

Gender And Education: A Case Study Of Payikyun Village, Kapa Village Tract, Kyunsu Township, Taninthayi Region

Thwet Thwet Win¹

Abstract

This research describes “Gender and Education: A Case Study of Payikyun Village, Kapa Village Tract, Kyunsu Township, Taninthayi Region. This study intends to explore the relationship between education and economy in the gender perspectives. The specific objective of this study is to describe the education from gender perspectives. A community based, case study was done using multiple method approach: qualitative study, key informant interview (KII), and In-depth Interview (IDI). As the Payikyun Village is surrounded by water, people earn their living from the nearby environment. Men in every social group work in fishing industry whether they are rich or poor, educated or uneducated. Learning at school, there is no system to gender separation. But, the wealthy people can go and study course for Grade 8 in town while the poor people face difficulties. If a family has a boy and a girl, the parents are willing to give the priority to the girl in education. The lives of women get higher when the parents change their attitudes. The education standard for women has altered and the norms of selecting their life-partners also consequently changed. The boys, though they have no education, can earn their living if they are skilled in fishery work. Whether the person is educated or uneducated, he gets the same amount of income. So, education is not important for the boys in this village.

Key words: gender, education, gender perspective

Introduction

People living in Payikyun Village in Kapa Village Tract, Kyunsu Township Taninthayi Region have been earning their living by fishing, depending on natural environment in which they live in. Their main economy depends on fishing as well. Myanmar is a country composed of many ethnic groups with diverse traditions. It means that there are different perspective on gender which differs from one ethnic group to another. Bamar is one of the Myanmar ethnic group, who live in Payikyun Village in Kyunsu Township Taninthayi Region. Since ancient times, Bamar nationals have been living across the country. Most people living in Payikyun village are Bamar nationals. Another interesting aspect is that villages do fishing as their main business as they live in the coastal region. People who reside in Payikyun village earn their living by fishing. Only men do the fishing. The women are mere housewives and dependents. Generally, girls are more educated than boys. The researcher focused on gender perspective study in this village. The Payikyun village in Kyunsu Township, Taninthayi Region was selected as the study area of this thesis, and the aim of the research is to understand the gender differences in education. This study will examine the social factors that contribute to the relationship between gender and education from socio-cultural perspective in Payikyun village, Kyunsu Township, Taninthayi Region.

Gender and Education

I. Types of education

There are two types of education as followed:

1. Formal education
2. Informal education

¹ Dr, Lecture, Department of Anthropology, Dagon University

1. Formal education

The village which was surveyed has only one post primary education school. The highest class is Grade 7. To continue their studies, the village school children have to go to the town nearby and attend higher classes. Their parents must have enough money to send their children to schools. If they do not have sufficient money for higher classes, girls are given priority because there is no job for girls in the village. The parents think that their daughters must be educated so that they will get good jobs as government servants, and will have high social status. As for the boys, it does not matter whether they are educated or not because they have paid jobs in fishing.

In some families, the sons who have not completed their middle school education are asked to leave school and sent to work because the business of the parents does not run smoothly. In this way, the young children have to work on fishing boats and their income contributes to their household expenses in some ways. As their jobs provide income, they take no interest in education.

Boys leave school, work on powered schooner, and learn fishing. They learn step by step and their destiny is to become a Pite-thu-gyi, head of the fishing boat finally. In some families, there is enough money to send their children, but they do not actually want schooling. Instead, they work on fishing boats, become grown up and finally the Master of net.

In former days, most parents, whether they have money or not, send their children until they finish primary education. Another reason is that there is only one primary school in Payikyun village. After primary education, those who are still interested in education are sent to school and those with no interest are asked to leave schools. The wealthy parents make their daughters continue their middle school education regardless of their interest. As a result, a few girls in Payikyun village are intellectuals and most of the boys are at work without completing their education. Education level of Payikyun villagers goes: those with primary school level education (198); those with middle school level education (57); those with high school level education (2); those with University education (3); and (1) graduate. (Source: the data by Post Primary School, 2017)

Pre-school education plays the most vital role in childhood. At preschools, children are not ready to accept the essential subjects yet. But they can have formal education initially. Although children in Payikyun village start learning from kindergarten at the age of 5 regularly, in 2013 they can start pre-school at the age of 4. The following year, they are ready to start kindergarten. Teachers at preschools need special skills such as teaching method, dance, song and training because children also need to develop their lives at this stage.

