

## A STUDY ON THE ATTITUDE OF MANIPURI MUSLIM WOMEN TOWARDS SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS IN MANIPUR

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### **Abstract:**

*According to Adam Smith, Economics was concerned with "An Enquiry into the nature and Causes of wealth of Nations". The early economists called the Science of Wealth. For a long time the accepted view was that Economics is concerned with those human activities, which centre on wealth not for its own sake, but for the material welfare that it promotes. This refuted the charge that "Economics was supposed to teach selfishness and came to be called a "dismal science". The present research work is to investigate the changing educational status of Manipuri Muslim women and its impact on the social and economic status of the women specially Manipuri Muslim women. The attitude of Muslims towards girls' education gradually changed, and there was a considerable increase in the enrolment of Muslim girls' in different general as well as professional courses of education as well as skill based courses of study, vocational training, adult education program etc.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Socio-Economic Status, Manipuri Muslim Women

### **Introduction:**

Muslim is indigenous ancient settlers in Manipur, owing lands of their own and cultivating in their own lands. A government report notes: "92.9% of the households belonging to the Meitei Pnagals has their own land 3.0% of the households were holding Government land in the manner of owner-like possession" (Ahamed F. & Rahman S. 2020-7). The socio-economic conditions of Manipuri Muslims were good following their initial settlement. Many Muslims participated in State's administration as ambassadors as well as warriors. Today, the Manipuri Muslims are third largest religious community. According to 2001 census, the percentage share of Muslim workers to the state total workers was found to be 7.42% only. Further, the number of Manipuri Muslim workers found in the state's total workers is only 36.75% while the total workers of the state are at 43.62%. Today, the Manipuri Muslims are the third largest religious community as 8.7% according to census 2011. The overall State literacy rate of the State is 70.5% but the literacy rate of the Muslims in the State is 58.6%.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

- i) To study the attitudes of Muslim women and their significant levels towards different aspects (Education, Parents-child relationship, Politics, Status of women, Marriage, Religion, Socio-cultural factors) in Imphal East District

### **Hypothesis of the study:**

- i) The Muslim women had positive attitudes, and their significant levels are different towards different aspects (Education, Parents-child relationship, Politics, Status of women, Marriage, Religion, Socio-cultural factors) in the Imphal-East District.

### **Socio-Economic aspects of Muslim women in Manipur:**

Economic independence or access to inherited or self-generated income has considered an essential means of empowerment of women. In addition, the contribution of employment to the improvement of women's position is contributed mainly by the modern sector. They enable women to move out of their homes to an extended plane, express their ideas, exchange their problems, and evaluate their position in many areas of social life. This would result in an awareness of their role in society and urge to do something about it. Total employment assures women a better, more enriching, and rewarding life and human relationship (Razia Parvin, M., 2012). Manipuri Muslim women were set apart from other Muslim women by their different past experiences, which clear their significant economic role. Manipuri Muslim women and Meitei of Manipur distribute many similarities and a typical relationship. The establishment of Lallup, which existed from the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 18th century, was one such experience that obligated Manipur's women to bear economic obligations in the lack of male family members. Many additional episodes, such as the Manipuri-Burmese battle of 1817, seven years of destruction, and the Anglo-Manipuri conflict of 1891, have increased their economic significance due to the male population's turn down.

In Manipur's agricultural areas, Muslim women play a crucial role. Muslim women's labor is often employed in rural regions for rice seed dissemination and transplanting, harvesting, threshing, paddy drying, and pounding. Animal husbandry and poultry rearing are also part of their trade. Aside from domestic utilization, Muslim women sell the vegetables and fruits they grow in their ingkhols linked to their homes. Meitei populated parts of the Thoubal district supplied a significant share of the vegetable and other cash crop items in the state's keithels. Some Muslim women have turned to weave as a source of income, creating phanek, khudei, mosquito nets, shawls, towels, and other items. Many widows and divorced women relied on this occupation to help maintain their children. Muslim women in rural areas create cooperative societies and self-help groups due to increased knowledge of government development and safety programs. Such organizations assist Muslim women in obtaining government-sponsored income-generating initiatives through loans and grants (Syed, F., IJRSS, 2017, p. 364).

