

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN: A STUDY OF JALADIPUR VILLAGE OF MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL.

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ABSTRACT:

India predominantly a patriarchal society, there are high levels of gender disparity and women lag behind men socially and economically. The status of women is one of important aspects to study in every era. It gives importance on the position of women in various fields like family life, social life and working life. It highlights on females condition in the households, marital status, education and literacy level of women, occupational structure and income source, health and nutritional status, and women role in decision making. This paper investigates the socio-economic status of women of Jaladipur village of Murshidabad district in Indian context. This study is purely based on primary data collected from field survey and used some statistical technique. It also explores causes that as the society are developed on 21st century the position and respect of women is decline day by day after so many constitutional provisions for women.

KEYWORDS: *Predominantly, Patriarchal society, Gender disparity, Socio-economic status, Era, Households, Occupational structure, Marital status, Literacy level, Nutritional status, Decision making, Constitutional provisions.*

INTRODUCTION:

In India majority of the poor are living in rural areas (i.e.68.48% as per 2011 census) and women are its main component. That's why the improvement of social and economic condition of women is considered as an urgent requirement for overall development of the rural economy. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the view that in ordered to awaken people, it is the woman who has to be awakened. According to him once the woman is on the move the household moves and thereafter the country moves. The great philosopher and emancipator of Indian women, Swami Vivekananda therefore opined, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing."

In India where women constitute nearly 50% of the population, but only 65.46% of the women are literate as per 2011 census and disproportionate sex ratio where female are lower than males proved that they are not treated as equal to men in all the places. Thus it is impossible to think about a developed nation without women development and empowerment through various social, political as well as economic activities.

Even after 70 years of India's freedom when we have achieved great development and success in science and technology that had led opportunities for women in various fields. Now a day's women are progressing step by step in the field of politics, administration, sports, science and technology. The leading innovators and crucial examples are Kalpana Chawala, Sunita Williams, Sania Mirza, P.V. Sindhu, Mamta Banerjee and Kiran Bedi etc. In spite of there are even today a few societies where women are treated as equal to men. In general women are treated as servants and slaves of their family /husband. In these families girls are only means of giving birth to children, cooking food and taking care of the family. And when any girl tries to oppose the system, they are physically and mentally tortured. But they have not to provide their rights for free living, higher education, freedom to work or take a decision independently. In our country boys are accepted as the gift of the God and they are providing with all the facilities but the girls are always treated as inferior to boys. In fact there are many facets of the exploitation of the women in our society. The present paper aims to study the socio economic conditions of women in Jaladipur village of Murshidabad District, West Bengal and number of suggestions will be put forward to improve their lot.

PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY AREA:

To simplify the presentation of these issues some indicators of low socio-economic status is created:

- Low educational attainment
- Lower employment status and income
- Marital status
- Lower personal wealth
- Low household wealth

