



SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS OF BODO PEOPLE OF UDALGURI DISTRICT OF ASSAM- AN INCOME LEVEL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Bodo people belong to an ethnic and linguistic community. The Bodo people are the largest minority group in Assam. They are found in the northern areas of the Brahmaputra River valley. They speak Bodo language which belongs to the Tibeto- Burman language family. Bodo people are a part of the Bodo- Kachari family group. Bodo people are mainly concentrated in Assam specially Bodoland (now officially the Bodoland Territorial Region) consists of Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang, Udalguri and newly added Tamulpur district. They are suffering from many problems i.e. social, economic, cultural, educational, etc. from the early time to till date. Some Bodo people live their lives in an organized way. But the number of such type of Bodo people are very low. Maximum number of Bodo people are struggling for their livelihood in day to day life. Such types of socio- economic problems have been observed in Udalguri district, with an area of 1,852.16 sq. km. and a population of 8, 31,688 as per the 2011 census. The Bodo people of Udalguri district have many socio- economic problems and such problems make their lives so complicated. In consideration of this, this present paper attempts to examine the socio- economic conditions of Bodos of Udalguri district with the help of per capita income of Bodo people. The study is primarily based on primary and secondary data sources. The sample size is 300 and purposive sampling method is used for the present study. The study reveals that due to the socio- economic backwardness, the socio- economic position of Bodo people of Udalguri district have been decreased in compared to the other social group of people.

Keywords: Bodo people, socio- economic status, problems, life.

INTRODUCTION

Bodo people are ethnic scheduled tribe community of Assam. They are found mainly in Bodoland area consists of Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang, Udalguri and Tamulpur district. The Bodos are a race of the Mongolian people. Basically, Bodo people are found in the North of Himalayas and in the Western belt of China. Bodo people speak Bodo language which is added in official language list of India by the year 192nd Amendment Act of 2003. Bodo people use their Bodo language as medium of instruction in the Bodo predominant primary schools of Kokrajhar district of Assam. According to Sidney Endle (1997) mentioned the eighteenth sub- groups within the Bodo- Kachari group; Bodo is the largest group among all eighteenth sub- groups. The Bodos represent one of the largest ethnic and linguistic groups of the Brahmaputra valley of

Assam. Generally, bodo people have different surnames such as Bargayary, Basumatary, Bodosa, Brahma, Dwimary, Goyary, Bodo, Hazowary, Ishwary, Bwiswmuthiary, Narzary, Khaklary, Owary, Wary, Mushahary, Narzihary, Swargwary and Sibiary. According to 2011 census report, bodo language speaking people was placed in twenty six out of thirty one in the list of population of native language speakers. Bodo language speaking people in Assam are close to one million. In the late 20th century, bodo people led a glory struggle for self-determination under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma. He is now considered as the father of Bodo people. After a long decade, Bodos have been granted the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), in the February 2003, it is an autonomous administrative body covering Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri and Tamulpur district. The Bodoland Territorial Area District was renamed to Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) with more administrative powers in January 2020.

According to 2011 census, the total bodo population is 1.4 million. Since BTR consists of five districts; bodo population spread in these five districts. According to 2011 census, scheduled tribes population in Kokrajhar district (2,78,651), Baksa district (3,31,006), Chirang district (1,78,689), Udalguri district (2,67,381). In this present study, we only concentrate on the bodo people of Udalguri district. Bodo people of Udalguri district have different types of socio- economic conditions such as education, employment, types of houses, lighting facilities, work participation by women, etc. are dependent on the level of per capita income of bodo people of Udalguri district. Good per capita income shows a stable socio- economic life of bodo people. This paper mainly focuses on socio- economic conditions of bodo people that vary to the different level of per capita income.

STUDY AREA

Udalguri district is a district in the Bodoland Territorial Region of the state of Assam. According to the 2011 census, the total area of Udalguri district is 1, 852.16 sq. km. Udalguri district is bounded by Bhutan and West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh in the north, Sonitpur district in the east, Darrang district in the south and Baksa district in the west. Udalguri district is located between 26.7452*N latitude and 92.0962* E longitude. The paper only focuses on the bodo people and their socio- economic lives of Udalguri district.



