

## LOWER PRIMARY EDUCATION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITY GIRL CHILD IN LAKHIPUR EDUCATIONAL BLOCK OF GOALPARA DISTRICT IN ASSAM

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The district Goalpara is one of the educationally backward districts of Assam. In the District 57.52% population do belong to religious minority (Muslim). The rural literacy rate in the district is just 65.93% and the Muslim female literacy is only 52.39%. Most important aspect is that the Lakhipur Educational Block of the district Goalpara has the lowest female literacy which is 21.61 percent. It is worst among the educationally backward areas of the state, so far as universalization of elementary education is concerned. So, micro-level Study like the present one may provide some valuable inputs to remove the hurdles of lower primary education of the female segment in general and those of minority group in particular.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Dropout, Education, Muslim Girl, Lower Primary School, and Universalization*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Lower Primary education is the starting level for every child to enter into domain of formal education. It is meant, the education for children of 6-14 years of age group. This stage is called primary stage of education in the sense that the child formally introduces disciplinary rules of education that one socially recognized. The child at the stage of 6 years is expected to attain necessary psychophysical maturity to undergo formal training in a lower primary school. The main aim of lower primary education is to fulfill the basic educational needs of children and starts their socialization keeping view on requirement of the society.

After independence the directive principal of Indian constitution has laid the provision for making available the opportunities for free and compulsory primary education up to age 14 years. Then 1964-66 commission has suggested making primary education free and compulsory. In 1986, it was National Policy on Education and Program of Action, 1992 have recommended a number of schemes for qualities and quantitative development of primary education of country. It was Sarva Siksha Abhiyan a centrally sponsored scheme that launched in 2001-02 for achieving the goal of universalization of elementary education through a time bound approach. The main objective of the scheme are to ensure education for all children of the age group of 6-14 by 2003 and completion of primary education of first five years within 2010. To give the importance on girls' elementary education the government of India launched the scheme on National Program for Education of Girls at educationally backward blocks where the level of female literacy is below and gender gap is above the national level, and recently, the Right to Education Act comes to force on 1st April 2010. The Act also gives the importance on education of girls and minorities.

The district Goalpara is one of the educationally backward districts of Assam. In the District 57.52% population do belong to religious minority (Muslim). The rural literacy rate in the district is just 65.93% and the Muslim female

literacy is only 52.39%. Most important aspect is that the Lakhipur Educational Block of the district Goalpara has the lowest female literacy which is 21.61 percent. It is worst among the educationally backward areas of the state, so far as universalization of primary education is concerned. So, micro-level Study like the present one may provide some valuable inputs to remove the hurdles of lower primary education of the female segment in general and those of minority group in particular.

The following studies are related to the present study which has helped the investigator to carry on the present one.

High drop-out and retention among the lower primary teachers are caused by manifold factors which could be perceived under socio-economic, cultural and political dimensions and negative attitude towards education. In the context of Goalpara district, particularly in the *char* areas which are predominantly inhabited by the Muslim, most of the schools are single teacher and single room schools, one which fail to make any appeal neither among guardians nor among the children.

### Objectives of the Present Study

The objectives of the present study are:

- To present detailed account of lower primary education in the selected villages in respect of enrolment of Muslim girls in Lakhipur Educational Block of Goalpara District in Assam.
- To find out the causes of non-enrolment and drop-out at lower primary level of education by Muslim girls in Lakhipur Educational Block of Goalpara District in Assam.
- To provide remedial measures for promoting lower primary education for Muslim girls of the Lakhipur Educational Block of Goalpara District in Assam.

### Area of the PRESENT Study

For the present study the investigator has selected Lakhipur Educational Block of Goalpara District. From the block, the investigator has selected three villages as sample village with the help of random sampling method. For the study, the investigator has selected Ten Lower Primary Schools of the selected villages. The study has deal with the academic records of 2019 and 2020.

