



## EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF MISHING WOMEN: A STUDY OF KEKURI VILLAGE OF DHEMAJI DISTRICT, ASSAM

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### ABSTRACT:

North-East frontier state of India is inhabited by various tribes and these tribes speaking different languages representing their different social and political institutions. Mishings are the second largest tribal group of Assam. Women constitute an important part in Mishing society and when women are educated it become a strong force for change. Without the development of these people, the development of Mishing tribe is a distant dream. Thus, education should be accorded a top priority in the tribal areas. Quality of performance has become the key factor for personal progress. Education helps in removing this evil and thus government are trying their best to remove this evil by giving basic education through established free education centers. But how far this has achieved in improving the educational status is still a question. In this paper, an attempt has been done to understand educational status of the Mising women in Kekuri village of Dhemaji district, Assam and different problems associated in the way of attaining education. The study is based on convenient sampling method and through interview schedule.

### KEYWORDS:

**EDUCATIONAL STATUS, MISHING COMMUNITY, DHEMAJI, REPRODUCTION OF LABOUR POWER.**

### INTRODUCTION:

Education is a means to all round progress of man and pathway to human development goes through the lanes of education. Women education refers to every form of education that aims at improving the knowledge, and skill of women and girls .It includes general education at schools and colleges, vocational and technical education, professional education, health education, etc. Education can generate awareness among the people by acquiring knowledge and information which will lead to change in their society. Education helps in maturity and integration of personality which helps in the right modification of behavior helping a human deal with life as a whole.

Mishing(or formerly Miris) tribe is one of the major plain tribes of Assam, who are generally found in upper Assam, mainly riverine areas of Jorhat, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Tinisukia, Dibrugarh, and Sonitpur district. The Indian constitution has regarded the "Miri"s as a schedule tribe of Assam and the second largest tribal group in Assam. Around 98.2% of total Mishing population inhabits in rural areas of Assam and only 1.8% of total population resides in urban areas, which is lowest. This shows that majority of Mishing population is untouched by

the roots of modernity they are found to be distributed in areas beyond the zone of urban influence.

The name Dhemaji is believed to be derived from Mishing word "Dhe" means 'Fly' and 'Maji' means "creeping". Dhemaji district is situated in the remote corner of northeast India on the north bank of river Brahmaputra. The boundaries of the district are the hilly ranges of Arunachal Pradesh to the north and the east, Lakhimpur district in the west and the river Brahmaputra in the south. Kekuri is a village under Jiadhol with Mishing population of 1400 (comprising of 287 families). Jiadhol is a village panchayat and is one of the most flood affected area despite being the fact that it is located only in the distance of 10 to 15 km from the district headquarter.

### METHODOLOGY:

The present study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature for which secondary data is collected from journal, books, articles, published and unpublished research studies and internet etc. Primary data is collected from field survey based on convenient sampling method and through interview schedule. The total sampling size is 30.

### FINDINGS:

**TABLE NO 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

SL. NO	DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %	
1.	Age group	15-25	9	30
		25-35	5	16.66
		35-45	15	50
		45-55	1	3.33
		55-65	0	0

		65-above	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
2	Religion of the Respondents	Hindu	21	70
		Muslim	0	0
		Donyi polo	9	30
		Christianity	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
3	Marital status	Married	21	70
		Unmarried	9	30
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
4	Types of Family	Nuclear	22	73.33
		Joint	8	26.66
		Extended	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>

**Source: Field survey**

From Table no 1 it is found that respondents which falls highest in the age group is 35-45 that is 15 and respondents which falls lowest in the age group is 45-55 that is 1. The respondents belonging to Hindu religion is the highest that is (70%), and the lowest followed religion

is Muslim religion (0%). It is found that majority of the respondents are married is 21(70%) and unmarried (9%). Majority of the respondents are nuclear family that is 22(73.33%), and there are no extended family that is 0.

**TABLE NO. 2 ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

SL.NO	ECONOMIC PROFILE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %	
1.	Source or income of the family	Agriculture	12	40
		Business	9	30
		Government employee	5	16.66
		Both agriculture and business	4	13.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
2	Monthly family income	Below 10,000	17	56.66
		10,000-20,000	10	33.33
		20,000-30,000	3	10
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
3.	Employed and unemployed member in the family	Employed	10	33.33
		Unemployed	20	66.66
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
4.	Monthly expenses of the family	1000-2000	1	3.33
		2000-3000	14	46.66
		3000-4000	4	13.33
		5000-6000	7	23.33
		6000 -7000	4	13.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.98</b>

**Source: Field survey**

From Table no 2, it indicates that respondents indulging in Agriculture is the highest that is 12 (40%),and the lowest occupation is Agriculture and business is 4 (13.33%).The monthly family income of the respondents

which falls highest is below 10,000 i.e. 17 (56.66%) and the respondents which falls between 20,000-30,000 is 3 (10%) that is the lowest. Employed member in the family is 10 (33.33%) and unemployed member in the family is more that is 20 (66.66%).The monthly expenses of the family which falls between 2000-3000 is the highest that is

14 (46.66%) ,and respondents whose monthly expenses falls between 1000-2000 is found to be lowest is 1.