Fig: Location Map of Study Area

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are-----

- 1) To study the demographic status by level of income of sample population in the study area.
- 2) To study the level of education among different income groups of bodo population.
- 3) To analyze the work participation of women by level of per capita income of bodo population.
- 4) To examine the overall socio- economic conditions by level of income of bodo people in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

This study is mainly based on primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected from the bodo people who live in Udalguri district with the help of questionnaire and face to face interaction with people. The secondary data are collected from various books, journals and different sources of internet. The study is done through primary data collected from 300 sample respondents of Udalguri district especially bodo inhabited areas viz- Majbat, Harisinga, Kalaigaon, Khoirabari, Paneri, Udalguri. The study is done by using the purposive sampling method.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the present study, our main concentration on the socio- economic conditions of bodo people of Udalguri district of Assam. So, we study minutely each and every aspect related to their social and economic status which are collected through face to face interviews and field observation. Generally, when we talk about socio- economic condition of any tribal group, then first thing that comes to our mind is overall status of that group. The collected data are converted into relative number such as percentage to observe the overall situation and divided all the sample population in five income groups on the basis of monthly per capita income of bodo people of Udalguri district to examine the socio- economic conditions of bodo people of different income groups in the study area.

Table 1: Population distribution by level of per capita income

Per Capita Income	Total Population		Male		Female	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Below 1000	115	38.3	82	46.9	33	26.4
1000- 2000	95	31.7	56	32	39	31.2
2000- 3000	62	20.7	23	13.1	39	31.2
3000- 4000	21	7	10	5.7	11	8.8
Above 4000	7	2.3	4	2.3	3	2.4
Total	300	100	175	100	125	100

Table 1 shows the bodo population distribution by the level of per capita income. The total population for the study is 300, among them, males occupied by 58.33% and rest of 41.67% is by females. In this study, majority of bodo people (38.3%) belongs to very low per capita income group (below Rs. 1000), followed by 31.7% of total sample population lies in per capita income group (1000- 2000). 20.7% of total sample population belongs to per capita income of Rs. 2000- 3000, whereas 7% of total sample population lies in per capita income group (3000- 4000). Above 4000 per capita income group consists of only 2.3% of total sample population. The number of bodo population of Udalguri district is gradually decreasing with the increasing of per capita income of the population.

Table 2: Status of Education by level of per capita income

Per Capita Income	Level of Education						
	Lower Primary	Upper Primary	High School	Higher Secondary	Graduation	Post-Graduation	Others
Below 1000	49	42.61	7	1.7	-----	-----	-----
1000- 2000	21.05	11.58	26.32	21.05	12.63	5.26	2.11
2000- 3000	9.68	3.23	32.26	35.48	12.90	4.84	1.61
3000- 4000	9.52	9.52	28.57	23.81	14.29	9.52	4.76
Above 4000	-----	-----	14.29	28.57	28.57	14.29	14.29

Education is one of the important components for any group of people for enhancing their lifestyle according to their desired way. Table no. 2 shows that in below Rs. 1000 income group, highest number of bodo literate people are lower primary level, followed by upper primary (42.61%), high school (7%) and higher secondary (1.7%). In this income group, the number of graduate, post- graduate and professional courses taking by bodo persons are nil. On the other hand, we can see that in above 4000 income group, maximum number of sample bodo literate people are higher secondary and graduation level that is 28.57% and post graduate bodo literate sample people are 14.29%. On the other hand, some bodo people take some professional courses like hotel management, LLB, BCA, etc. which lie in above Rs. 4000 income group. From the above data, one thing is clearly seen that income level plays a significant role in persuing the different level of education degrees.

Table 3: Occupational composition by level of per capita income

Occupation	Per Capita Income				
	Below 1000	1000- 2000	2000- 3000	3000- 4000	Above 4000
Cultivators	86.96	78.95	64.52	14.29	14.29
Agricultural labourer	13.04	15.79	19.35	23.81	-----
Industry worker	-----	5.26	9.68	38.10	-----
Government service	-----	-----	-----	19.05	85.71
Other workers	-----	-----	6.45	4.76	-----

Occupation is a major determining factor for the economic status of an individual as well as any group of the society. The occupation of an individual refers to his or her profession, type of work, etc. In the study area, bodo people are engaged in the different types of occupation like cultivation, labourer, business, service, etc. In table 3 shows that below Rs. 1000 income group, highest number of bodo people are engaged in cultivation (86.96%), followed by agricultural labourer (13.04%) in agricultural fields, rice mills, brick kilns, etc. On the other way, above Rs. 4000 income group, highest number of bodo people are engaged in the government service sector (85.71%). So, highest income level of bodo people come from tertiary sector as compared to the primary sector.

