

**SOCIAL EXCLUSION, ECONOMIC MARGINALISATION AND  
INCIDENCE OF POVERTY: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
SCHEDULED CASTES PEOPLE OF DHUBRI  
DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

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October, 2016**

# DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “**Social Exclusion, Economic Marginalisation and Incidence of Poverty: A Case Study of the Scheduled Castes People of Dhubri District of Assam**” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Kanak Kanti Bagchi, Professor of Economics Department, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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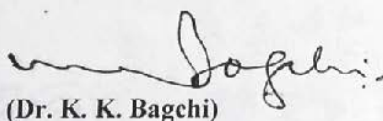
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# Abstract

## Introduction

The term Scheduled Caste owes its origin to the Government of India Act, 1935. In accordance with this enactment some of the undefined depressed castes were singled out in 1936, and listed in a schedule in order to ensure certain concessions and privileges for them because of their disadvantageous position in the social hierarchy. Because of the fact that their names are shown in a “schedule of the Act, they came to be known as “Scheduled Castes”. Gandhiji called them “Harijan”. According to Article 341 of the constitution of India, the President, after consultation with the Heads of the State or by public notification, specifies the castes, races and tribes or groups within the castes, races and tribes which shall, for “Scheduled Castes” in relation to the concerned State or the Union Territory. The President may also include in or exclude from the list of the Scheduled Castes any caste, race and tribe. Under the Article 341, there is the provision for the inclusion of even a tribe into the list of scheduled castes. The term Scheduled Castes is a constitutional myth and a legal fiction. Except listing a number of castes and sub-castes under the Article 341, no other explanation is given as to who are the Scheduled Castes.

## Objectives of the Study

The present study has carried out with the following objectives:

- (1) The study has tried to understand and highlighted the poverty scenario among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam in general and in particular of Dhubri district of Assam.
- (2) It has been tried to study the social, economic and political profiles of the Scheduled Castes in Assam with reference to their social, economic and political status in the Assamese society.
- (3) It has been tried to identify the problems faced by the Scheduled Castes people of Assam as well as Dhubri district which are responsible for their backwardness.
- (4) It has been tried to measure the level of significance of socio-economic and demographic variables such as family income, housing condition, type of family, pre and post-natal medical care, etc. on the mortality level of the Scheduled Castes people.

(5) It has also been tried to study the knowledge and practice of family planning among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam and their socio-economic determinants.

(6) In this study, it has been tried to suggest remedial measures for improving socio-economic condition of the poor SC people and controlling fertility and mortality on the basis of the findings, so that the Scheduled Castes people of Assam in particular of Dhubri district can improve their quality of life.

(7) Lastly, it has also been tried to find out the effects of different Government policies upon their upliftment.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is concentrated in one district of Assam i.e. Dhubri. As per 2011 census, the total Scheduled Castes population in Assam is 22,31,321 persons, which is 7.15 percent of the total population of the state. The percentage of SC population to total population in Dhubri District taken for the study is 3.15 percent..

Majority of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are poverty victim. They are suffering with extreme poverty and they are concentrated in low paying menial occupations. There is a close relationship between caste and occupation. The caste system has not allowed SC workers of this region to shift to move productive occupation. Their initial economic position and social status do not permit them to reach better standards in life through the change of occupations. Today a substantial majority of Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district remain confined to their ancestral occupations.

### **Justification of the Study**

The Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are more backward then non-scheduled castes people of this region. Still today, nobody has analysed why the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are more backward then non-scheduled castes people and what prevents them from coming up in life. There is the need for a change of the traditional occupation of the Scheduled Castes people of this area. Thus there is a need for an indepth study to provide valuable suggestions to shift these downtrodden people to better occupations which will go a long way in transforming the society in India.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions which have been addressed are:

(1) What is the present social, economic and cultural status of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam specially who are living in rural areas?

- (2) What are their levels of awareness about socio-economic and political situation and their exposure to outside their society?
- (3) Why are the majority of Scheduled Castes people of Assam living below poverty line?
- (4) Is massive illiteracy responsible for their widespread poverty?
- (5) Does poverty impact Scheduled Castes people more as compared to other section of the society?
- (6) What problems might they be facing in their traditional occupations?
- (7) Why are the Scheduled Castes people not motivated to shift from traditional occupations to modern occupations?
- (8) What problems might they be facing in their new occupations from within and without their families?
- (9) Why are the financial organizations not coming forward to support them?
- (10) How far do the various governmental schemes help the poor Scheduled Castes people?
- (11) Why are the various governmental schemes not adequately benefiting the Scheduled Castes beneficiaries?

### **Methodology of the Study**

The research project has primarily based on field data collected from the sample households of the sample villages with the help of a series of questionnaires prepared for the purpose. Dhubri district consists of three sub-divisions and 14 Development Blocks. We have categorized the Blocks into three heads, on the basis of their level of development, viz, highly developed, moderately developed and least developed Blocks respectively depending on several development indexes. Seven development indexes of Blocks have been used for categorizing these Blocks. These development indexes are (1) Number of LP and UP Schools (2) Number of branches of banks and Micro finances (3) Literacy rate of population (4) Health status (5) Irrigational status (6) Road condition and (7) Agricultural productivity. So in each category several Blocks have included. Then two Blocks have been randomly chosen from each category i.e. altogether six Blocks have been chosen. We have chosen 2 villages as sample villages from each Block so as to give maximum geographical coverage. That is, altogether 12 villages have been chosen. From these 12 villages, 20 households have been

taken randomly from each village. Thus, altogether 240 households have been chosen from the entire district.

### **Chapterization**

The Study has been divided into seven chapters:

#### **Chapter – I:**

The first chapter includes an introduction to the work, its scope and objectives, its location as well as the research method and techniques adopted for the study.

#### **Chapter – II:**

The second chapter contains the Review of Literature.

#### **Chapter – III:**

The third chapter deals with demographic profile of Scheduled Castes people in the state of Assam and the district of Dhubri and occupational pattern of Scheduled Castes people.

#### **Chapter – IV:**

The fourth chapter deals with the demographic behavior of S.C. population of Dhubri district with a focus on their attitude to family planning and the adoption behavior of family planning measures. This chapter is based on the field data.

#### **Chapter – V:**

The fifth chapter contains the causes and consequences of poverty in the district with special reference to Scheduled Castes people. This chapter is also based on the field data.

