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A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES IN BAJALI SUB-DIVISION, BARPETA DISTRICT.

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Abstract

Women play a very vital role in human progress and have a significant place in society. They are not at all inferior to men. A women's role has changed tremendously and is making its greatest impact in our society today. Women are standing tall and are playing a major role in many important areas. The role of women is primarily recognized in social, political, economic, cultural and religious spheres. In these spheres, when they are two to possess efficient skills and abilities, so they are able to render their participation in an effectual manner. In addition to the skills and abilities, it is vital for women to generate awareness in terms of the factors influencing their participation. The main areas that have been taken into account in this paper include significance of role of women within society, factors influencing the participation of women, type of roles within the society etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

*“Education of boy is the education of one person but education of girl is the education of the entire family” -----
----- Late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.*

“Woman” is one word the core of our human society. Without whom we can't imagine a world. It is not an exaggeration if we say that woman is the centre of family and the family is the centre of a society or a nation. But one thing we have to accept that women for many years were kept hidden inside the dusty den of depravity. They are not allowed to go to the school. Home was their world. Outside world were meant only for men, the bread earners of a family. Hence, they were wrapped by such a murky life that they remained disregarded many years.

But now a day the things are something different. Women induced as much courage within themselves so as to unveil their wrap to the society. They play different role and now take equal footstep with man. So we take an

overall survey on Bajali Sub division area to know the status of woman. This paper includes the different roles that are played by a woman in different community at this area.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

Due to the limitation of time, I have to compressed my objectives only to following points ---

1. To study the overall place of women in our society.
2. To study the different place of women in different communities like Assamese, Bodo and Muslim area.
3. To find the literacy and illiteracy rate of female in this area.
4. To find out comparative study on different community under Bajali Subdivision.

3. POSITION OF WOMAN IN OUR SOCIETY

Women have many different roles in our society. These roles have been drastically changed from women being homemakers to woman taking on jobs extra schooling and skill managing the majority of caring for their families. Research shows that this can be extremely stressful on a woman.

In 1950's most woman stayed at home and took care of their families. Only about 18.4 million women were working outside the home. But as time passes, in 1970 the percentage of women started to work is as 89%, in 2001 it is increased upto 46% and still improving. In present era, it is increased upto 79%.

Through we have had our worst time in case of woman but things are different now. Now woman go to school. They can now educate themselves as much they want. If not a lot then some are acquiring high and respectable position in work places. But since it is a fact that even after all these accomplishments, there still exists women liberation groups, makes us think that all of women's demands are not fulfilled.

Mahatma Gandhi while defining empowerment of women, had described it as a situation, " when women, where we call abala become sabala, all those who are helpless will become powerfull. "

The status of women in North Eastern Region of India is slightly different in comparison to those living in the rest of the country. In India, the status of women is high in comparison to the women of some other states of India. One salient feature of Assamese society was the absence of dowry system. In the field of education, women in Assam are in a better position than the all India average.

To know the status of women in different community in our society we have to study in vast area. It will take many a year to study properly. So due to the limitation of our time we have selected the area Bajali Sub- division and through study on focusing mainly three communities --

- a) Assamese
- b) Muslim and
- c) Bodo.

4. ROLE OF WOMEN IN ASSAMESE COMMUNITY OF BAJALI SUB- DIVISION

The role of women in Assam is higher than other states of India. While we survey the area of Bajali Sub -division we noticed this point to a large extent.

4.1 ECONOMIC ROLE: The women in Assamese community of Bajali Sub- division are much more economical. They normally save for investment in pigs, goats or yarn for weaving. They enjoy their own income. While income from women's economic activities is not really earned in cash, a system of barter and loan is widespread at the village level. The Assamese community women in Bjali Sub – division area, work in the form of traditional labour collectives by mahila samities, has brought much improvement in their economic status. Many women in Assamese community of Bajali Sub –division are self employed. They work in government as well as private sectors in different departments. So we can say that these women are not only taking care of their child and home but also they are able to handle and manage their work and working place very nicely.

