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## A Study on the Need of Women Education for Socio- Economic Development in Rural Assam

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### **Abstract:**

*Education is the liberating force cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances. Education plays prime role in economic and social development. The most significant factor that determines the quality of people is education. Education has to be recognized that for developing states like Assam, to make major progress in social and economic development, there is need to invest significant effort on resources in the education system. The findings of the research work shows that the literate women are able to engage in different socio-economic activities. Illiterate women confined only farm sector, but literate women engaged themselves in self employment and service activities. The findings of the study suggest that there is a positive correlation between female literacy and age at marriage, size of family and expenditure pattern of respondent.*

### **1. Introduction**

Education is the liberating force cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances. Education plays prime role in economic and social development. The most significant factor that determines the quality of people is education. Education has to be recognized that for developing states like Assam, to make major progress in social and economic development, there is need to invest significant effort on resources in the education system. For the development of rural Assam, including male, women education is must but women are neglected year after year. The attitude toward women has not changed yet, the literacy rate shows this fact. According to the census 2011, the literacy rate in Assam is 73.18 percent when 78.81 are males and 67.27 percent for female. The study tries to investigate how women education helps to uplift socioeconomic development in rural Assam.

#### *1.1. Objective*

The paper has been designed to achieve one objective only; viz:

- To examine the effect of education on socio-economic development of rural women.

#### *1.2. The Study Area and Methodology*

The data required for the study have been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The secondary data on certain aspects have been collected from (I) the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, (II) the Regional Census Office.

The primary data and information are being collected through personal interview with a pre-designed questionnaire having both structural and open-ended questions. Sibsagar district is a heritage place of Assam State and famous for the monuments of Ahom Kingdom. This district is comprised mostly of rural set up except the Sibsagar town, having industrial base of Oil and Natural Gas corporation (ONGC) Limited, the district has nine (9) developmental blocks, In the second stage, from the sample district Sivasagar out of 9 development blocks 4 sample blocks have been purposively selected. These are (i) Amguri, (ii) Demow and (iii) Lakwa (iv) Sapekhati development blocks considering their rural character, socio-economic backwardness. In the third stage, from each development block 5 villages have been chosen considering ethnicity, remoteness and socio-economic condition. After this, from each sample village 10 household has been selected. (4X5X10=200)

- Scope of the Study: Due to diverse character of rural areas, present study covers only 200 samples in rural area of Sibsagar district.
- Reference Period: A household survey was made during 2014-2015 financial year.
- Scheme of the Study: For convenience, this paper has been divided into five sections. Section II deals with *Educational status of rural Assam*, Section III deals with *Socio-Economic profile of Respondents*, Section IV deals with problems of women education, and final Section ends with recommendation and conclusion.

## 2. Section II: Educational Status of Rural Assam

Year	All India				Assam			
	Male	Female	Total	Gap bet.	Male	Female	Total	Gap bet
	Male				Male			
1961	34.60	12.90	24.00	21.70	44.28	18.62	32.58	25.66
1971	39.51	18.44	29.45	21.07	42.96	22.31	33.39	20.65
1981	46.51	24.82	36.23	21.69	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1991	63.86	39.42	52.11	24.44	62.34	43.74	53.42	18.60
2001	75.96	54.16	64.80	21.80	71.28	54.61	63.25	16.67
2011	82.14	65.46	74.04	16.68	78.81	67.27	73.18	11.54

Table 1: Male and Female literacy Percentage and literacy gap in India and Assam from 1961-2011

