

Economic Activities and Standard of Living of Schedule Tribe (Hills) People: A case study in the Kamrup District

BhairabKhakhalary

Department of Commerce, UGC Junior Research Fellow, Gauhati University

Abstract:

The economic activities are an important indicator of economic status and living standard of households. Economic activities are that activity which is actually related with monetary terms. It is the activities which helps in reducing the consumption expenditure and also generate income to the households. This paper attempts to analyse the various economic activities and other allied activities which actually determine the living standard of the hills tribal households.

Key words: Hills tribal people, economic activities, standard of living, households.

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, tribal people are living in more than 42000 villages dominated in 75 districts. There are around 8.2 % tribal population in India (census, 2011). In north east India, tribal people are dominated in the State of Arunachal Pradesh (94.05%), Nagaland (87.70%), Mizoram (94.75%) and Meghalaya (85.53%) (Manji, 2015).

In accordance with the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 1976, in Assam the Autonomous district comprises of Karbi Along and North Cachar Hill District where Chakma, Dimasa, Kachari, Garo, Hajong, Hmar, khasi, Jaintia, Any Kuki tribes, Lakher, Mikir & Syntheng tribes of people are found. While in other part of Assam, mainly Boro, Borokachari, Deori, Hojai, Kachari Sonwal, Lalung, Mech, Miri, Rabha are the main inhabitants.

In Assam, 12.45% of the total population are tribal (census, 2011). Out of the total tribal population in Assam, the percentage of hills tribal population is 9.06% (Garo and Hajong tribes) and in case of Kamrup district this percentage is 19.13% of the total hills tribal population in Assam.

Standard of living refers to the wealth, comfort, material goods, social status and the necessities which help in socio-economic life of the hills tribal communities. These includes living status, assets holdings, income level, expenditure level, savings habits, investment habits, habits of foods, etc.

An economic activity of the hills tribal people means the activity which is related with monetary terms and which actually helps in reducing their expenditures but help in generating incomes to their family. These includes agricultural farming like betel nut plantation, banana plantation, orange cultivation, pine apple cultivation, rubber plantation; other activities like business, service, daily wage earning, piggyery, poultry, fishery, etc.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Basumatary S. (2015) conducted study on “An analysis of consumption expenditure pattern among the Bodo tribe: A case study” in Baksa district of BTAD area of Assam. The study analysed the income expenditure and consumption pattern on various items used by the Bodo tribal people. The study found that agriculture is the main source of income of the sample households and the problems of improvements in income, living standards, nutrition, and health of individuals should be aimed through raising agricultural productivity. The study suggested for the extension of rural economic infrastructure, like roads, irrigation facilities, markets for the overall development in that area and rural financial facilities should be provided for all categories of rural households to bring improvements in their consumption expenditure pattern.

Samal R. And Dr. Patra S conducted study on “Standard of living of tribes in kondhamal district of Odisha”. Their study found that income and standard of living and the average monthly consumption expenditure of schedule tribes was low. The study suggested for effective implementation of schemes for improving their consumption standard. Their study also suggested for changes in occupational pattern for economic development of the tribal community.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out to meet up the following main objectives:

1. To determine the various economic activities of the schedule tribe (hills) people in the study area.
2. To analyse the standard of living of the schedule tribe (hills) community.

A. Research Methodology:

1) Research Design:

The population of the study consisted of all the Hills Tribal Households residing in the Kamrup district. The population for the study was 6707. Thus the population size N= 6707

2) Sample Size:

In determining the sample size, the formula adopted by Taro Yamane was used Yamane which is as follows:

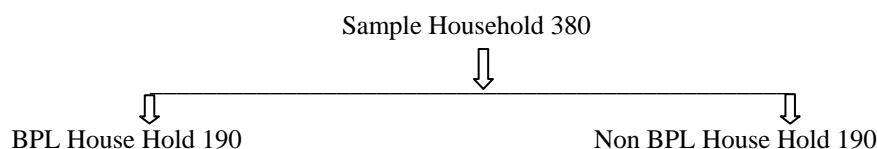
$$n = \frac{N}{1+N \times e^2}$$

Where, n = sample size, N = population size, e = allowable error which is usually taken as 5% or 0.05.

$$\text{Thus } n = \frac{6707}{1+6707 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{6707}{17.76} = 379.56$$

on the basis of this, sample size was fixed (n) at 380 i.e. n = 380



Sampling technique:

The study was carried out by adopting purposive random sampling technique.