**Table 1: Name of the Sample Villages with the Sample Schools in Year-2021**

District	Block	Villages	Sl. No of Schools	U-DISE Code	Name of School
Goalpara	Lakhipur	Katarihara	1	18030200607	Bondavanga LP School
			2	18030200610	Katarihara North Para LP School
			3	18030200608	Jolduba North LP School
			4	18030200603	997 No. Jolduba LP School
		Damrivasha	5	18030200602	Damrivasha LP School
			6	18030200601	905 No. Damrivasha LP School
			7	18030200606	Damrivasha North LP School
			8	18030200610	Pub Damrivasha LP School
		Tekona	9	18030212005	Uttar Tekona LP School
			10	18030212001	1013 No. Tekona LP School

Source: Field Survey, 2021

## **METHODOLOGY**

Both primary and secondary data are collected on the basis of objectives for the present study. The following tools have been used by the investigator for data collection.

- Observation
- Questionnaire
- Interview schedule

The primary data is collected from multiple stakeholders such as the religious minority Muslim girls in Lakhipur Educational Block of Goalpara district. Other secondary sources such as relevant books, journals and other reports have also been used appropriately. Relevant internet materials are also widely used. The tools used for collecting necessary data are depth interview, case history method, observation, non-participant observation and questionnaire. A questionnaire consisting of 25 questions focusing mostly on the objectives of the study is prepared to collect authentic information/ views of the children, their family members, school teachers, village head man, policeman, and political leader. Finally collected data are analyzed with the help of modern technique of computer.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The educational backwardness of the Muslim minorities has always been a grave concern and attracted the attention of many researchers. The studies conducted so far reveal that the major causes for educational backwardness are socio economic factors, gender issues, shortage of female teachers, teaching learning process in schools, drop out of children, implementation of policies and programs etc. The present paper primarily focuses on educational status of the Muslim minorities in the states where size of Muslim population is more in comparison to other states as per the Census 2011. Therefore, the paper tries to find out the educational status of Muslims as well as reasons for variations in their educational development among the states and within the state. Further it suggests strategies for educational development of Muslims in the country, particularly in Muslim concentrated areas. Various research studies have been carried out to explain the reasons for educational backwardness of the Muslim minorities. According to GOI report, lack of adequate number of schools and infrastructural facilities in the Muslim dominated areas is a major causes of educational backwardness of this community. In spite of more than seven decades of constitutional guarantee, there are many settlements where government schools are lacking and required facilities do not exist in schools as discussed in the education policies pointed out that teaching-learning processes and overall schooling environment (teacher-pupil relationship, pupil-pupil relationship etc.) are the reasons of low participation of Muslim children. The outcome data does not always throw light on why some children drop out or why some children learn so little even though they have been attending school, and even being promoted from one grade to the next.

Low participation of girls in schools is another notable problem in the education of Muslims. In schools, physical facilities are not available as per the need of the girls and as per the norms and standards laid by the government. When schools are not available within a walking distance and closer to the place of dwelling, parents are a bit reluctant - due to the feeling of insecurity - to send their girls to a school which is far off. The studies shown that the reasons for educational backwardness of Muslim girls are lack of government commitment in providing adequate infrastructural facilities in terms of building with a boundary wall, basic amenities, libraries, hostels, etc. Likewise, high teacher student ratio as well as

absence of lady teachers in schools restricted the girls from pursuing schooling. Jha and Jingaran's study reveals that Muslim girls are going to Madrassa because government schools are not functioning well, there is inadequate infrastructure, teachers are irregular and disinterested and the schools remain closed very frequently.

Drop and non-enrollment are the two major problems for universalization of primary education. The objective of the study demands to examine the existing enrollment and drop-out at primary level among the Muslim girls of the selected area. Numbers of drop-out girls are estimated through collection of secondary data from the selected schools and numbers of non-enrolled Muslim girls of selected villages are collected through house hold survey. From the investigation it is seen that the total number of Muslim girl child of the age 6-11 years in the sample villages are found 598 (305 + 190+103). Table-2 and Table-4 shows the class wise Muslim Girls enrollment and class wise drop out girl child of the selected primary schools of the villages covered under the study. Table-5 shows the non-enrolled Muslim girl child in the study area.

Table-2: shows the class wise Muslim Girls enrollment of primary schools of the three sample villages in Lakhipur Educational Block of Goalpara, Assam. The primary data of the table reveals that the S<sub>2</sub> and S<sub>4</sub> of Katarihara village shows the highest girl's enrollment in academic year 2019 – 2020 and S<sub>3</sub> in Katarihara and S<sub>5</sub> in Damrivasha village show the lowest girl's enrollment in the same academic year.

