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# Women Education of Chain Somaj: A Study on Malda District in West Bengal

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#### Abstract

The Chain is a little known ethnic community of India. They are also present in Bangladesh and Nepal in large numbers. In India, they are mostly settled in West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. In West Bengal, the Chain Community mainly lives in Malda, Murshidabad, Nadia, North and South Dinajpur, Birbhum, Burdwan and Medinipur districts. Malda has the largest Chain population than any other district in West Bengal. In Malda district, they mainly live in Manikchak Block, Kaliachak 2nd and 3rd Block, Old Malda Block, Gajol Block, Harishchandrapur 1st and 2nd Block, Ratua 1st and 2nd Block. The total population of the Chain community in West Bengal is approximately 50 million. The Chain people traditionally live on the banks of the Ganges or some other river. Due to the change in the course of the river, they are still found in large numbers in some rural areas away from the river. Known as Chain-Mandal, the community now belongs to the Scheduled Castes list in the entire state of West Bengal. This Chain community is currently showing remarkable progress in education and economic fields. Various policies of the government have played a helpful role in the progress of this community. Especially the women of the Chain community are leaving the shackles of the society and getting enlightened by the light of education. They are moving towards cities, getting modern education in keeping with the current situation. Getting modern education in various private schools, nursing homes, and shopping malls in the city gives them the opportunity to work.

Keywords: Ethnic community, Traditions, Chain Mandal, Women Education, Status.

### **Women Education of Chain Somaj:**

The culture and civilization of any nation or society is the result of education. The identity of a nation or country lies in its education and culture. Just as a person's self-development takes place through education, the overall development of a society, nation and country takes place through education. The nature of education which is given so much importance in the world plagued with various problems has been caught in the eyes of every society conscious person. Because the relationship between education and society is very close. Education is the backbone of society. There are two parts of this society - one is female and the other is male. Men and women together make the society beautiful. Everything that is beautiful and beneficial in this world is "half of it made by women, half by men." It is impossible to improve society by excluding one and the other. Therefore, for real and permanent improvement of the society, there is a need for education for both men and women. If half of the people in the society are deprived of the light of education, then the progress of the society cannot be expected in any way.

The number of people who are aware of women's education in Chain society is very low; As a result, the women of this society are very backward in terms of education compared to the

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women of other societies. Of course, there are direct reasons for it. The Chain community is basically agrarian and economically very backward. Both men and women have to work hard for the provision of food. Among agricultural production, they had a monopoly on vegetable cultivation rather than food grains. Men are busy day and night with the farm. Therefore, women mainly participate in selling their produce in the market. Where will they find time to focus on education in this situation? Even those who were well-to-do households did not like their daughters to study more than their sons. Twenty years ago, there were no highly educated women in this society - even the number of highly educated men was negligible. As a result, high-ranking government or private employees were not seen much among the people of this society.

At present people who are aware of social development have paid special attention to education and are realizing the importance of women's education for the development of society more than men. If the children of the society cannot get an education, then the future of the society is dark; Because children are the future descendants of the society. It is the mother's responsibility to educate these children. The child should be educated after completing twenty years of the child's birth. That is, the one who will become a mother should receive an education from her childhood. Mother is the greatest teacher and home is the greatest school. If the mother is illiterate then the child cannot get proper education during childhood. As a result, their character is not developed properly and disrupts the progress of the society.

It goes without saying that the influence of women in family life is considerable. Child rearing, health protection, character formation, manners, education, devotion to God, etc. are all entrusted to the mother. Educated mothers should have a conscious aim so that the future descendants of the nation can identify themselves as human beings in front of the country. In the family or society where the mother is well-educated and well-educated, the children of that family or society are also well-educated. The more educated women are in the society, the better the society will be. If we discuss the biographies of the great men, it can be seen that their mothers were educated and all-round women and due to the proper education of their children, they are also eternally remembered in the world. So when the mother is responsible for the education of the child, then it is clear that the importance of female education is immense.

There is a great need for women's education in the household aspect as well. The utility of an educated mother is proven step by step in numerous daily and casual matters such as taking care of the health of sons and daughters in sickness and in health, accounting for the daily income of the family, different types of cooking methods according to taste, cleanliness, home decoration etc.

In our uneducated society, women are often abused and insulted by men because they are uneducated. It can be seen that ignoring the eternal conventional marriage system of the society, when men oppress women and abandon their married wives for trivial reasons, they take other wives. If women are educated, they can stand up against this arbitrary tyranny of men and challenge the system of society and will be able to stand on their own feet and protect their current status without depending on men.

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The women of the Chain community go to the bazaar to sell vegetables in order to alleviate economic hardship, and people from other communities turn their noses up at them. Being uneducated, they all societies are traveling in various types of work in the market, train, bus, and road crowd. Where' - does not turn a nose at them. No one dares to belittle educated girls. In chain society girls have to be oppressed because they are illiterate. It can be seen that education motivates people to stand against unjust oppression. That is why the importance of women's education in our society is undeniable. Girls' education is not just for themselves for their children, their families, their society, their country and the world. The future of the society depends mainly on the education of women. Education that can make women ideal mothers, ideal housewives, ideal sisters, and above all ideal social workers should be the education that society wants.