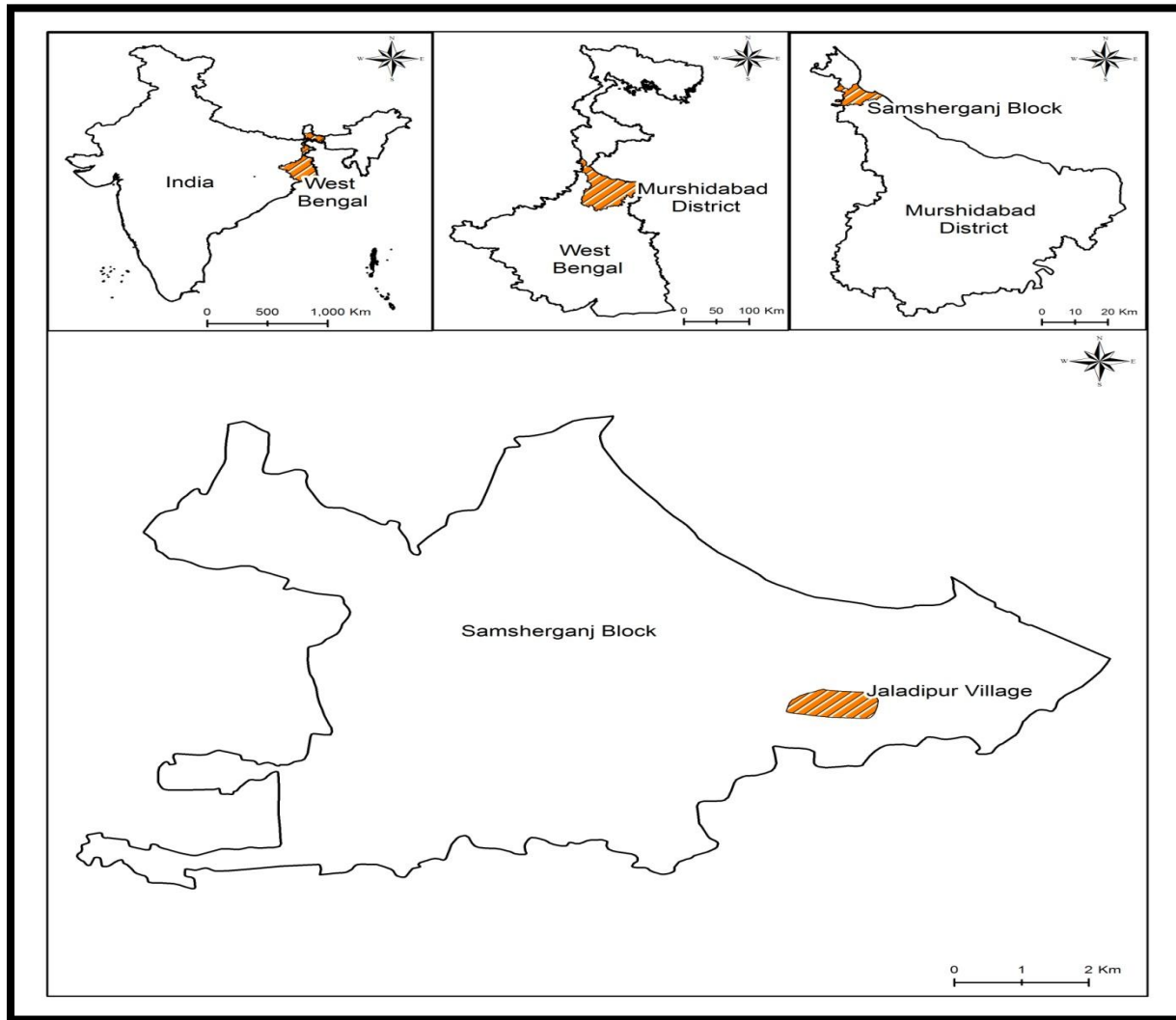
The paper is analyzed based on these indicators and draw out some major findings.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AREA:

- To examine age-wise distribution of women population
- To find out level of education and literacy

- Investigate level of income and occupational structure of women
- To know the marital status, early marriage and spouse age difference

LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA:



Jaladipur village is situated in Chachonda Gram Panchayet under Samserganj Block of Murshidabad District West Bengal. River Ganga is flowing near the village. Lat long distribution of the study area is $24^{\circ}64'33''\text{N}$ and $87^{\circ}97'68''\text{E}$. The area is dominated by religiously Hindu Population. The Jaladipur village has population of 3319 of which 1653 are males and 1666 are females as per population census 2011. Jaladipur village has lower literacy rate compared to West Bengal. In 2011, literacy of Jaladipur village was 61.72% compared to 76.26% of West Bengal. In Jaladipur Male literacy stands at 68.11% while female literacy rate was 55.44%.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY:

The data is collected from sample survey from the village. Total number of respondent is 40 women. Questionnaire and scheduled will be administered personally by the scholar during field work. Somewhere secondary data is used which collected from census of India 2011. Information is collected from magazine, journals, articles, books and internet. The methodology of the work involves data collection, calculation and analysis. Suitable maps and diagrams used wherever it needed.

HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION:

A number of hypotheses is formulated and tested during the work. These are as follows-

- Lower work participation rate among women are related to their low level of literacy and education
- Early marriage and spouse age difference is the symbol of women situation in the society
- Lower level of income are related to poor health condition

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS:

In this section of the paper the socio-economic status of women has been studied. It includes some socio-economic variables that directly and indirectly affect socio-economic status of women like marital status, occupation or employment, level of education, early marriage and spouse age difference, family income of the respondents etc.

Marital Status: Only married women of age group 20-60 are the respondent of the present paper. Marital status is also a social indicator for understanding the socio-economic status of women. Early marriage system has been one of the important characteristics of it. Marital status changes the women's status. It also changes the women's role and work load. The marital status of respondent is shown in the table below-

Table: 1
Marital status of the respondents

S.N	Marital Status	No. of respondents	Percent
1	Married	36	90
2	Widow	04	10
Total		40	100

Source: field survey, 2017.

