



Research Paper

## Awareness of Legal Rights: A Study among Women of Titabar

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**ABSTRACT:** A legal right is a claim recognized and delimited by law for the purpose of securing it. Legal awareness helps to promote consciousness of legal culture, participation in the formation of laws and the rule of law. Legal awareness can empower people to demand justice, accountability and effective remedies at all levels. Without legal literacy people can get intimidated and alienated from law. This may evolve into a situation which results in people coming into conflict with law or being unable to obtain help from it. Hence the present study is carried out to access the extent of legal awareness among the women of Titabar. The main objectives of the study are: 1] to study the legal rights awareness among women of Titabar, 2] to investigate how socio economic condition affects awareness and 3] to study the extent to which the knowledge of legal rights has been practiced. The study is based on both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data has been collected by conducting a survey among the women of Titabar and its neighboring villages. The study will help to understand the extent of legal awareness among the women of different age group and socio economic background.

**KEYWORDS:** Awareness, legal provision, Titabar.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Legal rights refers to rights according to law. It exists under the rules of some particular legal system. Legal awareness is the promotion of the public knowledge of the rights and obligations according to the constitution. Legal awareness lies at the base of any effort toward legal empowerment. Legal awareness can empower people to demand justice, accountability and effective remedies at all levels. Legal needs always stand to become crisis oriented because their ignorance prevents them from anticipating legal troubles and approaching a lawyer for consultation and advice in time. This magnifies the impact of their legal troubles and difficulties when they come.

Without legal literacy people can get intimidated and alienated from law. This may evolve into a situation which results in people coming into conflict with the law, or being unable to obtain help from it. Courts have acknowledged the barrier raised by a lack of literacy to asserting guaranteed rights effectively. Low literacy may block people's access to justice.

Legal awareness is achieved through camps, lectures, and interactive workshops or crash programs on the essential and elementary legal laws. Other methods are road shows, radio talks, street and theatre plays, as well as the publication of relevant books, periodicals, posters and charts that deal with particular laws. As part of the legal literacy mission, the National Legal Services Authority (India) conducted a five year nationwide "National Legal Literacy Mission" from 2005 to 2010.

The present study was carried out to assess the level of awareness of the women of Titabar about the legal provisions provided in India which secure the dignity of women. The study area is comprised of both rural and urban area and the sample selected for collecting data are heterogeneous in terms of their level of education, age, caste, etc. the study was carried out in order to assess the extent of legal awareness across this heterogeneous group. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Indian Divorce Act, 1969, Maternity benefit Act, 1861, Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act, 1986, Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 etc. are some of the very important laws in India for protecting the rights of women in India. But, it is not known that how many women are aware about these laws and their uses. Therefore,

## II. OBJECTIVES

The present study was carried out in Titabar with the following objectives:

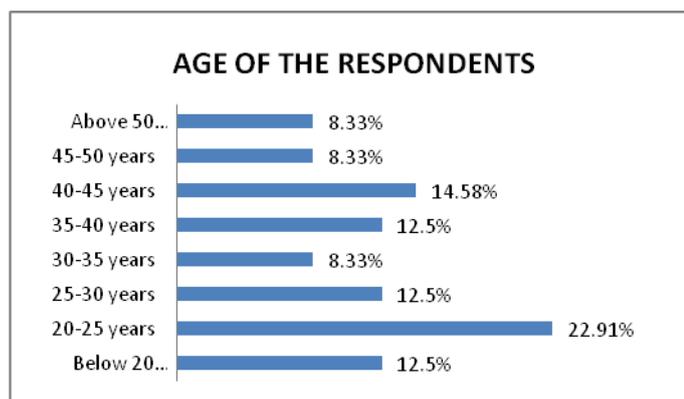
- To study the legal rights awareness among women of Titabar.
- To investigate how socio economic condition affects awareness.
- To study the extent to which the knowledge of legal rights have been practiced.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The present study has been carried out in 10 villages of Titabar with the help of a primary survey. Titabar is a town in the Jorhat district of Assam. It is about 20 km away from Jorhat city. The data has been collected from only the women of these villages using a questionnaire in a yes/no format. The sample size for the present study is 85 collected across a heterogeneous group of women from rural and urban Titabar. The data collected has been analyzed with the help of tables and figures.

## IV. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDANTS

To find out the level of awareness about the legal provisions prevailed in India, a survey has been conducted among the women of different socio-economic background in Titabar. In this study, the data have been collected from total 85 women of 10 different villages of Titabar. When the age of the respondents is considered, it has been found that most of them (22.91percent) belong to the age group of 20-25 years followed by 14.58 percent in the age group of 40-45 years, 12.5 percent each in below 20 years, 25-30 years and 35-40 years of age group and 8.33 percent each in 30-35 years, 45-50 years and above 50 years of age group (fig. 1).