Table 4: Types of Houses by level of per capita income

Types of house	Per Capita Income				
	Below 1000	1000- 2000	2000- 3000	3000- 4000	Above 4000
Kutchha	80	91.58	91.94	85.71	-----
Pucca	20	8.42	8.06	14.29	14.29
R.C.C.	-----	-----	-----	-----	85.71

Food, cloth and shelter are the basic needs of humans. Without shelter, the life of any human being is unpredictable. Different house types are found in Udalguri district viz- kutchha house, pucca house and R.C.C. house. These types of houses are mainly determined by the income level of an individual or family. Among below Rs.1000 income groups of people, kutchha type house (80%) are found in the study area, followed by pucca type houses (20%) and there is no R.C.C. type house in that income level group of people (Table 4) due to their low income. On the other hand, above Rs. 4000 income group of people, pucca type houses (14.29%) are found, followed by R.C.C. type house (85.71%) and no kutchha type house is found among that high level income group of people. This high level income group of people are mainly engaged in different non- agricultural activities and ultimately they enjoy a better lifestyle.

Table 5: Lighting facility by level of per capita income

Lighting facility	Per Capita Income				
	Below 1000	1000- 2000	2000- 3000	3000- 4000	Above 4000
Electricity	13.04	10.53	19.35	90.48	100
No electricity	86.96	89.96	80.65	9.52	-----

Many villages of India still did not getting the electricity facility. In the study area, some people are getting the electricity facility and some are still in dark. Below Rs. 1000 income group of people, 13.04% of bodo people are getting the facility of electricity, followed by 86.96% of bodo people of Udalguri district are still in dark, they use kerosene, candle for light. On the other hand, 100% of households are electrified among above Rs. 4000 income level group (Table 5).

Table 6: Work participation of women by level of per capita income

Work participation of women	Per Capita Income					In
	Below 1000	1000- 2000	2000- 3000	3000- 4000	Above 4000	
Agricultural field	81.82	64.10	56.41	18.18	-----	
Household works	18.18	30.77	33.33	27.27	-----	
Government service	-----	-----	-----	9.09	100	
Others	-----	5.13	10.26	45.45	-----	

modern time, work participation of women is a common thing. Bodo women of Udalguri district are not different from that. Bodo women are equally working with men for their livelihood. Table 6 shows that below Rs. 1000 income group family, 81.82% women are engaged in agricultural field, followed by 18.18% women are engaged in household works and no women of this income group are engaged in government service or other professions. But 100% women are engaged in government job among those family which have income level above Rs. 4000. The standard of living is high of this income group family.

REMEDIAL MEASURES

On the basis of the study, I would like to offer some remedial measures for the development of socio- economic conditions of bodo people of Udalguri district.

- i) There should be compulsory and free education upto graduate level sothat all bodo children are being educated.
- ii) Vocational education should be introduced to cover all bodo children in the urban and rural areas.
- iii) Role of government and NGO's in Udalguri district should be remarkable. They should organize some awareness meetings sothat the bodo people can aware about their rights, government schemes, etc.
- iv) Industries or factories should be established in Udalguri district sothat bodo people can engage in some productive works.
- v) Government should take some initiatives for the development of infrastructure of Udalguri district sothat the outside people can attract and come to Udalguri district.
- vi) Bodo women are expert in weaving. They can produce Endi, Muga and Silk of high standard. So, government should give a proper platform to show their talents.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, we find that the maximum number of bodo people of Udalguri district are not socio- economically sound. The educational, occupational condition, health condition, drinking water facilities, house condition, light facilities, work participation rate of women are not found in a satisfying condition. Some bodo people of Udalguri district are socio- economically rich because of their high per capita income level. Bodo people who fall under low per capita income group, they are still struggling for better socio- economic life. The government should give proper attention for the improvement of such group and

give some opportunities to increase their income level through government schemes, establishment of industries in Udalguri district.

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