**TABLE 3: HOUSEHOLD AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE**

SL.NO	HOUSEHOLD AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %	
1.	Types of house	Pucca	5	16.66
		Semi pucca	19	63.33
		Kaccha	2	6.66
		Semi kaccha	4	13.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.98</b>
2	Awareness about purification	Yes	28	93.33
		No	2	6.66
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
3.	Methods of purification	Boiled	9	30
		Not boiled /filtered	2	6.66
		Filtered	19	63.33
		Others	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
4.	Source of fuel	Firewood	12	36.66
		LPG	11	40
		Kerosene	07	23.33
		Electricity	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
5.	Electricity	No	24	80
		Yes	6	20
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
6.	Source of drinking water	Tube well	21	70
		Ring well	7	23.33
		Motor	2	6.66
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
7.	Surroundings	Clean	09	30
		Polluted and congested	21	70
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field survey**

From Table no 3 it shows that types of house of respondents having semi pucca is the highest that is 19 (63.33%) ,kaccha house among the respondents is the lowest that is 2(6.66%). Respondents' awareness about purification is 93.33% and unawareness is 6.66%. Methods of purification found that is not boiled or not filtered is 2 (6.66%) and filtered is found to be highest that is 19 (63.33%). Respondents who use firewood as a source

of fuel is 12(36.66%), and lowest number using electricity as source of fuel is 0. Electricity in the house is 6(20%), and without electricity is 24(80%). Source of drinking water by Tube well is the highest that is 21 (70%), and by motor (running water) is the lowest that is 2 (6.66%). Most of the surrounding area is polluted and congested is 21 that are (70%) and clean surrounding is only 9(30%).

**TABLE NO 4 .1 EDUCATIONAL PROFILE**

SL.NO	EDUCATIONAL PROFILE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %	
1.	Educational qualification of the respondents	Illiterate	5	16.66
		Lower primary(1-5)	7	23.33
		Upper primary(5-8)	6	20
		High school (9-10)	5	16.66
		Higher Secondary	3	10

	Graduate	3	10
	Post Graduate	1	3.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field survey**

From the table 4.1, it is found that respondents who are illiterate is 5 (16.66%), and respondents who have done their education only up to lower primary is 7(23.33%), respondents education up to upper primary is 6 (20%),

respondents who have passed their HSLC is 5 (16.66%), higher secondary is 3 (10%), graduate is 3 (10%), Post Graduate is 1 (3.33%).

**TABLE NO 4.2 EDUCATIONAL PROFILE**

SL.NO	EDUCATIONAL PROFILE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %	
1	Preference of school	Government	18	60
		Private	12	40
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
2	Reasons for going school	Education	10	33.33
		Mid- day meal	12	40
		Free books	2	6.66
		Others	6	20
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
3.	Educational satisfaction	Yes	14	46.66
		No	16	53.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
4.	Reasons behind dissatisfaction	Lack of infrastructure	5	16.66
		Lack of skilled teacher	3	10
		Improper instruction	14	46.66
		Financial problem	8	26.66
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
5	Favor of girl child education	Yes	30	100
		No	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field survey**

From the table no 4.2 it is found that preferences of school that is government is 18 (60%)and private school is 12(40%).The reasons for going school that is for mid-day meal is the highest that is 12(40%) and respondents goes to school for free books is the lowest that is 2 (6.66%) . Educational satisfaction is 14 (46%) and educational

unsatisfaction is 16 (53.33%). Reasons behind dissatisfaction due to lack of improper medium of instruction is found to be highest that is14 (46.66%)and reasons found lowest is due to lack of skilled teacher that is 3 (10%).Favor of girl child is found to be 100%.

**TABLE 4.3 EDUCATIONAL PROFILE**

Sl. No	Educational-Profile	No of respondents	Percentage %	
1.	Preference of higher education	Yes	11	36.66
		No	19	63.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>
2.	Reasons for not preferring higher education	Lack of interest	2	12.5
		Lack in the knowledge of the mechanics of obtaining education	2	12.5
		Afraid of moving out of their family and peer groups.	3	18.75
		Lack of confidence	2	12.5

		Financial problem	10	52.63
		<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>
3.	Preference of woman education	Yes	30	100
		No	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
4.	Reasons of preference of women education	Women empowerment	13	43.33
		Equal status between both men and women	5	16.66
		Upliftment of poverty	10	33.33
		Improving their society	2	6.66
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.98</b>
5.	Awareness of government schemes	Yes	12	40
		No	18	60
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
6.	schemes known by them	Mid- day meal	8	66.66
		Scholarship	4	33.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99</b>

**Source: Field survey**

From the table no 4.3, it is found that preference of higher education is 11 (36.33%) and not preferring of higher education is 19 (63.33%).And the reasons for not preferring higher education is found to be highest due to financial problem is 10 (52.63%).And preference of women education is 30 that is 100%. Reasons of preference of women education that is women

empowerment is found to be highest that is 13(43.33%), and to improve their society is found to be the lowest that is 2 (6.66%).Awareness of government schemes is 12(40%) and unaware is 18 (60%).Schemes known by them that is Mid-day meal is found to be highest that is 8(66.66%) and scholarship is found to be lowest that is 4 (33.33%)