B. Limitations of the Study

The main limitations of the study were:

1. The study was confined to only three blocks i.e. Boko Development Block, Bongaon dev. Block and Rani Dev. Block. The respective blocks were selected on the basis of the highest concentration of hills tribal people residing in the study area.
2. Only few variables were taken into account in determining the standard of living of the hills tribal people. There may be other variables which may affect the standard of living of the hills tribal communities.

3. While collecting the primary data, the researcher was used judgement sampling technique.
4. Hills tribal population comprises of two tribes only i.e. Garo and Hajong tribes. Other hills tribes residing in the study area were not included.

C. Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

After collecting the primary data keeping in mind the above objectives, the data were analysed and interpreted in the following manner:

Table 1: Main Economic Activities as a Source of Income to the Family

| Economic activities | BPL Households | Non-BPL Households | Percentage |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Fruits cultivation | 57 | 142 | 52.37 |
| Betel nut plantation | 47 | 137 | 48.42 |

| | | | |
|------------|-----|----|-------|
| Service | | 09 | 2.37 |
| Business | 05 | 17 | 5.79 |
| Daily wage | 126 | 34 | 42.10 |

From the table no. 1 it is evident that majority of the respondent's income source are income from fruits (banana and orange) cultivation (52.37%) betel nut cultivation (48.42) and daily wage earning (42.10%) . This percentage is quite low in case of economic activities like service (2.37%) and business (5.79%).

Table 2: Other Allied Economic Activities

| Economic activities | BPL Households | Non-BPL Households | Percentage |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Fish farming | 02 | 84 | 22.63 |
| Piggery | 56 | 48 | 27.39 |
| Poultry farming | 05 | 61 | 17.37 |
| Yam cultivation | 56 | 115 | 45 |

So far the other economic activities (table no.2) of the hills tribal people are concern, the percentage of economic activities like fish farming, piggery, poultry farming and yam cultivation are 22.63%, 27.39%, 17.37% and 45% respectively.

Table 3: Total Annual Income of the Households

| Annual Income | BPL Households | Non-BPL Households | Percentage |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Below Rs. 50000 | 128 | 02 | 32.21 |
| Rs.50000-Rs.100000 | 47 | 46 | 24.47 |
| Rs.100000-Rs.200000 | 11 | 98 | 28.68 |
| Above Rs.200000 | 04 | 44 | 12.63 |
| Total | 190 | 190 | 100 |

The above table no. 3 reveals the total annual income of each hills tribal community. Around 32.21% of the households earn below Rs.50000, 24.47% of the respondents earn between Rs.50000-Rs.100000, 28.68% respondents earn between Rs.100000-Rs200000 and only 12.63% of the total respondents able to earn more than Rs.200000 annually.

Table 4: Quantum of Monthly Savings

| Monthly savings | BPL Households | Non-BPL Households | Percentage |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Below Rs.2000 | 02 | 60 | 16.32 |
| Rs.2000-Rs.5000 | 01 | 31 | 8.42 |
| Rs.5000-Rs10000 | 03 | 12 | 3.95 |
| Above Rs.10000 | 00 | 05 | 1.32 |
| Total | 06 | 108 | 30 |

From the table no.4 it is evident that the hills tribal people have very poor habit of savings. Only 30% of the total respondents save their residual income in different savings institutions. 16.32% of the total respondents save below Rs.2000 (monthly), 8.425 between Rs.2000-Rs5000 (monthly), 3.95% (monthly)between Rs.5000-Rs.10000 and only 1.32% save above Rs.10000 (monthly).

Table 5: Total Area of Land Including own Residence

| Area of land (in bighas) | BPL Households | Non-BPL Households | Percentage |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| 0-4 | 149 | 15 | 43.18 |
| 5-9 | 39 | 81 | 31.58 |
| 10 and above | 2 | 104 | 27.89 |
| Total | 190 | 190 | 100 |

The above table no. 5 shows that out of the total 380 respondents, 43.18% have 0-4 bighas of land including residential area, 31.58% have between 5-9 bighas and 27.89% have above 10 bighas of total land area.

