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## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND WOMEN'S SOCIAL MOBILITY IN SEMI-URBAN INDIA: EVIDENCE FROM BERHAMPORE

**Chandrani Karmakar**

Research Scholar, Sociology, Eklavya University, Damoh

**Dr. Pramila Kushwaha**

Supervisor, Eklavya University, Damoh

### ABSTRACT

The level of education has been recognized to be a major factor in determining the social mobility of women especially in semi-urban areas where modernity and traditional gender practices co-exist. This paper looks at the correlation between education of women and their social mobility in Berhampore, West Bengal, in terms of occupational participation, contribution towards family income and decision-making activities. In a qualitative-descriptive design, information of 110 women was received, not allowing surveys to be used, the data was received in the form of institutional records, data held at community organizations, and local administrative registers. The analysis of frequency and percentage distributions was used to understand tendencies in terms of educational levels and related occupation activity.

**Keywords:** Educational Attainment, Women's Social Mobility, Semi-Urban India, Berhampore, Occupational Participation, Income Contribution.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The importance of educational attainment to social mobility among women especially in transitional societies is not new as it is understood to be an important determinant of gender equality in societies where old gender norms commence to merge with contemporary notions. In semi-urban areas of India like Berhampore in West Bengal, education has a dual purpose it empowers women through skills and knowledge and tends to breaks down entrenched socio-cultural barriers that tend to keep women out of the social, economic and political activities. The relationship that exists between formal education, job opportunities, and social placement offers a lot in terms of the speed at which the society is changing in those kinds of areas. This paper reviews how levels of education attained by women in Berhampore have affected their own mobility in terms of occupation, income, decision making capacity and participation in society.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Ahsan et al. (2025)** analyzed the accessibility, the engagement, and the affordability of online English language education by Muslim female students. It was found that the study had identified the intersecting nature of the issues that affected these students since their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds impacted participation and learning success. Although the technology-driven learning platforms provided potentials to improve skills, the structural obstacles usually restricted the equal access and successful engagement to the learning opportunities.

**Dhawale (2023)** Authors of this article explored the relationship between socioeconomic status and the development of academic goals and achievements of students in Osmanabad. The research indicated social-economic status of students led to significant differences in academic motivation and educational attainment where the students with higher socioeconomic status had high academic motivation and performed well compared to their peers of lower socioeconomic status facing limitations in their goals.

**Gupta (2022)** examined the determinants of bicycle use in rural and semi-urban settlement in India. The research indicated that access to infrastructure, income, and local mobility requirements had a great impact on the adoption of bicycles. It was revealed that socioeconomic factors, as well as housing patterns, contributed significantly to transportation

behavior especially in the semi-urban context and that the resource, access and lifestyle interact to influence this behavior.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

In this section, the researcher will describe the approach used in this study to develop his line of inquiry on the relationship between women educational attainment and social mobility in Berhampore, which is semi-urban. It explains the qualitative-descriptive design of the study, why secondary and institutional data were selected and who was sampled to ensure that the women were represented of various educational backgrounds.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The paper employed a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate the socio-economic mobility of women in relation to their levels of education in a semi-urban Bertampore with references to institutional and community statistics opposed to self-reports surveys to provide an underpinning and a clear picture of the patterns and trends.

#### **3.2 Sample Size**

A purposive sample of 110 women was therefore selected comprising of various education levels some with no schooling to the post graduate level based on institutional records, community organizations and local administrative registers that were not based on surveys.

### **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This section studies the role of women in Berhampore with regard to their educational level and the effect that this factor has on their involvement in the occupational sphere, contribution to economy and their societal involvement. Based on secondary data, women were categorised according to the education level and the research results were provided in tables and figures.

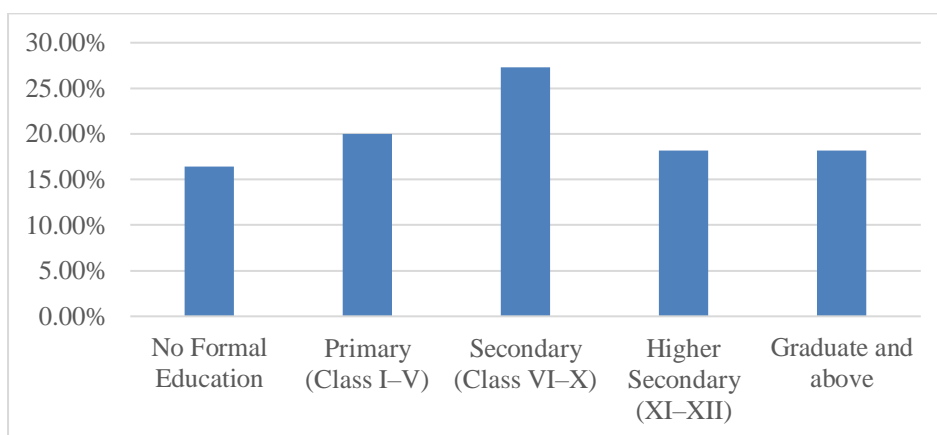
#### **4.1 Educational Attainment of Women**

