

## **Status of Women Education - A Field Study in North Lakhimpur Town, Assam**

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*“If you educate a man you educate an individual,  
However, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family.*

*Women empowered means mother India empowered”*

*Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru*

### **Abstract**

The importance of women's education is certainly great. Women play a very significant role in developing human resources, in improving household affairs and in molding character of children. Education of women is the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family. According to the Country Report of the Government of India, “Empowerment means moving from a weak position to exercise a power.” Women empowerment is determined to a great extent in terms of socio-economic indicators such as income, poverty, education and skills that opens up opportunities of employment, better health. These indices are also vitally interlinked with the concepts of power and position. At the same time, women must have a share in the decision making process in the family and in the public sphere, and access the rights and opportunities provided by the state and society at large. The present study makes an effort to have an idea about the effect of the women's education towards empowerment of women. The purpose of this study is to study how education influences women's day-to-day life and to identify the different factors that make change. Women of North Lakhimpur town within the age group of 20 to 60 years were taken for the study.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, socio-economic, women education

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The importance of women education is certainly great. Women play a very significant role in developing human resources, in improving household affairs and in moulding character of children. Women status is determined to a great extent in terms of socio-economic indicators such as income, poverty, education and skills that opens up opportunities of employment, better health. These indices are also vitally interlinked with the concepts of power and position. At the same time, women must have a share in the decision making process in the

family and in the public sphere, and access the rights and opportunities provided by the state and society at large

Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world. The rise of feminist ideas has, however, led to the tremendous improvement of women's condition throughout the world in recent times. Access to education has been one of the most pressing demands of these women's rights movements. Women education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country.

Women Empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political right are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. "Women's empowerment is defined as the process in which their spiritual, political, social or economic status is raised". This also includes the right to raise their level of confidence regarding their own capabilities.

## **2. STATUS OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN ASSAM(WITH SPECIAL REFERANCE TO NORTH LAKHIMPUR TOWN)**

Education of women in Assam actually started due to sincere efforts of the Baptist Missionaries, who started the first school for girls in Sadiya. Total population of Assam as per 2011 census is 31,205,576 of which male and female are 15,939,443 and 15,266,133 respectively. According to 2011 census report Literacy rate of Assam is 72.19%. Again, male and female Literacy rate 77.85 % and 66.27 % respectively.

North Lakhimpur is a Municipal Board city in the district of Lakhimpur, Assam. From the year 1913 women education system was started in Lakhimpur District, with establishment of a Girls' Primary school in the heart of the town. Since then women education was geared up in the district. At present there are a numbers of schools, colleges and other vocational training institutes. These institutions play a vital role in promoting women literacy in the district. The North Lakhimpur Municipal Board has population of 59,814 of which 30,847 are males while 28,967 are females as per report released by Census India 2011. In North Lakhimpur Municipal Board, Female Sex Ratio is of 939 against state average of 958. Literacy rate of North Lakhimpur city is 85.67 %, higher than state average of 72.19 %. In North Lakhimpur town, Male literacy rate is around 89.28 % while female literacy rate is 81.83 %.

### 3. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESIS

#### Objectives:

The present study seeks to modest attempt to study how education influences women's day-to-day life and to know status of women education in North Lakhimpur town of Assam

#### Hypothesis:

1.  $H_{01}$ : The age at marriage has no relation with the educational status of women.
2.  $H_{02}$ : Education has no relation with in decision making regarding family and other matters.
3.  $H_{03}$ : There is a relation between family income and educational status of women.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1. Sampling Design

The population of the study were married women within the age group 20 to 60 years in the North Lakhimpur town, Assam.

For the present study, a non-probability sampling technique, purposive sampling technique is used to select the sample from the population.

#### 4.2. Sample size

North Lakhimpur is a Municipal Board city in district of Lakhimpur, Assam. The North Lakhimpur city is divided into 14 wards .Now from each wards 20 married women (age group 20 to 60 years) was selected using purposive sampling technique. Hence, the sample size is 280.

#### 4.3. Collection of data

The study is based on primary data. . The primary data are collected through structured schedules and questionnaires consisting of 25 questions with multiple choices. The questionnaires are shaped with the objective of collecting quantitative information from the respondent.

