# Interrelation Between Mother's Empowerment and Children's Schooling : A Case Study of SC, OBC, and General Households of a Developing Region

** Promila Das*
*** Sumanash Dutta*

## Abstract

**Empowerment can be described as a process of enhancing the choice-making capacity of individuals or groups, total freedom to choose from available options and thereafter, transforming the chosen options into desired actions and outcomes. It is a process of awareness and awaking of capacity building, which is possible through greater participation and greater effective decision-making power. Education facilitates all these and hence, it is recognized in literature as one of the most important means to empower women. Literature also supports the view that educated mothers can give better education to their children, can take better decisions within family, and can make better decisions regarding their children's educational attainments. However, the direction of causation between mothers' education and children's education is still a matter of debate. The present study is based on primary data, which was generated through a household survey conducted in Karimganj District of Assam. The objectives of the study were to find out the level of empowerment of mothers, to find out the average schooling of their children, to find out the correlation between mothers' empowerment and children's education, and lastly, to make a comparison between mothers' empowerment and children's educational attainments among different castes, that is, Gen and SC, Gen and OBC, and SC and OBC households. The results established the connection between mothers' empowerment and education of their children.**

***Keywords :*** **Mother's empowerment, mother's education, children's schooling**

**JEL Classification : I 20, I21, J 16**

**Paper Submission Date : May 20, 2015 ; Paper sent back for Revision : October 3, 2015 ; Paper Acceptance Date : April 8, 2016**

Empowerment can be described as a process of enhancing the choice-making capacity of individuals or groups, total freedom to choose from among available options, and thereafter, transforming the chosen options into desired actions and outcomes. Hence, it involves social transformation of common persons through a rearrangement of power (Dey & Pain, 2007). However, a woman's level of empowerment varies from individual to individual on account of her social standing arising out of caste, ethnicity based identity, her relative income earning capability, inheritance, wealth, age, family position, and so forth. Hence, any analysis of women's empowerment must appreciate these dimensions. Women empowerment is a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own

* *Ph.D. Research Scholar,* Department of Economics, Assam University, Silchar - 788 011, Assam.
E-mail : das_promila2010@rediffmail.com
** *Professor, Department of Economics and Dean,* SVS of Library Science, Assam University, Silchar- 788 011, Assam.
E-mail : duttasu2003@yahoo.com

subordination (Keller & Mbwewe,1991). Education is the means for liberalizing societies out of gender based discriminations and retrogression, to grow out of oppression to democratic participation and involvement. It is a powerful tool for empowerment of individuals. It carries both intrinsic as well as instrumental values. Unfortunately, as the history of India reveals, education in India was never in reach of its entire people (Chakrapani, 2009).

Unequal access to education has been pervasive in India since time immemorial. Among others, discriminatory order in the caste system has been instrumental in perpetuating this type of inequality in access to education. The victims of such inequality are the marginalized sections of the society comprising of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), religious minorities (in monolithic societies), and women despite their sizeable presence in the demographic and social fields of the country. According to the Census of India (2011), the total population of SC accounted for 16.2% of Indian population and ST accounted for 8.2% of the total. Though there is no official head count for OBCs ; National Surveys suggest that the population of OBCs was 41% of the population (Chakrapani, 2009). As per NSS, 55$^{th}$ round, the literacy rate of SCs in rural India was 46.6%. In urban India, the literacy rate was 66.2%. The literacy rate of ST population was 42.2% in rural areas, and in urban areas, it was 70% . The literacy rate of Other Backward Class (OBC) was 54.8% in rural India. In urban India, the literacy rate of OBC was 75.3% (Chakrapani, 2009).

The picture is no way different in the North - East frontier of India. In all three districts of Barak valley of South Assam, the females are lagging behind their counterparts in literacy rate. In 1991, the female literacy rate in Karimganj district was 44.76%, while the male literacy rate was 64.05%, a difference of 19.29% against the females. In 2001, the female literacy rate increased to 57.28%, and the male literacy rate increased to 74.69 %, a difference of 17.41 % against the females. In 2011, the former increased to 73.49% and the latter to 85.70 %, a difference of 11.01% points against females. There are a number of studies on the empowerment of women and education of children. Some of these are reviewed below for drawing an analogy on issues concerned across regions.

