



# Income Over Education: The True Predictor Of Financial Inclusion Among Earning Youth

Ria Barua

Research Scholar

Department of Commerce, University of Calcutta

**Abstract:** While financial inclusion is universally recognised as a cornerstone of economic empowerment, traditional paradigms frequently overemphasise formal educational attainment and standard demographic profiles as the primary catalysts for banking readiness. This study investigates the core determinants of active financial inclusion among earning youth in the Kamrup Metropolitan district of Assam, deliberately isolating the impacts of gender, educational qualification, academic discipline, and independent personal income. By applying a cross-sectional empirical design, the research evaluated a representative sample of active earning college and university students. The data was analysed using advanced parametric and robust non-parametric statistical models to establish that generating a monthly personal income act as the definitive catalyst for active financial integration, effectively overshadowing all other tested socio-demographic variables. However, independent t-test indicated demonstrated superior levels of financial inclusion among female youth compared to their male counterparts. The empirical evidence mandates a critical paradigm shift indicating the practical reality of securing an independent income as the driving agent to achieve financial inclusion.

**Keywords:** Financial Inclusion, Demographic Determinants, Earning Students, Assam.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The access to and the utilisation of financial services are the foundational elements of Financial Inclusion (FI) and are widely acknowledged as critical mechanisms to eliminate poverty and promote economic well-being (Demirgüç-Kunt & Klapper, 2012; Kim et al., 2018). To foster a truly inclusive financial ecosystem harmonisation of two primary forces, the supply and the demand side. The supply side of financial inclusion dictates the physical availability of banking infrastructure, service costs, and regulatory frameworks; and the demand side reflects the active engagement and utilisation of these services by consumers. An effective financial system requires proper functioning of both the forces; therefore, a robust financial infrastructure along with an informed and capable consumer base become equally crucial (Cole et al., 2011). Bridging this gap will ultimately facilitate broader macroeconomic stability and accelerate poverty alleviation (Furtado, 2018; Honohan, 2004; Jayaratne & Strahan, 1996; Kar et al., 2011).

While financial inclusion has garnered significant global attention, particularly as a policy priority within developing nations (GPFI, 2011), profound inequalities in financial access persist worldwide (Demirgüç-Kunt & Klapper, 2013). Scholars have consistently identified a strong correlation between financial and social exclusion (Carbo et al., 2007; Claessens, 2006) which infers lack of financial access translates into less participation in the society. Within the Indian context, ambitious supply-side initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) have successfully expanded banking infrastructure and driven up baseline account ownership. However, a functional gap remains, as many of these accounts sit dormant rather than being actively utilised (Arun & Kamath, 2015). Furthermore, stark regional imbalances characterise the Indian landscape; notably, northeastern states have historically exhibited distinctly lower rates of financial integration (Bhanot et al., 2012). Traditional approaches frequently fail in a diverse country like ours, which necessitates a more innovative and customised model to achieve genuinely inclusive growth (Gwalani & Parkhi, 2014). While few researches highlight factors like income and

geographic access as primary drivers of financial inclusion (Das, 2024), studies also reveal significant localised and technological disparities that shape banking adoption (Patel et al., 2023), underscoring the critical need for context-specific research.

The World Bank's Global Findex data illustrates the scale of this ongoing challenge. As of 2025, while overall global account ownership has grown to 79%, an estimated 1.3 billion adults remain unbanked, predominantly within developing nations and low-income communities (Klapper et al., 2025). Youth are disproportionately marginalised by this exclusion. In 2021, only 54% of youth (ages 15–24) possessed a formal account, compared to 68% of older adults (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2022). By 2025, this generational divide remained remarkably consistent across both high-income and developing economies, with 81% of older adults holding accounts compared to only 69% of youth. Of the global unbanked population in 2025, approximately 380 million individuals (29%) fell precisely into the 15–24 age bracket (Klapper et al., 2025).

