational Programmes	Number of beneficiaries	Duration
1	Food Processing	25	15 Days
2	Traditional Weaving	32	3 Months
3	Cutting & Tailoring	26	3 Months
4	Beauty culture & Health care	15	3 Months
		Total = 98	

Table-2 shows details of caste and educational status of sample beneficiaries of respective vocational programmes.

Table 2: Details of caste and educational status of sample beneficiaries

Category	ST	SC	OBC	General	Literate	Illiterate	Neo-Literate	Total
Food Processing	—	05	14	06	21	04	—	25
Traditional Weaving	13	—	18	01	31	01	—	32
Cutting & Tailoring	08	04	07	07	20	04	02	26
Beauty culture & Health care	04	—	08	03	15	—	—	15
Total	25	09	47	17	87	09	02	98

Their education status is from class IV to class XII. Table-1 shows details of the selected vocational courses, number of sample beneficiaries and duration.

7.3. Data

The study is based on primary and secondary data.

7.4. Tools

The investigator developed an Attitude Questionnaire to collect data. The attitude questionnaire consisted of 9 statements and aimed to assess the occupational skills and socio-political empowerment of beneficiaries. The attitude questionnaire was design following Likert Method.

7.5. Statistical technique of data analysis

- (i) The percentages of responses having favourable and unfavourable attitude were calculated for the whole sample of Boko development block.

- (ii) The results were interpreted on the basis of percentages of responses and the findings and implication of the studies were highlighted.

- (iii) The percentages of beneficiaries having favourable and unfavourable attitude were highlighted in graphical presentation.

8. Data analysis

The investigator personally visited the selected vicinity and approached the concern respondents and collected data through the attitude questionnaire. In the present study high score on the attitude scale indicates the presence of positive attitude towards empowerment of women. The higher the scores presumably the better attitude towards empowerment. The low score indicates unfavourable attitude towards empowerment. The result in this study have been interpreted accordingly.

Table-3 shows that attitude score of beneficiaries towards development of skills

Table-3 : Attitude scores of beneficiaries towards development of skills

Category	Statement	Responses N=98		
		Highly Favourable	Favourable	Unfavourable
Food Processing,	Helps empowering own skills	23 (23.47)	49 (50)	26 (26.53)
Traditional Weaving,	To understand own capability	43 (43.88)	44 (44.90)	11 (11.22)
Cutting & Tailoring,	Acquired new skills which motivated for better performance	63 (64.29)	20 (20.41)	15 (15.31)
Beauty culture & Health care,	Enjoyed learning by doing	46 (46.94)	38 (38.78)	14 (14.29)

Figure in the brackets are percentage values

It is evident from the Table 3 that 23.47% respondents trained in food processing, traditional weaving, cutting - tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards development of skills, 50% have favourable attitude. Thus, the combined percentage of these two shows that 73.47% respondent have favourable attitude towards development of skills leaving 26.53% in unfavourable category.

It is evident from the Table 3 that 43.88% respondents trained in food processing, traditional weaving, cutting & Tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards development towards understanding own capability, 44.90% have favourable attitude. Thus, the combined percentage of these two shows that 88.78% respondents have favourable attitude towards understanding own capability leaving 11.22% in unfavourable category.

It is evident from the Table 3 that 64.29%

respondents trained in food processing, traditional weaving, cutting & Tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards new skills which motivated better performance, 20.41% have favourable attitude. Thus, the combined percentage of these two shows that 84.70% respondent have favourable attitude towards new skills which motivated better performance and 15.31% putting into unfavourable category.

It is evident from the Table 3 that 46.94% respondents trained in food processing, traditional weaving, cutting & Tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards learning by attitude, 38.78% have favourable attitude. Thus, the combined percentage of these two shows that 85.72% respondent have favourable attitude towards learning by attitude and 14.29% putting into unfavourable category.

Fig 1 shows the attitude scores of beneficiaries towards development of skills

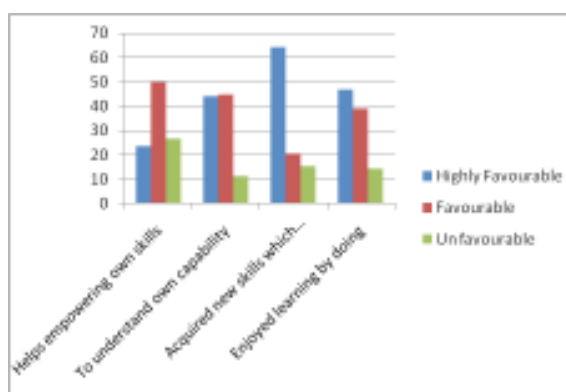
**Fig 1** : Graphical attitude scores of beneficiaries towards development of skills

Table 4 : Attitude scores of beneficiaries towards socio-political empowerment

Category	Statement	Responses N=98		
		Highly Favourable	Favourable	Unfavourable
Food Processing,	Idea about Right to Information Act, 2005	16 (16.33)	56 (57.14)	26 (26.53)
Traditional Weaving,	Sustainable Environment	9 (9.18)	51 (52.04)	38 (38.78)
Cutting & Tailoring,	Understanding the value of vote	18 (18.37)	65 (66.33)	15 (15.31)
	In developing service outlook	48 (48.98)	34 (34.69)	16 (16.33)
Beauty culture & Health care,	Team work & we feeling	63 (64.29)	23 (23.47)	12 (12.24)

Figure in the brackets are percentage values

It is evident from the Table 4 that 16.33% respondents trained in food processing , traditional weaving, cutting & Tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards idea about right to information Act 2005, and 57.14% have favourable attitude. Thus, the combined percentage of these two shows that 73.47% respondent have favourable attitude towards idea about right to information Act 2005 leaving 26.53% in unfavourable category.