The above table shows that out of 40 sample household, 36 (90%) of them are found to be married and only 2(10%) of them are widow. Married and widow females get different treatments in the society. Married women have to loss all their freedom and rights. The conditions of widow women are even worse.

Family Structure: Family structures are divided into two categories nuclear and joint family. Almost of the residents are live in nuclear family. Generally in nuclear family decision making role and other socio-economic indicator is higher than comparison with joint family. But in the study area situation is not similar with that concept. Here the table represented below-

Table: 2
Family Structure of Sample Household

Sl.No	Family Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Joint	12	30
2	Nuclear	28	70
Total		40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The above table shows that 30% of the sample households are joint family and the remaining 70% of the household are nuclear family.

Educational Status: Education plays an important for society’s development. It is one of the major degrees to measure the social status of any community. Level of education is an important indicator of the social status of women. The educational status of the sample household are represented below-

Table: 3
Educational Status of Household couple

Educational Status	No. of Respondents				Total	
	Male	%	Female	%	Number	%
Illiterate	6	16.66	15	37.5	21	27.63
Primary	10	27.77	10	25	20	26.31
Secondary	12	33.33	10	25	22	28.94
Intermediate	5	13.88	4	10	09	11.84
Bachelor & Above	3	8.33	01	2.5	04	5.26
Total	36	100	40	100	76	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The educational status is divided into five categories which are illiterate, primary level, Secondary level, Intermediate level and bachelor and above.

Showing Male-Female Educational Status in Percentage of the sample house-hold

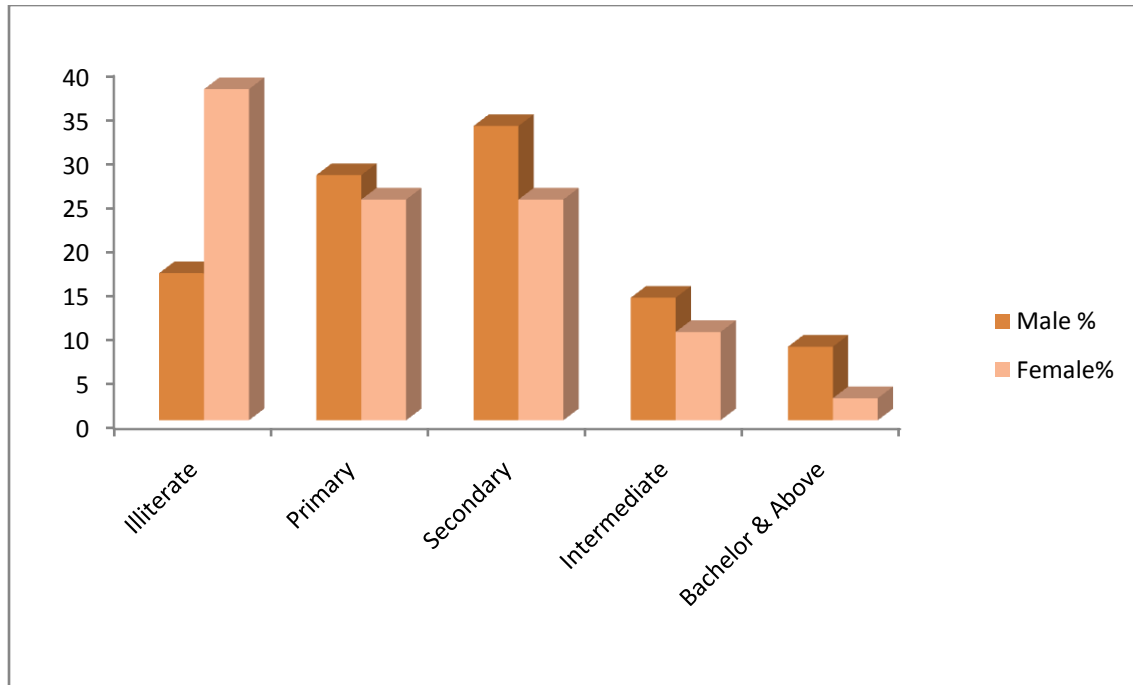


Fig: 1

The above table shows that out of 36 male population 16.66 % of them are found to be illiterate, 27.77 % hold primary education, 33.33 % hold secondary education, 13.33% intermediate and 8.33 of them hold bachelor and above education. In the similar way it is found that out of 40 female population 37.5% of them are found to be illiterate, 25% hold Primary and secondary education, 10% intermediate and 2.5% of them hold bachelor and above education.

