

# Status of Women in India with Special Reference to Assam

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**Abstract:** *The women of any country have a crucial contribution within the progress of the country. It's felt need that Indian women need to come to the fore and to play an outstanding role within the event of scientific thinking and scientific disposition in solving the issues of life. Women status is about to an outstanding extent in terms of socio-economic indicators like income, poverty, education and skills that exposes opportunities of employment, better health. History reveals that the status of women in ancient India was quite different than the status enjoyed by today's women. Indian constitution gives equal political rights to both men and women but, the representation of women in parliament and state legislatures is extremely less. There are numerous issues which remains tied round the neck of an Indian woman, blocking her progress within the new century, destroying all her efforts to know a lifetime of dignity and self respect. However, within the hilly areas, the women are more enterprising than the male counterparts. In Assam, the status of women is high as compared to the women of other states of India. The greatest challenge today is to improve the status of women who constitute almost half the population of the country. In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the Status of Women in India with special reference to Assam. The methodology of this paper is descriptive and required informations are collected from different secondary sources like books, research articles, different government documents etc.*

**Key Words:** *Status of women, India, North-East, Assam.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The women of any country have a crucial contribution within the progress of the country. Within the fashionable age, women have a crucial part to play within the national development at large. The women not only played a really significant role in developing human resources, but they also play a really important role in molding character of youngsters and progress and prosperity of the society she lives in. The Science and Technology has brought an entire revolution in thoughts and attitudes of person. It's felt need that Indian women need to come to the fore and to play an outstanding role within the event of scientific thinking and scientific disposition in solving the issues of life. The fortune of a nation depends upon the tutorial system of that nation. In any system of education, women education takes a crucial place. As per the University Education Commission 1948-49, there can't be educated people without educated women. Without educated women a nation cannot expect a high rate of growth and solution of internal problems. Women status is about to an outstanding extent in terms of socio-economic indicators like income, poverty, education and skills that exposes opportunities of employment, better health. These indices also are vitally interlinked with the concepts of power and position. At an equivalent time, women must have a share within the deciding process within the family and within the overall public sphere, and access the rights and opportunities provided by the state and society at large.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study has been designed keeping the following objectives in view.

- (i) To study the status of women in India.
- (ii) To study the status of women in Assam.

## 3. METHODOLOGY:

The methodology of this paper is descriptive and required informations are collected from different secondary sources like books, research articles, different government documents etc.

## 4. STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA:

History reveals that the status of women in ancient India was quite different than the status enjoyed by today's women. During that point, they were considered thereto of her men counterpart. However, the women status was deteriorated during Muslim period especially due to the intrusion of polygamy within the society. Moreover, sati dah, child marriage and pardah system were also practice which gradually made the status of girls quite shaky. Fortunately enough, women of India enjoyed constitutional status after India got independence within the year 1947. Gradually, various steps were taken to eradicate certain social evils like superstition, sati pratha, child marriage, pardah pratha

etc. which has contributed tons towards formation of a hope for creating an egalitarian society. Different commissions, committees including National Education Policy of 1986, Durgabhai Deshmukh Commission (1956), Hansa Mehta Committee (1961) and Bhakta Vatsalam Committee (1965) recommended valuable suggestion for improving the status of girls through education.

But, yet women aren't treated as equal as men. The Indian constitution gives equal political rights to both men and women but, the representation of women in parliament and state legislatures is extremely less. The 81<sup>st</sup> constitutional amendment bill to supply for one third reservation for women in parliament was tabled for the primary time in 1996. But, it had been soon engulfed within the conflicts over the demand of special quota for women of other backward castes and minorities. Till today, there's no sincere effort on the area of national and regional political parties towards the passing of the bill. There are numerous issues which remains tied round the neck of an Indian woman, blocking her progress within the new century, destroying all her efforts to know a lifetime of dignity and self respect. Sort of the issues Indian women face for the last 50 years are- the unwanted daughter, high rate of illiteracy among women, health abuse and mal-nutrition, unwilling child women, dowry death, harassment and at atrocities within the working place, torture at adulthood. Regarding the status of girls as an entire, it has been found that girls represent 50% of the entire population; 30% are engaged in labour force which they perform quite 60% of all working hours, but they receive only 10% of the world's income and own even but 1% of the world's property (ILO). As per population census 2011, the entire literacy rate of India is 74.4 percent, where the percentages of male and female literacy rates are 82.14 and 65.46 respectively and the gap is only 16.68 percent. The north eastern states of India which is additionally mentioned because the land of eight sisters, collectively account for about V-E Day of the country's geographic area and roughly 4 you're taking care of its population. As per the last 2001 census, the entire population of the region was 38,495,089 with 19,874,535 male and 18,620,554 female. The women population is around 50 considered the sex ratio is 940 female per 1000 male within the region as compared to 933 female per 1000 male within the country. Consistent with third small industry census (2001-02), 20.03 % micro-enterprises within the region are owned and managed by women entrepreneurs as against 10.11 % within the country. This is often mainly because of the rationale that the tribal women are mostly dominating the markets in most of the hilly areas of the region. The region is additionally characterized by the relatively high women literacy rate 63.4 resistant to all India female literacy of 54.2 %, (Women literacy rate of Mizoram is as high as 95.8 %), high decimal growth of population, low urbanization (except Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram) and contrasting population density (13 persons per sq km in Arunachal Pradesh where as in Assam and Tripura it's as high as 340 and 304 respectively). Economically, the plain areas of the region are more active than the hilly areas. However, within the hilly areas, the women are more enterprising than the male counterparts.