Such exclusion highlights an urgent need to examine the systemic barriers faced by youngsters, particularly as they transition into the workforce and begin making independent financial decisions. Therefore, attempts have been made in this study to investigate the dynamics of formal financial inclusion among earning youth within the Kamrup Metropolitan district of Assam. As these individuals represent the forthcoming generation of economic leaders, understanding how they integrate into the formal banking system is of utmost importance.

The primary objective of this research is to deeply analyse the core socio-demographic determinants influencing financial inclusion within this specific demographic. By isolating the impact of gender, educational qualification, academic stream, and income level, the study seeks to evaluate how these underlying factors shape an individual's financial readiness and banking utilisation. By exploring these localised drivers, the context-specific findings will come to light necessary for addressing the functional gap between basic banking access and active economic participation.

This paper is organised in 5 sections; the next section provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. Section 3 details the research methodology. Section 4 presents the empirical data analysis and results. Finally, Section 5 concludes the study with a discussion of the findings and their broader policy implications.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The theoretical framework of financial inclusion transcends the mere possession of a bank account; it embodies the systemic integration of populations into the formal economic sphere. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development International Network on Financial Education (2013) defines financial inclusion as a comprehensive initiative to guarantee that all societal segments enjoy affordable, timely, and adequate access to regulated financial services, emphasising that genuine inclusion relies on active utilisation driven by innovative financial education. Aligning with this, the World Bank described it as the responsible and sustainable provision of financial products that cater to the everyday requirements of consumers (Grohmann et al., 2018). Consequently, this architecture rests on three critical pillars: the depth of physical access and active engagement, the overarching quality of the services provided, and the financial capability of the end-users.

Consumer capability is exceptionally crucial for emerging economies, particularly for younger generations navigating their initial workforce earnings. Highlighting this vulnerability, Lusardi et al., (2010) identified severe educational deficits among youth, noting that barely a quarter of their subjects comprehended basic economic concepts like inflation, risk diversification, or interest rates. This knowledge gap leaves them highly exposed during critical financial transitions into independent adulthood. Moreover, converting theoretical knowledge into active financial participation is a complex process. Field studies in India and Indonesia by Van Rooij et al. (2011) demonstrated that while the demand side is driven by financial education, actual long-term utilisation is heavily depended upon supplementary factors like reduced transaction costs and institutional trust. Therefore, cultivating financial resilience among the youth requires a multifaceted strategy where theoretical education is coupled with tangible, practical opportunities to exercise those skills within the banking system (Johnson & Sherraden, 2007).

Several studies have pinpointed income and educational attainment as primary determinants financial access. Cross-national data confirms that elevated income levels strongly correlate with increased utilisation of banking services in developing economies (Demirgüç-Kunt & Klapper, 2012). However, in the Indian context, this relationship frequently manifests nonlinearly; rising income reliably boosts account ownership, yet active usage is often noticed to stagnate due to a disconnect between products availability and consumer needs (Inoue, 2019). This functional divide is further exacerbated by deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms. Rural Indian women are routinely marginalised by mobility constraints and patriarchal banking architectures—such as the demand for male cosigners—resulting in significantly lower credit access for female-headed households, even when asset ownership matches their male counterparts (Aziz et al., 2022; Baria, 2024). Such systemic exclusion extends to other vulnerable populations, including socially disadvantaged groups, particularly youth residing in geographically challenging areas (Kandari et al., 2021).

This exclusion is particularly evident across India's North-Eastern Region (NER). Macro-level evaluations consistently demonstrate that the NER struggles with financial integration, significantly lagging behind the rest of the country in broader economic development and rural banking coverage (Das & Guha, 2015; Maity, 2019). Even within Assam, financial inclusion remains highly uneven and broadly unsatisfactory, with many districts failing to keep pace with both state and national benchmarks (Deka, 2024). Reports suggest a positive relationship between Assam's GDP, the physical expansion of bank branches, and regional credit-deposit ratios, often creating an illusion of inclusion. However, merely opening bank accounts for marginalised populations does not automatically translate into genuine economic participation (Maity & Sahu, 2021).

