

**STATUS OF WOMEN IN EDUCATION AMONG SCHEDULED CASTE COMMUNITIES
IN ASSAM: A CRITICAL STUDY****Ritamoni Das****Research scholar, department of education Assam university, Silchar.****Abstract**

Education is the most important element for the development of human being. Without education society cannot be developed. For proper development of society both men and women must be educated. Scheduled caste community is one of the deprived sections of society. Among this community we found gender disparity in education. Women literacy is not at the satisfactory level among this society because of so many reasons. In this study educational status of scheduled caste women in Assam are discussed, their problems and some suggestions are given for better development of scheduled caste women in our society.

Keywords: S.C, gender disparity, Gross enrolment, School attendance

Introduction:

Education is the most important element for the development of human being. It helps in developing our knowledge, skills, decision making power etc. For proper development of our country both men and women must have education. In comparison to other developed countries our literacy percentage is not so satisfactory. Giving importance to education the framers of our constitution included it in the Directive principles of state policy provisions for free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years for all children and for promotion and special care of educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe and their protection from social injustice and forms of exploitation. Scheduled caste consist nearly 15% of the total population of our country.

Scheduled caste has given reservation in educational institution, jobs, state assemblies and the parliament. Among the scheduled caste communities women education in our country is neglected because of so many reasons, but for development of this deprived sections community women must be educated properly. Without educated women we cannot think about a progressive family, village, society, community, state and country.

Objectives of the study:

- (1) To study the present educational status of scheduled caste women and general caste women in Assam.
- (2) To extent some suggestion for better development of scheduled caste women in Assam.

Methodology:

The study relies on secondary data. The secondary data have been collected primarily from the census reports of India, some published books, journals and websites.

Discussion and observation:

General people's literacy rate in India and Assam

Table no.1

YEAR	ASSAM			INDIA		
	PERSON	MALE	FEMALE	PERSON	MALE	FEMALE
1961	32.98	44.28	19.63	28.3	40.40	15.35
1971	34.06	44.31	23.52	34.45	45.96	21.97
1981	NA	NA	NA	43.57	56.38	29.76
1991	52.89	61.87	43.03	52.21	64.13	39.29
2001	64.25	71.93	56.03	65.38	75.85	54.16

Source: various census reports (1961-2001), registrar general of India

The above mentioned table shows the gradual growth of people's literacy rate in India as well as in Assam. From the census reports 1961 to 2001 literacy rate of our country increases up to 37.08 %. It was 28.3% in 1961 and 65.38% in 2001 census. In 1961 male literacy was 40.40% and female literacy was only 15.35% which was very less than male literacy rate. After that, female literacy increase gradually this was 21.97% in 1971, 29.76% in 1981, 39.29% in 1991 and 54.16% in 2001. On the other hand in Assam literacy rate in 1961 was 32.98% and in 2001 it was 64.25%, which was comparatively higher than all India level literacy rate. In 1981 there was no census in Assam. Regarding the female literacy also Assam's literacy rate was higher than all India level; it was 19.63% in 1961 and 56.03% in 2001. But the entire census reports of India as well as Assam also show us very negative things about female literacy rate that it was very lower than male counterpart. There was gender disparity in education. In all India level the gap between male female literacy were 25.05% in 1961, 23.99% in 1971, 26.62% 1981, 24.84% in 1991, 21.69 in 2001%. In Assam the gap was 24.65% in 1961 and in 2001 it was 15.90%. The gender disparity in Assam is less than all India level in all the census years

Literacy rate of scheduled caste in India and Assam

Table no.2

YEAR	ASSAM			INDIA		
	PERSON	MALE	FEMALE	PERSON	MALE	FEMALE
1961	24.40	31.60	16.10	10.27	17.00	3.29
1971	25.70	35.00	15.7	14.67	22.40	6.44
1981	NA	NA	NA	21.38	31.10	10.93
1991	53.94	63.88	42.99	37.41	49.91	23.76
2001	66.78	75.74	57.14	54.69	66.64	41.90