Source: Primary survey, 2019

**Fig. 1**

In case of the occupation of the respondents, it is found that 45.83 percent of them are housewives, 18.76 percent are students, 27.08 percent are service holders, 2.08 percent are unemployed women and 6.25 percent are involved in different business activities (Table 1).

**Table 1: Occupation of the Respondents**

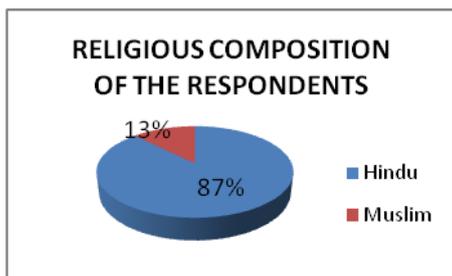
Occupation	Percentage
Housewife	45.83
Service	27.08
Student	18.76
Business	6.25
Other	2.08
Total	100.00

Source: Primary survey, 2019

While we look into the religious composition of the respondents, it is found the 87.5 percent of them are Hindus and remaining 12.5 percent are Muslims (Fig. 2). In case of marital status of the women, it is observed that 54.17 percent of them are married while 4.16 percent of them are widow and 41.16 percent are unmarried (Fig. 3).when the castes of the respondents are considered, it is found that 43.75 percent of the respondents are of General caste, 41.66 percent are of OBC and 14.58 percent are of ST caste. There is no respondent from SC caste (Fig. 4).

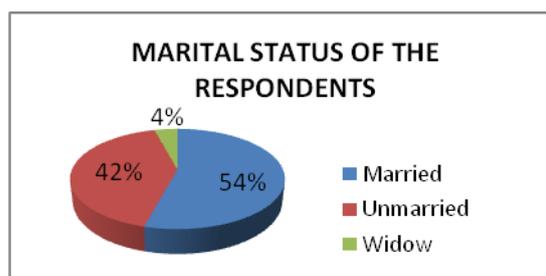
Source: Primary survey, 2019

Source: Primary survey, 2019



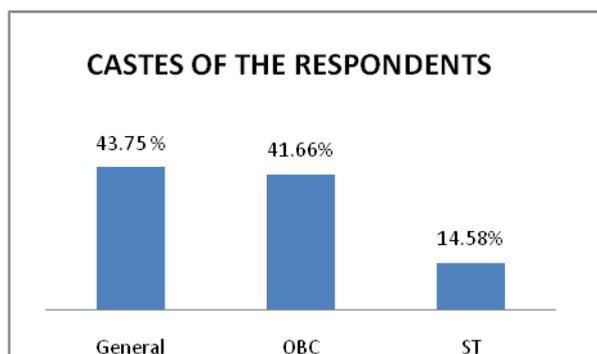
Source: Primary survey, 2019

Fig. 2



Source: Primary survey, 2019

Fig. 3



Source: Primary survey, 2019

Fig. 4

All the respondents considered in the present study are literate and are having different levels of education. 41.66 percent of them are HS passed followed by 18.75 percent graduates, 14.58 percent post graduates, 12.5 percent HSLC passed and 8.33 percent below HSLC level. 4.16 percent have other educational qualifications like ITI, etc. (Table 2).

**Table 2: Level of Educational Qualification of the Respondents**

Educational qualification	Below HSLC	HSLC passed	HS passed	Graduate	Post Graduate	Other	Total
Percentage of respondents	8.33	12.5	41.66	18.75	14.58	4.16	100.00