It is evident from the Table 4 that 9.18% respondents trained in food processing, traditional weaving, cutting & Tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards sustainable environment, 52.04% have favourable attitude. Thus, the combined percentage of these two shows that 61.22% respondents have favourable attitude towards sustainable environment 38.78% in unfavourable category.

It is evident from the Table 4 that 18.37% respondents trained in food processing, traditional weaving, cutting & Tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards understanding the value of vote, 66.33% have favourable attitude. Thus, the

combined percentage of these two shows that 84.70% respondent have favourable attitude towards understanding the value of vote and 15.31% putting into unfavourable category.

It is evident from the Table 4 that 48.98% respondents trained in food processing, traditional weaving, cutting & Tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards developing service outlook, 34.69% have favourable attitude. Thus, the combined percentages of these two shows that 83.67% respondent have favourable attitude towards developing service outlook and 16.33% putting into unfavourable category.

It is evident from the Table 4 that 64.29% respondents trained in food processing, traditional weaving, cutting & Tailoring and Beauty Culture & Health care at Boko Development block have highly favourable attitude towards team work and we feeling, 23.47% have favourable attitude. Thus, the combined percentage of these two shows that 87.76% respondent have favourable attitude towards team work and we feeling and 12.24% putting into unfavourable category.

Fig 2 shows the Graphical representation of attitude scores of beneficiaries towards socio-political empowerment

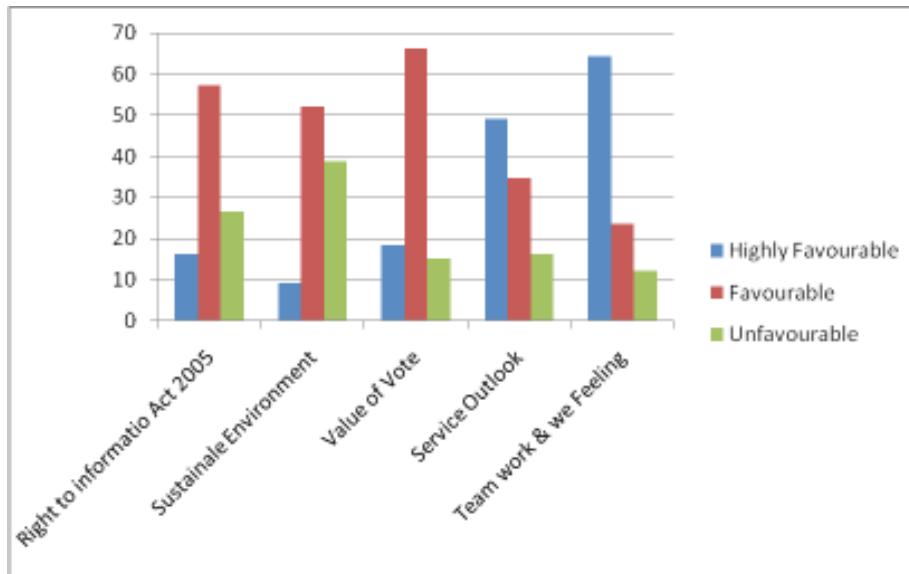


Fig 2 : Graphical representation of attitude scores of beneficiaries towards socio-political empowerment

9. Findings

On the basis of the above analysis the following findings have been obtained.

- Various categories of trainees in general have favourable attitude towards JSS programme and they opined training by JSS has developed their occupational and technical skills.
- A large number (88.78%) of respondents trained in food processing ,traditional weaving, cutting-tailoring and beauty culture and health care have favourable attitude towards understanding their own capabilities. This indicates that this training has been playing an effective role in enhancing socio-political empowerment among the women.
- Likewise a majority (87.70%) of beneficiaries have favourable attitude towards socio-political empowerment of women. It shows that this training has been playing a vital role in bringing about socio-economic empowerment of women.
- Various categories of trainees in general have favourable attitude towards better performance where as 85.72% have favourable attitude towards learning by doing.
- A large number(73.47%) of respondents trained in food processing ,traditional weaving, cutting-tailoring and beauty culture and health care have favourable attitude towards knowledge of Right to Information Act,2005.
- A majority (52.04%) of beneficiaries have favourable attitude towards sustainable environment where as 84.70% have favourable

attitude towards Right to Vote.

- On the other hand majority (83.67%) of beneficiaries have favourable attitude towards developing service outlook

10. Suggestions

The study was conducted on 98 beneficiaries who were trained in four vocational programmes rendered by JSS, Kamrup, Assam. The findings reported in this study are significant but it has few limitations also. The investigator from their experience in conducting the study would like to recommend the following for further research by other investigators.

- This study can be replicated on a large sample to examine the role of JSS, in the empowerment of the underprivileged people.
- An analytical study of various JSS may be conducted.
- Role of JSS in developing SHG among the women may be examined.
- The contribution of the JSS towards national economy may be assessed.

11. Conclusion

It is impossible to imagine the progress of a nation without the contribution of women. The extensive role of women begins with the family and expands to the different organs of the society in building up a healthy and civilized nation. Therefore, women should be given safeguarded from all kinds of discrimination and exploitation so that they can develop their own

personality. As empowerment is an all inclusive programme, the Govt., NGOs and other sections of the society should come forward with a positive mind to help women folk in uplifting their position in the society. From that point of view the role of JSS, Kamrup in empowering women is highly praiseworthy.

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