

# Influence of Education on Women Empowerment among Muslim and non-Muslim women of Goalpara District, Assam.

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**Abstract:** Education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. There is found gender difference in our society. Women are vulnerable in each and every aspect in society. This study has tried to investigate the Influence of Education on Women Empowerment among Muslim and non-Muslim women of Goalpara District, Assam. This study tries to find out the status of women in present society, attitude of parents towards girls education, problem associate with women empowerment among Muslim and non-Muslim communities of rural society. The study was carried in the Matia block of Goalpara District. A total of 100 samples have been selected from Muslim (50) and non-Muslim (50) women were taken as sample. They belong to the age group of 20-45 years. The study is based mainly on primary data. To collect the data Descriptive Survey Method was used. Simple Random Sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data was collected through a Questionnaire consisting of 40 statements; all are pertaining to education and various aspects of their life. To analyse the data percentage was used.

**Keywords— Influence, Education, Women Empowerment, Muslim, non-Muslim**

## Introduction

Education is the most essential agent of social change. It can be considered as a key factor for the modernization and social change. Education exposes people to new thoughts and ideas and provides necessary skills. Therefore, without educating the women the progress of the society cannot be imagined because women constitute almost half of the total population of India. To educate a woman is to educate the family. The status of women in Indian society is not uniform. The women are not yet fully dynamics for the future and they are still lacked behind of knowledge and leadership. So, to think harmonious development without educating women is impossible. India today can boost of a large educated manpower, which is crucial for the socio-economic growth of any nation. Though, the reformation for women empowerment is going on in India, yet to meet the requirements. India is lacked behind in economic growth due to hindrance and lack of women's participation. Education can reduce inequalities and functions as a means of improving women status in the society.

Therefore, the utmost importance should be given to women education to equip her multi-purpose role as mother, housewives, citizens, contributor to economic condition of the family, builders of modern society and builder of the nation. Rural Muslim women are more illiterate and backward than non-Muslim women in Goalpara District.

In this study, the investigator tried to discuss the **Influence of Education on Women Empowerment among Muslim and non-Muslim women of Goalpara District, Assam.**

## History of Women Education in India

In Vedic period, though women acquired education in India, yet they had no right to make any decision as men in society. During the modern period, East India Company ruled over India since 1757. In this period, men accessed education to promote their life and country, but nothing was done to promote women education. During British period, to promote women education, various socio religious movements led by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidya sagar in India. Some Indian lower caste leaders like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Periyar and Baba Saheb Ambedkar took initiatives to promote women education. After independence the government of India has taken various measures to provide education to women for empowering them.

In Assam during British rule, tremendous changes occurred in the field of social and politics. In this period the Assamese society found a totally new environment. The Christian Missionaries established some schools to educate the Assamese people. A remarkable status has been given to the Assamese women, which had been denied to them earlier. At that time, the status of the Assamese women varied according to their caste, class and religion. But a few Assamese women like Padmavati Devi Phukanani, Nalinibala Devi, Chandraprabha Saikiani, Amalprabha Devi etc. brought light in the field of education, politics and social reform. Assam is a state in North-eastern India where the literacy rate is 73.18% (2011 census) where the female literacy rate is 67.27%. As a result women's literacy rate has grown over the three decades and the growth of female literacy has in fact been higher than that of male literacy rate.

Despite the various government policies to the women education, still women are lagging behind than men. In rural society still women are uneducated; as a result, women become victims of man dominated society.

### Objective of the Study:

- ❖ To study the influence of education on women empowerment.
- ❖ To study the impact of education in rural areas of Goalpara district.
- ❖ To study the impact of education on Muslim and non-Muslim women.

### Hypothesis of the Study:

- i. The influence of modern education on women empowerment is not satisfactory.
- ii. Impact of modern education is yet to reach the corners of villages of Goalpara district.
- iii. Women of Muslim community are most backward as compared to non-Muslim women in education.

### Definition of Key Terms:

- **“Influence”** means in this study “Effect” or ‘impact’.
- According to the Dictionary of Education the word **“Education”** means (i) It includes all the process that develop human ability and behaviour. (ii) The aggregate of all the process by which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour, positive value in the society in which he or she lives.
- **Empowerment:** According to the Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus the word “Empowerment” means “give power” or “Authorize” or “license”.
- **Muslim women:** those women are Islam by religion specially the ‘Pamuwa’ Muslim.
- **Non-Muslim women:** Assamese women are taken as non-Muslim Women.

### Delimitation of the study:

Following are the main limitations of this study –

- Due to the vastness of the topic, the study is strictly conducted only within the Matia Block of Goalpara district of Assam.

- The study is restricted only married educated and uneducated Muslim and non-Muslim women within the age of 20-45.
- The study has covered only the rural area of Matia Block of Goalpara district.