This functional disconnect is highly evident at the micro-level. For instance, despite widespread baseline account ownership in districts like Golaghat, Assam, actual transaction volumes and the usage of digital tools like ATM or debit cards remain remarkably low due to a severe lack of consumer awareness regarding financial products (Dutta, 2022). In fact, broader ATM growth across the state has shown a relatively insignificant relationship with economic development, reinforcing the premise that passive infrastructure and account ownership are merely the beginning of the inclusion process, not the end.

These systemic hurdles and profound awareness gaps are particularly detrimental to the youth demographic as they navigate their early financial independence. The transition from theoretical banking access to active utilisation is heavily dictated by socio-demographic inequalities. Among college-going youth in socioeconomically diverse areas of Assam, financial readiness is predominantly driven by family income and parental education rather than mere geographic proximity to a bank. Furthermore, deep demographic divides persist within this demographic; active financial comprehension is significantly skewed toward male students and those enrolled in quantitative or commerce-based academic disciplines (Sarkar et al., 2025). This intersection of socio-economic and educational barriers leaves female students, low-income cohorts, and scholars from non-commerce streams highly vulnerable, highlighting an urgent need for targeted interventions to support their integration into the formal economy.

While existing empirical studies comprehensively document the overarching systematic barriers faced by women, rural populations, and the broader NER, there remains a distinct gap in the literature regarding the localised dynamics of early-career transitions. Specifically, the precise interplay of fundamental demographic determinants—namely gender, educational attainment, academic stream, and income level—on the active financial integration of earning students within the Kamrup Metropolitan district remains unexplored. Examining these specific variables addresses a critical research gap, providing the contextual insights necessary to design targeted interventions and foster economic participation among the region's emerging workforce.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design and Sampling Strategy**

To effectively evaluate the underlying socio-demographic determinants of Financial Inclusion (FI), this research employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design. The target population comprise of earning youth residing in the Kamrup Metropolitan district of Assam, a demographic representing the region's emerging economic workforce. To further investigate the combined impact of educational attainment and personal income generation, samples from earning college and university students were collected. A purposive sampling strategy was applied to select the respondents. Rather than enforcing predetermined quotas, this

non-probability sampling approach allowed the study to capture a natural, unequal distribution across various demographic segments, thereby providing a highly authentic cross-section of the local youth workforce.

The final sample consisted of 156 valid respondents. To achieve statistically valid sample adequacy for predictive modeling, the minimum required sample size was established applying the standard observation-to-predictor ratio rule for multiple regression analysis, which requires a minimum of 10 to 15 subjects per predictor variable (Green, 1991). Since the final regression model will evaluate four primary independent variables (gender, educational attainment, academic stream, and income), the retained sample size of 156 easily exceeds this rigorous threshold, ensuring robust statistical power and preventing model overfitting.

### 3.2 Measurement Instrument

Primary data was gathered using a structured questionnaire. To ensure methodological rigor and data integrity, the survey instrument of Financial Inclusion was adapted from the standardised Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development International Network on Financial Education (OECD/INFE) 2022 toolkit for Measuring Financial Literacy and Financial Inclusion. The dependent variable—the aggregate Financial Inclusion score—is calculated based on the OECD's established scoring methodology, capturing the respondents' holding and usage of payment, saving, investment, retirement, insurance and credit products. Relying on family members and friends for savings and financial shocks also form a crucial part of financial inclusion scale. The independent variables for this study comprise of four distinct socio-demographic factors: gender (binary), educational attainment, academic stream, and monthly personal income level.

### 3.3 Statistical Analysis

All quantitative assessments and econometric modeling will be executed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The analytical framework will be conducted in two primary phases:

First, comparative mean analyses will be deployed to identify the preliminary variations in financial inclusion across different demographic groups. An independent samples t-test will measure the variance in continuous financial inclusion scores between dichotomous groups (i.e., male versus female respondents). For independent variables comprising three or more distinct strata—such as educational attainment, academic stream, and income brackets—a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be administered to test the statistically significant mean differences.