Table 6: Other Assets Holding

| Other assets | BPL Households | Non-BPL Households | Percentage |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| T.V. | 114 | 188 | 79.47 |
| Mobile Phone | 181 | 190 | 97.63 |
| Auto Rickshaw | 02 | 32 | 8.95 |
| Motorcycle | 01 | 61 | 16.32 |
| Car | 00 | 19 | 5 |
| Bus/Truck | 00 | 02 | .53 |
| Pressure cooker | 00 | 56 | 14.74 |
| Fridge | 00 | 08 | 2.10 |

So far the other assets holding (table no.6) by the hills tribal people are concern, the percentage of assets holding like T.V., mobile phone, auto rickshaw, motor cycle, car, Bus/truck, pressure cooker and fridge are 79.47%, 97.63%, 8.95%, 16.32%, 5%, .53%, 14.74% and 2.10% respectively.

D. Findings

The major findings of the study are:

1. The main economic activities of the hills tribal people were found to be fruits cultivation (52.37%), betel nut plantation (48.42%) and daily wage earning (42.10%). But this percentage was very low in case of the economic activities like service (2.37% and business (5.79%).
2. In case of the other economic activities of the hills tribal people, the percentage of the yam cultivator was found to be high (45%).
3. Majority of the BPL households earn below Rs.50000 per annum.

4. So far the savings habits of the hills tribal people were concern, only 305 of the total respondents (both BPL and Non BPL) households save their income.
5. Most of the BPL households have below 4 bighas of total area of land including own residence. However, majority of the Non BPL households have above 10 bighas of total area of land.
6. Almost 97.63% of the total households have mobile phones and 79.47 have T.V. However the numbers of households who have car and bus/truck were very less.

E. Suggestions

The suggestions that can be put forward are as follows:

1. Govt. should motivate to improve the economic activities among the BPL hills tribal people by providing subsidies especially in the farming and business sector.
2. Different entrepreneurship and training programme should be provided to the BPL tribal people to increase their income from various economic activities.
3. Awareness campaign relating to savings should be organised frequently in the locality to improve their savings behaviour.
4. Government should establish financial institutions especially bank in the locality to improve the economic activities and savings behaviour amongst them.

- [4] Manjhi S. 1st Publication, Crescent Publishing Corporation, New Delhi-110002, ISBN-978-81-8342-367-0.
- [5] Statistical Handbook of Kamrup, Assam, edition 2013-14, Deputy Director of Economics and Statistics Kamrup, Guwahati-28.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of the present investigation have a number of implications for economic development of the hills tribal people by diversifying their economic activities and establishing financial institutions in the locality thereby improving their standard of living. Therefore, it calls for intensification of policy support to the tribal locality by NGOs and Government. Improving economic activities and standard of living among hills tribal people is not a onetime effort; it is an ongoing process. It is a huge project which requires concerted effort from the members of each family and support from the government. It requires the passionate involvement, dedication and commitment of all family members.

REFERENCES

- [1] Basumatary S.(2015) "An analysis of consumption Expenditure pattern among the Bodo tribe: A case study" International Research Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies(IRJIMS), ISSN: 2394-7969(online), ISSN: 2394-7950(print), volume-I, issue- V, June 2015, page no: 42-48.
- [2] Samal R. &Patra S.(2015) standard of living of tribes in Kondhamal district of Odisha, International Journal of Economic and Business Review, Impact factor- .0998, February 2015, Vol.-3, issue-2, ISSN: 2349-0187, e- ISSN: 2347-9671.
- [3] Mullah M., Parveen N. &Ahshanullah(2007). Tribal people & their Socio-Economic characteristics in RangamatiSadarthana, BRAC university journal vol. iv, No. 1, 2007, pp. 47-58.
- [4] S. Begum(2015). International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature. ISSN(E): 2321-8878; ISSN(P): 2347-4564, volume 3, Issue 5, May 2015, 55-66.

Books

- [1] Bordoloi B.N. Tribes of Assam Part-1, 1st Edition, Tribal Research Institute, Assam, Guwahati-21.
- [2] Bordoloi B.N. Tribes of Assam Part-III, 1st Edition, Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati.
- [3] Lasa H., Nayak S.C. and Thupten N, edition 2013, Adhyayan Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi- 110002, ISBN 978-81-8435-413-3.