

A Study on the Socio-Economic and Demographic Status of Rural Areas of Greater Borholla Area of Assam

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Abstract:

The socio – economic status of any society can be measured relying upon various parameters. It refers to the position of an individual or the family members in a social structure. It is measured with indicators, such as gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Through this study attempt has been made to understand the socio - economic status of rural areas of greater Borholla area of Assam, India with its demographic status. The socio-economic status of rural areas and at the same time demographic status evaluation of any area is very important from different angles. India is a democratic country and governments as well as other stakeholders are very much concerned about the welfare of the common people. It is expected that such type of studies will help the stakeholders to formulate policies for the better living standard of the people. This study was conducted through limited data sources because of limited time frame and word constraints. It is expected that future studies can be conducted by using extensive primary data among the targeted respondents with the legitimate time tenure with adequate support from different agencies. It is based on both primary and secondary data sources. A total 445 respondents from 94 families were randomly selected for the study. The respondents' data were analyzed on the basis of different parameters. The secondary data have been collected from different sources like internet, published relevant literature, databases and so on. It is analytical in nature.

Keywords: Socio-economic condition, demographic status, Borholla, Assam.

1. Introduction:

Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society. It is measured with indicators, such as gross domestic product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. For better understanding of socioeconomic development, we may look into the available literature that discusses various aspects of the relevant matter. Scholars are of the opinion that Socio-Economic Status (SES) is a measure of family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on various variables responsible for social and economic development (Gaur, 2013). Socio-economic status is utilized in sociological research and measuring socio-economic status is important tool in descriptive analysis. Moreover, Socio-economic status has been one of the most strong and consistent variables in explicating variations among social groups (Bateman, 2014) and is defined as an indicator of households' combined economic and social welfare variables. Generally, socioeconomic status is

viewed as a latent construct and is measured using a composite index of education, health, poverty, income and consumption (Baker, 2014). According to Vyas and Kumaranayake (2006) standard economic measures of socio-economic status use monetary information such as income or consumption expenditure. Income is related to socio-economic status through structural factors. Income is normally defined as pre-tax wages from one's occupation. This can be measured at the individual level but it is more commonly measured at the household or family level, which consists of the combined income of all household or family members, respectively (Galobardes et al., 2006). It may also be measured in relation to the level of poverty (Lynch and Kaplan 2000). According to Dutton and Levine (1989), socio-economic status is "a composite measure that typically incorporates economic status, measured by income; social status, measured by education; and work status, measured by occupation". Economists suggested two more variables, i.e., expenditure and debt as a measure of family's socio-economic status (Gaur, 2013). Study by Onwujekwe et.al (2006) used consumption expenditure as the measure of socio-economic status. Other studies also associated consumption expenditure with socio-economic status of households (Fiorito, 2010) and the socioeconomic status was explained by consumption expenditure at household level (Kamakura and Mazzon, 2013). The household indebtedness is also affected by the socio-economic status (Kyriopoulos, 2016) and should be additionally considered when assessing health effects of socio-economic status (Munster et. al, 2009). Rathod & Ningshen (2012), noted that Socio-economic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. Krieger et al. (1997) define socio-economic position as 'an aggregate concept that includes both resource-based and prestige-based measures, as linked to both childhood and adult social class position'. Socio-economic status refers to the position of individuals, families, households, or other aggregates on one or more dimensions of stratification. These dimensions include income, education, prestige, wealth, or other aspects of standing that member of society deem salient. Socio-economic status is often considered a personal demographic variable; however, Socio-economic status can also reflect aspects of an individual's broader environment. As a result, it can be measured at the individual level or the area level. On the other hand demographic status is a way to categorize people into groups based on shared characteristics, such as age, gender, income, and education. Demographic data can be used to understand population trends and patterns. Such type of data can be used as tools for market strategies and governments can frame and implement public policies with the help of demographic data. India is a developing country and to understand the socio economic condition of the people of rural areas including the demographic pattern is very essential for the policy makers as well as government agencies. The point is that socio-economic status is the foremost issue in the contemporary world, especially in the developing world. Socio-economic status in rural areas is gradually improving over a period of time. Many programmes and policies have been implemented to improve the socio-economic status of population in rural areas. But in economic sense, people of the rural areas could not develop equally over the region. Even within a small village, different types of economic classes are found. It must be noted that socio-economic condition and representation of demographic, human development status etc. are some important indicators which help to measure the development level of any community or state. Measuring the contribution of education to household income is much of importance to policy makers. There are number of Socio-economic and demographic factors which individually or collectively contribute to long life and well being for the people of an area. Improved education increases attention to health and better job option. Increase in life expectancy is an indication of

development of a society and as the nations trying to improve their socio-economic condition. Demography play vital role in population distribution, density, family type and cultural development.