The female population is found to be more illiterate as compared to male population of the study area and very few have a bachelor degree and above.

Occupational Status: Occupation is considered as the main source of income it represents the economic status of people. Beedi is the main occupation of the female villagers. Due to lack of higher education, villagers industrial and another government employment is limited.

Table: 4
Occupational Status of the Household

Occupation	No. of Population			
	Male	%	Female	%
Agriculture	03	8.33	01	2.5
Beedi worker	07	19.44	29	72.5
Service	02	5.55	01	2.5
Business	08	22.22	-	-
Tailoring	02	5.55	02	5
Mobile shop	05	13.88	-	-
Wage Labour	06	16.66	-	-
Household workers	03	8.33	02	5
Non-worker	00	0.0	05	12.5
	36	100	40	100

Source: Sample Survey, 2017

The above table shows that out of 36 male populations 22.22% of them are engaged in Business work, 19.44% in Beedi work, 16.66% in wage labour, and 13.88% in mobile shop. In same way out of 40 women respondents 72.5% of them are engaged in Beedi work, 2.5% in agriculture and services.

Age-wise socio demographic profile of the women: Age-wise socio demographic profile of women is divided into six age groups. During the period of the study it was found that out of 40 female respondents 40% of them are belong to 21-25 age group, 20% among 26-30 and 31-35 age group and 2.5% belongs to 41-50 age group.

Table: 5
Age-wise socio demographic profile of the women

Age	Number of Women	%
21-25 yrs	16	40
26-30 yrs	08	20
31-35 yrs	08	20
36-40 yrs	6	15

41-45 yrs	1	2.5
46-50 yrs	1	2.5
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Status of Early Marriage: Early marriage or age of marriage age is the symbol of society’s backwardness and women’s situation in the society. Sample survey was done among 40 female respondents with marriage age. The following table represents that-

Table: 6
Status of Early Marriage

Below 15 yrs	15-18 yrs	Above 18 yrs
19	12	9
47.5%	30%	22.5

Source: Field Survey, 2017

19 respondents were married at the age of below 15 years, 12 female respondents were married between 15-18 years and 9 respondents were married above 18 years.

Duration of Marriage: Marital duration that is time elapsed since the day of marriage, was used as the life course measure. The effects of socio-economic factors varied with the duration of marriage, the couples were dividing into six categories of marital duration. These categories are below 7 years, 7-15 years, 16-24 years, and 25-33 years, 33-41 years and above 41 years.

Table: 7
Duration of marriage

Duration of marriage	Number	Percentage
Below 7 yrs	17	42.5
8-15 yrs	14	35
16-24 yrs	05	12.5
25-33 yrs	02	5
34-41 yrs	01	2.5
Above 41 yrs	01	2.5
Total	40	100

Source: Sample Survey, 2017

From the above table it is measured that below 7 years and 8-15 years categories were used at higher marital duration.

Spouse Age Difference: Throughout the world, marriages in which the husband is older than his wife are more common than same age and women older marriages. Spousal age difference is a very common in Indian society also. Spousal age difference is one of the important indicators for identifying socio-economic status of women.

Table: 8
Spouse age difference

Below 5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15+ yrs
5	10	18	07
12.5%	25%	45%	17.5%

Source: Sample survey, 2017

Higher age difference of the spouse is the indicator of social backwardness and lack of higher education in women.

Monthly income of the family: Monthly income of the family is one of the indicators of female situation in the society. Here the sample survey represented below the monthly income of the family.

Table: 9
Monthly income of the family

Monthly income	Number	%
Upto 2000	4	10
2000-4000	12	30
4000-6000	8	20
6000-8000	6	15
8000-10000	4	10
Above 10000	6	15
Total	40	100

Source: Sample Survey, 2017

Above table shown fifty percent and above families monthly income lies under 8000. Among them only fifteen percent families income is above 10000. It is proved that the sample survey area is economically backward.

