

# Empowerment of Rural Women in Assam: Its Problems and Prospects

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## Abstracts:

The women empowerment is concept to improvise the status of women especially in under developed countries and in every part of the globe in whole. It is also made to reduce the gender inequalities, to increase social status of women. The increasing socio-economic status of a woman its directly increase health issues, education and awareness increases side by side. Women play an important role development in the rural economy as a farmer and an entrepreneur same time women engaging social activity. In this study an attempt has been made to highlight mainly socio-economic empowerment of rural women of Assam and its Problems and Prospects. In this paper mainly focused the problems of rural working women like working of agriculture sector, service sector and related the other activity. Basically we know that the women is the backbone of a society without women active participation we cannot development socially and economically. In this context this paper will be an attempt through which an enquiry will be made to get the enough knowledge in a cognitive way. This whole paper will be preceded relying on the descriptive method of study.

**Keywords:** Development, Empowerment, Rural Economy, Socio-Economic Status, Women, Etc.

## 1. Introduction:

The idea of women empowerment was first introduced at World women's conference in 1985. In India the women empowerment is an important phenomenon in the development socio-economic & political aspects. The increase economic status of women results directly in the education, health & awareness issues day by day. The Government of India has lunched and implemented a number of schemes towards poverty alleviation and women empowerment but it was observed that in the rural areas especially from the poor families could not benefited. According to Gangrade, "Women empowerment means, equal status to women, opportunity and freedom to develop one self." In the present society, the realization and recognition of the concept of women empowerment is absolutely essential for the families.

Women make a vital role in the society socio-economic infrastructure and their empowerment in the fields of economic, social and political are very essential. Investing in the sphere of women's capabilities and empowering them to achieve their choice and opportunities is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and development.

## 2. Methodology:

Realizing the availability of the essential data available in the various studies which have already done in this field the method used in this paper is descriptive method of study. Data will be basically collected from the secondary sources of information. The secondary source of data will be generally relevant

literatures like books, journals etc. Some data will be collected through conventional survey and official records too.

### **3. Scope and significance of the study:**

The study is basically based on Socio-empowerment of women of the rural society in Assam. As compared to the urban women, the rural women are socio-economically very backward. It is always found that there remained a disproportion in the access of women health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security in the official activities etc. Due to a lack of proper education and many other socio-economic causes, they are still backward, mainly in the rural society. That is why, they are not able to go ahead and develop themselves in societal arenas as per the esteemed goal. So, there are immense scopes to arrange better studies and it bears its significance along with.

### **4. Objectives of the study:**

1. To draw a clear picture of the socio-economic empowerment of rural women of Assam.
2. To find out the various problems as well as the prospects that face by the women of this region if there are any.

### **5. Results and Discussion:**

This paper mainly concentrates its efforts on the socio-economic empowerment of women population in rural areas in Assam. In Assam, a total of 65% population inhabits in the rural areas. The socio-economic status of the people living in the rural areas is severely backward as compared to the population living in the urban areas. In this regard, there are ample scopes to take steps to uplift the rural society and mainly empowerment of the women. After the independence and reconstruction of the education system at the same time, people started realizing the importance of education. Educated women have been able to get power in different fields. In the earlier time, the National Planning Committee (NPC) was constituted by the Indian National Congress in 1938, which produced a series of reports on planning of India. NPC in 1947 documented that a plan can advance only when all aspects of life develop side by side. At the same time, very strong recommendations were made by the Women's subcommittee constituted by NPC. After that, the Indian government introduced much reform measure in the form of globalization, liberalization and privatization in July 1991. As a result of these measures, subsidies to the agriculture sector were reduced, fiscal deficit was controlled; the economy was opened up to the global market. The rural economic development can be defined as integrated development of an area and the people through optimum development and utilization of local resources—physical, biological and human and by bringing about necessary institutional, structural and attitudinal changes by delivery of a package of services to encompass not only the economic field, i.e., agricultural, allied activities, rural industries, but also establishment of required social infrastructure and services in the area of health and nutrition, sanitation, housing, drinking water & literacy, with the ultimate objective of improvement in quality of life.

Socio-economic development is a factor that is preferred in the definition of development which influenced a way of understanding of a considered phenomenon, has been documented by international institutions and declarations of a country and cooperated in order to achieve development goals (Bellu, 2011). Education & economic empowerment changes in women's mobility and social interaction and changes in intra-

household decision-making are necessary. Basically two sectors have empowered the women of rural area.

### 5.1 Economic Empowerment:

Women empowerment contributes to social-economic development of a state. In various societies lack of women empowerment arise to large extent from their low participation in gainful activities. It is generally believed that their increased participation in economic spheres will lead to or at least facilitate their empowerment. A women's ability to secure items and service herself is an important measures of her empowerment. If women could find enough opportunities to work and be economically free, then their dependence on men for their livelihood would diminish. Then they would be a position to participate in decision making process, raising and distribution income, investment and expenditure at all levels both in and outside their household as equal partners in society. (K.D.Rosa, 2010).

Women play an important role in the economic life of rural India. Women participation is a significant one in rural employment activities such as agricultural operations, poultry sheep rearing, dairy, fire wood cutting and selling of agricultural product etc. Through they put their heart and soul in rural employment activities the economic status is not improved.