#### 4.4. Analysis of data

For the present study after collecting the data, data were edited, coded, tabulated and represented using bar diagrams and pie chart. For testing the hypothesis non-parametric test, Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test for "Independence of Attributes" is applied. All analysis part has been done using SPSS and MS EXCEL.

### 5. ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1. From the study (table no 1) it is found that 80% of women are happy with their married life. Only 10% of women faced gender based problem in the society. Again, 99%of women agree with girl education, but still 1% women not agree with girls' education.80% of women encourage by

family to pursue education and 85% of women say yes to family member help in day-to –day work.70% of women’s husband encourage them to work.

Table 1: Women according to their opinion about questions in the questionnaire:

Questions	yes	No	Yes%	No%
1) Women happy with married life	224	56	80	20
2)Women faced gender based problem in the society	28	200	10	90
3) Women agree with girl education	277	3	99	1
4) Family encourage to pursue education	224	56	80	20
5) Family member help in day-to-day work	238	42	85	15
6) Do your husband encourage you to work	196	84	70	30

Source: Field survey

5.2. *Distribution of women according to their opinion about early marriage:*

From the study it is found that 71% of women disagree with early marriage, 11%of women agree with early marriage, but 18%of women do not want to give any comment regarding opinion about early marriage.

5.3. *Distribution of women according to their opinion for affords more education:*

It is found from the study that 30%of women studied as much as they want but 18% of women could not continue because of financial constraints and 32 % of women could not continue because of social pressure for marriage.

5.4. *Distribution of women according to their opinion about causes for lack of women education:*

From the study it is found that social bias and Ignorance are the major causes for lack of women education. Fig no 1 depicted distribution of women according to their opinion about causes for lack of women education.

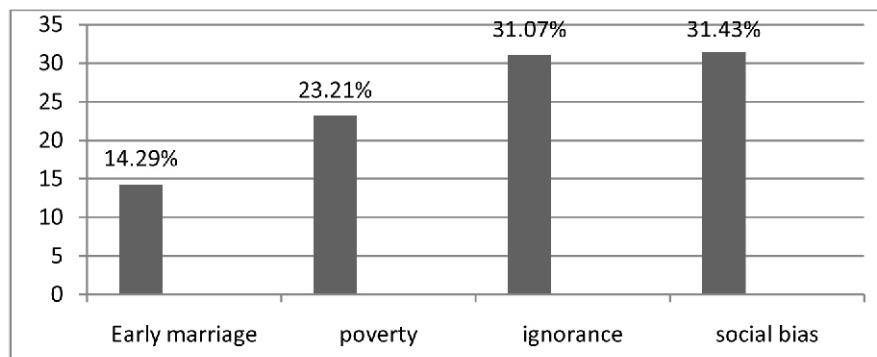


Fig 1: Distribution of women according to their opinion about causes for lack of women education.

5.5...*Distribution of women according to their opinion in decision making regarding family and other matters:*

From the study it is found that 66% of women are independent, in decision making regarding family and other matters but 34% of women are not-independent in decision making regarding family and other matters. Fig no 2 depicted distribution of women according to their opinion in decision making regarding family and other matters.

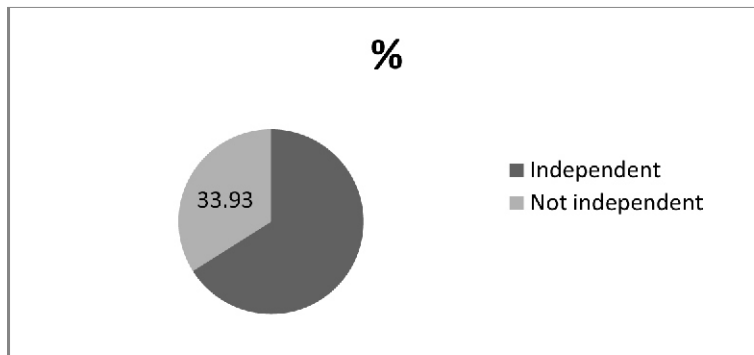


Fig 2: Distribution of women according to their opinion in decision making regarding family and other matters.