Currently, students can enroll in middle school education course without spending any money. As the parents in Payikyun village do not need to pay any money for their children's enrollment starting from primary level, they enroll their children at the age of five. In former days, parents, financially could not afford to enroll their children. If they could afford to enroll, their children were enrolled in later period, when they were 7 or 8 years old. At present, children start primary school education generally at five. There are 198 primary students in Payikyun village in 2018 academic year.

Secondary education normally is for students who are eleven or twelve years old. As students can learn up to Grade 7 in Payikyun village, students attend the school from Grade 5 to 7. The students from rich family, when they pass Grade 7, they go to schools in Katan village or Kyunsu (town) or Myeik for the course from Grade 8 to Grade 10. Families who could not afford remain in Payikyun village whether they pass Grade 7 or not. It is learnt that for the above reasons, the school's headmaster and the chairman of the village have submitted

a proposal to promote the level of schooling. The school in Payikyun village is a post primary school. The children from the neighboring villages come and attend this school. It is also learned that in 2017-2018 academic year, there are 57 middle school students.

As there is a post primary school in Payikyun village, the students can learn up to Grade 7. There are only a few students who can pursue higher education. Only the students from wealthy families can do that. It is learnt that there are (3) university students in 2017-2018 academic year. They are one male and two females.

2. Informal Education

In Payikyun village, there are people who attend school and learn to earn their living from their childhood. Formerly, only the children of wealthy men could go to school, poor people have to learn fishing in the sea and earn income. Most of the boys, since the age of 10 or 11 from poor families start working on powered fishing schooners. The children at that age start splashing water out of the boat. When they grow up, they have to learn fishing, mending fishing nets, tying nets, unhooking fish from the net, drying fish, taking measures of water-depth, forecasting weather, etc. from the Head fishing boat (Pite-thu-gyi) step by step. The Net-Masters are patient to teach them. When they are well-versed in these skills, they can work on fishing boats as Pite-thu-gyi regardless of their age level. The ordinary boatmen are salary-earners. Pite-thu-gyi's earn (1/5) of the total value of the catch. So, their income is much greater than the boatmen. As a consequence, people mostly try hard to become a Pite-thu-gyi. But the boat-owners choose Pite-thu-gyi out of those people who have a lot of work-experience.

To become a good head fisherman, he must be perfect in the following facts or qualities: to be well-versed in forecasting weather condition; to be able to find the places where fish are plentiful; to be able to know the rise and fall of tide; to be able to know the direction of the blowing wind; to be able to mend fishing nets; to be well-versed in the knowledge of machines; to be able to manage all fishermen on boat; to be able to make right decision; to be resistant to lack of sleep; etc. If he has such qualities, he is a good head fisherman.

Some of the boys that come from the wealthy families join their parents' business- fishery due to their unwillingness to study, repeated failures in examination and no complete interest in education. Those who pass their final exams year after year and finally obtain their respective degrees are also in fishery as it is their parents' business. When they are interviewed why they want to be in fishery, they mention that fishery is the job that they can easily get. The only main business of Payikyun village is fishery. And then, the young people think that they get good income from fishery. That is why they are inclined to do this job.

The girls who belong to the wealthy or poor families of Payikyun village start schooling at the age of five whether their parents can afford to send them to school or not. Those who are unable to support even try to find more money to send girls to school. Formerly, as there is a primary school and they helped their parents do household chores. Parents also systematically instructed them how to take their household responsibilities and let them do so.