Following the comparative analysis, a multiple linear regression will be executed to isolate and quantify the predictive power of the selected socio-demographic determinants. By forcing all four independent variables (gender, education, stream, and income) into the model simultaneously, this technique will allow the study to ascertain the specific magnitude, direction, and statistical significance of each factor's influence on the financial inclusion of earning students, holding all other variables constant.

For the purpose of this study, the multiple linear regression model is mathematically specified as follows:

Where:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \epsilon$$

$Y$  = The dependent variable, defined as the respondent's aggregate FI score.

$\beta_0$  = The Y-intercept (Constant).

$\beta_1 \dots \beta_k$  = The unstandardised regression coefficients, representing the individual predictive weight and direction of each independent socio-demographic variable.

$X_1 \dots X_k$  = The independent variables

$\epsilon$  = The stochastic error term

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. T-test for Gender-wise Comparison

**Table No. 1. Group Statistics**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FI 1.00	96	3.4167	1.10183	.11246
2.00	60	3.8333	.90510	.11685

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

**Table No. 2. Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
F	Equal variances assumed	10.678	.001	-2.456	154	.015	-.41667	.16966	-.75182	-.08151
I	Equal variances not assumed			-2.569	142.818	.011	-.41667	.16217	-.73723	-.09610

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the Financial Inclusion (FI) scores between male and female earning youth in the Kamrup Metropolitan district. The sample consisted of 96 respondents in Group 1 (Male) and 60 respondents in Group 2 (Female), aligning with the natural, non-quota-based distribution of the local workforce.

Prior to interpreting the t-statistic, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was evaluated. The test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated ( $F = 10.678, p = .001$ ). Therefore, the robust "Equal variances not assumed" (Welch's t-test) values were utilised to ensure mathematical accuracy.

The results revealed a statistically significant difference in FI scores between the two genders;  $t(142.82) = -2.57, p = .011$ . Specifically, the female respondents ( $M = 3.83, SD = 0.91$ ) demonstrated significantly higher levels of financial inclusion compared to their male counterparts ( $M = 3.42, SD = 1.10$ ). This finding suggests that within this specific earning youth demographic, gender plays a statistically significant role in attaining financial inclusion.

## 4.2. ANOVA for Education-wise Comparison

**Table No. 3. Descriptives**

FI

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1.00	91	3.4945	1.04747	.10980	3.2764	3.7127	2.00	5.00
2.00	55	3.7091	.89593	.12081	3.4669	3.9513	2.00	5.00
3.00	10	3.6000	1.71270	.54160	2.3748	4.8252	2.00	6.00
Total	156	3.5769	1.04751	.08387	3.4113	3.7426	2.00	6.00

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

**Table No. 4. Test of Homogeneity of Variances and Robust Tests of Equality of Means**

FI

	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Levene's Test	10.705	2	153	.000
Welch's test	.840	2	23.305	.444

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in Financial Inclusion (FI) scores based on the educational attainment of the earning youth. The sample was divided into three distinct educational categories; students who are enrolled in Under-Graduate courses ( $n = 91$ ), Post-Graduate courses ( $n = 55$ ), and MPhil and PhD courses ( $n = 10$ ).

Prior to analysing the group means, Levene's test results revealed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated ( $F(2, 153) = 10.705, p < .001$ ). Thereafter, the robust Welch's ANOVA was administered to safely and accurately evaluate the data. The robust test revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in Financial Inclusion scores across the three educational groups; Welch's  $F(2, 23.30) = 0.840, p = .444$ . Because the overall Welch's ANOVA was not significant, the post-hoc multiple comparisons (Tukey HSD and Games-Howell) were not warranted.

These findings indicate that within this specific sample, an individual's level of formal education does not significantly dictate their active integration into the formal financial system.