Sonowal (2013) tried to focus on women empowerment and education in SC and ST community in Sonitpur District of Assam. The author found that in the Sonitpur district, women of rural areas are backward as compared to women in urban areas of the district. Furthermore, SC and ST categories of women in rural areas are backward in respect to empowerment and education as compared to women of general category. Sharma (2012) tried to focus on the difference in employment and empowerment attainment among SC and ST women in rural India. The author found that the high status of women among SC/ST groups in Rajnandgoan, Jhabua, Mayurbhanj, and Cuddalore has important effect on generating community assets and enhancing their spending capacity. High poverty rates pose to be significant obstacles in attaining empowerment among SC/ST women in rural India. The author observed that by putting cash earning in women's hands, NREGA has both increased and diversified the contribution that women are making to household incomes as wage earners.

Afridi (2010) tried to establish a significant relationship between the gender gap in educational investments and mothers' empowerment within households in India. The author found that in India, unlike some other countries, if education of parents increases, then educational attainments of daughters also increases as compared to that of sons. Furthermore, gender gap in schooling declines more with the increase in mother's education than father's education. He also found that there is less discrimination against educational investments in daughters where mothers are highly educated and take decisions in the family. Niaz, Ali and Rukhsana (2010), in a study conducted in Pakistan, tried to focus on the impact of empowerment of urban women on their family socioeconomic conditions. The study found that empowered women played an important role in supplementing their family budget; they participated in all kinds of decision-making related to family affairs; there was no gender discrimination in health and education of their children. Their children got

better education and developed better personality traits such as self confidence, manners, and permissiveness.

Durrant and Sathar (2000) conducted a study in Pakistan with an objective to focus on the link between status of mothers and their investment in children. They found that women with higher status are better able to make positive investments in their children, and as a result, the chances of survival of their children during infancy increases. As a result, their chances of ever attending school also increase. Kalmijn (1994) tried to examine the influence of mother's occupational status on children's educational attainment. He found that mother's occupational status had a strong effect on the schooling of both sons and daughters.

Women empowerment can substantially contribute to the educational prospects of children as they can take decisions regarding children's education, by making positive investment in children's education and by eliminating gender discrimination in educational decision making. However, although the broad focus of the present paper is health, education, and welfare economics; it attempts to explore, in particular, the link between women empowerment and children's educational attainments, which is still a very less researched area in comparison to studies conducted on the other aspects of women empowerment. The present study, therefore, focuses on this link and sets the following objectives to address in the study :

**(1)** To find out the level of empowerment of mothers,

**(2)** To find out the average schooling attainments of their children,

**(3)** To find out the correlation between mother's empowerment and children's education and,

**(4)** Lastly, to make a comparison between mother's empowerment and children's educational attainments among Scheduled Caste (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and General (Gen) households.

## Sample and Data

The size of the sample for the study was 90 households where mothers were the respondents and were selected purposively to facilitate comparison among categories. Out of 90 mothers, 30 respondents belonged to SC community, 30 respondents belonged to OBC community, and the rest 30 respondents belonged to General category. The study is based on primary data which was generated through household survey conducted in the month of January 2013 in Karimganj district of Assam.

## Research Design

Mother's empowerment is determined as a composite of her decision making power within family, her freedom of mobility, political participation, and control over economic resources. The variables representing these dimensions are discussed below :

**(1) Mother's Decision Making Power Within Family (MDMPWF) :** It is measured with the help of the following variables:

**(i)** FHC = Decision making regarding family health care,

**(ii)** LHP = Decision making regarding larger household purchases such as TV, refrigerator, two wheelers, and four wheelers (motor), etc.