The girls from the wealthy families continue their high schools in town after passing Grade 4. After that they pass Grade 10 and become intellectual and a graduate, they try to become a school teacher. They conceive that teaching career is very modest, graceful and satisfactory. Some of the graduated women in Payikyun village have to do teaching job. Whether it is their hobbies or not, the only profession for women is teaching. Those who have not taken any interest in education since their childhood, had poor grades in school subjects, and failed exams, quit their schools and helped parents with household activities. Formerly, in

Payikyun village, there was no income generating job for women, they stayed at home and spent time to do household chores.

II. Gender perspective on education

In studying the attitude of the parents in the families living in Payikyun towards their children and how they value them, analysis will be provided on the basis of three facts.

The first fact is that parents that belong to the wealthy families who value education want their children to become educated. They can afford to support their children to continue further education. However, some are found not interested in education although parents can help them complete their education. Such children discontinued their education. If he is a son, parents make him join their own fishing business. If she is a daughter, parents ask her to drop out of school and help them with household chores.

In some families, both son and daughter are interested in education. As a result, they continue their education after Grade 11 until they are graduated. But, what is common is that graduated sons rejoin their own fishery due to the reasons of good income, no choice for other jobs and there is no accessibility. When men were asked why they do like that, they responded quickly that the income they may obtain from fishery is different from that of government services. So they choose fishery. The graduated daughters apply for Primary Assistant Teacher (PAT) post when announced. They work long in the teaching career appointed by the government because there are rare opportunities to get jobs for them.

Regarding the above mentioned factors, there is no separation in gender role. Parents do not discriminate between son and daughter in education on the basis of gender. Parents are found always ready to assist son and daughter in pursuing their dreams. It is studied that their ability to provide them to make their dreams come true is due to affordability and opportunities.

The second factor is about the story of a wealthy family that they are not interested in their children's education and it shows that they know the essence of education. Some of the families living in Payikyun village do not take an interest in education though they are wealthy. When the children do not want to go to school those parents never force them to go to school. It is also studied that they are called by school due to their children's absence. They do not think that it is important and refused to go to school. They are the wealthy family who do not pay special attention to send their children to school. But they never hesitate to indulge their children when they said they did not want schooling. Their children are actually not interested in schooling, but when they work, they provide income for them. In their mind, they conceive that job matters most whether someone is educated or not. For the educated and uneducated person, income-generation has the most vital role to play in a family because both of them earn the same income at the end. But later, work experience will determine the amount of income. Thus, for them, being educated or not, does not matter.

The third factor is that the poor families that value education want their children to be educated. But they found it difficult to financially support them as they were poor. As there is a middle school up to Grade 7 as a sort of post-primary school in Payikyun village. When the children passed Grade 7, they need to send to other township to attend Grade 8. Children desperately wanted to continue education, but they lost their chances due to their parents' poverty. But if such a family has one son and one daughter, they choose the daughter to be educated by letter her continue her education. The people in Payikyun village believe that girls will be sociable if they are educated. As a consequence, they will be able to stand on their own feet. They also believe that the girl graduates will be able to work as a teacher appointed by the

government. The reason is that there is no income generating job for girls other than household chores.

Boys want their elder and younger sisters to become educated. In order to support them, boys leave school and work outside. Even though the boys are willing to become educated men, they give priority to elder and younger sisters to pursue education.

In the past, parents who did not earn sufficient money to send all their children to school, they tried to send their sons to school. They believed that if their sons become educated, they would support their family by working as government servants. As for the girls, when they got married, their husbands would take the responsibility of their wives.

Regarding such cases mentioned above, there is separation in gender role. Among the poor families living in Payikyun village, parents, though they do not want to discriminate between boys and girls on the basis of gender roles, give priority to girls due to their economy. Boys were contended to accept the priority to girls because they were also inclined to be like that. Formerly, girls willingly accepted the idea of giving priority to boys. In Payikyun village, the ways of gender role separation in the past and at present are found different.

There is only one post-primary school in Payikyun village. Both boys and girls living in Payikyun village have their education up to Grade 7. Learning at school, there is no system to gender separation. But when they pass the Grade 7, they have some difficulties to continue their education. There are the reasons that the affordable person can go to town to study course for Grade 8 while the poor persons face difficulties. They absolutely want their children to be well educated, but they cannot financially support them until end of their educational goals.