## 4.3. ANOVA for Stream-wise Comparison

**Table No. 5. Descriptives**

FI

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1.00	58	3.5517	1.17238	.15394	3.2435	3.8600	2.00	6.00
2.00	51	3.4510	.98618	.13809	3.1736	3.7283	2.00	6.00
3.00	47	3.7447	.94335	.13760	3.4677	4.0217	2.00	5.00
Total	156	3.5769	1.04751	.08387	3.4113	3.7426	2.00	6.00

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

**Table No. 6. Test of Homogeneity of Variances and Robust Tests of Equality of Means**

FI

	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Levene's Test	3.367	2	153	.037
Welch's test	1.160	2	101.788	.318

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

*Source: Author's calculation from primary data*

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate whether the academic discipline (Stream) of the earning youth significantly impacted their Financial Inclusion scores. The sample distribution across the three distinct academic streams was Science (n = 58), Commerce (n = 51), and Arts (n = 47).

Prior to interpreting the group means, Levene's test results indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated ( $F(2, 153) = 3.367, p = .037$ ). Consequently, the standard ANOVA results were discarded in favor of the robust Welch's ANOVA to ensure mathematical validity. The robust Welch's test revealed no statistically significant difference in the Financial Inclusion scores across the three academic streams; Welch's  $F(2, 101.79) = 1.160, p = .318$ . Because the overall test did not yield a significant result, post-hoc multiple comparisons (such as the Games-Howell test shown in the output) were not warranted.

These findings suggest that an individual's chosen academic discipline does not create a significant barrier to, or advantage for, their active participation in the formal financial system.

#### 4.4. ANOVA for Income-wise Comparison

**Table No. 7. Descriptives**

FI

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1.00	49	3.0204	1.07024	.15289	2.7130	3.3278	2.00	5.00
2.00	48	3.1667	.80776	.11659	2.9321	3.4012	2.00	5.00
3.00	59	4.3729	.64054	.08339	4.2060	4.5398	3.00	6.00
Total	156	3.5769	1.04751	.08387	3.4113	3.7426	2.00	6.00

*Source: Author's calculation from primary data***Table No. 8. Test of Homogeneity of Variances and Robust Tests of Equality of Means**

FI

	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Levene's Test	3.361	2	153	.037
Welch's test	50.971	2	92.151	.000

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

*Source: Author's calculation from primary data*

**Table No. 9. Multiple Comparisons**

Dependent Variable: FI

(I) Income	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Games- 1.00 2.00	-.14626	.19227	.728	-.6045	.3120
Howell 3.00	-1.35247*	.17415	.000	-1.7689	-.9361
2.00 1.00	.14626	.19227	.728	-.3120	.6045
3.00	-1.20621*	.14334	.000	-1.5479	-.8645
3.00 1.00	1.35247*	.17415	.000	.9361	1.7689
2.00	1.20621*	.14334	.000	.8645	1.5479

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the monthly personal income of earning youth significantly influenced their Financial Inclusion scores. The sample was categorised into three distinct income brackets: Below ₹5,000 (n = 49), ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 (n = 48), and Above ₹10,000 (n = 59).

Prior to assessing the group means, Levene's test results indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated ( $F(2, 153) = 3.361, p = .037$ ). Consequently, the robust Welch's ANOVA was employed to reveal a highly significant difference in Financial Inclusion scores across the three income brackets; Welch's  $F(2, 92.15) = 50.97, p < .001$ .

To determine exactly where these differences lay, a Games-Howell post-hoc analysis was performed. The results demonstrated that youth in the highest income bracket (Above ₹10,000) scored significantly higher in Financial Inclusion ( $M = 4.37, SD = 0.64$ ) than those in both the lowest bracket ( $M = 3.02, SD = 1.07, p < .001$ ) and the middle bracket ( $M = 3.17, SD = 0.81, p < .001$ ). However, there was no statistically significant difference in inclusion scores between the lowest and middle income brackets ( $p = .728$ ).