**(iii)** RHP = Decision making regarding routine household purchases,

**(iv)** FS = Decision making regarding family size (such as living with in-laws, other relatives, number of children),

**(v)** JW = Decision making regarding women (including self) joining workforce,

**(vi)** GOH = Decision making regarding mother's going outside home (for numerous genuine reasons),

**(vii)** FDTDE = Decision making regarding family's day to day expenditure (actual),

**(viii)** SPI = Decision making regarding spending personal income of mother (real or hypothetical).

If mother is found to be able to take decisions alone and independently, the value assigned to the variable is 2, if both the mother and her husband take the decision jointly, then the value assigned is 1. But if mother has no role to play in decision making, that is, her husband or other family member(s) take a decision, the value assigned is 0. Therefore, the aggregate maximum score of mother may be 16, implying her exclusive role in decision making regarding family matters. The aggregate minimum score, on the other extreme, is 0, implying no role of mother in decision making regarding family matters. Applying the dimension index as developed by UNDP (UNDP, 1990) for estimating the human development index, the mother's decision making power regarding family matters (MDMPWF) in each household is estimated by the following formula :

$$\text{MDMPWF} = \frac{(\text{Actual value} - \text{Minimum value})}{\text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value}}$$

**(2) Mother's Freedom of Movement (Mobility of Mother) (MFOM) :** It is measured with the help of the following variables:

Mother's mobility to visit :

**(i)** local market for purchases (LMFP),

**(ii)** Local health center/ local doctor clinic (LHC/LDC),

**(iii)** Neighborhood for chatting/talking (NFG),

**(iv)** Home of relatives/ home of friends (HoR/HoF),

**(v)** Other city or other villages (OC/OV),

**(vi)** Cinema/festival/village fair (C/F/VF),

**(vii)** Visiting parental home (VPH),

**(viii)** Participation in cultural programmes of village/town (PCPOV/T),

**(ix)** Participation in religious programmes of village/town (PRPOV/T),

**(x)** Participation in meetings of women organizations (PIMWO).

If mother is found to be able to visit the above places frequently/participate in the above mentioned activities, the value assigned is 2. If the mother visits the above places/ participates in activities sometimes, then the value assigned is 1. But if mother never moves to/ participates in the above places/ activities, the value assigned is 0. Therefore, the aggregate maximum score of mother may be 20, implying her greater freedom of movement and participation. The aggregate minimum score, on the other extreme is 0, implying no freedom of movement/ participation. The mother's freedom of movement (MFOM) index is estimated by applying the dimension index

in the same manner as mentioned in the mother's decision making power within family (MDMPWF) dimension.

**(3) Mother's Political Participation (MPP)** is measured with the help of the following variables which represent mother's political participation in the following ways :

**(i)** CVIE = Caste vote in election,

**(ii)** VCOOC = Vote for candidate of own choice,

**(iii)** ASOEC = Attend speeches of election contestants,

**(iv)** UHACPS = Update herself about changes in political situation,

**(v)** DPOLPF = Discuss problems of local people at any forum,

**(vi)** FHCIE = Feel herself contesting in election,

**(vii)** SWCE (OP) = Mother's own opinion about should women contest election.

If mother is found to be able to participate in the above political matters freely, the value assigned is 2, if mother participates in the above political matter occasionally, then the value assigned is 1. But if mother never participates in political matters, the value assigned is 0. In case of SWCE (OP), value 2 is assigned in cases where the mother opines that women should context election. Value 1 is assigned if mother has restricted opinion about women contesting election (i.e. occasional contesting). Value 0 is assigned if mother is not found to be in favour of women contesting elections. Therefore, the aggregate maximum score of mother may be 14, implying her maximum political participation. The aggregate minimum score, on the other extreme, is 0, implying no political participation. As like previous cases, the mother's political participation (MPP) index is estimated by applying the dimension index.