Similarities in the distributions of women educational levels in Berhampore reveal that education is important to the accessibility of newly-found social and occupational roles, as well as in access to decision-making opportunities, in the semi-urban setting.

**Table 1:** Educational Attainment of Women

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
No Formal Education	18	16.4%
Primary (Class I–V)	22	20.0%
Secondary (Class VI–X)	30	27.3%
Higher Secondary (XI–XII)	20	18.2%
Graduate and above	20	18.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

The information demonstrates that the majority of the women (27.3) obtained secondary education, 24.7 obtained higher education, and 16.4 did not get any schooling, which proves the prevalence of secondary education and the prior possibility of the future intervention.



**Figure 1:** Graphical Representation of the Percentage of Educational Attainment of Women

Figure 1 presents the distribution of secondary education among women as the majority having it but it is lesser among women who get higher and non-education, an aspect that policy interventions can use as a guidance.

#### 4.2 Occupational Status by Educational Level

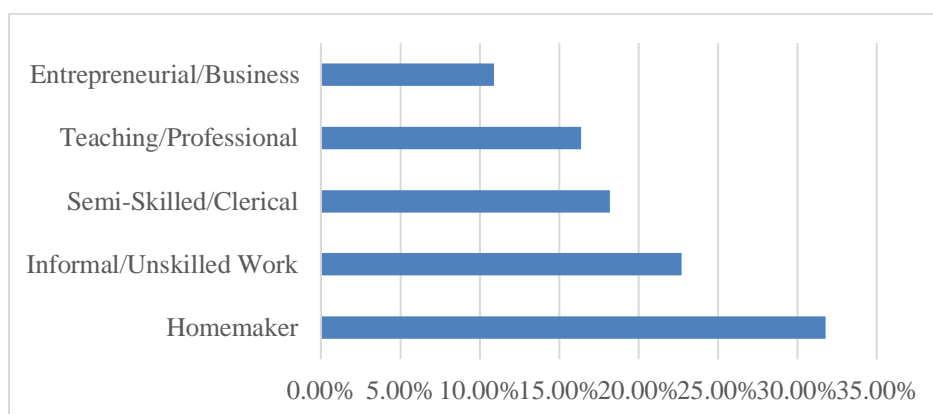
The table 2 and figure indicate how education of the women in Berhampore contributes to changes in the labor force participation of women both as homemakers, as professionals and as self-employed as well as the creation of skilled jobs and opportunities to social progress.

**Table 2:** Occupational Status by Educational Level

<b>Occupational Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Homemaker	35	31.8%
Informal/Unskilled Work	25	22.7%
Semi-Skilled/Clerical	20	18.2%

Teaching/Professional	18	16.4%
Entrepreneurial/Business	12	10.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

The data indicate that majority of women (31.8%) are housewives, higher educated women can be found in the sphere of professions (16.4%) or entrepreneurs (10.9%), whereas less-educated females are reported in the sphere of informal or unskilled services (22.7%). The figure shows the effects of education on occupational opportunities and how there are disparities regarding different sectors of the economy.



**Figure 2:** Graphical Representation of the Percentage of Occupational Status by Educational Level

The figure restates the tabular information where highly educated women are more likely to be employed in professional and business espousal jobs and less educated women become engaged in unofficial employment and homemaking. The visual summary repeats the relationships between the rate of education and the presence of the women in different fields, their social and economic mobility rights as individuals.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The research shows that there is an obvious correlation between educational completeness and social mobility of women in semi-urban Berhampore. More educated women tend to work in professional, entrepreneurial jobs, provide economic support to their families and can make a difference in local decision making, which is an indication of greater agency and social empowerment. On the other hand, the few educated women are still stuck in homemaking and informal jobs indicating the continued presence of socio-cultural divisive forces that limit mobility. The results indicate that there is an increase in the access to education but it remains

important to facilitate higher education opportunities and skill formation of the women so as to facilitate equitable social and economic progress.

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**Chandrani Karmakar**

**Dr. Pramila Kushwaha**