Source: various census reports (1961-2001), registrar general of India

The above mentioned table shows us the gradual growth of education of scheduled caste in Assam and in India. In 1961 in Assam scheduled caste literacy rate was 24.4% and in all India level it was only 10.27%, where in Assam male literacy was 31.6% and female literacy was 16.1%. But in the same year in all India level scheduled castes male literacy was 17.0% and female literacy was 3.29% which was low in comparison to Assam. The above table also shows us that scheduled caste literacy rate increased up to 75.74% in Assam from 1961 to 2001. And in all India level it increased up to 66.64%. From this we can say scheduled castes literacy rate is increasing in a growing rate in all India level and in Assam also. Comparatively the literacy rate of scheduled caste in Assam is higher than the all India level. But the table shows us that like the general caste people there also appears gender disparity among the scheduled caste people in India as well as Assam. In Assam the literacy gap between male and female was 15.50% and in 2001 it was 18.60% , in all India level this gap was 13.71% in 1961 and 24.74% in 2001. Again in the case of scheduled caste also the gap was less in Assam in 2001 than all India level. But in 1971, 1981 and 1991 the gap was higher in Assam than all India level, in Assam in 1971 it was 19.30%, in 1991 20.89%, in 2001 18.60% and in India it was 15.96% in 1971, 20.17% in 1981, 26.15% in 1991 and 24.74% in 2001 census. From this we can say educational condition of scheduled caste women in Assam is in a very poor condition.

School attendance rates (%) among scheduled castes rural and urban children in age group (5-14) in the year 1993-1994

Table no.3

	RURAL		URBAN	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
INDIA	64.3	46.2	77.5	68.6
ASSAM	75.4	70.8	71.6	84.3

Source: Employment and Unemployment Situation among Social Groups in India,1993-94: NSS 50th Round, National Sample Survey Organization, Department of Statistics, Govt.of India.

The above table shows the school attendance among scheduled caste rural and urban children in age group (5-14) in the year 1993-1994. From the above table we see that there is a gap between male and female attendance in 1993-1994. The male school attendance is also not satisfactory. In all India level in rural areas male school attendance was 64.3% and female school attendance was 46.2%, and exist 18.1% gap between both the groups. In urban areas this percentage is higher than rural areas. It was 77.5% for male and 68.6% for female school attendance. In Assam rural male female school attendance was higher than all India level attendance; there was 75.4% male school attendance and 70.8% female attendance, but there was a gap of 4.6 5% between male and female school attendance. This picture is reverse in rural areas of Assam in the year 1993-1994. Female school attendance was 84.3% and male school attendance was 71.6%. In Assam urban male school attendance was lower than all India level and female school attendance was higher in Assam in comparison to male school attendance.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio for scheduled castes students (as on 30.9.2006), (percentage), 2006-2007

Table no.4

	Classes (i-v) (6-11 years)			Classes (vi-viii) (11-14 years)			Classes ix-xii (14-18 years)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
India	131.53	115.30	123.71	83.14	67.33	75.65	43.68	33.21	38.80
Assam	148.83	147.76	148.30	107.14	99.46	103.92	66.70	56.91	61.94

Source: India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education. (2009). Selected Educational Statistics 2006-07 (as on 30th September).

Table no.4 shows us the Gross enrolment ratio for scheduled castes students, 2006-2007. In India class (i-v) gross enrolment ratio of boys was 131.53% and 115.30% was of girls and in Assam it was 148.83 % of boys and 147.76% of girls. In comparison to all India level gross enrolment ratio was higher in Assam. But in India and in Assam also gross enrolment ratio of girls was

lower than boys gross enrolment ratio in classes (i-v). In India gross enrolment ratio of boys was 8.14% and gross enrolment ratio of girls was 67.33% in class (vi-viii). But in Assam it was higher than all India level, 107.14% and 99.46% of boys and girls respectively. The above table shows a very low gross enrolment rate both for boys and girls in all India level and in Assam also in classes (ix-xii). It was only 43.68% of boys and 33.21% of girls in India and in Assam it was 66.70% of boys and 56.91% of girls. In the entire session in Assam the gross enrolment ratio of scheduled castes girls was lower than boys gross enrolment ratio.