**(4) Mother's Decision Regarding Control Over Economic Resources (MDRCOER) :** In this area, mother's empowerment is measured by the following variables. Mother's abilities are measured in the following matters :

**(i)** RHS= Routine household spending,

**(ii)** PJ/B/S= Purchasing jewelry/bonds/shares,

**(iii)** PGFR = purchasing gifts for relatives,

**(iv)** COEFPDN= control on expenditure for purchasing daily necessities,

**(v)** PCMA= purchasing clothes and makeup articles,

**(vi)** CWOCFU= control the wastage of commodities for use,

**(vii)** S/EOL = sale or exchange of land,

**(viii)** E/EOC= educational and other expenses on children,

**(ix)** PDF = purchasing daily food, POL = purchase of land.

If mother is found to be able to take decision alone and independently, the value assigned is 2, if both the mother and her husband take the decision jointly, then the value assigned is 1. But if mother has no role to play in decision making, that is, her husband or other family member(s) take the decision, the value assigned is 0. Therefore, the aggregate maximum score of mother may be 20, implying her exclusive role in control over economic resources. The aggregate minimum score, on the other extreme, is 0, implying no role of mother in

controlling economic resources. Applying the dimension index, the mother's decision making power in controlling economic resources (MDRCOER) index in each household is estimated.

The overall mother's empowerment index (MEI), taking the above selected aspects only, is measured by assigning equal weight to each of the above four aspects of participation/ decision making. Therefore,

**Mother's Empowerment Index =1/4 [*(MDMPWF)+ (MFOM) + (MPP) + (MDRCOER)*].**

The others variables taken in the study are listed below:

**(i)** Education of mother in years (Med).

**(ii)** Category code taken as 0 for OBC, 1 for SC, 2 for Gen.

**(iii)** Children's average education (CAEd) which is estimated by taking the average of education in years of all the children in a household.

## Results and Discussion

The data set is used to address the objectives of the study. The first objective is to find the level of empowerment of mother. The average schooling attainment of children is calculated by summing up the schooling of children in a household and then dividing it by the number of children excluding (0-6 years) age group. It is found that the average education of children in the sample (SC, OBC, & Gen combined) is 11.53 years. The same of SC sub sample is 11.28, OBC sub sample is 10.53 years, and that of Gen is 12.77 years. To meet the third objective of the study, the degree of association between children's average education (CAEd) and mother's empowerment (MEI); mother's education (MEd) and children's average education (CAEd); mother's education (MEd) and mother's empowerment (MEI) is estimated by applying Pearson's correlation coefficient *(r)* formula. The results are shown in Table1, Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4.

The results depicted in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4 indicate that in the combined sample of SC, OBC, and Gen households, children's education and mother's education; children's education and mother's empowerment; mother's education and mother's empowerment all are highly positively and significantly correlated with each other. The direction of causation is probably as follows: mother's education empowers her and empowered mothers have children with higher schooling attainments. Mother's education (which is an achievement) is a "functioning" that has a positive impact on mother's empowerment at the household level. This, in turn, promotes children's education.

**Table 1. Estimated Correlation Coefficient *(r)***

**Case-1: Combined Case (SC,OBC, & Gen)**

Sample Size=90,

| Correlation Between | Value | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|
| *r(CAEd, MEd)* | 0.479 | Significant at 1% |
| *r(CAEd, MEI)* | 0.675 | Significant at 1% |
| *r(MEd,MEI)* | 0.712 | Significant at 1% |

**Table 2. Estimated Correlation Coefficient *(r)***

**Case-2: SC sub sample**

Sample size=30

| Correlation Between | Value | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|
| *r(CAEd, MEd)* | 0.56 | Significant at 1% |
| *r(CAEd, MEI)* | 0.638 | Significant at 1% |
| *r(MEd,MEI)* | 0.671 | Significant at 1% |

Mother's Empowerment Index=MEI
Children's Average Education=CAEd
Mother's Education=MEd

**Table 3. Estimated Correlation Coefficient *(r)***

**Case-3: OBC Sub sample**

Sample Size: 30

| Correlarion Between | Value | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|
| *r(CAEd, MEd)* | 0.363 | Significant at 5% |
| *r(CAEd, MEI)* | 0.653 | Significant at 1% |
| *r(MEd,MEI)* | 0.624 | Significant at 1% |