#### **Chapter – VI:**

The sixth chapter deals with the poverty alleviation programmes and their implementation and the effectiveness of these programmes in Dhubri district and problems and hazards faced by the implementing agencies.

#### **Chapter – VII:**

The seventh chapter summarizes the findings of the above chapters and suggests measures for improvement of the socio-economic and demographic life of the Scheduled Castes people.

## **Summary of the Findings**

In the third chapter, it has been found that unskilled labour is the main occupation of the Scheduled Castes people. 30.00 percent of the Scheduled Castes husbands have been engaged in unskilled labour which is quite temporary. In case of permanent occupation, only 37.14 percent husband and 8.89 percent wives have been able to get the permanent type of work. Child marriage has still practiced among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district of Assam. In the fourth chapter, it has been found that about 60 percent of the females have knowledge of at least one modern method of contraceptives and the best-known method is contraceptive pill. With higher educational attainment, the knowledge of family planning has also found to be higher. The working women have also sound knowledge of contraceptives as compared to the unemployed. In the fifth chapter, it has been found that the educational attainment among the scheduled Castes is not at all satisfactory. Female education has much lower than that of the male. The percentage of male dropped out (children) has been found higher than the female dropped out. It has also been found that 37.50 percent families of the sample area have been living in kutchha houses and only 10 percent families have been living in pucca houses. The overall housing condition of the sample households is not satisfactory as most of the families do not have enjoyed the basic amenities of life such as pucca bathroom, pucca latrine, pure drinking water, etc. In the sixth chapter, it has been found that the Government of Assam has been implementing various welfare schemes for all round development of the Scheduled Castes people including implementation and monitoring of the point 11 (A) of 20 point programme. But it has been found that in spite of various poverty alleviation programmes which have been implementing by the government, the condition of the poor Scheduled Castes People of this region has not improved and so many reasons have been identified for that. One of the major reasons have identified as corruption.

## **Suggestions**

In the light of the findings of the study, the following suggestions have been put forward for the improvement of the socio-economic condition and demographic life of the scheduled castes people of Dhubri district of Assam.

(1) It is observed that majority of the households have unskilled labour. But the income earned from this profession is not sufficient and certain. Therefore, to improve the socio-economic condition of the unskilled labours, it is necessary to improve their skill. Therefore it has suggested that special training should be given to them according to their eligibility. Government should take strong steps for properly utilizing the Special Component Plan which

is announced for the overall development of the poor Scheduled Castes People of Assam in general.

(2) Fishing is found to be another main occupation of the Kaibartas of Assam. But the income earned from it is very negligible to run the families. It is because of the fact that technology and procedure they use for catching, storing and marketing fish are crude and outdated. Therefore, it has suggested that special training should be given to the Kaibartas in fish catching, fish storing, fishing instrument making etc. They are also expert in producing cane and bamboo products. But due to financial problems they cannot produce it at a large scale. Therefore, it has also suggested that agro-farming training should be given to them. Raw materials like, nylon, yarn, bamboo and cane, takau and other items may be provided at subsidized rate. Necessary marketing facilities may also provide to them.

(3) It has found that child marriage is still practiced among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district of Assam. Again, it has also found that the mortality levels including the infant mortality is very high among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam. Therefore, it has suggested that to reduce mortality (specially infant mortality) among them special attention should be given to improve female education, institutional deliveries and vaccination programme.

(4). In SC villages, it has observed that the son preference is the strongest motivating factor behind desiring additional children especially among the illiterates. Therefore, it has suggested that the government should create awareness among the illiterates through NGOs that there is no difference between son and daughter.

(5) In survey area it has found that most of the households do not enjoy the basic amenities of life, such as pucca bathroom, pucca latrine, pure drinking water, etc. Hence, it has suggested that the government should create awareness among the people regarding giving up the habit of open defecation. Consequently, the government should also make time bound scheme for facilitating the toilet facilities to those families with minimum cost.

(6) It has been observed that in implementing the various poverty eradicating schemes, the government officials from top to bottom are directly involved in corruption. Therefore, it has suggested that the government should take strong steps to abolish corruption in selecting the actual beneficiaries.

## **Conclusion**

It is a fact that the Scheduled Castes people of Assam are socially and economically very poor. Social backwardness is due to certain socio-cultural factors which make them neglected by others. Economic backwardness is due to the dependence on the indigenous occupations. However, growth of population, sub-division and fragmentation of land holding, pressure of population, tough competition from machine-made goods, lack of technical knowledge of modern system of production, lack of capital money, influx of outsiders on the trade once solely meant for Scheduled Castes are the main causes of poverty, homelessness and unemployment among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam

Again, it could be inferred that without reforming the bureaucracy and changing their mindset, the development interventions are unlikely to be effective and efficient. Furthermore, specific reforms need to be designed to make development administration responsible, transparent, accountable and culpable. Lastly, a whole-hearted effort of the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Gaon Panchayats, dynamic role of the educated youths, Mahila Samities, etc are required for a drastic change in the socio-economic and demographic life of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam.

## Preface

This work is the first of its kind studying the poverty scenario among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam in general and in particular of Dhubri district of Assam. In this study, an attempt has been made to describe why the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are more backward than non-Scheduled Castes people and what prevents them from coming up in life. There is the need for a change of the traditional occupation of the Scheduled Castes people of this area. Thus there is a need for an indepth study to provide valuable suggestions to shift these downtrodden people to better occupations which will go a long way in transforming the society in India.

In order to arrive at the concrete form of the work (study), the whole analysis has been organized into seven chapters. The First Chapter (Chapter-1) gives an introduction to the work, its scope and objectives, its location as well as the research method and techniques adopted for the study. Chapter-2 contains the Review of Literature. Chapter-3 deals with demographic profile of Scheduled Castes people in the state of Assam and the district of Dhubri and occupational pattern of Scheduled Castes people. Chapter-4 deals with the demographic behavior of S.C. population of Dhubri district with a focus on their attitude to family planning and the adoption behavior of family planning measures. This chapter is based on the field data. Chapter-5 contains the causes and consequences of poverty in the district with special reference to Scheduled Castes people. This chapter is also based on the field data. Chapter-6 deals with the poverty alleviation programmes and their implementation and the effectiveness of these programmes in Dhubri district and problems and hazards faced by the implementing agencies. Chapter-7 summarizes the findings of the above chapters and suggests measures for improvement of the socio-economic and demographic life of the Scheduled Castes people.