2. The Significance of the Study:

The study is undertaken to investigate the socio-economic and demographic status of rural areas of greater Borholla Area of Assam. The socio-economic status of rural areas and at the same time demographic status evaluation of any area is very important from different angles. India is a democratic country and governments as well as other stakeholders are very much concerned about the welfare of the common people. The socio-economic and demographic status of any area reflect many other aspects of the people of the concerned area and such type of studies will help the stakeholders to formulate policies for the better living standard of the people. At last it will help the policy makers in the national level to act positively in such a direction which will help for the development of the nation and its people in a sustainable way.

3. The Area of the Study:

The area under study is located in Titabar Subdivision of Jorhat District, Assam. The pin code of Borholla is 785631 with geographical coordinates as 26.4133 Latitude and 93.6663 Longitude. Time zone is IST (UTC+5:30) and elevation / altitude is 98 meters above sea level. It is a village which is located 39 KM towards south from District head quarters Jorhat and about 284 KM from state capital Dispur. The size of the area is about 242.85 square kilometer. The nearest airport is Jorhat Airport with aerial distance of 24.98 km and the nearest railway station is Kamarbandha Ali with aerial distance of 10.69 km.

4. Objective of the Study:

It is true that defining some rigid aims and objectives in any research is a crucial task. In a research context, the terms ‘research aims’, ‘research objectives’ tend to have some specific meanings. The aim and objective of the present study are as following:-

1. To study the overall socio-economic status of peoples in the study area on the basis of the data collected from the respondents.
2. To study the demographic status of the people of sample population in the study area.
3. To analyze different parameters to acquire the knowledge about the socio-economic and demographic status of the people of the study area.

5. Materials and Methods:

Research methodology is the most important aspect of research work and is a way to systematically solve research problems. It facilitates the research work and provides reliability and validity to it. Data collection is an integral part of the research methodology that plays a pivotal role throughout the whole research work. It is the process of collecting and evaluating information or data from multiple sources to find answers to research problems, answer questions, evaluate outcomes, and forecast trends and probabilities. It is an essential phase in all types of research and accurate data collection is necessary to make research successful, ensure quality assurance, and keep research integrity. It is also very much necessary that during data collection process, the researchers must identify the data types, the sources of data, and what methods are being used. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data

sources. A total 445 respondents from 94 families were randomly selected for the study. The respondent’s data were analyzed on the basis of different parameters. The secondary data have been collected from different sources like internet, published relevant literature, databases and so on. It is analytical in nature.

6. Limitation of the Study:

As stated above, the socio-economic status of rural areas and at the same time demographic status evaluation of any area is very important from different angles especially in a democratic country where the welfare of the common people is matter of concern from various aspects. This study was conducted through limited data sources because of limited time frame and word constraints. It is expected that future studies can be conducted by using extensive primary data among the targeted respondents with the legitimate time tenure with adequate support from different agencies.

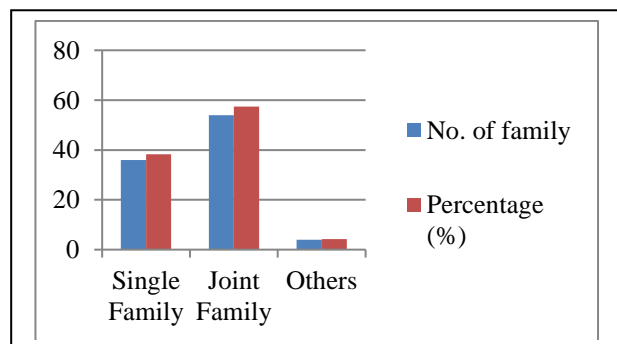
7. Result and Discussion:

On the basis of the objectives of the study few questionnaires were formulated and distributed among the target population. Care has been taken to cover the common parameters. The data received from the respondents were analyzed. The following tables reflect the socio-economic and demographic status of the people of the area under the study.

The data given in the Table – I show the family structure of the respondents in the study area as following. It shows that 57.45% of the respondents belong to joint family which is majority in the table. It is followed by single type families with a percentage of 38.30 and minimum respondents belong to other types with 4.25%. The indicator shows positive note because the joint family structure in any society shows the collaborative effort of the members for family prosperity. It caters to the development of cultural, moral and economic values in a society.

