



# Occupational problems of Scheduled Caste Educated Working Women

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## ABSTRACT

It is generally perceived that gender bias against working women starts from the stage of recruitment. Most of the Indian men are not ready to accept that women are capable enough to work side by side with men in all the sectors, other than in a few limited ones like teaching, nursing and in clerical sectors. While a majority of the women still face discrimination and gender bias, in the last few decades, the number of women successful in politics, technology and business etc. is definitely on the rise. Society has started seeing women in a different perspective. They work as lawyers, nurses, doctors, social workers, teachers, secretaries, managers and officers etc. There is no profession today where women are not employed. However, it is true that working women have to face problems by virtue of their sex. For centuries women have been subjected to exploitation and torture, physically, sexually and mentally. There are innumerable challenge and problems faced by them both at home and workplace. What we generally see today, in addition to various media and journal reports is that in the workplace women generally face mental stress, sexual harassment, discriminatory practices, safety and security issues etc. It is a fact that women have to face problems just by virtue of their being women. And if they are working the problems are multiplied manifold. Working women are those who are in paid employment. Since, the SC people belong to lower strata of the society; the women belonging to this caste are more vulnerable to exploitation. Therefore, the present study aims at finding out if Scheduled Caste Educated Working Women of Sonitpur District, Assam face occupational problems in their work places. The number of sample taken for the study was 50 SC working women.

**Key Words:** Scheduled Caste, Occupational Problems, Working Women.

## INTRODUCTION

Our Indian society is based on hierarchical caste system and has different economic background. In Hindu society, individuals predetermined their status and dignity on the basis of their caste. In the hierarchical order, Brahmins were at the top of the social ladder than Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and than Shudras who serves under the three higher Varna's are at the bottom rank in the status hierarchy. Finally, the last category is untouchables who were considered to be outside of the Varna system and the bottom of the social hierarchy, other named as "untouchables",

The terms "untouchables castes" was made use of for the first time by the simon commission (1928). Under the government of India Act of 1935, the untouchables are designated as scheduled castes. Long back

Sudras were the exterior or untouchable group in the society and they are now considered as scheduled caste. They are the Peasants, fishermen and working class people in the society.

The situation of SC women in India needs special attention. They are one of the largest socially segregated groups anywhere in the world and make up two per cent of the world's total population. They are poor, they constitute half of the 200 million SC population and 16.3 per cent of the total Indian female population. The traditional taboos are the same SC men and SC women. However, SC women have to deal with them more often. SC women are discriminated against not only by people of higher castes, but also within their own communities. Men are dominant in SC communities. SC women's sufferings are two-fold: they have their own share of universal suffering as women. Additionally, they are victims of a variety of exploitations - social, religious, economic and cultural as well. Her experience of patriarchal domination is more severe than that of non-SC women. Opportunities and avenues available to her to voice her grievances and agonies are very few. Indian society is all male dominated society. Men dominate women. Therefore, it is very natural for SC woman to be dominated by her husband and other male folk. Even after sixty years of Independence and constitutional guarantees, she has to undergo several travails. She has to work hard for earning livelihood of her family. She has to undergo atrocities committed on her by her drunken husband she has to protect herself from the people where she works and she has to fight against all exploitation. Hence, SC women in general, have to make a two-way struggle, one in the house and the other outside the house.

Total population of India has reached to 121 crores where as scheduled castes population are 166,635,700. Sex ratios for females per 1000 males are 940 females. Literacy rate of India has gone up to 74.04 percent from previous figure of 64.83 percent (census 2001), Total population of Assam as per 2011 census is 31,169,272 of which male and female are 15,954,927 and 15,214,345 respectively. The Total literacy rate of Assam is 73.18, where Male literacy rate is 78.81 and female is 67.27 and sex ratio for females per 1000 males are 954 females. Assam is the state of North East India and having large number of scheduled caste population. In Assam, there are 18, 25,949 scheduled castes population out of 2, 66, 55, 528 (according to 2001 census) and it becomes 6.85% of the total population of Assam. The literacy rate among general as well as scheduled caste in Assam is 52.89% and 53.94% respectively (according to 1991 census). However, in 2001 it was increased up to 64.28% and 66.78% respectively. There are sixteen sub-castes among scheduled caste population are found in Assam. They are – 1) Kaibartta, 2) Namasudra, 3) Jalo-Malo, 4) Hira, 5) Dhuba- Dhubi, 6) Bania, Bittal Bania 7) Bansphor, 8) Patni 9) Bhuin Mali, 10) Jalkeot, 11) Mahara, 12) Sutradhar, 13) Muchi Rishi, 14) Bhangi, 15) Dugla, and 16) Lalbegi (Das, B 1986).

