

ABSTRACT

Scheduled Tribes are the most disadvantaged group of people and they are socially and geographically isolated. The term “scheduled tribe” first appeared in the Constitution of India, to confer certain constitutional privileges and protection to a group of people who are considered disadvantaged and backward. Out of the total tribal population, tribal women add up to almost half. Like all other communities, development of status of tribal communities also largely depends on the upliftment of the status of tribal women.

Education is a basic right and an important engine of socio-economic development. However, there are many barriers that tribal women in India face in accessing education. Despite various government programs and initiatives promoting the education of tribal populations, tribal women's educational attainment remains very low compared to that of their non-tribal counterparts. Education is crucial for everyone and is key to overall development. It helps bring about positive changes, improves understanding, reduces exploitation within communities, and affects growth, health, and social well-being.

Across all states in India, there is a noticeable difference between the literacy rates of Scheduled Tribe men and women . The literacy rate for Scheduled Tribe men is higher than ST women. In Assam, the overall literacy rate for the Tribe is 72.1%, with men at 79% and women at 65.1%, creating a gap of 13.9%. This shows that tribal women are lagging behind in education.

Tribal women have a lower status compared to both tribal men and women in the general population. The Bodo women of Assam have faced various difficulties and issues since early times. The education status of Bodo women represents an area of study critical in dimensions that further reflect the wider societal dynamics and intersectionality of gender, culture, and education within the tribal context. Education is the means to empowerment, and in terms of Bodo women, systemic obstacles continue to put it beyond their reach and effect. These barriers often stem from deeply rooted socio-economic issues, cultural norms and traditions, and inadequate infrastructure, leading to disparities in educational attainment. This study is essential because it prioritizes understanding education from the perspective of Bodo women as it provides an authentic narrative of their experiences, aspirations, and struggles.

This study provides a complete way to look at the constraints and perception or attitude of Bodo women in relation to education. It examines family, social, cultural, financial, school, and psychological obstacles, as well as understand their perception towards education. The aim is to give a detailed understanding of what affects Bodo women's education. This

knowledge can help to understand and provide suggestions to improve access, involvement, and development in education for Bodo women. Findings of the study will leverage in effecting culturally sensitive interventions and strengthening education policies.

This thesis has been systematically organized into six chapters. Below highlights an overview of the contents and scope of each chapter:

The first chapter covers the background of the study which includes the importance of education among all individuals and how women are lagging behind in terms of attaining education. This chapter covers the literacy trends of men and women in India, which focussing in the literacy rate of tribal women. Also, the problem faced by tribal women in attaining education. This chapter covers the brief history of Bodos in terms of their social, cultural and economic aspects. This chapter also includes the education of Bodos since pre-independence to post-independence period. Moreover, this chapter also includes brief analysis of the theories that are important for this study, rationale, significance, objectives, operational definition and delimitations of the study.

The second chapter covers the review of related literature. The researcher conducted an extensive review of both national and international studies related to this field. It is conducted on educational status of women, their constraint towards education and perception of women towards education. The researcher also provided a summary of the reviews conducted and the significant research gaps that are identified.

The third chapter of the thesis contains the research methodology applied in this study. This chapter provides a brief description of the locale of the study. A mixed-method research design, which combines both qualitative and quantitative data, is used to achieve the study's objective. This approach involves collecting data simultaneously. To do this, the descriptive survey research method is applied. In this study, 3 districts of BTR, namely, Kokrajhar, Baksa and Udalguri have been purposively selected on the basis of highest number of populations. From the 3 districts, 200 rural Bodo women having education or have at least attended basic schooling, have been selected for quantitative analysis from each district. And 30 women from among the 600 women have been selected for qualitative study. Two self-prepared and standardized scales are used in this study and their development procedure has been explained in detail. The data analysis technique for quantitative and qualitative data is presented in detail. For quantitative data, Percentage, Mean, S.D, Bar-chart and pie-diagram are used and Thematic analysis has been used for analysing the qualitative data.

The fourth chapter of the thesis presents the analysis and interpretation of the research data. The study's findings revealed that most women in the Bodoland territorial region have basically received primary education. Also, it indicated that that Bodo women from three districts of BTR have experienced High level of constraint in attaining education. Both quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that Bodo women have faced significant, Family ,Financial ,Socio-cultural , Psychological and school-based constraints in relation to education. However, it is also found from both quantitative and qualitative findings that most Bodo women in BTR have a favourably high perception towards education of Bodo women in BTR. This study also includes suggestions provided by Bodo women related to education of Bodo women. This is because they have experienced the problems and they are capable of offering meaningful solutions which have the potential to improve the access and the outcomes of education for Bodo women.

In the fifth chapter, the researcher has interpreted and discussed the findings of the study in coherence with the existing literature. This chapter explains the study's results, comparing them to past research and providing the researcher's reasoning.

This last and final chapter, that is the sixth chapter, sums up the study by presenting key findings, provides recommendations to all the key stakeholders in relation to education of Bodo women. This chapter also include the educational implications of the study and suggests further potential areas of research that can add to the understanding of constraints in the education of Bodo women and their perception towards education.

In conclusion, this research is a re-affirmation of the fact that the views of Bodo women are essential in gaining an understanding of their educational realities. The study underscores the importance of sensitizing families and communities to the value of women's education, challenging traditional norms that hinder progress. Empowering Bodo women through education will not only uplift them individually but will also contribute to the overall development of the Bodo community, promoting gender equity and socio-economic progress Their voices are precious as they will throw light on changes needed to ensure education is liberating and truly empowering. To address the issues, they face and embrace their dreams will pave the way for an inclusive, just, and equal society in which Bodo women can grow, develop, and contribute meaningfully to their community and beyond.

Keywords:[Educational Status, Bodo women, Constraint, Perception, Bodoland Territorial Region]