4.2 SOCIAL ROLE: the process of socialization clearly demarcates spaces: private for a female, public for a male. When we survey the role of women in Assamese community and tried to question females, about their roles and work, most of them only reply was “Ask my husband”. Women were portrayed as submissive. They are not meant to be active and outspoken, particularly in the presence of men and elders. While surveying different villages in Bajali Sub – division, we notice that most of the Assamese women are rejected and not interested in taking part of any social work. If some of them are interested in took part in social activities their husband and other elders in the family give no permission to them. Though some women are dominated, but we meet some another women whose family members are supportive for their women members and give them freedom to take part in any social activity and live their life as they want.

From the evaluation of our survey data, we can say that 60 % of women in Assamese community engage in their household activities and 40 % of Assamese women in this area engaged in house hold activities as well as their work place activities.

4.3 CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL ROLE: Through our survey in this area, we come to know that the various spiritual and cultural roles played by Assamese communities' women. Most of the Assamese women in this area weaves all clothes required for her family. Most of the Assamese people are agriculturists and the festivals observed by the people related to agriculture mainly. Lakhimi puja, a traditional festival held in this area and in this festival women actively take part and sing holy songs of lakshmi and mah-prasad etc. are offered to her. Not only the Assamese people other caste or community people of this area celebrating bihu thrice in a year, which are known as Bohag Bihu, Kati Bihu and Magh bihu. In this festivals, the women played a significant part. The women and girl in this society can compose wedding songs, performs bihu dance and music, recite Kirtan and Namghosa. Besides songs, music and dance other works relating to festivals are also accomplished by the women folk. Rice is the main food of this people. Women in this community are not allowed to do anything during mensuration period. In social feast women are not allowed to cook food.

5. ROLE OF WOMEN IN BODO COMMUNITY OF BAJALI SUB- DIVISION

The Bodo community of Assam is one of the major tribal communities of the North Eastern region of India. They are originated Mongoloid racial group. The field study was conducted by selecting some villages of Non BTAD area of Barpeta district and BTAD area of Baksa District. While we survey the role of women in Bodo community, we noticed various aspects. We try to elaborate some role of these communities women are below –

5.1 ECONOMIC ROLE: Bodo women can take a decisive role to up life the economic status of the community. While, we survey the Bajali Sub-division, we come to know that the women section of this community are very active in household as well as in economic activities. From the survey data, at present time 52% out of total is engaged under agriculture sector, 14% are in business, 22% in service sector and 12% people are belongs to different type of unskilled manual labour, wage labour. Various sources of income of Bodo women in Bajali Sub-division which are as like agriculture, weaving, poultry, piggery business,service, traditional industries and wage labour. Among these activities traditional industries like handcraft, weaving, preparation of traditional wine, piggery and poultry are the most

prestigious culture of Bodo community which is prevailing mostly in the rural area. Such type of activities are generating a respectable amount of income for the Bodo family but the rate of income generation in such activities is not satisfactory as compare to modern farming activities. Most of the women of Bajali Sub-division of Bodo community are not highly educated. This is because of the poor transportation, dropout of girl student due to poverty, lack of Bodo medium school, lack of motivation for higher education etc. So they are working in different types of agriculture and allied activities. Highly educated women are working in government and private sector jobs. They have also their own business like fashion design, beauty parlour, sewing and cutting, tailoring etc. Income earn from such activities are impressively higher than traditional premetive economic activities.

5.2 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ROLE: Sidney Endle writes, “ The Kasari husband usually treats his wife with distinct respect and regards her as an equal and a companion to an extent which can hardly be said to be the rule among many of the Indian people.” (Endle 1991). When we survey the role of women in Bodo community, we come to know that the Bodo women work shoulder to shoulder with men and have a higher status in the family and the society. Violence and oppression against women in a Bodo family is hardly seen. These women are expert in weaver and use to produce all most all of the clothes required for family use. Fishing is another activity of the Bodo women in this area. During the survey we see that most of the Bodo girl og 9-10 years of age, help their mother in various domestic activies like cooking, weaving and poultry farming. Women traditional level of the Bodo society is very low. We also come to know that, in Bodo society arrange marriage the standard practice, although other types marriage are also not unseen. In a negotiated marriage, the girls have little say in the selection of boys. In Bodo society, separation is permissible and polygyny has also the social sanction. Male and female child are equally preferred in this community.