Its members share a family's socio-economic necessities. These requirements are particularly relevant to reproduction and child rising. When a Muslim woman gets out of bed in the morning, she has a long list of home duties to complete. Women to overcome the family's requirements to overcome the families need Assume the male partner is a daily wage employee who cannot provide for his family. The Pangal women engage in household activities such as vegetable farming, fishing, weaving, etc. It is also discovered that 14.54 percent of Muslim women work in the economy as account workers in their households, wage employees, casual wage labor, employers, or unpaid helpers.

Nonetheless, women engage in non-economic household tasks such as kitchen garden upkeep, chicken breeding, free firewood collecting, food grain provision, water, washing, cooking, etc. (Ali, M., 2013, IOSR-JHSS, p.40). The active engagement of Manipuri Muslim women in extra-familiar economic tasks like livestock care, marketing, and selling items is the most conspicuous element of their financial responsibility. Because of the nature of their labor and their proximity to one another in the workplace, women form relationships that

give birth to collective solidarity in the marketplace in the Ima Keithels (Women's Markets). In the Nupilan of 1990, Muslim women also participated and other activities in the late 1990s and first decade of the 21st century, the 18<sup>th</sup> June uprising of 2001, and others (Irene, S., p. 20-21).

According to 'Gazetteer of Manipur 1786,' all of the country's marketing was done by women in the open air, including morning marketplaces. Of course, the situation has changed in recent years. The market is open from early morning until late at night. The government has refurbished markets, and women traders pay a levy for a designated spot in the market. If a woman has a lot of room, she has a higher social position since the tax she pays is proportional to the amount of space.

Furthermore, the market has been recognized as a fashion hub since the reign of King Khagemba. Muslim stall owners of respectable status dressed better than women sellers with little stalls and invested more money in purchasing things to market. In addition, diversify their commercial profits was also more significant, which improved their working environment at the Ima Keithel (Hudson, T.C., Op. Cit. p. 23).

According to Dr. Jamini Devi, some Muslim women work as manual workers in hotels, bakeries, small businesses, and other establishments, but they lack entrepreneurial skills and are paid little. Poverty forces rural Muslim women to leave their homes and work as domestic house cleaners in the public realm for a pittance. Teenage girls have to sell vegetables or start vending businesses (Devi, J. 2007, p. 57).

The Meitei women have a long history of being the family's breadwinners. Because Muslims do not practice family planning and generally have ample kids, Muslim women in Manipur are driven to augment their husbands' salaries. Furthermore, although there are many wealthy Meitei Pangal males, there are few prosperous women among the Meitei Pangal. According to the 2004 Report on Meitei-Pangals Socio-Economic Survey (after this 2004 Report), 90.12% of Muslim women are unemployed. Muslim women engage in non-traditional economic tasks such as maintaining the kitchen garden, domestic poultry farming, fishing, etc. These activities provide a significant financial benefit to their home management, and if they were included in the GDP, Muslim women's engagement in the workforce would be far higher. According to the 2004 Report, 41.40 percent of Muslim women are self-employed, with 35.31 percent working as paid domestic workers. Muslim women in Manipur, unfortunately, are disproportionately self-employed. They have worked for their families but do not record themselves as employees, even unpaid help. The lack of presence of Muslim women in the service industry was also emphasized in the 2004 report. As per the report, 90.12% of unemployed women, 60.29% of Male Worker, 37.71% of Female Worker, 35.31% of unpaid Helpers, and 41.40% of Own account workers are female. In addition, the majority of household monthly earning is below Rs. 2000/-.

The majority of Muslims live in rural regions. On the other hand, many villages were built along riverbanks where the ground was wealthy, giving Muslims a dual-edge in fishing and farming, the latter in which they were exceptionally skilled. Muslim women also provide the market with fresh vegetables and fruits grown in their inkholes linked to their homes. The Meitei women and other traders brought and sold the products they made at the local and central markets. However, many women and vendors who sell door to door and want to earn a little more money do so by working part-time at home, usually selling their wares. Others