Apart from studying the socio-economic and demographic life of the Scheduled Castes people, this thesis also discusses various economic issues relating to socio-economic characteristics, traditional occupational pattern, existing occupational pattern, demographic behaviour of Scheduled Castes people, adoption behaviour of family planning measures, various poverty alleviation programmes and their implementation, problems of poverty and unemployment, etc. are dealt with in detail.

The study is based mainly on primary data collected through personal survey of the sample households of twelve villages by filling up of questionnaire. Of course, secondary sources of data like Census of 2001 and 2011, etc. were also used to analyse the various economic parameters of the study area. Therefore, I hope that this work will serve the purpose of reference to research scholars as well as fellow colleague in teaching communities of rural economics.

In the light of the findings of the study, various suggestions are put forward for the improvement of the socio-economic condition and demographic life of the scheduled castes people of Dhubri district of Assam. Besides these, a whole-hearted effort of the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Gaon Panchayats, dynamic role of the educated youths, Mahila Samities, etc are required for a drastic change in the socio-economic and demographic life of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam.

I express my sincere and intense gratitude to my worthy guide Dr. Kanak Kanti Bagchi, Professor, Department of Economics, University of North Bengal, Dajeeling for his precedent guidance, valuable suggestions, constant supervision, indoctrination, inspiration and special inclination in every step of my dissertation work. I never forget kind cooperation and blessing of faculty members and other staff of Economics Department of University of North Bengal.

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## List of Abbreviations

- |      |         |   |
|------|---------|---|
| (1)  | AAY     | Antyodaya Anna Yojana                                   |
| (2)  | APL     | Above Poverty Line                                      |
| (3)  | ASDC    | Assam State Development Corporation                     |
| (4)  | BPL     | Below Poverty Line                                      |
| (5)  | DC      | Deputy Commissioner                                     |
| (6)  | DRDA    | District Rural Development Agency                       |
| (7)  | GOI     | Government of Assam                                     |
| (8)  | HDR     | Human Development Report                                |
| (9)  | HPI     | Human Poverty Index                                     |
| (10) | HSG     | Self-Help Group   |
| (11) | IAY     | Indira Awas Yojana                                      |
| (12) | MGNREGA | Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act |
| (13) | MLA     | Member of Legislative Assembly                          |
| (14) | MP      | Member of Parliament                                    |
| (15) | NGO     | Non-Government Organization                             |
| (16) | NSS     | National Sample Survey                                  |
| (17) | NSSO    | National Sample Survey Organisation                     |
| (18) | PA      | Poverty Alleviation                                     |
| (19) | PMEGP   | Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme          |
| (20) | SC      | Scheduled Castes  |
| (21) | ST      | Scheduled Tribes  |
| (22) | TPDS    | Targeted Public Distribution System                     |
| (23) | VC      | Vigilance Committee                                     |

# CHAPTER – I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. 1. 0. Introduction

The term Scheduled Caste owes its origin to the Government of India Act, 1935. In accordance with this enactment some of the undefined depressed castes were singled out in 1936, and listed in a schedule in order to ensure certain concessions and privileges for them because of their disadvantageous position in the social hierarchy. Because of the fact that their names are shown in a “schedule of the Act, they came to be known as “Scheduled Castes”. Gandhiji called them “Harijan”. According to Article 341 of the constitution of India, the President, after consultation with the Heads of the State or by public notification, specifies the castes, races and tribes or groups within the castes, races and tribes which shall, for “Scheduled Castes” in relation to the concerned State or the Union Territory. The President may also include in or exclude from the list of the Scheduled Castes any caste, race and tribe. Under the Article 341, there is the provision for the inclusion of even a tribe into the list of scheduled castes. The term Scheduled Castes is a constitutional myth and a legal fiction. Except listing a number of castes and sub-castes under the Article 341, no other explanation is given as to who are the Scheduled Castes.

Articles 330 and 332 of the Constitution conferred political rights on the Scheduled Castes in the form of reservation of a specified number of seats in the various State Assemblies and the Parliament on the basis of population. For Assam, it is 7%. Article 335 ensures reservation of services and posts for the Scheduled Castes in the affairs of the state. By a Presidential order, in pursuance of Article 341, a number of castes were specified as Scheduled Castes for the purpose of the Constitution in general and the above Articles in particular.

According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 1976 there are sixteen Scheduled Castes communities in Assam. These are Bansphor, Bhuimali/ Mali, Brittal Banka/ Bania, Dhupi/ Dhobi, Hira, Jalkeot, Jhalo/ Malo/ Jhalo-Malo,

Kaibbartha/ Jaliya, Lalbegi, Mahara, Mehtor/ Bhanggi, Muchi/ Rishi, Namasudra, Patni and Sutradhar.

Out of the sixteen Scheduled Castes, some are indigenous and they are distinguished as Assamese Scheduled Castes, others are non-Assamese. The Assamese Scheduled Castes are: Brittal Banka/ Bania, Dhupi/ Dhobi, Hira, Jalkeot, Dugla/ Dholi, Kaibbartha and Mali.

The Bansphor, Lalbegi, Mahara, Mehtor/ Bhanggi are non-indigenous Scheduled Castes of Assam. They are non-agriculturist group and have no scope for acquiring any land for agriculture. They are generally under the employment of municipal bodies of different towns.

The Muchi/ Rishis are also non-indigenous Scheduled Castes. They are mostly from Bihar and engage themselves in leather-work. They move from place to place and do their daily business on leather-made things like shoe repairing and manufacturing at certain convenient places of urban and semi-urban areas. They do not possess any permanent land for residential purposes. They live in the hired residential houses. Though the Bhuimali is listed as Scheduled Castes in Assam but there is no record of such communities in Assam. The Namasudra, Patni, Sutradhar and Jhalo-Malo who are included in the list of Scheduled Castes of Assam are Bengali speaking communities and mostly concentrated in the Barak valley districts and Dhubri district.

Although Scheduled Castes people constitute a large section of population of Dhubri district, their lives are still characterized by hard work, drudgery and without any adequate basic amenities. A big chunk of them generally live in the slum areas without adequate basic accommodation, water-supply, sanitation, light, public health etc. Many of them, again who are landless and unemployed, migrate from the rural areas to the city and towns in search of labour, jobs, contracts and other petty wage-earning employments.