**Table 2: Class Wise Enrollment of Muslim Girl Child of the Surveyed Schools**

School	Year	Class I		Class II		Class III		Class IV		Class V	
		T	G	T	G	T	G	T	G	T	G
S <sub>1</sub>	2019	07	05	29	11	25	12	17	07	16	06
	2020	19	08	06	04	27	09	24	11	16	06
S <sub>2</sub>	2019	28	13	27	11	25	08	29	12	18	10
	2020	21	09	26	11	25	10	22	07	26	10
S <sub>3</sub>	2019	22	10	11	06	18	10	13	05	11	06
	2020	16	07	20	08	09	05	15	08	12	04
S <sub>4</sub>	2019	67	43	43	18	50	27	47	22	50	18
	2020	58	26	63	40	40	16	46	25	43	20
S <sub>5</sub>	2019	07	03	10	04	11	05	09	03	11	06
	2020	15	07	06	02	08	03	10	04	08	02
S <sub>6</sub>	2019	30	14	33	16	18	08	18	06	13	10
	2020	24	11	27	12	29	14	14	06	16	04
S <sub>7</sub>	2019	28	12	22	10	14	08	17	07	16	07
	2020	19	09	26	08	19	08	13	07	15	05
S <sub>8</sub>	2019	20	09	22	10	18	08	16	09	23	12
	2020	24	10	18	08	19	09	15	06	14	07
S <sub>9</sub>	2019	27	12	18	10	19	08	17	07	17	08
	2020	18	08	26	11	15	08	17	06	15	06
S <sub>10</sub>	2019	28	13	19	08	19	07	18	08	20	11
	2020	27	12	25	11	16	06	15	05	15	06

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table-2 shows the total Muslim enrolment, total Muslim Boys enrolment and total Muslim girls enrolment of the surveyed schools of the sample village. The table reflects that the highest total enrolment has found in S<sub>4</sub> (257) of Katarihara village and lowest total enrolment has found in S<sub>5</sub> (48) of Damrivasha village. So far as the girl's enrolment is concerned it has found that the number of girl's enrolment in all the surveyed schools has found less than the number of boy's enrolment of the same schools. That table also reveals that the average of boy's enrolment has found always high than the average of Muslim girl's enrolment of the surveyed schools.

**Table 3: Year wise Total Muslim Enrollment, Total Muslim Boys Enrollment and Total Muslim Girls Enrolment of the Surveyed Schools**

School	Year	Total Enrolment	Boys Enrolment	Girls Enrolment
S <sub>1</sub>	2019	94	53	41
	2020	92	49	43
S <sub>2</sub>	2019	127	73	54
	2020	120	62	58
S <sub>3</sub>	2019	75	38	37
	2020	72	39	33
S <sub>4</sub>	2019	257	129	128
	2020	250	130	120
S <sub>5</sub>	2019	48	27	21
	2020	47	25	22
S <sub>6</sub>	2019	112	58	54
	2020	110	59	51
S <sub>7</sub>	2019	97	53	44
	2020	92	52	40
S <sub>8</sub>	2019	99	51	48
	2020	90	47	43
S <sub>9</sub>	2019	98	53	45
	2020	91	49	42
S <sub>10</sub>	2019	104	57	47
	2020	98	54	44