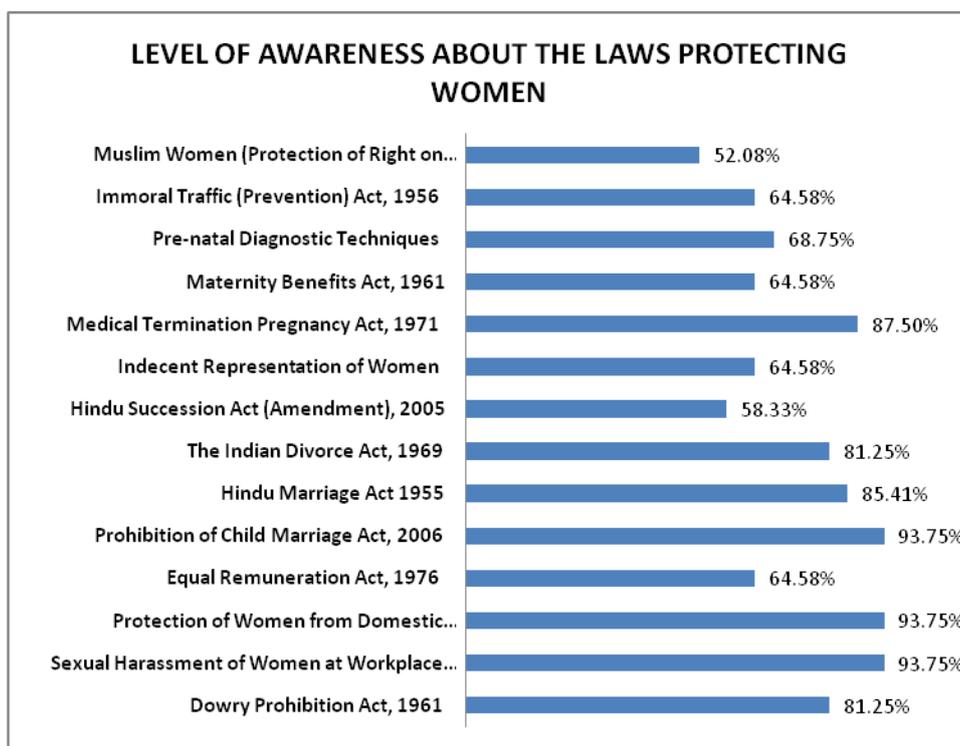
Source: Primary survey, 2019

## V. AWARENESS OF WOMEN ABOUT THE LEGAL PROVISIONS

To assess the awareness about the laws protecting the rights of women, a convenient random sampling survey has been conducted among the women of Titabar. For this purpose, they were asked about their knowledge about 14 important laws in India protecting the rights of women. These laws include the protection of women from sexual harassment, domestic violence, safety in their workplaces, laws relating to marriage and dignity of women. The data from the field says that more than 50 percent of the women surveyed know about all the laws mentioned in the survey schedule prepared for the present study. It has been observed that more than 90 percent of the respondents are aware about Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. On the other hand, more than 80 percent of the women covered in this study are aware about Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Hindu Marriage Act 1955, The Indian Divorce Act, 1969 and Medical Termination Pregnancy Act, 1971 (81.25percent, 85.41 percent, 81.25 percent and 87.5 percent respectively). On the other hand, Fig. 5 shows that less than 60 percent of the women surveyed are aware about Hindu Succession Act (Amendment), 2005 and Muslim Women (Protection of Right on Divorce) 2017 while more than 60 percent of them knows about Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (64.58 percent), Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 (64.58 percent), Maternity Benefits Act, 1961(64.58 percent), Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation & Prevention of misuse) Act, 1994(68.75 percent) and Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (64.58 percent).

It has been noticed that the women of age group of 20-25 are more aware about the laws protecting the women of India than the women of other age groups. It has also been noticed that all the women covered in the present study are aware about the legal provisions which makes the lives of the women secure in different

spheres. When we assess their legal awareness in terms of their educational qualification, it comes out that more the level of educational attainment more the awareness (fig. 5).



Source: Primary survey, 2019

**Fig. 5**

### VI. SOURCES OF GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEGAL RIGHTS

In the present study it is also inquired that from where they come to know about the above mentioned laws and they mentioned different sources of information. It has been found that the television is the most popular source to gain information about the legal provisions as 100 percent of the respondents mention it in the interview. Family members (89.58percent), newspapers and magazines (85.82 percent), friends (81.25 percent) and neighbors (77.08 percent) and internet (70.83 percent) are important sources of information which provide knowledge about the existing laws and provisions in India to help the women (Table 3).

**Table 3: Sources of Gathering Information**

Sources of information	Percentage
TV	97.91
Family members	89.58
Library	39.58
Radio	37.5
Govt. agencies	41.66
Friends	81.25
Internet	70.83
Neighbor	77.08
Social worker	60.42
Newspaper/magazine	85.82
Books	52.08
Teachers	66.66

Source: Primary Survey, 2019

During the interview, the respondents were asked that if any one of them has faced any situation to apply any of the above mentioned laws in life till date and they replied it in negative and said that they have not faced any such situations till. Again it has also been inquired that in future, if they will face any situations that lead them to seek help of any of the laws mentioned in the present study, will they come forward or hesitate to do so. In this regard, all the women answered in positive way and said that when they will feel its need they will definitely take shelter to the laws without any hesitation.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

The study revealed that the women of Titabar are literate as well as aware about their legal rights. Television and Internet has played a major role in creating awareness. It was also found that though the women are aware but they have not used these legal rights as situation has never arisen. But it was found that these women were willing to take legal help when need be.

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