In the history of human development, women have been as vital in the history making as men have been as vital in the history making as men have been. In fact higher status for women vis-à-vis employment and work performed by them in a society is a significant indicator of a nation's overall progress. Undoubtedly, without the active participation of women in national activities, the social, economic or political progress of a country will deteriorate and become stagnant. But, ironically and tragically, women employees in general, are not taken very seriously by their superiors, colleagues, or society at large.

It is generally perceived that gender bias against working women starts from the stage of recruitment. Most of the Indian men are not ready to accept that women are capable enough to work side by side with men in all the sectors, other than in a few limited ones like teaching, nursing and in clerical sectors.

While a majority of the women still face discrimination and gender bias, in the last few decades, the number of women successful in politics, technology and business etc. is definitely on the rise. Society has started seeing women in a different perspective. They work as lawyers, nurses, doctors, social workers, teachers, secretaries, managers and officers etc. There is no profession today where women are not employed. However, it is true that working women have to face problems by virtue of their sex. For centuries women have been subjected to exploitation and torture, physically, sexually and mentally. There are innumerable challenge and problems faced by them both at home and workplace. What we generally see today, in addition to various media and journal

reports is that in the workplace women generally face mental stress, sexual harassment, discriminatory practices, safety and security issues etc.

It is a fact that women have to face problems just by virtue of their being women. And if they are working the problems are multiplied manifold. Working women are those who are in paid employment. Since, the SC people belong to lower strata of the society; the women belonging to this caste are more vulnerable to exploitation. Therefore, the present study aims at finding out if SC educated working women face occupational problems in the workplace.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To find out the occupational problems faced by Scheduled Caste Educated Working Women.

### **DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study area is confined to only Scheduled Caste Educated government Working Women of sonitpur district of Assam, India.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Kumar and Sunder (2012) states that the role of women was confined to household chores and limited to domestic issues. In the male-dominated Indian society, women suffered to extreme levels of exploitation. The study seeks to identify the factors preventing women employees from aspiring for higher posts and problems faced by women executives in public sector banks related to work performance. The data was collected from 104 women executives working in public sector commercial banks in puducherry.

Dr. Kamini B. Dashora in their paper “problems faced by working women in india” published in International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences (2013) states that a gender bias creates lot of hurdles while remunerating the women at the workplace. There is an old belief that women are less capable and less efficient than men and hence deserve unequal salaries and wages for the same job.

Ramya K. R. and A. Raghurama (2016) try to focus on some issues and challenges faced by women participants in the Indian banking sector. Researcher finds out that the banking and insurance sectors today offer more prospects for jobs for women - both qualitatively and quantitatively. However, there are some common problems faced by women managers, officers, and clerical groups in the banking and insurance sector in their careers. These include the dual role's burden, sexual harassment in the workplace, the refusal of men to accept women as colleagues or seniors, and the lack of solidarity among women. Many women play both primary breadwinner and primary care-taker role, which creates tension most men do not experience when juggling work and personal responsibilities

### **METHODOLOGY:**

#### **Collection of data**

To study the objectives, required data will be collected from primary as well as secondary sources.

#### **Primary data:**

The data required for the study will be collected from the respondents by personal interview method with the help of pre-structured questionnaire . The respondents will be interviewed at their working places, homes and other outside places.

#### **Secondary data:**

The secondary data will be collected from books, journals, magazines, internet and other relevant sources.

For carrying out the present study, Descriptive Survey Method has been chosen. The sample for the present study has been selected by applying Purposive Sampling technique. The selection process is done by identifying the scheduled caste educated working women in different govt. organizations.

For selecting the sample, Purposive sampling has been used. Therefore Researcher could select the sample according to the convenience of meeting the sample. Total 50 scheduled caste educated working women are selected for the present study as sample.

For the present study, scheduled caste educated working women is considered as the Dependent Variable.

Occupation and income are considered as Independent Variables of the study.

The sample Distribution for the study

Kind of occupation	No. of Respondents
Lower primary teachers	17
High school teachers	05
Professors	12
Nurse	07
Banker	01
police	06
Upper Division Clerk	01
C.R.P.F Officer	01
Total	50

## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

1) Department pays adequate attention towards Women Employees and their problems?

**Table No.1**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	47	94
No	03	6
Total	50	100

From the Table No.1, it has been seen that 94% women accepted that their respective department pay adequate attention towards women employees and their problems. On the other hand, 6% of women responded negatively.