sit at their designated stalls and sell to a large extent directly. Unlicensed women sellers, the fourth group, were a typical sight in the latter decade of the twentieth century (Ahamed, S., June 5, 2011). The economic contribution provided by educated working women, particularly labor professionals such as physicians, engineers, attorneys, teachers, nurses, and entrepreneurs, significantly improved their social position in the final decade of the twentieth century. Those who have been accepted into government service are treated with great respect. Despite their efforts and earnings, no rich Muslim women were completely self-sufficient by the end of the twentieth century. Due to a lack of sufficient education, Muslim women are also slower to grasp new commercial and trade procedures, particularly in fields such as business and science. (Ashraf, p. 169). In Manipur, Muslim women are disproportionately self-employed. They worked for their families but did not record themselves as employees, even unpaid assistants. Economic challenges have forced many Muslim women to participate in the market economy throughout the years directly. In most of the keithels in Manipur's valley, Muslim women sellers known as "potfambies" sell vegetables and other culinary products. Lilong Keithel has around a hundred Muslim women of almost all age groups selling commodities of daily consumption. Large numbers of Muslim women potfambies are seen at Khwairamband. Many Muslim women also run pan-dukans, galamals, hotels, tailoring, and embroidery establishment (Irene, S. 2010, p.135-137).

### **Population and Sample of the Study:**

The present study is confined to the Muslim women population residing in Imphal-East District under the 3 (three) sub-divisions, namely Keirao Bitra, Sawombung, and Porompat. The Muslim women who have passed matriculation (10<sup>th</sup>) and above has been taken as educated, and those below shall be uneducated. Again, under-educated has been further classified into three categories viz., highly educated (Graduate and above), Average (12 passed), and Below Average (10 Passed) under uneducated it has been classified into two categories viz and married and Unmarried for the present study. A stratified random sampling technique has been employed, and for the sample data, a total of 600 Muslim women, 200 samples (100 educated and 100 Uneducated) each from the three Sub-Divisions are collected.

### **Tool Used:**

- i) Comprehensive Modernization Inventory (CMI-AK) was developed by Dr. S.P. Ahluwalia and Dr. A.K. Kalia

### **Statistical Technique Used:**

- i) For finding out the Muslim women's attitudes towards different aspects (education, politics, parent-child relationship, status of women, marriage, faith in God, socio-cultural factors) by adopting CMI- AK, scale and percentage method, Z-test and t-test have been used

### **Delimitations of the Study:**

- i) The present study has been confined to Imphal East District, Manipur.
- ii) The present study has been confined only to Muslim women residing in Imphal-East District.
- iii) For the present study, the selected Manipuri Muslim woman has been limited to 18-50 years.

**Table 1: Showing the attitudes of Muslim women towards different aspects (education, parent-child relationship, politics, status of women, marriage, religion, socio-cultural factors) in Imphal-East District**

Comprehensive Modernization Inventory (CMI)							
Sl. No.	Category	Education Level	No. of Sample	Score	Z-Score	Grade	Women's Opinion Status Level
1	Educated	Highly Educated	75 (12.50%)	13168 (13.50%)	+0.84	C	High Opinion
2		Average	101 (16.83%)	16084 (16.49%)	-0.22	D	Average Opinion
3		Below Average	124 (20.67%)	20100 (20.61%)	-0.03	D	Average Opinion
4	Uneducated	Married	191 (31.83%)	30743 (31.52%)	-0.11	D	Average Opinion
5		Unmarried	109 (18.17%)	17454 (17.89%)	-0.16	D	Average Opinion
Total			600	97549			

**Analysis and Interpretation:**

The above table shows the educated and uneducated Muslim women of Imphal-East District of Manipur based on their “modernization Opinion Level” using the Comprehensive Modernization Inventory scale. For the selected sample of the present study, Muslim women have been classified into two categories: educated ( $X^{\text{th}}$  passed and above) and uneducated (under  $X^{\text{th}}$ ). Further, educated Muslim women have been classified into three categories viz. highly educated (Graduate and above), average ( $XII^{\text{th}}$  passed), and below average ( $X^{\text{th}}$  passed). Uneducated Muslim women are broadly they were classified into two categories, viz. married and unmarried. As for the study, 300 samples each of educated Muslim women and uneducated Muslim women were selected.

From the above table, it can be interpreted that, Highly Educated Muslim women (13.50 %) are found to be in grade C (High Opinion) of “Women’s Opinion Level” with Z score +0.84. For Average Educated Muslim women (16.49 %) are found to be in grade D (Average Opinion) of “Women’s Opinion Level” with Z score – 0.22 and for Below Average Educated Muslim women (20.16%) with a Z score of – 0.03 found and fall in grade D (Average Opinion) level of “modernization Opinion Level.” Uneducated Married Muslim women (31.52%) with a Z score of –0.11 are found and fall in grade D (Average Opinion) of



“Women’s Opinion Level.” And for the Uneducated Unmarried Muslim women (18.17%) with a Z score of  $-0.16$  are found and fall in grade D (Average Opinion) “modernization Opinion Level.”