**Table 4. Estimated Correlation Coefficient *(r)***

**Case-4: Gen Sub sample**

Sample Size: 30

| Correlarion Between | Value | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|
| *r(CAEd, MEd)* | 0.649 | Significant at 1% |
| *r(CAEd, MEI)* | 0.733 | Significant at 1% |
| *r(MEd,MEI)* | 0.847 | Significant at 1% |

**Table 5. Empowerment Level of Mothers**

| Empowerment Level | Number of mothers | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | SC | OBC | GENERAL |
| 0 to <0.5 | 11 | 16 | 4 |
| 0.5 to <0.7 | 13 | 9 | 19 |
| 0.7 to 1 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| AVERAGE EMPOWERMENT | 0.560 | 0.498 | 0.607 |

Similar are the cases in SC, OBC, and Gen subsamples. However, the degree of association between CAEd, MEd; CAEd, MEI ; and MEd, MEI is found to be stronger in general category as compared to SC and OBC sub samples.

From the Table 5, it is evident that the average empowerment of mothers belonging to general (Gen) category is distinctly different and higher than the average empowerment level of mothers belonging to SC and OBC category. This difference may further be tested statistically by considering general category mothers as the reference group.

Is mother's empowerment the same in SC, OBC, and Gen sub samples? This question is taken up for verification by assuming that the empowerment of mothers in SC, OBC, and Gen groups is independent of each other. Under this assumption, independent sample *t*- test is applied, which is detailed as under.

**(1) Independent Sample *t* - test :** We try to assess whether mother's empowerment of two samples (SCs and Gen) is the same.

↳ **The Null Hypothesis H01 is :** Average empowerment of mothers of SC category equals that of the mothers of Gen category.

↳ **The Alternative Hypothesis H1 is :** The mothers of the two samples (SC and Gen) significantly differ in their empowerment.

Table 6 and Table 7 contain two sets of analysis, the first one assuming equal variances in two groups, and the second one assuming unequal variances. The Levene's test as used by Gaur and Gaur (2006) tells us which statistic to consider to analyze the equality of means. Since the *F* - value is found to be statistically significant, the hypothesis of equal variance is rejected. Therefore, the statistic associated with equal variance not assumed is used for *t*-test for equality of means. In that case, the *t* - statistics is 1.412, with degrees of freedom 56.285. The corresponding two- tail *p* - value is .163, which is greater than 0.10. Therefore, we cannot reject the null

**Table 6. Group Statistics**

| | Category | *N* | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *MEI 2* | Gen | 30 | .6075 | .11589 | .02116 |
| *MEI 1* | SC | 30 | .5610 | .13825 | .02524 |

**Table 7. Independent Samples Test**

| | Levene's Test for equality of Variables | | *t*-test for equality of Mean | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *F* | Sig | *t* | df | Sign (2-tail) | Mean difference | Std Error Difference | 95%Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| 1* | 1.798 | 0.185 | 1.412 | 58 | .163 | 0.4652 | 0.03294 | -.01941 | 0.11245 |
| 2* | | | 1.412 | 56.285 | .163 | 0.4652 | 0.03294 | -.01945 | 0.11249 |

1* MEI Equal Variance Assumed, 2* MEI Equal Variance NOT Assumed

hypothesis even at 10% significance level. This means that the average mother's empowerment of Gen and SC categories are not significantly different from each other.

**(2) Independent Sample *t* - test :** We now try to assess whether mothers' empowerment of the two samples : Gen and OBCs is the same.

**The Null Hypothesis H02 is :** Average empowerment of mothers of Gen category equals that of the mothers of OBC category.

**The Alternative Hypothesis H2 is :** The mothers of the two samples (Gen and OBC) significantly differ in their empowerment.