Poverty, malnutrition and consequent indebtedness are the socio-economic constraints inherited by the Scheduled Castes people from their fore-fathers and these problems still remained unsolved even in spite of the implementation of the special component plan within the state.

This sort of discomfoting and unenviable situation stifled their progress in all directions. They are deficit in education, in wealth and they could yield no influence whatsoever in the society in which they are moving. The few aspirants for higher education are the worst sufferers. They have to face great social barricades not only in Assam but also outside.

### 1. 1. 1. Statement of the Problem

Dhubri district is one of the districts of the state of Assam. According to 2001 census, the population of Dhubri district is 16,37,344 persons. Out of 16,37,344 persons, the total Scheduled Castes population of Dhubri district is 63,208 persons which constitute 3.86% of the total population of the state. Out of the total Scheduled Castes population 63,208 persons; 32,734 persons are males and 30,474 persons are females.

The study is concerned with the examination of the socio-economic status of the Scheduled Castes population of Assam. In Assam, majority of the Scheduled Castes people live in villages, a small proportion of them are in towns. In villages they are segregated from caste Hindus and in towns also they are discriminated against. The problems faced by the members of the Scheduled Castes are similar wherever they live.

For centuries these depressed classes have been denied basic civic rights. The services of these depressed classes are utilized by the upper classes for their benefit. But the Scheduled Castes are not given equal status with others. Untouchability continues to be practiced in diverse forms.

In urban areas, these untouchables who are poor, illiterate and undergo the ordeal of caste discrimination generally live in slums. The life of these people is miserable and unhygienic. The environment of these people is in no way conducive to the achievement of better standards. They are made to feel that they are born to suffer. The Scheduled Castes are backward largely because they are confined to certain low occupation where their earnings are *low and partly due to social disability and illiteracy. The backwardness of the Scheduled Castes* has historical, social and political roots. Poverty, lack of educational facilities, discrimination, inability to enter government services and other lucrative jobs have all contributed to their backwardness. The concentration of the Scheduled Castes workers in low paying occupations is the product of a vicious circle of poverty and discrimination.

Agriculture is the backbone of the Assam economy. A number of Scheduled Castes communities of Dhubri district pursue agriculture as their major occupation. But the Scheduled Caste populations in this district are never self-sufficient in agricultural products as their cultivable lands are insufficient. Again, majority of the Scheduled Caste agriculturists of Dhubri district are poor, ignorant and unskilled. Due to lack of agricultural base and skill, their paddy fields are not suitable for a flourishing crop. As a result, the scope of economic

development has been hindered and the present generation is feeling the pinch of acute hardship.

The condition of the non-agricultural Scheduled Caste communities of Dhubri district is also no better. The Banias do not get enough to maintain their families as the people no longer use ornaments made by this community. The urban dwellers like Bansphore, Muchis, Mehtars, Maharas have to switch over to other professions because of the changing social scenario. Machine made cheaper articles are popular with the people and the Scheduled Castes people who produced bamboo items of day to day use can no longer withstand the stiff competition of plastic items.

The socio-economic condition of the Kaibartas of Dhubri district reveals a disheartening picture. The Kaibartas till about two decades ago had fishing as major source of income and most of the Kaibartas depended solely on fish trade. But today, the situation underwent metamorphic changes. The fishermen from other states have snatched the age old trade from the Kaibartas. Further, poor fishermen are indebted to the influential Mahajans. This indebtedness is a never ending affair and poor fishermen have no alternative but to bow down to the whims of the Mahajans. Consequently, upon degradation of the traditional income sources and non-availability of fresh avenues, the time worn economic backwardness has been further aggravated.

In Dhubri district, Scheduled Castes communities like Doms, Jalia-Kaibartas, Namasudra, Chandal, Hira, Brittil-Baniya or Hari are considered to be low in the Hindu society. They are look down upon by the upper caste Hindus as they are doing some menial or unclear jobs. Other Hindu castes do not accord them equal treatment. They are placed outside the pale of Hindu society. They are untouchables. This sort of discomforting and unenviable situation stifled their progress in all directions. Therefore, the Scheduled Castes people in Dhubri district, so far have failed to receive the social recognition of their caste status as the caste Hindus still maintain social distance rigidly.

Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are yet to realize the paramount importance of education. Illiteracy is very high among the Scheduled Castes people of this region. According to 2001 census, literacy rate among the SC population is lowest as compared to the literacy rate of SC population of other districts of Assam. Children belonging to this community without getting educational facilities start to help their parents in work and raise the family earnings and therefore proved to be assets to the family. Female children are confined to the kitchen rather going to school for cooking purposes. As the primary and middle stage of education is over, the number of school drop-outs increases among this

community as compared to other communities. The main reasons for drop-outs are lack of proper guidance, deplorable economic condition of the people, repeated failure in the examinations and marriage of girls at early age etc. The number of college going students is also very less in the Scheduled Castes inhabited villages.

Population growth is very high among the Scheduled Castes community of this region. They consider their children as the gift of God. They do not understand the effect of large family on the income of the family. People belonging to this community are ignorant about biology of reproduction, need of birth control and devices of birth control. They consider family planning programme to be curse, as according to them this is against the God's will. As a result, they create large number of births whose ultimate result is wide spread poverty.

Besides these, Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are facing a number of problems which hinder their socio-economic development. Among them most important are joint family system, dowry system, observation of various festivals, chewing of tobacco, smoking of bidi and drinking of country liquor regularly among minor and adult males, dirty dwelling condition, unhygienic, poor sanitation, belief in witchcraft and sorcery etc.

The Government of Assam has been implementing various welfare schemes for all round development of Scheduled Castes people of the state living below poverty line. But these welfare schemes have brought neither a remarkable change nor a considerable benefit to Scheduled Castes people. The reason is that the scarce funds of the government has been misused or mismanaged. There is corruption in the officer level and improper selection of the beneficiaries. There is also lack of adequate cooperation between the implementing authorities and the beneficiaries.