How many women have migrated? Cause of Migration: Women have migrated for various causes like marriage, education and employment. In the study area women have migrated mainly for marriage purpose and only 5% was migrated due to employment. The table represents below-

Table: 10
Causes of Migration

Marriage	Education	Employment
38	0	02
95%	00%	5%

Source: Sample Survey, 2017

Preferred Place of treatment by the respondent women: Health condition can be taken as another important socio-economic indicator. Preferred place of treatment by the respondent women has been present below:

Table: 11
Preferred place of treatment by the respondent women

Sl. No	Treatment Place	No. of respondents	%
1	Hospital	8	20
2	Private Clinic	6	15
3	Health Centre	24	60
4	Others	02	05
		40	100

Source: Sample Survey, 2017

The above table indicates that 20% women prefer hospital for treatment and 60% women prefer primary health centre for treatment.

Cause of Low Socio-Economic Status of Respondents: The researchers asked some questions to know the opinion of the respondents about the main reason of women backwardness of the study area through the collected data and analyze the reports.

Table: 12
Distribution of socio-economic of women low status

Sl.No	Causes	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Lack of Education	15	37.5
2	Patriarchal	07	17.5
3	Culture	09	22.5
4	Inferiority	04	10
5	Lack of Awareness	05	12.5
Total		40	100

Source: Sample Survey, 2017

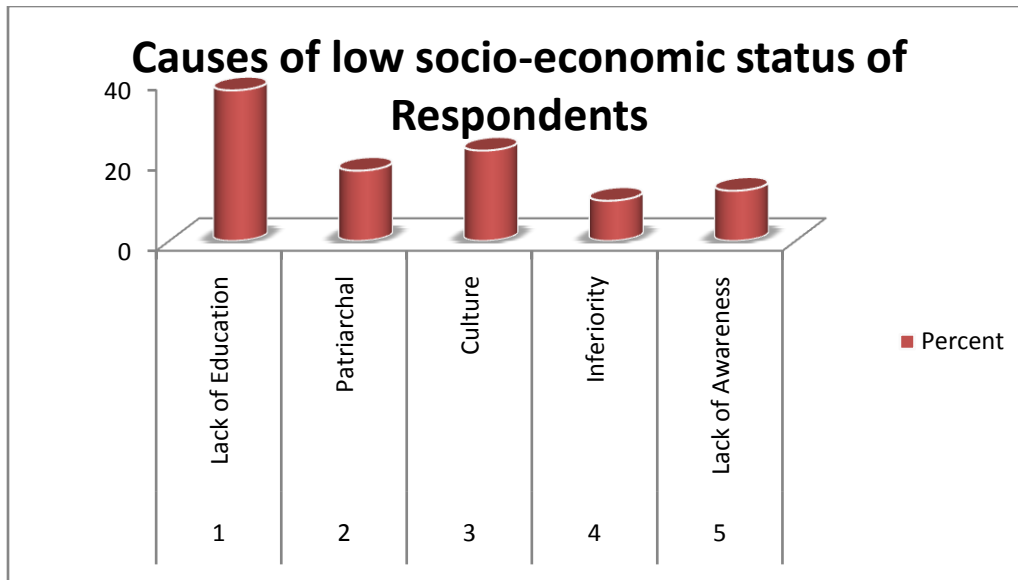


Fig: 2

In the study area, the higher percentage 37.5% of respondents reported that the main cause of low socio-economic status of women is the lack of education, 17.5% respondents said about patriarchal system, 22.5% said about cultural backwardness, 10% said inferiority and 12.5% said that lack of awareness is the cause of their low socio-economic status.

SUGGESTION TO IMPROVE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN:

Table: 13

Distribution of sampled respondents by suggest to improve their status

Sl.No	Suggestions	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Promote the education	12	30
2	Equal property right	5	12.5
3	Priority in job opportunity	8	20
4	Social & Cultural attitude towards women	6	15
5	Skill Promotion	5	12.5
6	Others	4	10
Total		40	100

Source: Sample Survey, 2017

In the study area respondent answered the question about suggest to improve the socio-economic status of women- 30% respondents answered that education should be provided for these women to develop their status. 12.5% respondents said about that equal property right should be provided for women to develop their status. 20% said that giving priority in job opportunity, 15% women told that the traditional social and cultural attitude

towards the women should be change. In the same way 12.5% women said about skill promotion and left 10% respondents said that they have lack of knowledge about this.

CONCLUSION:

The study focuses that the socio-economic status of the respondents are backward. Their education level is very low and they are mostly engaged in Beedi work, their level of income is very low. To overcome this problem there are some recommendations represented below-

- To grow literacy rate and Government NGO and NGOs should arrange higher education for women
- To overcome from poverty engaging women in microfinance and another small industry work
- Organized some Specific employment basis education
- Promote joint decision in household matters.

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