From the above analysis, it can be said that the selected Muslim women of Imphal-East District of Manipur are found to be in Average Opinion of “Women’s Opinion Level.” It is also found that with the variation in their level of education, their “modernization opinion” level also varied. With the higher in their educational level, their “modernization Opinion Level” has also increased. Educated Muslim women have a higher level of “modernization Opinion Level” than the uneducated Muslim women of the selected samples of the present study. Hence, the present study's hypothesis, “Muslim women had positive attitudes towards different aspects (Education, Parents-child relationship, Politics, Status of women, Marriage, Religion, Socio-cultural factors) in Imphal-East District,” has been accepted.

**Table 2: Showing the significant levels of Educated and Uneducated Muslim Women towards modernization opinion level in Imphal-East District**

Categories of women	N	Mean Value	SED	df	t-value	Sig. value	Sig. level
Educated	300	164.51	0.95	598	3.09	0.00209	**
Uneducated	300	160.66	0.81				

\* Significant level at 0.05 \*\* Significant level at 0.01 NS = Not significant  $t_{tb} = 1.98$  at 0.05  $t_{tb} = 2.62$  at 0.01

**Table 3: Showing the significant levels of Married and Unmarried Muslim Women towards modernization opinion level in Imphal-East District**

Categories of women	N	Mean Value	SED	df	t-value	Sig. value	Sig. level
Married	240	161.29	0.88	598	1.79	0.07396	NS
Unmarried	360	160.66	0.87				

\* Significant level at 0.05 \*\* Significant level at 0.01 NS = Not significant  $t_{tb} = 1.98$  at 0.05  $t_{tb} = 2.62$  at 0.01

**Table 4: Showing the significant levels of Highly Educated and Average Educated Muslim Women towards modernization opinion level in Imphal-East District**

Categories of women	N	Mean Value	SED	df	t-value	Sig. value	Sig. level
Highly Educated	75	175.57	1.47	174	7.62	0.00001	**
Average Educated	101	159.25	1.49				

\* Significant level at 0.05 \*\* Significant level at 0.01 NS = Not significant  $t_{tb} = 1.98$  at 0.05  $t_{tb} = 2.62$  at 0.01

**Table 5: Showing the significant levels of Highly Educated and Below Average Educated Muslim Women towards modernization opinion level in Imphal-East District**

Categories of women	N	Mean Value	SED	df	t-value	Sig. value	Sig. level
Highly Educated	75	175.57	1.47	174	7.62	0.00001	**
Below Average Educated	124	162.10	1.49				

\* Significant level at 0.05 \*\* Significant level at 0.01 NS = Not significant  $t_{tb} = 1.98$  at 0.05  $t_{tb} = 2.62$  at 0.01

**Table 6: Showing the significant levels of Average Educated and Below Average Educated Muslim Women towards modernization opinion level in Imphal-East District**

Categories of women	N	Mean Value	SED	df	t-value	Sig. value	Sig. level
Average Educated	101	159.25	1.49	223	1.34	0.18161	NS
Below Average Educated	124	162.10	1.48				

\* Significant level at 0.05 \*\* Significant level at 0.01 NS = Not significant  $t_{tb} = 1.98$  at 0.05  $t_{tb} = 2.62$  at 0.01

### Analysis and Interpretation:

The significant differences in the attitudes of Muslim women towards modernization opinion levels belonging to different categories have been shown in the above tables, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. The calculated t-values of Muslim women belonging to different categories (Educated & Uneducated, Married & Unmarried, Highly Educated & Average Educated, Highly Educated & below Average Educated, And Average educated & Below Average Educated) were 3.09, 21.79, 7.62, 6.06, and 1.34 respectively. The calculated t-value of Educated & Uneducated, Highly Educated & Average Educated and Highly Educated & Below Average Educated Muslim women has been more significant than the tabulated value ( $t_{cal} > t_{tab}$ ) and found at a 0.01 significance level. The calculated t-value of Married & Unmarried, Average Educated & below Average Educated Muslim women, is smaller than the tabulated t-value ( $t_{cal} < t_{tab}$ ) and not found significant at any level.