### **1. 1. 2. Objectives of the Study**

Our enquiry starts from this point, namely Scheduled Castes people of Assam who are living below the poverty line. The present study is carried out with the following objectives:

- (1) To understand and highlight the poverty scenario among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam in general and in particular of Dhubri district of Assam.
- (2) To study the social, economic and political profiles of the Scheduled Castes in Assam with reference to their social, economic and political status in the Assamese society.
- (3) To identify the problems faced by the Scheduled Castes people of Assam as well as Dhubri district which are responsible for their backwardness.

(4) To measure the level of significance of socio-economic and demographic variables such as family income, housing condition, type of family, pre and post-natal medical care, etc. on the mortality level of the Scheduled Castes people.

(5) To study the knowledge and practice of family planning among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam and their socio-economic determinants.

(6) To suggest remedial measures for improving socio-economic condition of the poor SC people and controlling fertility and mortality on the basis of the findings, so that the Scheduled Castes people of Assam in particular of Dhubri district can improve their quality of life.

(7) To find out the effects of different Government policies upon their upliftment.

### **1. 1. 3. (a) Research Questions**

In order to fulfill the stated objectives of the proposed study there are different issues and questions on which we have conducted inquiries.

The research questions which have been addressed are:

(1) What is the present social, economic and cultural status of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam specially who are living in rural areas?

(2) What are their levels of awareness about socio-economic and political situation and their exposure to outside their society?

(3) Why are the majority of Scheduled Castes people of Assam living below poverty line?

(4) Is massive illiteracy responsible for their widespread poverty?

(5) Does poverty impact Scheduled Castes people more as compared to other section of the society?

(6) What problems might they be facing in their traditional occupations?

(7) Why are the Scheduled Castes people not motivated to shift from traditional occupations to modern occupations?

(8) What problems might they be facing in their new occupations from within and without their families?

(9) Why are the financial organizations not coming forward to support them?

(10) How far do the various governmental schemes help the poor Scheduled Castes people?

(11) Why are the various governmental schemes not adequately benefiting the Scheduled Castes beneficiaries?

**(b) Research Gaps**

Still today, nobody has analysed why the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are more backward than non-Scheduled Castes people and what prevents them from coming up in life. There is the need for a change of the traditional occupation of the Scheduled Castes people of this area. Thus there is a need for an indepth study to provide valuable suggestions to shift these downtrodden people to better occupations which will go a long way in transforming the society in India.

**1. 1. 4. Scope of the study**

The study is concentrated in one district of Assam i.e. Dhubri. As per 2011 census, the total Scheduled Castes population in Assam is 22,31,321 persons, which is 7.15 percent of the total population of the state. The percentage of SC population to total population in Dhubri District taken for the study is 3.15 percent.

Majority of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are poverty victim. They are suffering with extreme poverty and they are concentrated in low paying menial occupations. There is a close relationship between caste and occupation. The caste system has not allowed SC workers of this region to shift to move productive occupation. Their initial economic position and social status do not permit them to reach better standards in life through the change of occupations. Today a substantial majority of Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district remain confined to their ancestral occupations.

The Scheduled Castes people are seldom found in large compact areas like the other communities. They usually live inter-spread with the general population, though in clusters of villages/hamlets in some areas. The life-style of the village people is simple and they are a set of very contented people. Their possessions are few. They have the same careless attitude towards disease and death like other people. The poor progress in educational development among the Scheduled Castes people is due to strong caste prejudices, prevalence of the practice of untouchability, lack of proper financial aid, dropping out before completion of the school and ignorance of the value of education.

Indebtedness is also causing miseries to many of the Scheduled Castes people like other sections of the backward communities. One of the causes of indebtedness is the inherent poverty of the Scheduled Castes population. They take loans to purchase bullocks, to purchase

articles, to perform rites connected with death, marriage ceremonies and other festivals. The spread of modern education is very important to make the people understand this inherent problem.

The poor Scheduled Castes people cannot take loan offered by the Government Departments as they cannot offer sufficient security for obtaining such loan. Hence, in spite of provisions for loan and subsidies or subsidized-grants, the vast majority of them are deprived of these provisions. The Scheduled Castes people in Assam generally reside on the banks of rivers. The habitations of these people living on the banks of the rivers are vulnerable to erosion and inundation for which they lose house and house-hold property. They have to construct residential houses and built property afresh every year for which they have to take loan from private sources. Hence, they cannot get-rid of sufferings caused by natural calamities and perpetual indebtedness.

To overcome all these problems, accurate information regarding the provisions made in the Constitution for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes people to be given wide publicity, through mass media, like radio, television, newspaper, bulletins and wall posters. Personnel across the administration cadres from Deputy Commissioner to village level workers, banks and co-operatives could play useful role in this regard. Otherwise, Scheduled Castes society will remain in the same standard as it was yesterday and there will be no better tomorrow waiting for them. So, it is today that we should bring about a change and uplift the society.

### **1. 1. 5. Area of Study**

#### **(a) Physical and Demographic Features of Assam**

Assam is situated in the North-East region of India – bordering seven States viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and West Bengal and two countries viz. Bangladesh and Bhutan. With a geographical area of 78,438 Sq. K.ms. Assam accounts for about 2.4 percent of the country's total geographical areas. Most of the State's population lives in the lush and verdant valleys of its two major river systems in the twenty two districts of the Brahmaputra valley and the three districts of the Barak valley. Less densely populated are the two hill districts of the KarbiAnglong and the North Cachar Hills, set in the low-lying hills that separate the two valleys. For administrative and revenue purposes, the state has 27 districts including the newly created Kamrup (Metro) district and four districts under the newly created Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) areas viz. Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang and Udalguri.

**(b) Location**

Assam is in the north-east corner of India and is connected with the rest of India by a narrow strip of land lying in the submontane regions of the Himalayas. She is surrounded on all sides (excepting the narrow corridor) by independent states, viz. Bhutan and China (Tibet) on the north; China and Myanmar on the east; Myanmar and Bangladesh on the south; and Bangladesh on the west. With a geographical area of 78,438 sq. km which is about 2.4 percent of the country's total geographical area Assam provides shelter to 2.6 percent population of the Country.

**(c) Population**

According to the census of India, 2011, the population of Assam stands at 3,1205,576 of which 1,5939,443 are males and 1,5266,133 females. The total area of Assam is 78,438 Sq. Km. as per 2011 census. The decadal growth of the state's population works out to 17.07 percent during the decade 2001-2011 as against 17.68 percent for the country as a whole. The density of the population of Assam has gone up to 398 in 2011 which was 340 in 2001 Census. The corresponding all India figure was 382 as per Census, 2011. The number of census house used as residence houses is 63,52,226 for population size of 3,1205,576 in the State as per Census, 2011. Table 1.1 shows some important features of population of Assam.