#### 4.5. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

**Table No. 10. Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.613 <sup>a</sup>	.375	.346	.84737	1.946

a. Predictors: (Constant), Income\_3, Stream\_3, Education\_3, Gender, Education\_2, Stream\_2, Income\_2

b. Dependent Variable: FI

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

**Table No. 11. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	63.809	7	9.116	12.695	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	106.268	148	.718		
Total	170.077	155			

a. Dependent Variable: FI

b. Predictors: (Constant), Income\_3, Stream\_3, Education\_3, Gender, Education\_2, Stream\_2, Income\_2

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

**Table No. 12. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	2.655	.241		11.002	.000		
Gender	.235	.148	.109	1.591	.114	.893	1.120
Education_2	-.013	.150	-.006	-.090	.929	.902	1.109
Education_3	.355	.296	.083	1.199	.232	.876	1.141
Stream_2	.107	.167	.048	.642	.522	.753	1.328
Stream_3	.161	.172	.071	.937	.350	.741	1.349
Income_2	.033	.182	.015	.181	.857	.653	1.532
Income_3	1.284	.174	.596	7.360	.000	.643	1.554

a. Dependent Variable: FI

Source: Author's calculation from primary data

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict the Financial Inclusion of earning youth based on a combination of socio-demographic factors, including gender, educational attainment, academic stream, and monthly income level. Categorical variables with more than two tiers (Education, Stream, and Income) were recorded as dummy variables to allow for accurate inclusion in the regression model.

Prior to interpreting the results, standard regression assumptions were evaluated. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.946, falling well within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating that the assumption of independent errors (no autocorrelation) was met. Furthermore, collinearity diagnostics confirmed that multicollinearity was not a concern in this dataset; all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores were between 1.109 and 1.554, which is significantly below the strict threshold of 5.0.

The overall regression model was highly statistically significant,  $F(7, 148) = 12.695, p < .001$ . The socio-demographic variables collectively explained 37.5% of the variance in Financial Inclusion scores ( $R^2 = .375$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .346$ ) which is considered quite robust.

However, an examination of the individual coefficients reveals a highly concentrated driver within the model. While controlling for gender, academic stream, and education level, the highest income bracket (Income\_3: Above ₹10,000) emerged as the only statistically significant predictor of financial inclusion ( $B = 1.284, p < .001$ ). The unstandardised beta coefficient indicates that moving into this highest income tier increases a respondent's FI score by 1.284 points, holding all other variables constant.

Conversely, variables that are traditionally assumed to drive financial readiness—such as gender ( $p = .114$ ), higher education levels (Education\_2:  $p = .929$ ; Education\_3:  $p = .232$ ), and specific quantitative academic streams (Stream\_2:  $p = .522$ ; Stream\_3:  $p = .350$ )—did not achieve statistical significance in this model. These results compellingly demonstrate that within the Kamrup Metropolitan district, generating an income above the ₹10,000 threshold operates as the definitive catalyst for active financial integration among adult earning students, effectively eclipsing all other baseline socio-demographic disparities.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The empirical investigation into the financial inclusion of earning college and university students within the Kamrup Metropolitan district reveals a critical departure from traditional socioeconomic assumptions. The multiple linear regression analysis robustly established that generating a monthly personal income above ₹10,000 is the singular definitive catalyst for active financial integration. Controlling for all baseline socio-demographic variables, this highest income bracket emerged as the only statistically significant predictor, effectively eclipsing other traditional markers of financial readiness.

While the regression model highlighted sufficient income as the ultimate driver, baseline independent-samples t-tests revealed a highly significant gender dynamic: female respondents in this demographic

demonstrated significantly higher levels of financial inclusion compared to their male counterparts. This localised evidence of female financial superiority aligns perfectly with recent macro-level evaluations of financial inclusion initiatives across India (Prasad and Kakarlapudi, 2023). Furthermore, evaluations of national inclusion schemes demonstrate that female participation has consistently outpaced that of male account holders, highlighting remarkable progress in bridging gender gaps in financial access (Ashwath and Sachindra, 2025). Furthermore, this research challenges the conventional assumption that higher educational attainment and specific academic disciplines are prerequisites for financial integration. Robust Welch's ANOVA tests confirmed that neither an individual's level of formal education—spanning undergraduate to doctoral studies—nor their chosen academic stream (Science, Commerce, or Arts) creates a statistically significant advantage for their active participation in the formal financial system. These findings regarding the insignificance of formal academic qualifications are strongly corroborated by the work of Chhillar and Arora (2020), whose empirical testing revealed that basic financial literacy across different education levels does not differ significantly.