##### **5. STATUS OF WOMEN IN ASSAM:**

In Assam, the status of women is high as compared to the women of other states of India. One salient features within the Assamese society was the absence of the dowry system. The Assamese society (except people that came from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and other places) didn't have dowry as a neighborhood of marriage as is that the custom found in other states. Aside from the general national picture, in Assam also if we focus our attention on this scenario or status of girls then the image is additionally not within the smallest amount rosy. Women have usually got lower wage than the lads for an equivalent work; they need comparatively poor health status, low educational status, and lower skill than the lads. They're generalized as a gaggle of vulnerable and marginalized section altogether spheres viz. in educational field, in social situation, in economic activities and political field then on. In fact, during a patriarchal society, women activities are considered as belonging to non-public domain whereas men's activities are considered as belonging to ownership. The population of the state is 26.66 million of which 12.85 million are female. As regards sex ratio, it's 932 females per 1000 males (Census of India 2001) and it's increased to 954 females per 1000 males within the census of 2011. There's a worth loaded concept that girls in Assam are more liberal, they're free from the various social constraints, social evils like dowry, purdha system etc than the states like Bihar, Rajasthan or the Northern and Southern belt of India. The predominance of tribal economy or an extended standing influence of tribal work pattern, where economy revolves on women labour, is that the most factors that the mobility of girls in Assam and within the North East generally is taken into account far above it's within the other parts of the country. However, this doesn't mean that girls in Assam are on an equal footing with men. Still in Assam, the capacity building among the women could even be a way bigger challenge before us and also there's a rampant gender disparity altogether human development sectors. Out of the entire literacy rate in Assam i.e. 64.3 percent, the male literacy percentage is 71.9 percent whereas the feminine literacy is 56 percent, with the gap of 15.9 percent (Census of India 2001) although during 1991-2001, annual average rate of growth of female literacy (1.3 per cent) was quite that of male literacy rate (0.99 per cent). Consistent with the Census of 2011, from the entire literacy (73.18%) men literacy percentage is 78.81 whereas female occupies 67.27 percent with the gap of 11.54 percent. Again, the feminine enrolment is increasing within the primary and elementary level but still the enrolment rate of girls in secondary and better education segment could also be a smaller amount than 33 percent.

Sex ratio could also be an important indicator that reflects the status of girls in society. It reflects whether she enjoys the rights to survival, protection and development. In 2001, the male-female ratio in Assam was 1000:932 which was but all India average of 1000:933. The imbalance within the male female ratio is due to blind faith also because the results of illiteracy which have resulted in destruction of the daughter at the prenatal stage due to sex determination test (which fortunately has been banned by the Govt. of India), deliberate malnutrition and neglect of the girl child. Within the world of education, women in Assam are in better position than all India average. As per 2001 census, the literacy rate for Assam is 64.28 considered against 65.38% for India, while male literacy is 71.93 % (India 75.85%), female literacy stands at 56.03% (India 54.60%). The male –female gap within the literacy rate remains perceptible although it's declining over time and is much below the all India average. It is a certain incontrovertible fact that the status of girls in Assam is that the worst in terms of their position making bodies. In Assam in 1977, out of three female candidates who contested for the Lok Sabha, two candidates were selected. In 1980, out of the 2 female candidates who contested for the Lok Sabha, none were elected. No women from the state of Assam contested within the 1984 and 1989 elections. In 1991, 7 female candidates contested for the Lok Sabha but, none was selected. In 1996, just one woman was elected to the Lok Sabha out of 9 candidates who contested. The participation of girls is low not only within the elected bodies but also in administrative posts. The overall picture seems to be quite dismal. However, there are much possibilities and potential for increased participation of girls within the national mainstream. So, keeping now in sight, some strategic approaches for improving women's status in Assam are often can be taken up.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

The greatest challenge today is to improve the status of women who constitute almost half the population of the country. The fundamental rights and directive principles given in the constitution of India bear faithful application of the principle of non discrimination so that women are entitled to the same rights as men as citizens of India. In India, during the last three decades, through the gender disparity at various levels of education has declined, still it needs to be further reduced. The central and state governments have to implement policies on empowerment of women to effectively address gender disparities particularly in education. Women's empowerment is possible through educating the women of society and by imparting that education helps them building confidence, morality and self respect. Education is the key to improving the quality of life; that directly reflect to pace of growth and advancement of a nation. No country can progress if it is proactive in its action; which can come only through learning and education. So, the greatest challenge today is to educate the women who plays main role in the progress of the society. In conclusion, we may say that men and women are like the two halves of humanity making a perfect whole. It should be realized that equality does not demand the sacrifice of individuality, but each sex should try to develop its own particular talent.

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