**Table: 1.1**  
**Population Features of Assam at a Glance**

Particulars		Unit	2001 Census	2011 Census
Population		Lakh	267	312
Decadal Growth		Percent	18.92	17.1
Density		Per Sq. Km.	340	398
Sex-Ratio		Females per 1000 males	935	958
Literacy		Percent	63.25	72.19
	Male	Percent	71.28	77.85
	Female	Percent	54.61	66.27
Urban Population		Percent	12.90	14.09
	Male	Percent	53.41	51.39
	Female	Percent	46.58	48.61
Rural Population		Percent	87.10	85.90
	Male	Percent	51.43	51.03
	Female	Percent	48.57	48.97
S.C. Population		Percent	7.40	7.15
S.T. Population		Percent	12.83	12.45

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Classification of population by economic activity according to the result of population census, 2011 reveals that out of total population of 3,12,05,576 in the state; 1,19,69,690 were total workers against 9538591 were in 2001. Out of the total workers in 2011 main workers were 8687123 and 3282567 were marginal workers against 7114097 and 2424494 in 2001 respectively. Among male workers 82 percent were main workers, 18 percent were marginal workers against 85 percent and 15 percent respectively in 2001. Among females 48 percent were main workers and 52 percent were marginal workers in 2011 against 47 percent and 53

percent in 2001 respectively. Out of the total 11969690 workers in Assam in 2011 against 9538591 workers in 2001, 3138554 were Cultivators (26 percent), 903294 were Agricultural labourers (7.5 percent), 242071 were engaged in Household Industries (2.0 percent) and 4403204 were Other Workers (36.8 percent) in 2011. Thus, about 34 percent of working population was engaged in Agriculture (i.e. cultivators and agricultural labourers) in the State as per Census, 2011 against 52 percent as per Census 2001.

**(d) Dhubri District**

Dhubri District is one of the districts of the state of Assam. Dhubri District is located on globe between 89.42<sup>0</sup> to 90.12<sup>0</sup> east longitude and 26.22<sup>0</sup> to 25.28<sup>0</sup> north latitude. According to the 2011 census, the total land area of Dhubri districts is 2,176.00 sq. km, out of which 2144.06 sq. km. are rural and 31.94 sq. km. are urban. Dhubri District comprises of three sub-divisions: (1) Dhubri sub-divisions, (2) Bilasipara sub-divisions and (3) South Salmara sub-divisions.

According to 2011 census, the total population of Dhubri district stands 19,49,258 persons of which 9,97,848 are males and 9,51,410 are females. Out of the total population of 19,49,258 persons, 17,45,557 persons are rural population and 2,03,701 persons are urban population. The density of population is 896 per Sq. km. and sex-ratio is 953 per 1000 males. The literacy rate of Dhubri district is 82.28 percent.

As per 2011 census, Dhubri district comprises 14 (fourteen) Development Blocks, 9 (nine) revenue circles, 168 numbers of Gaon Panchayats, 1091 numbers of villages and 9 (nine) numbers of towns (Statutory Census).

Dhubri district is in the west corner of Assam. The district is bounded by state West Bengal and Independent country Bangladesh on the west, Bangladesh and Meghalaya on the south, Goalpara district and Bongaigaon district on the east and Kokrajhar district on the north.

# Map of Dhubri District



Fig: 1.1

### **1. 1. 6. Methodology**

With limited resource and time of an individual researcher, we have taken up the enquiry in only one district of the state of Assam covering a few development blocks. The name of the district is Dhubri. The reason for selecting Dhubri district is that Dhubri is one of the backward districts of Assam. As per 2001 census, literacy rate of Dhubri district is lowest as compared to the literacy rate of other districts of Assam. Again, Dhubri is one of the high SC population concentrate district of Assam. The research project is primarily based on field data collected from the sample households of the sample villages with the help of a series of questionnaires prepared for the purpose. The samples have been selected with the help of multiphase (stratified) sample technique both random and purposive. The respondents selected for this enquiry will be all rural. The study is descriptive in nature.

In case, where more than one male/female member was present in a family, only one had been interviewed. The field work spread over a period of six months from May, 2014 to October, 2014. This method of obtaining data has strong as well as weak points of its own. On the one hand, it is not possible for an individual to visit a very large number of households in the villages scattered in a large area and perforce, the sample size must be kept at its modest level. On the other hand, the opportunity given by meeting the households in person provides a great scope for an in depth investigation. Details on income from various sources, consumption expenditure, family size, housing condition, occupational pattern, productivity etc. can be obtained from such an enterprise.