**5.6. Hypothesis Testing**

5.6.1. Here we are going to test the hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis  $H_{01}$ : Age at marriage has no relation with the educational status of women.

Alternative Hypothesis  $H_1$  : Age at marriage has relation with the educational status of women.

To test this, Chi –Square test for independent of attributes has been applied.

Table 2:Age at marriage and Educational status of women( Cross tabulation)

Age at marriage	Illiterate	Under HSLC	HSLC	HS	Graduation	PG/ Others	Total
<18	11	15	20	0	0	0	46
18-25	11	20	30	10	20	15	106
26-35	5	8	10	20	30	10	83
> 35	5	7	8	10	8	7	45
Total	32	50	68	40	58	32	280

Table 3:Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	72.992 <sup>a</sup>	15	.000
Likelihood Ratio	89.825	15	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.468	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	280		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.14.

**Results:** From the top row of the table no 3, Pearson Chi- Square statistic ( $\chi^2$ ) is equal to 72.992. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected, since  $p < 0.05$ . Hence, Age at marriage has relation with the educational status of women.

**5.6.2. Here we are going to test the hypothesis 2**

**Null hypothesis  $H_{02}$ :** Education has no relation with in decision making regarding family and other matters.

**Alternative hypothesis  $H_2$  :**Education has relation with in decision making regarding family and other matters.

To test this, Chi –Square test for independent of attributes has been applied.

Table 4 :Education and Decision making( Cross tabulation)

Education	Decision making		Total
	independent	Not independent	
Illiterate	5	27	32
Literate	180	68	248
Total	185	95	280

**Table 5 :Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.015 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000		
Continuity Correction	38.513	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	39.633	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	40.868	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases <sup>b</sup>	280				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.86.

b. Computed only for a 2x2table.

**Result:** From the top row of the table no 5,  $\chi^2 = 41.015$ . The null hypothesis is rejected, since  $p < 0.05$ . Hence, Education has relation with in decision making regarding family and other matter.

### 5.6.3. Here we are going to test the hypothesis 3

**Null hypothesis  $H_{03}$ :** There is a relation between family income and educational status of women.

**Alternative hypothesis  $H_3$  :** There is no relation between family income and educational status of women.

**Table no 6: Family Income and Educational Status (Cross Tabulation)**

Family Income	Educational Status				Total
	Illiterate	Up to HS	Degree	PG/Others	
<10,000	10	20	5	1	36
10,000-50000	12	53	15	8	88
50000-100000	10	40	18	10	78
>1,00,000	0	45	20	13	78
Total	32	158	58	32	280

**Table no 7 :Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.748 <sup>a</sup>	9	.002
Likelihood Ratio	33.120	9	.000
N of Valid Cases	280		

a. 2 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.11.

**Result:** From the top row of the table no 7, it is found that  $\chi^2 = 25.748$ , . The null hypothesis is rejected, since  $p < 0.05$ . Hence, Annual family income has no relation with education status of women.

## 6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

The major findings of the study areas follows:

- Economic factor plays an important role in the progress of female education.
- Social bias, beliefs, ignorance plays an effective role in hampering the education of women.
- In spite of the advancement, value of women and their education, it is yet to be recognized by all.
- The illiterate women are generally dominated by their family members.
- Most of the literate women have the right in taking decision regarding family and other matters.
- Age at marriage has relation with the educational status of women.

### Suggestions:

- There should be proper attitude towards education of women.
- Women should be aware about various provisions and educational schemes to get job opportunities.
- Non-formal education should be provided to illiterate women.
- Parents should be educated so that they can realize the necessity of education to encourage their girl's children to go school.
- Superstitions, harmful customs, orthodox ideas should be ignored.

Women have an important role to play in the advancement of a country. It is only through the education of women that the level of culture of a nation can be praised. A country where



women are disregarded can never make progress. So, our aim should be therefore to build a society where there should not be any discrimination based on caste, religion or sex. An educated woman is normally found to be more efficient, aware of happenings around her and capable of taking decisions. Illiteracy creates a barrier to the realization of constitutional goals of social justice and equality of status of opportunity between men and women

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