### Methodology:

This research work is a qualitative analysis based on a gender sensitive approach. The study is based mainly on primary data. The study was carried in the Matia block of Goalpara District. A total of 100 samples have been selected from Muslim (50) and non-Muslim (50) women were taken as sample. They belong to the age group of 20-45 years. To collect the data Descriptive Survey Method was used. Simple Random Sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data was collected through a Questionnaire consisting of 40 statements; all are pertaining to education and various aspects of their life. To analyse the data percentage was used.

### Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

**Table – 1: Educational qualification of the Rural Muslim and non- Muslim Women**

Educational qualification	Illiterate		I-IX		HSLC Passed		HS Passed		Graduate		PG		Others	
	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%
No. of respondents	30	60	13	26	4	8	3	6	---	---	---	---	---	---
	Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim	
	5	10	15	30	14	28	7	14	5	10	2	4	2	4

From the above table, it is seen that rural married Muslim women are educationally backward than non-Muslim women.

**Table – 2: Occupational status of the Rural Muslim and non- Muslim Women**

Occupational status	Service		Business		Housewife		Cultivation		Wage earner		Others	
	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%
No. of respondents	3	6	10	20	10	20	22	44	5	10	---	---
	Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim	
	5	10	4	8	34	68	7	14	---	---	---	---

From Table 2, it is found that 68% Non-Muslim and only 20% Muslim women are housewives. Here, it can be said that Rural Muslim women have done more outside works than non-Muslim women.

**Table – 3: Educational facilities from home for Rural Muslim and non- Muslim girls**

Providing facilities	Received				Not-Received			
	Muslim	%	Non-Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Non-Muslim	%
Separate reading room	2	4	11	22	48	96	39	78
Providing necessary books	14	28	27	54	36	72	23	46
Providing facilities for news paper & other books	3	6	9	18	47	94	41	82
Supporting to stay in hostel, boarding school etc	15	30	31	62	35	70	19	38
Any other means	6	12	14	28	44	88	36	72

From the above Table 3, it can be observed that, non-Muslim girls have got more educational facilities from home than Muslim.

**Table-4: Rights and Judicial awareness of Rural Muslim and non- Muslim Women**

Categories	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Muslim	7	14	43	86	50	100
Non-Muslim	21	42	29	58	50	100

From the above Table 4, it can be observed that, non-Muslim women have more awareness about rights and judicial matter than Muslim.

**Table-5: Awareness in health and family welfare of Rural Muslim and non- Muslim Women**

Categories	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Muslim	9	18	41	82	50	100
Non-Muslim	33	66	17	34	50	100

From the Table-5 it can be said that 66% Non-Muslim rural women are aware in health and family welfare. Again, only 18% rural Muslim women are aware in the same.

**Table-6: Participation in income generating programmes of Rural Muslim and non- Muslim Women**

Income generating programme	Self-help group		Weaving		Tailoring		Animal Farming		Grocery		Others	
	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%	Muslim	%
No. of respondents	----		---		2	4	21	42	3	6	----	

	Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim		Non-Muslim	
	37	47	44	88	4	8	7	14	---		---	

In this study, it has been found that 47 % Non-Muslim women living in the rural area are active member of self help group, 88 % Non-Muslim women are related to Weaving, 8 % Non-Muslim women are related to Tailoring, 14% are doing animal farming.

### Major Findings:

1. The rural married Muslim women are educationally backward than non-Muslim women.
2. The Rural Muslim women have done more outside works than non-Muslim women.
3. The non-Muslim girls have got more educational facilities from home than Muslim.
4. The non-Muslim women have more awareness about rights and judicial matter than Muslim.
5. The Non-Muslim rural women are aware in health and family welfare.
6. The 47 % Non-Muslim women living in the rural area are active member of self help group, 88 % Non-Muslim women are related to Weaving, 8 % Non-Muslim women are related to Tailoring, and 14% are doing animal farming.

From this study, the hypotheses which were assumed for the study it is found truth. Therefore, the hypotheses are accepted here.

### Conclusion:

From the study it is found that, non-Muslim women are educationally forward comparing to Muslim women. Therefore, non-Muslim women are aware in imparting education for girls, aware in rights and judicial matter, aware in health and family welfare, involve in modern income generating programmes and so on. Hence, to empower the women education is the prime factor.

### Recommendation:

1. Proper care should be taken for development of women education in rural and remote area of Goalpara district for encouraging the Muslim girls.
2. Hostel for girls at the middle and high school stages and subsidized transport facilities, wherever necessary and possible should arrange in rural area.
3. Attendance scholarships for girl students which serve as a compensation to the parents should be given. This will also ensure reduction of wastage.
4. Women of rural areas should be trained up in different vocational courses like handloom and textile, poultry farms, fish farming, piggery, dairy farm, food and nutrition, fashion and designing, beauty parlour etc.
5. General awareness programmes should be taken among the women of village area, especially in Muslim area.
6. Health awareness camps should be organized not only for pregnant women but also for general people of the village community.
7. There should be opening the large number of adult school with facilities of sewing, knitting, handicrafts, animal husbandry etc., and basic knowledge of health care and food habit.

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