**TABLE NO: 5**

**PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED IN ATTAINING EDUCATION**

SL NO	PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED IN ATTAINING EDUCATION	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE	
1.	Feeling inferior of being women	Yes	6	20
		No	24	80
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
2.	Reasons of feeling inferior being women	Early marriage done by their parents	2	6.66
		Decisions were taken by their parents	3	10
		Discrimination regarding gender	1	3.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19.99</b>
3.	Reasons for educating girls	Upliftment from poverty	12	40
		To change their society	8	26.66
		To live a better life	5	16.66
		Supporting their parents by getting good jobs	5	16.66
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99.99</b>

**Source: Field survey**

From table no 5 it is found that respondents feeling inferior of being women is 6 (20%) and respondents who don't feel inferior being women is found to be highest that is 24 (80%).And reasons of feeling inferior being women due to decisions taken by their parents is found to be highest that is 3 (10%), and discrimination regarding gender is found to be lowest that is 1 (3.33%).So, total 19.99% is found out of 100% who feels inferior being women. And reasons for educating girls is found for upliftment from poverty is found to be highest that is 12 (40%).And reasons found lowest is to live a better life is 5 (16.66%),and for supporting their parents by getting good jobs is 5 (16.66%)

**DISCUSSION:**

- ❖ Majority of the age group falls in the group 35-45 i.e. (50%) of the respondents and they mostly follow Hindu as their religion (70%). Respondents (70%) are married and having nuclear family structure is (73%).
- ❖ The respondents (40%) are engaged in agriculture and their monthly family income falls below 10,000 (56.66%). As Dhemaji is flood prone area, hence it affects their agriculture too. Thus economic hardship is really affecting their life.

- ❖ The house of the village semi pucca (63.33%) and this only because of Garmin Awaas Yojana scheme. 40% of the households use firewood as their cooking fuel and this might cause problem for the women in the long run. Village till today don't have electricity and only source of light that some privileged one has through illegal taking of power from the nearby village. Most of the households (70%) in the village are congested and unclean. This is because of lack of awareness and hygienity and thus their standard of living is low. Majority of the respondent (93%) knew about the purification of water and mostly preferred for filtration. (63.33%)
- ❖ 60% of the respondents prefers for govt. school only for the mid-day meal scheme. People (53.33%) are not satisfied the way of teaching that imparted in the schools. Among the various reasons (46.66%) is for improper instruction in the school. There is negligence in appointing Mishing language teacher that hampered good communication and real meaning of education among the children in schools. Thus if proper shape is not given in the initial level then the real meaning of education is difficult to develop. (52.63%) of the respondents could not go for the higher education because of the economic hardship. The present educational system that prevails in the village is not adequate to give proper employment and data reflects this too as (66.66%) of the respondents is unemployed. *Economic status of parents rather than educational achievement is the best predictor of their children economic status.* (Bowles and Gintis). Here more focus is given on the schools as it is not playing its role efficiently. Neither schools motivate the children for going higher education nor do they provide awareness in various govt schemes that one can have for higher education. Only 40% of the respondents are aware about the govt. schemes that too only the mid -day meal scheme. *Thus the present educational system functions as reproduction of labor power.* (Bowles and Gintis).
- ❖ All most all the respondents are favored of girl's education and felt that educating them would surely uplift them from the economic hardship that they suffered. But the saddest part, they do not know to solve out the problem.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

- The government has to do a lot to improve their educational status .According to National curriculum framework 2008; Curriculum should be prepared in their mother tongue. Moreover the government should appoint some tribal members as teachers wherever possible. This will certainly bring confidence and also motivate the tribal students. There should be proper training of teachers.
- Though the development of the tribes is taking

place in India, but the pace of development has been rather slow. If government will not take some drastic steps for the development of tribal education, the status of education specially higher education among tribes will be a story of distress, despair and death. So, there is an urgent need for various government intervention, planners and policy makers to address this problem.

- The technical, vocational education and training facilities should be needed so that women of that society will get better chance to be specialized in this field and empowered.

#### CONCLUSION:

To sum up the researcher expressed that People in the Kekuri village used to live in poor condition. They suffer from multiple problems especially during flood season. Economic life of majority of them is in bad shape. Education awareness is yet to develop among them. The socio-economic condition of the majority of the respondent is not good. Condition of road, school, and electricity in the locality is worse till today. Due to ignorance and illiteracy they are deprive from the government policies and schemes. Their poor socio-economic condition reflects their educational backwardness. Poor educational infrastructure of existing educational institution, remoteness of village and poverty among villagers resulted in educational backwardness. Even geographical and economic barriers stand on way of educational attainment of kekuri villagers. Although literacy rate of the kekuri village is improving because of Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan (SSA). It has been believed that schools do not provide economic success and hence one's success is linked to one's position not on skills. It tries to go beyond the level of literacy rate and examine the overall culture of schooling. The dominant pattern of schooling is not improving the educational status of women in the region. According to the data given by village headman is quite satisfactory, but in true sense they are not educated as their living standard status is quite low.

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