Ultimately, the data from the Kamrup Metropolitan district compels a shift in how financial inclusion is evaluated among earning students. The findings conclude that traditional educational parameters and quantitative academic backgrounds do not guarantee financial competence. Instead, the practical reality of earning an independent, sufficient income acts as the ultimate equaliser and driver of true financial inclusion, particularly empowering female youth to participate in the formal economy at superior levels. In order to effectively include more youth into the financial system, policymakers and institutional frameworks must implement more practical, income-linked financial integration programs tailored specifically for young adults entering the workforce.

## References

1. Arun, T., & Kamath, R. (2015). Financial inclusion: Policies and practices. *IIMB Management Review*, 27(4), 215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iimb.2015.10.007>
2. Ashwath, R., & Sachindra, G. R. (2025). The impact of pradhan mantri jandhan yojana on financial inclusion and socio-economic development in India. *International Journal of Finance and Commerce*, 7(2), 22–28.
3. Aziz, F., Sheikh, S. M., & Shah, I. H. (2022). Financial inclusion for women empowerment in South Asian countries. *Journal of Financial Regulation and Compliance*, 30(4), 489–502. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jfrc-11-2021-0092>
4. Baria, B. P. (2024). Determinants of rural financial inclusion in India: A short note using the Aidis 2019. *Economic Affairs*, 69(1). <https://doi.org/10.46852/0424-2513.2.2024.5>
5. Bhanot, D., Bapat, V., & Bera, S. (2012). Studying financial inclusion in north-east India. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 30(6), 465–484. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02652321211262221>
6. Carbo, S., Gardener, E. P., & Molyneux, P. (2007). Financial exclusion in Europe. *Public Money and Management*, 27(1), 21–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9302.2007.00551.x>
7. Chhillar, N., & Arora, S. (2020). Basic financial literacy: A comparative study at Delhi NCR. *ASIAN JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT*, 11(4), 507–516. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2321-5763.2020.00075.x>
8. Claessens, S. (2006). Access to financial services: A review of the issues and public policy objectives. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 21(2), 207–240. <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lkl004>
9. Cole, S., Sampson, T., & Zia, B. (2011). Prices or knowledge? what drives demand for financial services in emerging markets? *The Journal of Finance*, 66(6), 1933–1967. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6261.2011.01696.x>
10. Das, S. (2024). Financial Literacy and education in enhancing financial inclusion and poverty alleviation. *Sustainable Finance*, 127–144. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-67523-2\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-67523-2_8)
11. Das, T., & Guha, P. (2015). A study on the differences in the banking parameters between pre- and post-financial inclusion periods: some evidence for India. *The IUP Journal of Bank Management*, XIV(1), 39–56.
12. Deka, L. (2024). Review of financial inclusion in Assam. *International Journal of Research and Review*, 11(8), 575–582. <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20240861>
13. Demircuc-Kunt, A., & Klapper, L. (2012). Measuring Financial Inclusion: The Global Findex Database. <https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-6025>