School Dropout Rates of Scheduled Castes (SC) Students Classes I-X, (%) , 2006-2007

Table no.5

	Classes(i-v)			Classes (i-viii)			Classes(i-x)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
India	32.4	39.9	36.0	51.6	55.0	53.0	66.6	72.2	69.0
Assam	37.3	36.0	36.7	70.6	70.5	70.5	76.2	72.8	74.7

Source: India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education and Literacy. (2009).Annual Report 2008-09. New Delhi. P.319-320.

Table no.5 shows the dropout rates of scheduled caste students of class i-x in the year 2006-2007. In that year in all India level girls drop-outs rates was higher than boys drop-out rates in all the classes up to x and in Assam it was lower than boys drop-out rates. In all India level from classes (i-v) drop-out rates of boys was 32.4% and girls was 39.9% but in Assam it was 37.3% and 36.0% for boys and girls respectively. In Assam drop-out rates was higher in classes (i-x), it was 76.2% of boys and 72.8% of girls drop-out rates. In class I-VIII there was a little difference was found between boys and girls drop-out rates in Assam and In all India level. From the table it has been clear that boys and girls drop-out rates was higher in all the classes from I to X in Assam than all India level.

Discussion and suggestion:

From the above observation we can state that girl's education among scheduled castes has been increased in all India level as well as in our state Assam also but it cannot be said as satisfactory level. For the development of education of the scheduled castes students various programs and policies has been taken by central and state government also. In our Indian constitution Article 46 and 15(4) provide special safeguards for the educational development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribe. The directive enshrined in the constitution has been reflected in various five year plans which have sought to raise the level of education among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribe. Fourth five year plan showed that nearly half of the backward classes' sector allocation (48%) was mainly spent on educational program alone. One centrally sponsored scheme for scheduled castes students is post-metric scholarship scheme. The objectives of the scheme are to provide financial assistance to sc/st students to complete their higher education in colleges or universities. Another scheme was girls hostel's for S.C/ST girls students, it was started in fifth five year plan (1974-1979). Various scholarship scheme for girls are there in secondary and higher. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme is became a very effective scheme regarding girls education of SC/ST, OBC and minority communities. Under this scheme residential school, hostels are established for girls in educationally backward blocks(EBBS). In Assam 15 EBBS spreading all the districts like Darrang, Nalbari, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Karbi-Anglong, NC hills and 11 blocks as per the revised guide lines of Ministry of Minority affairs and MHRD in 7 districts, Darrang, Karbi Anglong, Dhuburi, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Kamrup and Lakhimpur are selected for implementation of this scheme.

For improving girls education among scheduled castes in Assam suggestion can be given as follows--First, people of scheduled caste communities should be made conscious and aware about the girl's education among their communities. Adult education should be introduced and developed in these communities. More incentives should be given for girl's education by government so that they can perceive education without any problem. More female teachers should be appointed in the schools, so that parents do not hesitate to send their girl child to schools. Parent-teacher association should arranged. Scheduled caste's girls education should be made free at least up to the class x. More Kasturba Gandhi Balika vidyalaya should be opened in the areas having poor literacy scheduled caste girl's. People of this communities are very conservative so more programs should be introduce to make them scientific, NGO'S can play a significant role in this regard. It may be conclude that for development of education among the

scheduled caste girl's government should introduce more realistic programs and every girl's should make themselves more aware and strong to make themselves educated and progressive person's in this society.

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