**Assam has implemented several schemes to promote the empowerment of women. Basically these schemes aim to improve the socio-economic empowerment of women.**

1. **1 Arundhati Gold Yogana Scheme:** The Arundhati Gold Scheme, launched by the Assam government, provides a financial grant of Rs 40,000/ will be provided to the brides to buy gold for her marriage. The main objective of the scheme is to facilitate the parents of the girl child who are economically not very sound.
2. **Indira Miri Universal Widow Pension Scheme:** All the women up to 45 years of age who have lost their husband & resident of Assam can avail this lump sum amount. This widow pension scheme is going to benefit around 2.4 lakh widows.
3. **Minority Girls Scholarship scheme:** Scholarship to the girl students belonging to Minority communities of classes X, XI & XII. It aims to provide financial support for their education. Minority Girls Scholarship, Assam 2023-24 is offering up to INR 4000 per annum to Girl students studying at the above classes.
4. **Na-Bowari scheme:** this scheme mainly aims to finance for the economic empowerment of women belonging to the Scheduled castes (SC) families those who are living below the poverty line. The beneficiary age
5. **Orunodoi or Arunodoi Scheme:** Orunodoi or Arunodoi Scheme is a new scheme of the Government of Assam is launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 has been enhanced from 830/ to Rs 1000 of women. The scheme is an ambitious and momentous step towards socio-economic empowerment.
6. **Swanirbhar Naari- Atmanirbhar Asom Scheme 2020:** Swanirbhar Naari-Atmanirbhar Asom Scheme 2020 lunched by CM sarbanand sonowal for economically disadvantaged women, around 4 lakh families to benefit in 1<sup>st</sup> phase of swarnibhar Nari- atmannirbhar assam scheme, approx. 3.72 lakh sustainable individual and 822 community assets to created.
7. **Jibika Sakhi express Schemes:** Jibika Sahki Express scheme in assam aims to empower women though self- Help Groups (SHGs) by providing schoolers and a monthly allowance to 5,242 community Cadres, including Bank sakhi, Krishi Sakhi, Bima Sakhi, Pashu sakhi, and Master Bookkeepers.

## 5.2 Social Empowerment:

In Assam some necessary steps has been taken to empower of women, yet there has been change for further improvement. After independence, reconstruction of education took place people started realizing the importance of education for women though which women are able to get different field.

### Problems that hampers Socio-economic empowerment of women in Assam:

1. **Lack of Proper Education:** In the Assamese society Female Education plays a strong and significant role. Since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century men only got educational preferences. Female enrolment in primary, secondary and higher levels of education was not satisfactory, as a results, female were deprived of their rights. In Assam the female literacy rate was 67.27 percent according to census report 2011. As we all know education is the milestone of women empowerment. Because, it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life they face.
2. **Poverty:** According to U.N “Fundamentally poverty is a denial of choice and opportunities a violation of human dignity”. The poverty status of Assam as per estimation was 34.4 percent during 2004 which is reduced to 27.34 percent in 2015. The poverty means about not having enough money to meet basic needs including food, clothing and shelter. Poverty is a social phenomena in which a section of the people of the society is unable to fulfill their basic needs of life. As per the estimates of World Bank, 763 million people in India live below the poverty line in 2011.
3. **Household & professional inequality:** Since the beginning of the development of human society in Assam it had been observed that the prevailing inequality regarding the acquiring of household property and achieving the professional qualification in case of girl child. There had been also prevailing disproportionate distribution of responsibilities and opportunity regarding care, work and career and the advancement of profession. These causes lead the women of Assam in the back through of socio-economic empowerment.
4. **Physical weakness:** Physical weakness is one of another obstacle of women empowerment of rural area of Assam. In Assam the most of women of rural area lying under below poverty line and their health condition are not satisfactory. At the same, Child marriage is one of the factors of women weakness. Maternal mortality rates have declined, but access to quality healthcare remains uneven, Malnutrition and anemia are prevalent among women and girls, impacting their overall well-being and productivity.

There are several other factors that create problems towards the equal walk of the women. But in the context of Assamese society these are the prominent factors that have mentioned here.

### Suggestions:

To elevate socio-economic empowerment of women live I Assam are to follow some recommended suggestion that mentioned below.

- a. Finding out social issues that hampers in the enhancement of socio-economic empowerment of women in Assam.
- b. Promote equal rights and opportunities are very essential.
- c. Combat violence and discrimination which have been continued since ancient time in Assam.
- d. Support women’s empowerment initiatives like initiatives of various NGOs and programmes of govt. and elites groups are recommended.

- e. Encourage Self-esteem and confidence among the women is very essential. Since the ancient time women were assumed as weak in comparison with the men. So, there should be developed a sense of strength and confidence.
- f. Preferences towards education and skill development of women are to be created all over the state and also the country.
- g. Encouragement of mental health and awareness of women is also recommended. In most cases it has been observed that women are dominated and deprived from their activities thinking of that they are incapable.

### Conclusion:

Empowerment of rural women especially in the backward countries is regarded very significant. In this regard development and women empowerment through education help to change economic and social status which must ensure sustainable development of a nation. Government initiatives like the “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” campaign aim to address issues of female infanticide and promote girls education. It is said that without economic independence the independence in other field of social life is meaningless. In this regard economic earnings through engaging in the various occupations and earning sources of women are very significant. While empowering progress has been made in areas such as education, employment and political participation, challenges like gender inequality, violence and traditional social norms persist. Empowering women and achieving gender equality is not just a matter of social justice but also a crucial factor for the overall development and prosperity of a nation. Assam as a constitutional part of the country is reflected all that of characteristics that are found in the country more or less. In that circumstances we have to follow all that of plan and programmes that implemented by the central government. By addressing the structural and cultural barriers that hinder women progress and fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. India can unlock the full potential of its women, driving innovation, growth and social harmony. The future aspect of Assamese women and their social and economic empowerment of depend mainly on social awareness and active participation of its women in various fields of social arenas. This should be the collective responsibility of all the citizens to work towards this noble goal.

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