The Table 8 and Table 9 contain two sets of analysis, the first one assuming equal variances in the two groups, and the second one assuming unequal variances. Levene's test (Gaur & Gaur, 2006) tells us which statistic to consider to analyze the equality of means. Since the *F* - value is found to be statistically significant, the hypothesis of equal variance is rejected. Therefore, the statistic associated with equal variance not assumed is used for *t*-test for equality of means. In that case, the *t* - statistics is 2.842 with degrees of freedom 50.395. The corresponding two- tail *p* - value is .006, which is less than 0.10. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis even at 10% significance level, which means that the average mother's empowerment of Gen and OBC categories is significantly different from each other.

**Table 8. Group Statistics**

| | Category | *N* | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *MEI 2* | Gen | 30 | .6075 | .11589 | .02116 |
| *MEI 1* | OBC | 30 | .4987 | .17463 | .03188 |

**Table 9. Independent Samples Test**

| | Levene's Test for equality of Variables | | *t*-test for equality of Mean | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *F* | Sig | *t* | *df* | Sign (2-tail) | Mean difference | Std Error Difference | 95%Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| 1* | 11.608 | 0.001 | 2.842 | 58 | .006 | 0.10876 | 0.03827 | .03217 | .18536 |
| 2* | | | 2.842 | 50.395 | .006 | 0.10876 | 0.03827 | .03192 | .18561 |

1* MEI Equal Variance Assumed, 2* MEI Equal Variance NOT Assumed

**(3) Independent Sample *t* - test:** We now try to assess whether mother's empowerment of the two samples of SCs and OBCs is the same.

↳ **The Null Hypothesis H03 is :** Average empowerment of mothers of SC category equals that of the mothers of OBC category.

↳ **The Alternative Hypothesis H3 is :** The mothers of the two samples (SC and OBC) significantly differ in their empowerment.

Table 10 and Table 11 contain two sets of analysis, the first one assuming equal variances in the two groups, and the second one assuming unequal variances. Levene's test tells us which statistic to consider to analyze the equality of means. Since the *F* value is found to be statistically significant, the hypothesis of equal variance is rejected. Therefore, the statistic associated with equal variance not assumed is used for *t*-test for equality of means. In that case, *t*-statistics is 1.531 with degrees of freedom 55.099. The corresponding two- tail *p* - value is 0.132, which is greater than 0.10. Therefore, we cannot reject the null hypothesis even at 10% significance

**Table 10. Group Statistics**

| | Category | *N* | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *MEI 1* | SC | 30 | .5610 | .13825 | .02524 |
| *MEI 0* | OBC | 30 | .4987 | .17463 | .03188 |

**Table 11. Independent Samples Test**

| | Levene's Test for equality of Variables | | *t*-test for equality of Mean | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *F* | Sig | *t* | df | Sign (2-tail) | Mean difference | Std Error Difference | 95%Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| 1* | 4.21 | 0.045 | 1.531 | 58 | 0.131 | 0.06225 | 0.04066 | -0.01915 | 0.14365 |
| 2* | | | 1.531 | 55.099 | 0.132 | 0.06225 | 0.04066 | -0.01924 | 0.14374 |

1* MEI Equal Variance Assumed, 2* MEI Equal Variance NOT Assumed

level, which means that the average mother's empowerment of SC and OBC categories are not significantly different from each other.

## Policy Implications

The findings of the study re-establish the importance of mothers' education in the progression of the educational attainments of their children and in enhancing their own empowerment levels. The policy implications of these observations clearly emphasize a proactive role of the state in policy formulation and implementation for enhancing the educational attainments of mothers in the society. Opening of adult education centers for mothers along with provision of monetary benefits for them shall encourage mothers to improve their education levels. For minimizing the prevailing caste-wise disparity in the level of mothers' empowerment, policy intervention for enhancing mothers' empowerment levels by adopting a target group approach, particularly for SCs and OBCs, is required to improve the situation in this remote area of the country.

## Conclusion

In development literature, education is considered as a panacea for all development related problems. The prevailing inequality in educational access and attainments across different genders, castes, religions, and regions is, therefore, a serious problem that contributes to underdevelopment. Any study on these aspects of education has, understandably, important research and policy implications.