If we review the current situation, it can be seen that the women of the Chain society in Malda district have made a lot of progress in education, where a matric pass boy or girl was not available forty years ago. Nowadays one or the other boy or girl is a graduate in every village. However, primary school teachers are more common in our Chain society. However, there are two or four teachers. Many female teachers are seen in high schools today. There are many highly educated people working in other departments as well so it is very promising that all these educated people surely cannot do without educating the girls of their families. If girls of educated status and government or private employees are able to get higher education, then the female education rate of Chain society will increase and soon a developed society will be developed. It is the duty of women to educate society - they are trying to educate and develop their children; Moreover, they should fulfill their social and human responsibility by imparting some literacy knowledge without disrespecting their illiterate mothers and sisters or neighbors.

Chain society parents saw almost no economic benefit from educating their daughters. Their parents probably thought that education would diminish her ability to be the ideal traditional wife and mother. Moreover, lack of adequate schools, whether primary or secondary, was another serious obstacle to girls' education. The Left Front government that came to power in West Bengal in 1977 promised in its election manifesto to implement "concrete and effective programs, including legislative and administrative measures supported by popular efforts for the eradication of illiteracy". The state government has made significant progress in reducing illiteracy, increasing student enrollment, and setting up new primary and secondary schools. Non-plan expenditure on education in the state budget rose from 12.9 per cent in 1976-77 to 21.1 per cent in 1992-93, the Left Front government also implemented several schemes to provide free school education, dry food ration and free textbooks. At primary level, provision of free uniforms to a significant number of female students etc. The benefits of these government measures have not remained untouched for Chai girls. However, the current Trinamool government's Kanyashree, Rupashree, Sabujsathi, and MDM systems of Indian government have helped girl students to go to school. The Chain community became a Scheduled Caste on 2nd May 2002 by public struggle and movement. As a result, they are getting various benefits in terms of education due to being SC. Which is a step forward in the advancement of women's education.

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### Various Problems of Women's Education in Chain Society:

There are many complex critical issues and issues in women's education. It is as follows:

- 1. Medium of Language: Language is an important limitation of children of Chain society which prevents them from accessing education.
- 2. Village Location: Physical barriers prevent children from villages in Chain area from going to schools in neighboring villages.
- 3. Economic Condition: The economic condition of Chain people is so bad that they do not want to spare their children or their labor force and do not allow them to go to school.
- 4. Parental Attitude: Since education does not provide immediate economic benefits, parents in Chain society prefer to engage their children in remunerative jobs that supplement the family income.
- 5. Teacher-Related Problem: Absenteeism of teachers is a regular phenomenon in rural areas in remote areas and it mainly affects the quality of education.
- 6. Lack of Proper Monitoring: Proper monitoring is hampered due to poor coordination between the Child and Women Welfare Department and School Education Department.

# **Suggestions:**

Following are some suggestions for improving the education of needy children:

- 1. Literacy Campaign: Appropriate awareness campaigns should be organized to create awareness about the importance of education.
- 2. Attitude of Parents: The attitude of parents towards education should be improved through proper counseling and guidance.
- 3. Relevant Study Materials in Local Language: All study materials should be provided in the local language of choice.
- 4. Recruitment of Local Teachers and Female Teachers: Environmental, cultural, and psychological characteristics of children of the Chain community should be carefully considered by the local area teachers.
- 5. Stipends and Various Scholarships: Government scholarships are required for higher education. Students need higher education, especially vocational education in medical, engineering and other fields.
- 6. Residential Schools: More residential schools need to be set up in every state and district and should be extended to PG levels in different areas.
- 7. Social Security: Social security of students, especially adolescent girls, in residential

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schools is a matter of great concern.

8. Proper Monitoring: Higher-level officials should regularly monitor the functioning of the schools such as teaching methods, working hours and attendance registers.

#### **Conclusion:**

Change is a natural as well as a social process. So it cannot be an exception in the life of Chain women. There was no noticeable change in their condition during the first half of the 20th century. No matter how small the steps of the colonial government were for Indian women, they were not touched by the winds of the Renaissance in Bengal. They lived far from the center of Bengali culture and education. They could not even speak Bengali. India's independence in 1947 started a process of change in their lives. The establishment of new educational institutions and the upgradation of existing institutions lead to a slow but steady expansion of education among their male counterparts, which in the long run serves to increase the penetration of education among them. Empowerment of a large number of women through the beedi industry has brought about a noticeable change in their mindset and thereby their socio-economic life. Besides, the Left Front government's various measures since 1977 to increase literacy, especially the establishment of more schools and colleges and free school education, brought a relatively large number of them into the education arena. It is true that the change in the position and status of Chain women during the 20th century has not been satisfactory and is negligible compared to the so-called upper castes and progressive classes. However, it can reasonably be said that the 20th century chain ushered in a new dawn in women's lives that marked the transition from "nothing" to "something", from dark midnight to cloudless dawn.

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