Source: Field Survey, 2021

**Table 4: Percentage of Drop-out of Muslim Girl Child of the Surveyed Schools**

Name of Village	Surveyed School	Year	Class I-II	Class II-III	Class III-IV	Class IV - V	Total Drop-out Girls	Percentage of Drop-out Girls
Katarihara	S <sub>1</sub>	2019	02	03	01	01	07	17.03%
		2020	01	02	01	01	05	11.62%
	S <sub>2</sub>	2019	01	03	02	02	08	14.81%
		2020	02	02	01	02	07	12.07%
	S <sub>3</sub>	2019	01	03	02	01	07	18.92%
		2020	02	01	02	01	06	18.18%
	S <sub>4</sub>	2019	03	03	03	03	12	09.38%
		2020	03	02	03	02	10	08.33%
Damrivasha	S <sub>5</sub>	2019	01	02	02	01	06	28.57%
		2020	01	01	01	01	04	18.18%
	S <sub>6</sub>	2019	01	03	03	02	09	16.67%
		2020	02	02	02	02	08	15.69%
	S <sub>7</sub>	2019	02	03	02	01	08	18.18%
		2020	02	02	01	02	07	17.50%
	S <sub>8</sub>	2019	02	02	03	02	09	18.75%
		2020	02	01	02	02	07	16.28%
Tekona	S <sub>9</sub>	2019	02	03	01	02	08	17.78%
		2020	01	02	02	01	06	14.29%
	S <sub>10</sub>	2019	02	03	03	02	10	21.28%
		2020	02	02	02	02	08	18.18%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table-4 reflects the drop-out rate of Muslim girl child of the ten surveyed schools of the academic year 2019 and 2020. From Damrivasha village, the S<sub>5</sub> shows that 28.57% is highest drop-out rate in the academic year of 2019. Like this, in the Katarihara village, the S<sub>4</sub> shows that 08.33% is lowest drop-out rate in the academic year 2020. In S<sub>3</sub> and S<sub>10</sub>, the highest drop-out rate is 18.18% in 2020.

**Table 5: Percentage of Non-enrollment Muslim Girl Child of the Sample Village**

Village	Total Girl-Age Group of 6-11	Attend in School	Non-enrolment Girl	Percentage of Non-enrolment Girl
Katarihara	305	260	45	14.75%
Damrivasha	190	167	23	12.11%
Tekona	103	92	11	10.68%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The table-5 shows the non-enrollment Muslim girl of the sample villages. The table reveals that 14.75% girl of the age group 6 to 11 years are non-enrolled in the Katarihara village; 12.11% in respect of Damrivasha and 10.68% in Tekona village of Lakhipur Educational Block. It is also observed that the rate of non-enrolled girls of Katarihara village is highest and the rate of non-enrolled girls of Tekona village is lowest of the same block.

## CAUSES OF DROP-OUT AND NON-ENROLMENT

One of the major objectives of the study was to identify the causes of drop-out and non-enrollment of Muslim girl child of the selected areas. To find out the causes of drop-out and non-enrollment of girl child the teacher and parents of locality are interviewed to find out the causes. The interview with teachers and parents of drop-out and non-enrolled subjects reveals the main causes, these are as follows.

- Poor economic condition of the parents.
- For looking after of their younger sibling and old ailing ones.
- Teaching learning situation of the school is not attractive.
- Failing to enjoy individual attention of teacher in the single teacher schools.
- Interest of girl education is subdued by that of marriage at earlier age.
- Lack of female teachers in the schools.
- Engaged in wage earning activities.
- Parents are illiterate and ignorant about importance of education of their children.

## SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the responses of teachers and parents interviewed for the study and the first hand experience of about the reality of the villages of following suggestions may be effective to control the problem.

- Women teacher should be appointed in lower primary schools of the area.
- It is possible to retain the enrolled in school with attractive and moderate facilities with qualified and trained teachers.

- Efforts should be made to change the negative attitude of Muslim parents towards their girls' education.
- Early child marriage should be strictly prohibited by the low and adequate sensitization of the parents at large.
- To deal with the problem of engagement of girl child in carrying of siblings women's association may informed to tackle the problem collectively.
- Door to door approach should be taken by both Government and Non-Government agencies to convince the illiterate women to attend continuing education centre where imparting literacy to the illiterates should be an important activity.
- Single teacher school system should be stopped and at least two teachers should be appointed in every school.

## CONCLUSION

The emphasis of the present study is primarily laid upon the problems associated with drop-out and non-enrolment among girl child Muslim community in lower primary stage of Lakhipur Educational Block of Goalpara District in Assam. The main objective of the study was estimate the drop-out and non-enrolment among Muslim girl child and to identify the causes responsible for these two evils. From the point of view of the problems associated with drop-out and non-enrolment among Muslim girl child of lower primary stage, this work has been carried out with the aims to study the existing number of non-enrolment and drop-out children, as well as the causes responsible for it. Thus from the household survey, the non-enrolled and drop-out children are identified and with the help of questionnaire and different schedules prepared for teachers and parents, various causes of drop-out and non-enrollment are identified. The problem of education in minorities particularly among the female segment is an issue of national importance. The findings this study, no doubt shed light on the plight of their socio-economic life.

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