## 2) Have friendly relationship with your Colleagues

**Table No.2**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	43	86
No	07	14
Total	50	100

From the Table No.2, it has been found that 86% of SC working women have friendly relationship with their colleague, while 14% had responded negatively on this particular item.

## 3) Cordial relationship with male employees

**Table No.3**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	48	96
No	02	4
Total	50	100

From the Table No. 3 shows that 96% of women have cordial relationship with their male-employees which is followed by 4% of women who had negated regarding this.

## 4) Cordial relationship with female employees

**Table No.4**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	44	88
No	06	12
Total	50	100

From the Table No. 4, it has been revealed that 88% of women keep cordial relationship with their female employees. But, 12% of women do not have cordial relationship with their female employees.

## 5) Able to communicate freely with your superior

**Table No.5**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	46	92
No	04	8
Total	50	100

From the Table No. 5, it has been seen that 92% of women can communicate freely with their superior, while 8% responded that they cannot communicate freely with their superiors.

## 6) Receiving any help from your superiors when you face work related problems in your jobs?

**Table No.6**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
Total	50	

From the Table No.6, it has been revealed that 100% of women receive help from their superiors when they face any work related problems in their jobs.

7) Superior receptive to suggestions of women subordinates.

**Table No.7**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	47	94
No	03	6
Total	50	100

From the Table No.7, it has been found that 94% of women accepted that their superior are receptive to the suggestions put forwarded by women employees. While, 6% women responded negatively regarding this.

8) Having freedom to try out new work method.

**Table No.8**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	44	88
No	06	12
Total	50	100

From the Table No.8, it has been found that 88% of Sc working women have freedom to try out new working method, while 12% of respondents told that they do not have such freedom in their work-place.

9) Observing any discrimination between male and female employees.

**Table No.9**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
Total	50	

Regarding discrimination between male and female employees, it has been found that 100% of women accepted that there is no discrimination between male and female employees.

## 10) Harassment by Superiors

**Table No.10**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
Total	50	

From the Table No.10 it has been seen that 100% of the respondents assured that there is no harassment from their superiors in their jobs.

## 11) Physical abuse

**Table No.11**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
Total	50	

Again regarding physical abuse also 100% of the respondents do not experience any physical abuse in their work places.

## 12) Sexual harassment

**Table No.12**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
Total	50	

From the Table No. 12, it has been seen that 100% women have not faced sexual harassment in their work place.

## 13) Mental harassment

**Table No.13**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
Total	50	

From the Table No. 13, it has been revealed that 100% of women do not face mental harassment in their jobs.

## 14) Non-Supportive Subordinates

**Table No.14**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	-	-
No	50	100
Total	50	

Regarding non-supportive subordinates all the respondents have responded that their subordinate employees are supportive.

#### 15) Mental pressure in work-place

**Table No.15**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	90
No	05	10
Total	50	100

From the Table No.15, it has been found that 90% of women face mental pressure regarding work.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The key findings of the study are as follows:

- Majority of women (94%) accepted that their respective department gives proper attention towards them and their problems.
- Majority of SC working women (86%) have friendly relationship with their employees.
- Maximum numbers of SC working women (88%) have cordial relationship with their female employees.
- Most of the Respondents (92%) can communicate freely with their superior.
- All the SC working women receive help from their superiors when they face any work related problems in their jobs.
- Majority of the respondents (94%) of women accepted that their superior are receptive to the suggestions put forwarded by women employees.
- Maximum numbers of the SC working women (88%) of Sc working women have freedom to try out new working method.
- All the SC educated working women accepted that there is no discrimination between male and female employees.
- All the SC educated working women had assured that there is not any incidence of harassment by superiors.
- All the SC educated working women had revealed that they have not faced any kind of physical abuse, sexual harassment and mental harassment in their respective working place.
- Regarding non-supportive subordinates, all the respondents have responded that their subordinate employees are supportive.
- Majority of the SC educated working women (90%) do not face mental pressure regarding work.

### **CONCLUSION**

Education plays a greater role in strengthening the position of Scheduled caste women. Generally, women face different kind of problems in their day to day life irrespective of their caste. Since, Scheduled caste belongs to the lower most strata of the society, therefore it is assumed that the women belonging to this community face more problems in their work front than the women of other so-called upper caste of the society. But, in this paper when the researcher went for data collection, she found that occupational problems of SC working women are very minimal and that are of general in nature. It is happened because of their access to education. Education gives them confidence and required skill to hold a status in the society and make them eligible to get a livelihood in government jobs. Moreover, the society as a whole is developing because of easy access to education. Thereby, the stigma attached to the Scheduled Caste people is vanishing day by day.



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