Source: Statistical Handbook 2012, Directorate of Economics and Statistics

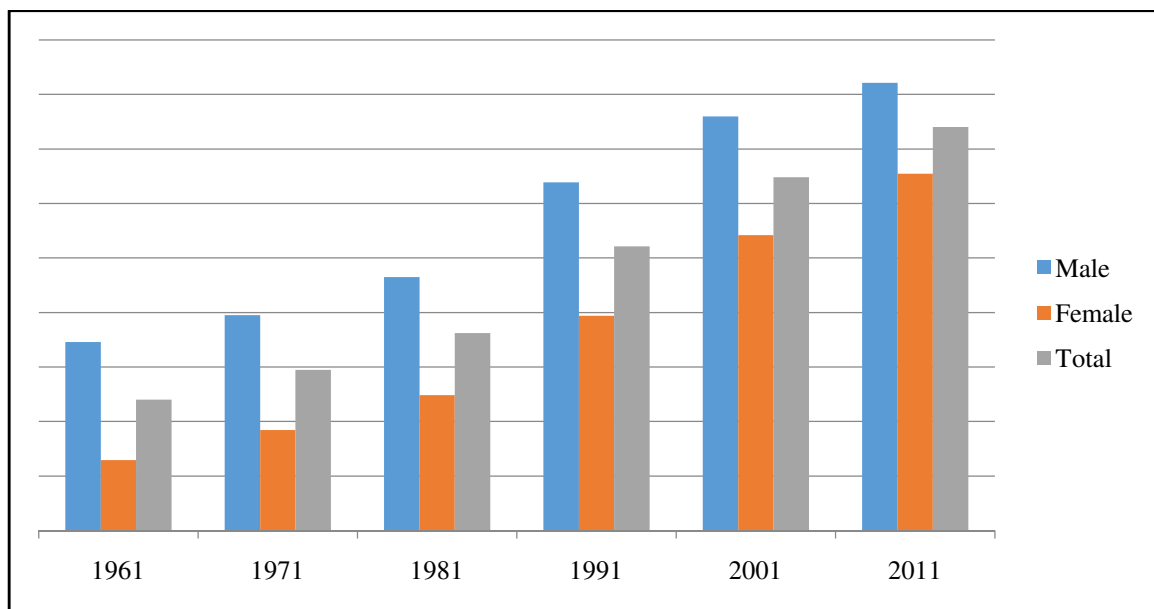


Figure 1

The census report from 1961-2011 indicates that India and Assam has made gradual progress in spreading education among people. A comparison of male and female literacy from 1961 to 2011 census figure shows that-

- Female literacy rate as compared to male literacy is low in India (Female 1961-12.90 % Male-34.60% ,2011 Male-82.14,Female-65.46%) and also in Assam(1961,Male -44.28,Female-18.62,2011, Male-78.81,Female-67.27.
- Female literacy rate in Assam is above the all India female literacy rate (i.e. 67.27 percentages in Assam and 65.46 percentages in India.
- The gap between male and female literacy rate has been recorded at 24 percent in 1961 and 16.68 percentage in case of all India level on the other hand Assam's gap between male and female in 1961 is 25.66 ,which is above the national level but in 2011 it is 11.4, which is lower than the national average.

### 2.1. Educational Status of the women in Sample Villages:

→ Education level of Respondents:

SL. No.	No. Respondents
1. Illiterate	100
2. Lower primary	62
3. Upper primary	28
4. M.E. School	10
5. Matriculation	Nil
Total	200

Table 2: Educational Composition of respondents

Source: field study

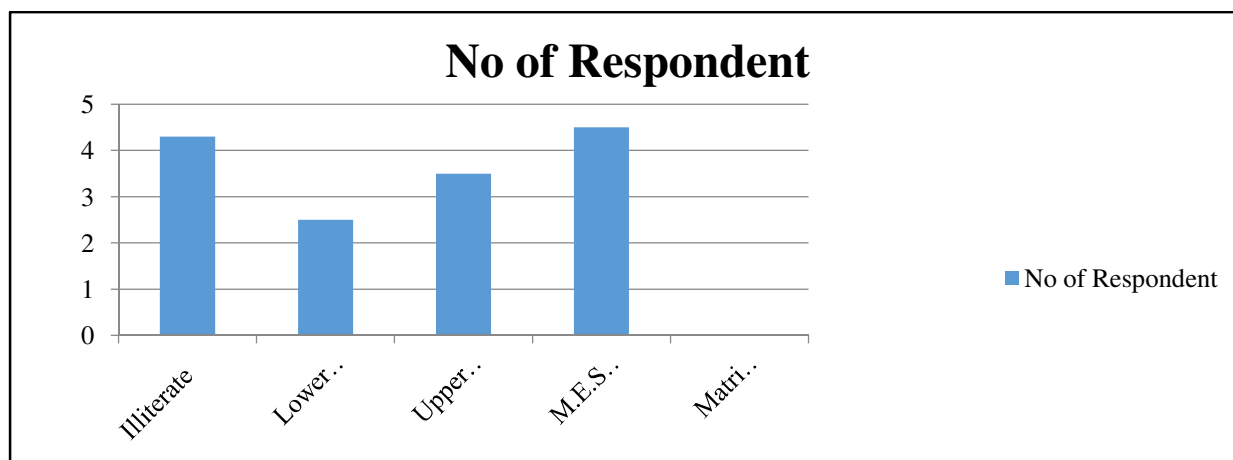


Figure 2

### 3. Section-III: Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

#### 3.1. Occupational Distribution of Population in Sample Areas

The occupational structure refers to the distribution or division of its active population according to different occupations. Primary, Secondary and tertiary sectors are included in occupational structure. Agriculture and allied activities are included in primary sector and industries are including in secondary sector and service sector is included in tertiary sector. Among the villages 65 percent illiterate women engage in farm sector and 35 percent of illiterate women engaged in non -farm sector works. On the other hand 70 percent literate women engaged in non-farm works, only 30 percent worker engaged in farm sector works.