As a consequence, if a family has a boy and a girl, the parents are willing to give the priority to the girl in education. Boys also conceive that they have the secondary role to play in education. So they have the desire to see their elder or younger sister as an educated person. That is because women can be socially related to their respective communities if they are educated. And then, what is more favorable for women in the community is that good education can bring life-partners in high status. All these view put the focus on female-based educational opportunity.

Although there is no gender reparation in education, all the elderly members of the family such as father, mother, elder brother and younger brother want the girls at home to reach their educational goals. In accord with these situations, most of the girls become graduates. Boys are found to be fishermen. Girls, after graduation, become teaching staff at schools.

For these reasons, they need gender equality. As there was no gender equality in Payikyun village for the time being that the village was found undeveloped and its economy has declined. So the family that cannot rely on education to earn their living moved to Myeik. Because there likely to be more job opportunities for girls and their income can be higher.

Although wealthy parents' sons are educated, there are no job prospects in their Payikyun village when they come back home. They have to do their traditional fishing work. Poor parents cannot afford to send their sons to higher grades. As a result, the number of educated young men is very small in Payikyun village.

There are ten lady teachers and two male teachers in the post primary school of Payikyun. The lady teachers are the natives of Payikyun village. Among them, three lady teachers are married and seven lady teachers are spinsters. The daughters of the villagers have become educated with the change of their attitude. The lady teachers' outlook on gender is as follows.

The women in this village who become graduated and educated and joined education department as teachers mostly remain spinsters. The reason is that the men, living in Payikyun and lacking education, think that they do not deserve those educated women. And on women's side, they think that they can stand on their own feet and have jobs. And then educated women conceive that the men, they should marry must be as educated as they are or those must be in governmental department, belonging to higher ranks. For the educated women in Payikyun, their men are sufficient if they are graduated government staff and it does not matter whether they are rich or not. For women in Payikyun, the standard of their life-partner may be different when they are not graduated. But when they become graduated, the standard of their would-be-husband might have changed. Thus, it can be studied that the women's concept of determining their men's status can be changed in accordance with time and situation.

Some teachers are married. They usually marry army officer. Those officers like them very much. The teachers also think that they are prestigious because their husbands are army officers.

CONCLUSION

The local people of Payikyun Village make their living, mainly through fishery in their surroundings for its particular livelihood. For this reason, their vital livelihood becomes fishing as water resources are bountiful in their area. Bamar nationalities living in Payikyun village in Kyunsu Township do fishery all the year around. The fishermen on fishing boats earn different wages. Learning at school, there is no system to gender separation. But when they pass the seventh grade, they have some difficulties to study their education further. There are the reasons that the wealthy persons can go to town to study course for Grade 8 while the poor persons face difficulties.

The women in this village, who become graduated and educated, joined education department as teachers. Most of them remain spinsters. The reason is that the men, living in Payikyun and lacking education, think that they do not deserve those educated women. And on women's side, they think that they can stand on their own feet and have jobs. Thus, it can be studied that the women's concept of determining their men's status can be changed in accordance with time and situation.

According to the population study, 2014, in overviewing the census-data taking, it is studied that the educational status of men is higher than that of women in Taninthayi Region. Although men can be said educationally higher from collected digits, actually, there are many graduated women in Payikyun village in the region and few men graduated there.

There has been a gap between education and job-opportunities in Myanmar. Similarly, it is the same in Payikyun village. So, they link themselves with informal education and try to have job-opportunities and livelihoods. Actually, the young people who graduated through formal education may have the idea of getting jobs with their respective degrees. But when the salary they earn is not even enough for individual, to support their families' needs to be considered. That is why they choose informal education.

To sum up, studying the gender and education of Myanmar nationalities of Payikyun village, according to gender perspectives, there are varieties of findings in education. In studying education, it is found that girls have more right to become educated than boys. As a consequence, there are more women graduates. And then, men become fishermen.

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