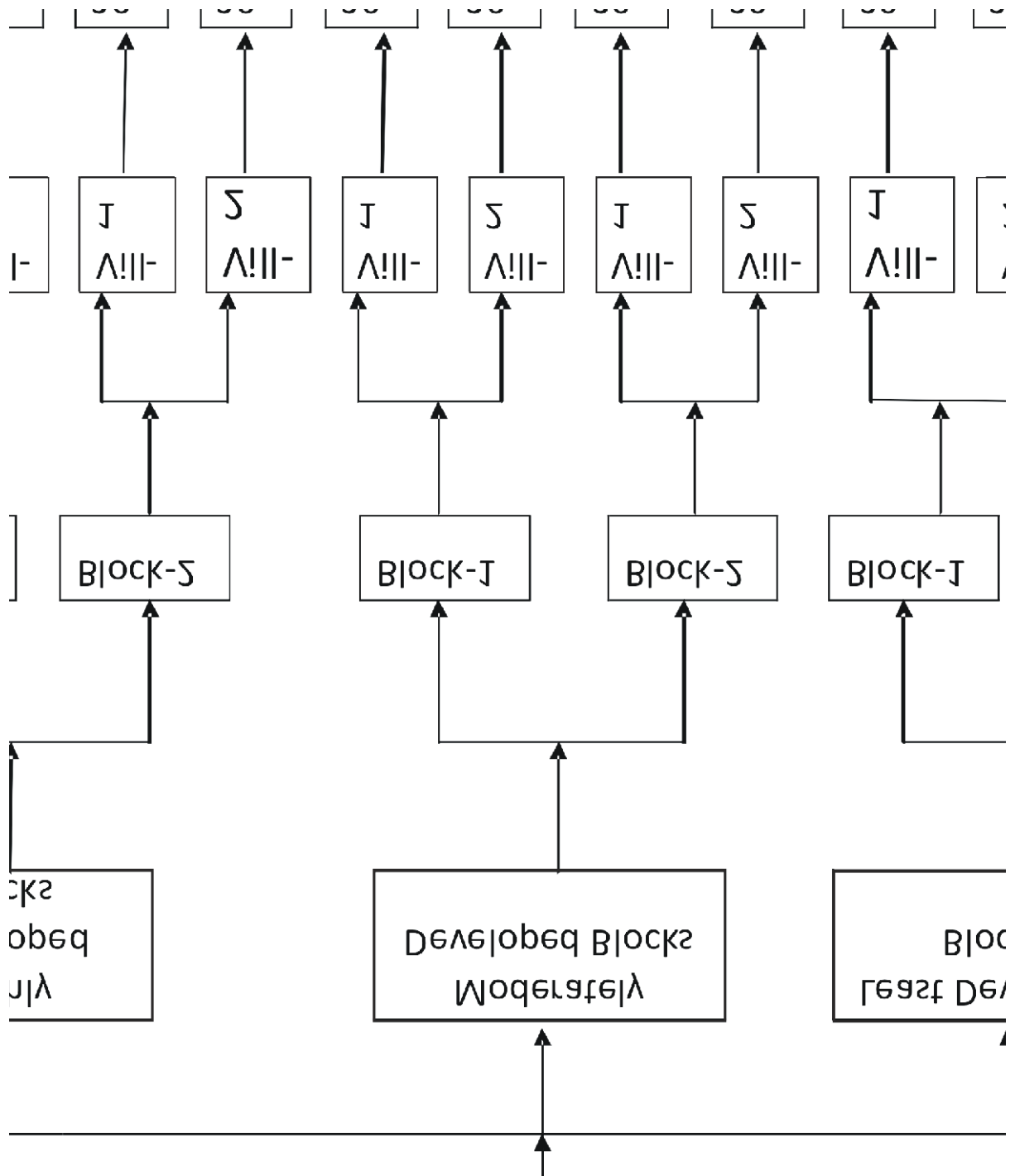
#### **Sample Design**

Dhubri district consists of three sub-divisions and 14 Development Blocks. We have categorized the Blocks into three heads, on the basis of their level of development, viz, highly developed, moderately developed and least developed Blocks respectively depending on several development indexes. Seven development indexes of Blocks have been used for categorizing these Blocks. These development indexes are (1) Number of LP and UP Schools (2) Number of branches of banks and Micro finances (3) Literacy rate of population (4) Health status (5) Irrigational status (6) Road condition and (7) Agricultural productivity. These development indexes are broadly discussed in the appendix. So in each category several Blocks are included. Then two Blocks are randomly chosen from each category i.e. altogether six Blocks are chosen. We have chosen 2 villages as sample villages from each Block so as to give maximum geographical coverage. That is, altogether 12 villages have been chosen. From

these 12 villages, 20 households have been taken randomly from each village. Thus, altogether 240 households have been chosen from the entire district.

As noted above, the units of observation is the household and the total size of sample is 240 households.

### Sample Chart – I



**Table: 1. 2**  
**Sample Villages**

Block Category	Name of the Blocks	Sample villages	Under GaonPanchayat
Highly Developed Blocks	(1)Agomani development Block	(1) Kaldoba-1	Agomani
		(2) Choto Dighaltari	Boterhat
	(2)Bilasipara development Block	(1) Futkibari	Futkibari
		(2) Anandanagar	Anandanagar Bangalipara
Moderately Developed Blocks	(1) Chapar-Salkocha development Block	(1) Baniapara-1	Salkocha
		(2) Batardal	Barunitara Batardal
	(2)Gauripur development Block	(1) Dharmasala-3	Dharmasala
		(2) Bhelakoba	Durahati
Least Developed Blocks	(1)Fekamari development Block	(1) Hatsingimeri	Fulerchar
		(2) Kurkumara-1	Kukurmara
	(2)Debitola development Block	(1) Asharikandi	Asharikandi
		(2) Geramari-6	Geramari

Source: www.drdadhubri

We have chosen 2 villages as sample villages from each block of all three categories so as to give maximum geographical coverage. Agomani development block comprising 13 gaon panchayats and 67 villages. Out of 67 villages, we have randomly chosen two villages as sample villages and the sample villages are (1) Kaldoba-1 and (2) Chota Dighaltari. The first one goes under Agomani gaonpanchayat and the second one goes under Boterhat gaonpanchayat. Like that, Bilasipara development block consists of 10 gaonpanchayats and 79

villages. Among them two villages have been randomly chosen as sample villages and the sample villages are (1) Futkibari and (2) Anandanagar where first one comes under Futkibari gaonpanchayat and the second one comes under Anandanagar Bangalipara gaonpanchayat.

Similarly, two villages i.e. (1) Baniapara-1 and (2) Batardal have been randomly chosen as sample villages from Chapar-salkoca development block which comprises 12 gaonpanchayats and 142 villages where first one goes under Salkoca gaonpanchayat and second one goes under Barunitara Batardal gaonpanchayat. From Gauripur development block, we have randomly chosen two villages as sample villages which comprise 15 gaonpanchayats and 84 villages. The sample villages are (1) Dharmasala-3 and (2) Bhelakoba where Dharmasala-3 comes under Dharmasala gaonpanchayat and Bhelakoba comes under Durahati gaonpanchayat.

Likewise, we have randomly chosen (1) Hatsingimari village and (2) Kukurmara-1 village as sample villages from Fekamari development block which consists of 14 gaonpanchayats and 74 villages. The first one goes under Fulerchar gaonpanchayat whereas the second one goes under Kukurmara gaonpanchayat. Like that, Debitola development block consists of 11 gaonpanchayats and 189 villages. Among them two villages have been randomly chosen as sample villages and the sample villages are (1) Ashrikandi and (2) Geramari-6 where first comes under Ashrikandi gaonpanchayat and the second one comes under Geramari gaonpanchayat.