5.3 SPIRITUAL ROLE: In Bajali Sub-division area, during our survey we see that, the spiritual role played by the Bodo women are very specific. Bodo people are believe in five traditional gods, viz Ailong (god of earth); Agrang (god of water) Khoila (god of air), Sanjaborle (god of fire or light) and Rajkumre (god of sky). Women have the specific role of performing rituals in dance form like kherai dance. In addition to that, women particularly girls, use to share in many other social dance forms like Baisagu Domahi, and Haba Janai along with the boys with their traditional instruments like Khum, Jotha, Sherja, Gagona etc.

6. ROLE OF WOMEN IN MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF BAJALI SUBDIVISION

We take some Muslim families of our study and try to know about the position of women in their culture. The studies of women in Islamic society is neither a new issue nor it is full settled one. Now we discuss about the position and role of women in Muslim community from its various aspects – spiritually, socially and economically.

6.1 THE SPIRITUAL ASPECTS: In terms of religious obligations such as daily prayers, fasting, poor due and pilgrimage women is no different from man. Like other Islamic area in this area women are also considerate of the fact that a woman may be nursing her body and caring for him and thus may be enable to go out to the mosque at the time of prayers. So she can make up for the prayers missed for any of the reasons. Although woman can did go into the mosque during the days of proplet and their after attendance at the Friday congregational prayers is optional for them while it is mandatory for man.

6.2 THE SOCIAL ASPECTS: In this area when we look into social point of view the societal status of a girl child or a man is quite better than the more rural Muslim area. Though this society then also people is aware of girl child saving and trying to give equal space of girl child with the boys. Families are interested in giving higher education to girl child and more of the families giving equal importance on women empowerment with boys empowerment. In this area women don't use 'Parda Pratha' like other communities people or women in this area. The Muslim women are also liberal. In case of marriage it was specifically decreed that women has the full right to her 'Mahr' or marriage

gift which is presented to her by her husband and is included in the meptical contract and that such ownership does not transfer to her father or husband.

6.3 THE ECONOMICAL ASPECTS: As we know as before with regard to the woman's right to seek employment it should be stated first that Islam has regarded her role in socially as a mother and a wife as the most sacred and essential one. However there is no decree in Islam which forbids women from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it.

In this area the women employment of this community is quite poor. But it is now developing. Now a day's families are more careful on women empowerment.

7. METHODOLOGY

The study of role of women in different communities like Assamese, Bodo and Muslim and literate and illiterate women in Bajali Subdivision. The study is based on the primary data. The data has been collected from primary sources. To collect primary sources from sampling unit, a sample survey has been made for this purpose a suitable questionnaire was a view to collect information the sample areas of women.

8. AREA OF OUR SURVEY

Barpeta district is divided into two sub-division – Barpeta subdivision and Bajali subdivision. Our survey area Bajali subdivision include Pub- Bajali, Sarih, Uttar Bajali, Manikpur, Bhabanipur, Hastinapur and Bijni.

9. DATA COLLECTION OF OUR SURVEY

Data of total population according to the sources report in 2011 of Barpeta District:

Total population	Total Male population	Total Female population
1693190	867891	825299
Sex ratio		population
1000:951		
Total Literate person	Total Male literate	Total Female literate
918708	512330	406378
Male Literacy Rate		Female Literacy Rate
70.72%		59.04%

Population of female of different community in Bajali Subdivision at 2018:

Age	ST	SC	Minority		
6 months to 3 years	177	309	636	1981	3103
3years to 6 years	187	227	564	1548	2476
Pragnt mother	59	127	225	834	1235
Nursing mother	48	125	242	834	1249

Growth of female literacy rate from 1971-2001 of Bjali Subdivision area:

Years	Female population	Literacy rate	% of Literates Female to total Female population	% of Literacy of total population
1971	2025	966	47.7	55.2
1991	3252 (444)	2179	77.6	82.9
2001	4556 (500)	3397	83.75	89.71

10. CONCLUSION

From the detailed study it is experienced a lot about the literacy pattern and status of female population in the Bajali subdivision area. Women who can act as catalysis in the development process of the society so if they are literate they can develop the society. Female of this town are more interested in education and maximum women are engaged in service sectors. Adult women of this area are facing some problem in earning education of their time, these are mainly economic, transport and early marriage problem. But the girls of the area are not facing very low problem related to education. There is marked sex disparity in literacy between the man and woman of this area. The families are also small and they grow up a well develop economic condition.

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