14. Demirgüç-Kunt, A., & Klapper, L. (2013). Measuring Financial Inclusion: Explaining variation in use of financial services across and within countries. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 2013(1), 279–340. <https://doi.org/10.1353/eca.2013.0002>
15. Demirgüç-Kunt, A., Klapper, L., Singer, D., & Ansar, S. (2022). The Global Findex Database 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1897-4>
16. Dutta, A. P. (2022). Status of Financial Inclusion Among the Rural Communities of Assam. *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*, 7(11), c158–c165. <https://doi.org/ijnr.org/papers/IJNRD2211221.pdf>
17. Furtado, C. (2018). Economic development of Latin America. *Promise of Development*, 124–148. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429497995-9>
18. GPF. (2011, October). Global standard-setting bodies and financial inclusion for the poor. <https://www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/researches/documents/CGAP-White-Paper-Global-Standard-Setting-Bodies-Oct-2011.pdf>
19. Green, S. B. (1991). How many subjects does it take to do a regression analysis. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 26(3), 499–510. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327906mbr2603\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327906mbr2603_7)
20. Grohmann, A., Klühs, T., & Menkhoff, L. (2018). Does Financial Literacy Improve Financial Inclusion? cross country evidence. *World Development*, 111, 84–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.06.020>
21. Gwalani, H., & Parkhi, S. (2014). Financial inclusion – building a success model in the Indian context. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 133, 372–378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.203>
22. Honohan, P. (2004). Financial Development, growth and poverty: How close are the links? *Financial Development and Economic Growth*, 1–37. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230374270\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230374270_1)
23. Inoue, T. (2019). Financial inclusion and poverty reduction in India. *Journal of Financial Economic Policy*, 11(1), 21–33. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jfep-01-2018-0012>
24. Jayaratne, J., & Strahan, P. E. (1996). The finance-growth nexus: Evidence from Bank Branch Deregulation. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 111(3), 639–670. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2946668>
25. Johnson, E., & Sherraden, M. S. (2007). From Financial Literacy to financial capability among youth. *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 34(3). <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.3276>
26. Kandari, P., Bahuguna, U., & Salgotra, A. K. (2021). Socio-Economic and Demographic Determinants of Financial Inclusion in Underdeveloped Regions: A Case Study in India. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(3), 1045–1052. <https://doi.org/doi:10.13106/jafeb.2021.vol8.no3.1045>
27. Kar, M., Nazlıoğlu, Ş., & Ağır, H. (2011). Financial Development and Economic Growth Nexus in the MENA countries: Bootstrap panel granger causality analysis. *Economic Modelling*, 28(1–2), 685–693. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econmod.2010.05.015>
28. Kim, D.-W., Yu, J.-S., & Hassan, M. K. (2018). Financial Inclusion and economic growth in OIC countries. *Research in International Business and Finance*, 43, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ribaf.2017.07.178>
29. Klapper, L., Singer, D., Starita, L., & Norris, A. (2025). The Global Findex Database 2025: Connectivity and Financial Inclusion in the Digital Economy. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-2204-9>
30. Lusardi, A., Mitchell, O. S., & Curto, V. (2010). Financial literacy among the young. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 44(2), 358–380. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.2010.01173.x>
31. Maity, S. (2019). Financial Inclusion Status in North Eastern Region: An Evidence of Commercial Banks. *International Journal of Research in Applied Management, Science and Technology*, IV(III), 1–11.
32. Maity, S., & Sahu, T. N. (2021). Financial inclusion in north-eastern region: An investigation in the state of Assam. *Vilakshan - XIMB Journal of Management*, 19(2), 206–221. <https://doi.org/10.1108/xjm-09-2020-0118>
33. OECD. (2013). Promoting financial inclusion through financial education. *OECD Working Papers on Finance, Insurance and Private Pensions*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/5k3xz6m88smp-en>
34. OECD. (2022). OECD/INFE Toolkit for Measuring Financial Literacy and Financial Inclusion 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1787/cbc4114f-en>

35. Patel, A. S., Rao, V. K., & Radhakrishnan, M. K. (2023). Impact of mobile banking platforms Paytm and Google Pay on financial inclusion in rural and semi-urban areas in India. *Journal of Finance and Accounting*, 7(5), 113–122. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t4205>
36. Prasad, L., & Kakarlapudi, K. K. (2023). Gender Disparity in Financial Access and Use: Trends and Patterns. *Kerela Economy*, 4(2).
37. Sarkar, D., K Jena, Prof. S., & Paul, N. (2025). Determinants of financial literacy among college students in Assam. *International Journal of Research and Review*, 12(9), 589–602. <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20250957>
38. Van Rooij, M., Lusardi, A., & Alessie, R. (2011). Financial Literacy and Stock Market Participation. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 101(2), 449–472. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfineco.2011.03.006>