Table – I: Types of families and their percentage

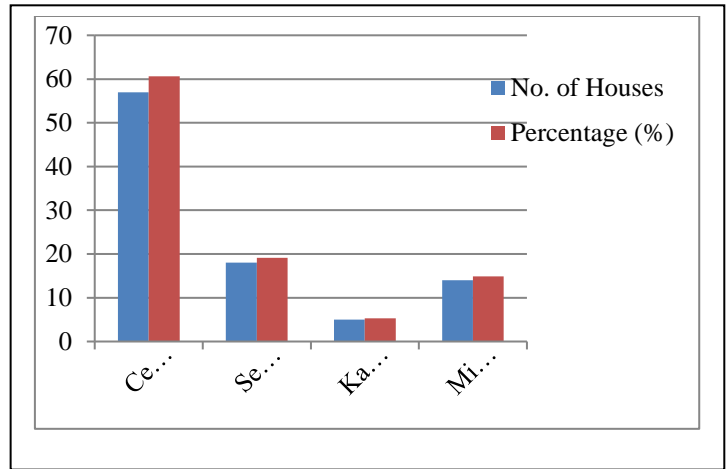
Types of Family	No. of family	Percentage (%)
Single Family	36	38.30
Joint Family	54	57.45
Others	04	4.25
Total	94	100



The data presented in Table – II shows the types of house used by the families in the study area. The majority of the respondents use cemented houses for living with a percentage of 60.64%. It is followed by semi - cemented with 19.15%. While 14.89% respondents live in mixed type houses and minimum respondents live in kachha houses with a percentage of 5.32. The data reveals that the life style of the people of the area is comparatively better than the common village areas. It indicates the better socio economic condition of the people of the area under study.

Table – II: types of houses and their percentage

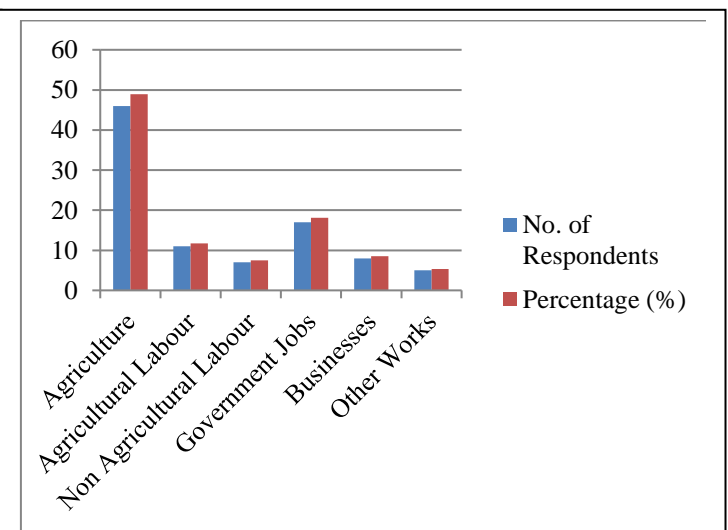
Types of Houses	No. of Houses	Percentage (%)
Cemented	57	60.64
Semi – Cemented	18	19.15
Kachha	05	5.32
Mixed	14	14.89
Total	94	100



The Table – III represents the data that shows the source of income and their percentage in the study area. The society is agrarian hence agriculture and related works are the most dominating source of income among the people. The dependency of the people on agriculture and agricultural related works is higher. The respondents reflect that on average 60.64 percent of the total income come from crop production where rice is the high yielding crop followed by tea production. Agricultural practices are the main source of income of the area which provides employment to about half of the population with 48.94%. A good number of people are agricultural labourers with 11.70% and 18.08% respondents are government employees. Very less number of people is engaged in business (8.51%) and other works (5.32%). The study shows that the socio – economic condition of the people are managed by agricultural and agricultural activities. The climate and soil quality of the area is suitable for crop yielding. As stated above the main crops in the area is rice and tea but there are lots of other agricultural products also produced by the farmers. The soil and climatic condition is suitable for different seasonal vegetables, fruits, betel nut and betel leaf.

Table – III: Source of Income and their percentage

Source of Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	46	48.94
Agricultural Labour	11	11.70
Non Agricultural Labour	07	7.45
Government Jobs	17	18.08
Businesses	08	8.51
Other Works	05	5.32
Total	94	100



The Table – IV shows respondents’ response regarding the average annual income which reflects the prosperity of people of the area. Majority of the respondents have annual income less than 180000 thousand per year. If we focus on the other aspects that more than fifty percent people have moderate income per year which ranges between 180000 to 900000 with a percentage of 57.45. It reflects the prosperity of the people of the area and we can have an idea that the life style and the livelihood of the area is average.