The present study reveals that the average education of mothers in SC, OBC, and Gen category is 10.8 years, 9.57 years, and 11.2 years, respectively. The average education of children in the three categories is 11.28,10.53, and 12.77 years, respectively. The average empowerment of mothers in SC category is 0.561, OBC category is 0.498, and that of Gen category is 0.607 on a scale of 0-1. From these, one gets the impression that Gen category mothers have an edge over SCs and OBCs, and their children are also more educationally well off than SC and OBC children. The study conducted by Sonowal (2013) partly corroborates these findings. One important implication of these findings is the problem of less social mobility under such circumstances. The empowerment level of mothers is also not up to the mark in the three categories. Efforts should be taken to improve the empowerment levels of women belonging to SC, OBC, and Gen categories. The study leaves enough indications towards the fact that education of mothers plays a determining role in their empowerment, which, in turn, influences the educational attainments of their children. The education of mothers will have an intergenerational impact on the education of their children as observed in other studies such as Afridi (2010), Deding and Hussain (2002), and Plug (2004).

Lastly, independent sample test confirms that there is no significant difference between the empowerment levels of mothers of SC and Gen categories and SC and OBC categories. But there is a significance difference between the empowerment levels of mothers of Gen and OBC categories. However, overall, the empowerment levels of mothers of the three categories is found to be low.

## Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

One important limitation of the present study is the small size of the sample drawn for the study. Although the present sample is a representative one, more such studies may be taken up with a larger size of sample comprising of heterogeneous sample units that represent different castes, genders, religions, and so forth. Moreover, the combined data set used in the study representing both the rural and urban areas of Karimganj may

also be viewed as a limitation of the present study. This is because there may exist wide rural-urban disparity in both the areas of empowerment and educational attainments. Hence, further research may be undertaken to study the rural-urban disparity in mothers' empowerment levels and in the educational attainments of both mothers and their children.

## References


Afridi, F. (2010). *Women's empowerment and the gender gap in schooling in India.* Retrieved from http://www.isid.ac.in/fafridi/doc/empowerment_PS_RR2.pdf

Chakrapani, P. (2009). *Empowerment of marginalized communities : Role of ODL in India.* Retrieved from http://wikieducation.org/images/0/09/PID_534pdf

Deding, M. C. & Hussain, A. M. (2002). *Children's educational attainment - Effects of parents' education, living conditions, and other background factors* (Working Paper 27). The Danish National Institute of Social Research. Retrieved from http://www.sfi.dk/Files/Filer/SFI/Pdf/Working_papers/WP27MCDMHDanishChildrensEducational.pdf

Dey, D., & Pain, A. K. (2007). *Women empowerment : New dimensions and experiences* (pp. 123 - 135). Hyderabad : The ICFAI University Press.

Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam. (2001). *Statistical Handbook Assam*. Assam : Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam.

Durrant, V. L., & Sathar, Z. A. (2000). *Greater investments in children through women's empowerment : A key to demographic change in Pakistan?* (Paper No 137). Retrieved from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download? doi=10.1.1.175.9610&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Gaur, A. S. & Gaur, S. S. (2006). *Statistical methods for practice and research* (pp. 58-62). Response Books : New Delhi.

Government of Assam. (n.d.). *Statistical databank of Karimganj.* Retrieved from http://www.karimganj.nic.in

Kalmijn, M. (1994). Mother's occupational status and children's schooling. *American Sociological Review, 59* (2), 257-275.

Keller, B., & Mbwewe, D. C. (1991). Policy and planning for the empowerment of Zambia's women farmers. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies, 12* (1), 75-88.

Niaz, M., Ali, A. & Rukhsana, J. (2010). Socio-economic impacts of women's empowerment in Peshawar, Pakistan. *Sarhad Journal of Agriculture, 26* (3), 461-465.

Plug, E.(2004). Estimating the effect of mother's schooling using a sample of adoptees. *The American Economic Review, 94* (1), 358-368.

Registrar General & Census Commissioner. (2011). *Census of India.* New Delhi. Retrieved from http://www.censusindia.gov.in