From the above analysis, it can be said that modernization opinion level has been a significant difference found between the Educated and Uneducated, Highly Educated & Average Educated and Highly Educated & below Average Educated Muslim women at 0.01 levels. Therefore, the study's hypothesis is, "There exist significant differences in the attitudes of Muslim women towards different aspects (Education, Parents-child relationship, Politics, Status of women, Marriage, Religion, Socio-cultural factors) in Imphal-East District

of Manipur.” It has been highly accepted. However, for the Married & Unmarried, Average Educated & Below Average Educated Muslim women, the hypothesis, “There exist significant differences in the attitudes of Muslim women towards different aspects (Education, Parents-child relationship, Politics, Status of women, Marriage, Religion, Socio-cultural factors) in Imphal-East District of Manipur.” has been found rejected.

**Main Findings of the Study:**

- i) Highly Educated Muslim women (13.50%) are found with a Positive Z score of + 0.84 and fall in grade C (High Opinion) of ‘Modernization Opinion Level.
- ii) Average Educated Muslim women (16.49%) are found with a Negative Z score of – 0.22 and fall in grade D (Average Opinion) of ‘Modernization Opinion Level.
- iii) Below Average, Educated Muslim women (20.61%) are found with a Negative Z score of – 0.03 and fall on grade D (Average Opinion) of ‘Modernization Opinion Level.
- iv) For the married category (31.52%), Uneducated Muslim women have a Negative Z score of – 0.11 and fall on grade D (Average) of ‘Modernization Opinion Level.
- v) For the Unmarried category (17.89%), Uneducated Muslim women have a Negative score of – 0.16 and fall on grade D (Average) of ‘Modernization Opinion Level.
- vi) The calculated t-value of educated & uneducated and married, & Unmarried Muslim women towards women’ social freedom was found more significant than tabulated value and found at 0.05 significant level.
- vii) The calculated t-value of highly educated and Average educated, highly educated & below average educated and average & below average educated Muslim women towards women’ social freedom was found as more significant than tabulated value and found at 0.01 significant level.
- viii) The calculated t-value of educated & uneducated and highly educated & average educated and highly educated & below average educated Muslim women towards modernization opinion level found more significant than the tabulated value and found at 0.01 significant level.
- ix) The calculated t-value of married & unmarried, average educated & below average educated Muslim women towards modernization opinion level was not found significant at any level.

**Suggestions for Improvement of Muslim Women’s Status:**

The following suggestions can be undertaken for the improvement of Muslim women’s status:

- i) The educated, employed, and empowered Muslim women should come forward and take the necessary and practical steps to eliminate the problem of illiteracy to overcome the socio-economic backwardness of Muslim women.
- ii) The Government and other agencies have to convince and encourage illiterate Muslim women to attend Adult education programs.
- iii) Muslim women should be allowed to pursue their education, employment, and decision-making inside or outside the home.



- iv) Skills education and vocational training should be given to Muslim women to be financially independent and contribute to socio-economic development.
- v) Muslim women should be allowed to participate in activities viz. social, political, economic, etc.

### **Conclusion:**

Educational backwardness is the main factor for the social degradation of women. Suppose the level of the intellectual development of people is an indicator of social progress. In that case, education for women is essential for developing knowledge, skill, awareness, scientific outlook, positive self-image, individuality, self-respect, and dignity, which are necessary ingredients for women to empower themselves. (Kumar, R., 2007) In the present study, the investigator has attempted to study the development of the educational status of Muslim women in the Imphal-East District of Manipur. From the study's findings, it has been found that education has been an essential factor for the upliftment and development of the status of women in society

Women have to take responsibility for empowering themselves. Unless they become conscious of their oppression, show initiative, and seize the opportunities, it will not change the status of women's society (Soni, J.K., 2008). Another attempt has also been carried out amongst the educated and uneducated Muslim women of Imphal-East District on their social attitudes towards different aspects- Education, Parents-child relationship, politics, the status of women, marriage, religion, socio-cultural factors. The study has been examined with the help of a comprehensive modernization inventory scale. From the study, it has been found that educated Muslim women covered in the present study have higher modernization opinion levels than uneducated Muslim women. It also showed that educated Muslim women showed favorable attitudes towards modernization opinion level than uneducated Muslim women.

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