Areas	Various Sectors		Total
	Farm Sector	Non Farm Sector	
Illiterate Women	65	35	100
Literate Women	30	70	100

Table 3: Occupational Distribution of Population in Sample Areas  
Source: Field Study

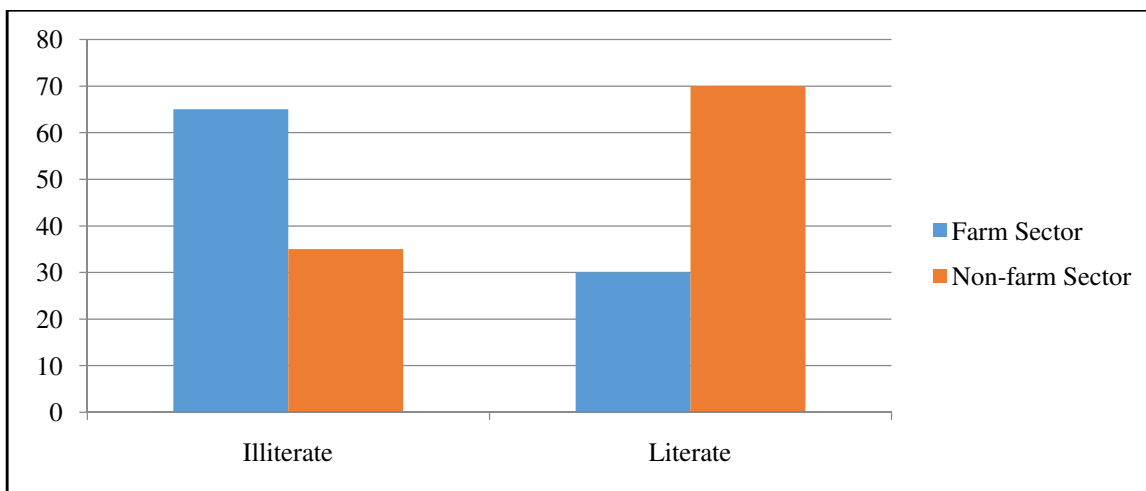


Figure 3

#### 3.2. Women Literacy and Income

Literate women can earn more income than illiterate women due to skilled based knowledge along with household activities.

Income	Average Income of Literate women(per month)	Average Income of illiterate Women (per month)
	2500	1350

Table 4: Women literacy and income:  
Source: Field Study

### 3.3. Size of the Family

Size of the family has been counted based on number of family members. A family comprising less than five members is considered as a small family and a family having more than given numbers has been considered as large family. Table 5 depicts picture of the size of the family of respondent

Sl. No.	Size of the family	Illiterate	Literate
1.	0-2	3	10
2.	3-5	40	70
3.	6-8	45	19
4.	9-11	12	1
	Total	100	100

Table 5: Size of the family of the respondent

Source: Primary data

The T Table 5 reveals that only 43 percent of illiterate respondent belong to small family size, having family members between 1 and 5; while 57 percent respondent belong to large family size. On the other hand 80 percent illiterate respondents belong to small family.

### 3.4. Age of Marriage of Respondents:

The age of marriage has been shown in the Table 6. It shown that 50 percent of illiterate respondent's age at marriage is 20-25. 60 Percent of literate respondent's age at marriage is 25-30

Sl. No.	Age	Illiterate	Literate
1.	15-20	28	10
2.	20-25	50	30
3.	25--30	22	60
	Total	100	100

Table 6: Age of female non-farm worker

Source: Field Survey

Majority of the non-farm worker falls in the age group of 31-40 years.

### 3.5. Expenditure Pattern of the Non-Farm Female Workers:

SL. No.	Kind of main habit	Illiterate	Literate
1.	Food	20	30
2.	wine	30	3
3.	Bettlenuts	20	7
4.	Children's education	5	50
5.	Others	25	10
	Total	100	100

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of the Main Habits and the Average Daily Expenditure of the Respondents

Source: Primary data

Table 7 shows that 30 percent of the illiterate respondents spend on wine. But on the other hand 50 percent of the literate respondents spend their money on their children's education.

## 4. Section-IV

### 4.1. Problems of Women Education

1. Low economic background and lack of parental education.
2. Lack of proper social attitude towards girl child.
3. Heavy burden of household on young girl child.
4. Lack of useful curriculum.
5. Lack of social security measures

## 5. Section-V

### 5.1. Recommendation

1. Spread awareness of education in rural areas.

2. Non-formal and part time courses should be provided to women so that they are able to acquire knowledge and skills for their social, cultural and economic advancement.

### 5.2. Conclusion

The findings of the research work shows that the literate women are able to engage in different socio-economic activities. Illiterate women confined only farm sector but literate women engaged themselves in self employment and service activities. The findings of the study suggests that there is a positive correlation between female literacy and age at marriage (60 percent of the literate respondents prefer to age at marriage at 25-30 age).Awareness of education helps to control population. Size of the family of literate respondents is small (80 percent).Expenditure pattern of literate women influence their children's education (50 percent on children's education).Hence findings of the field data reveal that education and socio-economic status enjoyed by a woman has a strong relationship.

### 6. References

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