Table – IV: Annual Income and their percentage

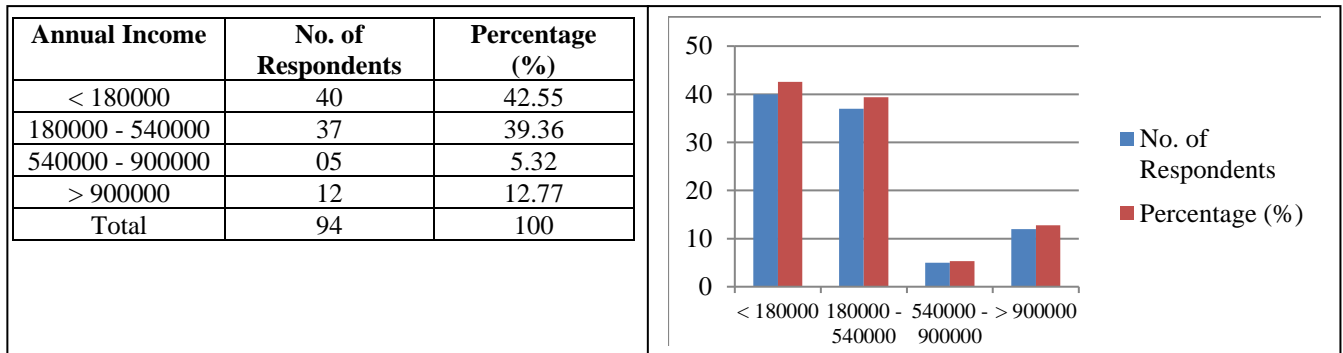
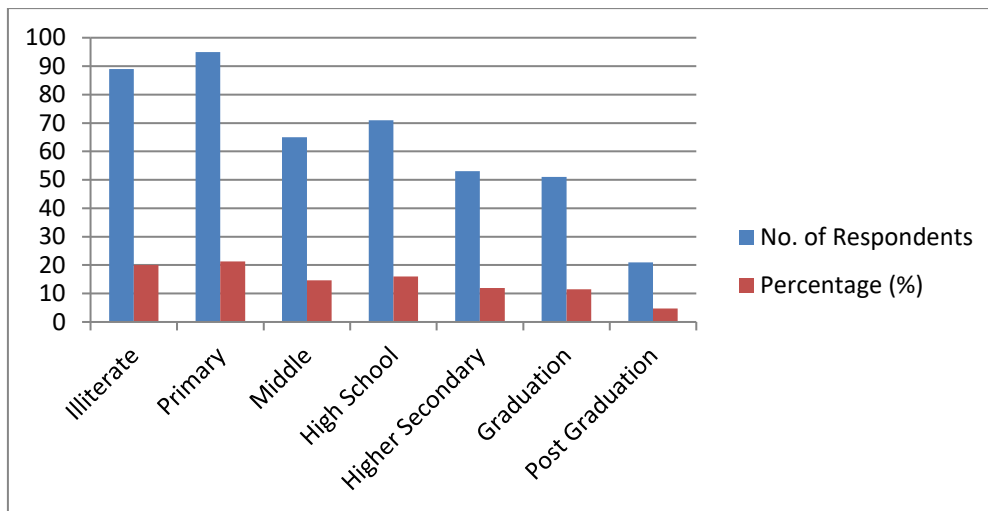


Table – V reflects the education level of the 445 respondents in the study area. It shows that the illiteracy rate of the sample population is only 20 percent. Most of the respondents are literate. 21.35% people have primary education followed by 15.95% people with high school education. Higher Secondary and graduation level education is quite equal about 11% while minimum population are post graduates with 4.72%. The lack of adequate higher educational institution in the study area is the reason behind it. There is only one degree college in the area with arts stream only. The students who opt for science or commerce stream have to travel far kilometers. There is the need of mass awareness among the people about the benefit of higher education. Such type of approach will increase the minimum share in government jobs in the area. Another prime aspect of the locality is that there is lack of professional institutions in the study area. For the development of the professional skill of the students the government as well as the other organizations should take proper step for the establishment of professional institutions in the area. The students should be encouraged to opt for post graduation studies in different subjects which are viable in present day scenario and for that purpose proper road map should be framed by the competent authorities in a sustainable way. Such type of steps will help in the development of socio – economic condition of the area.

Table- V: Education Level of the respondents and their percentage

Education level	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	89	20
Primary	95	21.35
Middle	65	14.61
High School	71	15.95
Higher Secondary	53	11.91
Graduation	51	11.46
Post Graduation	21	4.72
Total	445	100



7. Conclusion:

The socio – economic status of any society can be measured relying upon various parameters. It refers to the position of an individual or the family members in a social structure. But scholars are of the opinion that the socio-economic status scales developed earlier are not exactly suitable in the present changed socio- economic scenario and rural situation. The need for appropriate socio-economic status measuring tool has been felt with relevant indicators to suit the present scenario. In this study an attempt has been made to investigate the socio - economic condition of the people of the study area with demographic aspects with limited resources and limited time frame. The study shows that the socio – economic condition of the people of the study area is adequate because of the better geographical position as well as climatic condition. The society is agrarian and larger population depends on agriculture and other related activities. Comparatively better income from the agricultural activities laid to better housing and life style. The people lead a prosperous life with moral values and cultural richness. The literacy rate is high with some loophole in the higher education sector. As the economic condition of the respondents are adequate there is scope for the development higher education in the society. For that purpose mass awareness among the people must be generated with sustainable policies.

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