Category wise selected sample villages from six development blocks are as follows:

**Highly Developed Blocks**

(1) Agomani Development Block

**Sample Villages**

(A) Kaldoba-1

(B) Choto Dighaltari

(2) Bilasipara Development Block

(A) Futkibari

(B) Anandanagar

**Moderately Developed Blocks**

(1) Gauripur Development Block

**Sample Villages**

(A) Dharmasala-3

(B) Bhelakoba

(2) Chapar-Salkocha Development Block

(A) Baniapara-1

(B) Batardal

**Least Developed Blocks**

(1) Fekamari Development Block

(2) Debitola Development Block

**Sample Villages**

(A) Hatsingimari

(B) Kukurmara-1

(A) Asharikandi

(B) Geramari-6

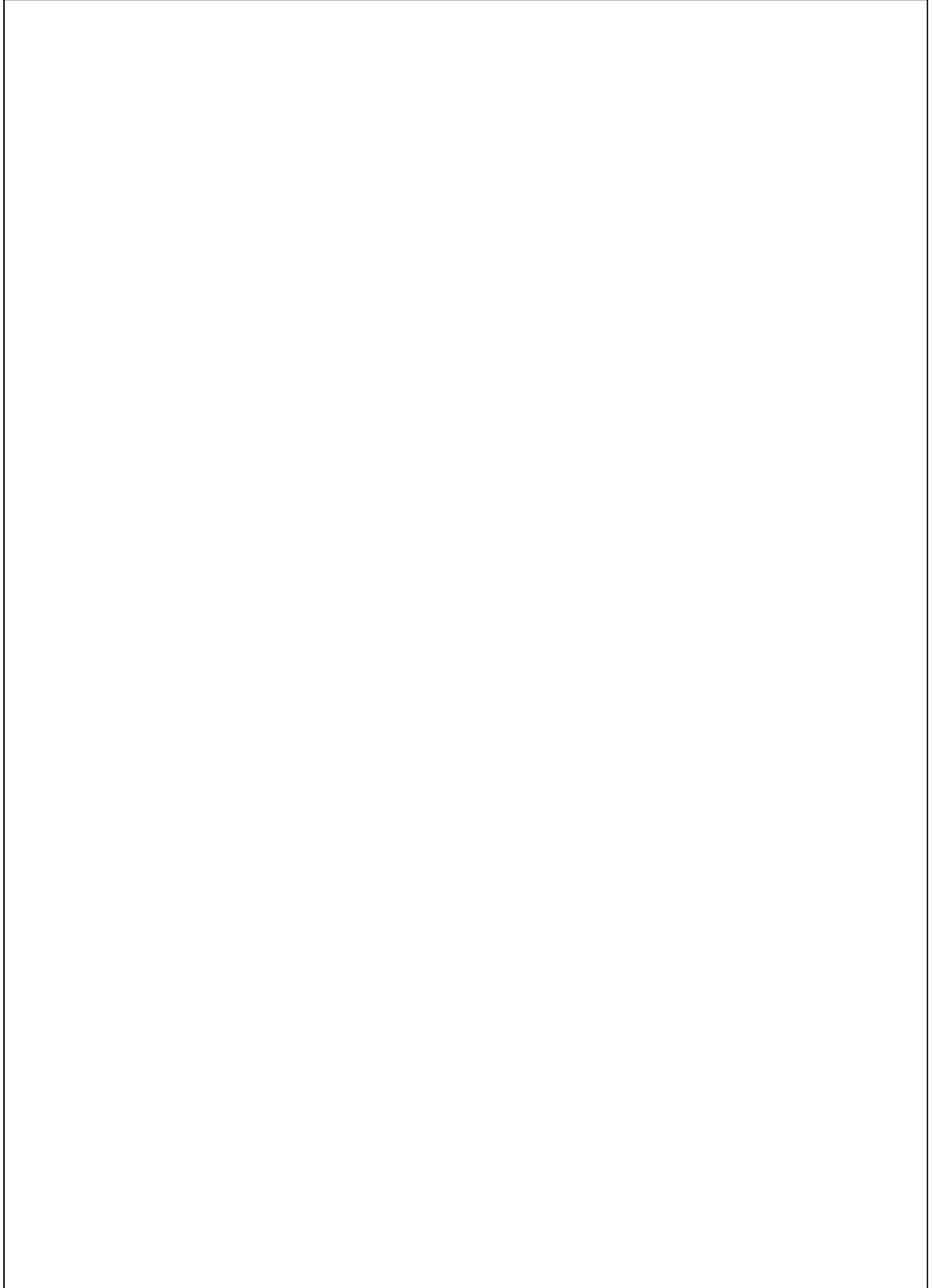
**Table: 1. 3**  
**Category Wise Selected Sample Villages**

Highly dev. blocks		Moderately dev. block		Least dev. block	
<b>(1) Agomani Development Block</b>	Sample Vill : Kaldoba-1 House hold : 538 Population: 2692 Male : 1836 Female : 1306 S.C. : 344 S.T. : 0 Others : 2348	<b>(1) Gauripur Development Block</b>	Sample Vill : Dharmasala-3 House hold : 489 Population: 2442 Male : 1228 Female : 1214 S.C. : 122 S.T. : 0 Others : 2320	<b>(1) Fekamari Development Block</b>	Sample Vill : Hatsingimari House hold : 112 Population: 408 Male : 193 Female : 215 S.C. : 119 S.T. : 36 Others : 253
	Sample Vill : ChotoDighaltari House hold : 128 Population: 386 Male : 198 Female : 188 S.C. : 149 S.T. : 0 Others : 237		Sample Vill : Bhelakoba House hold : 218 Population: 857 Male : 456 Female : 401 S.C. : 126 S.T. : 0 Others : 731		Sample Vill : Kukurmara-1 House hold : 387 Population: 1779 Male : 918 Female : 861 S.C. : 297 S.T. : 0 Others : 1482
<b>(2) Bilasipara Development Block</b>	Sample Vill : Ananda Nagar House hold : 926 Population: 4632 Male : 2317 Female : 2315 S.C. : 304 S.T. : 0 Others : 4328	<b>(2) Chapar-Salkocha Development Block</b>	Sample Vill : Baniapara-1 House hold : 103 Population: 333 Male : 159 Female : 174 S.C. : 128 S.T. : 0 Others : 205	<b>(2) Debitola Development Block</b>	Sample Vill : Asharikandi House hold : 308 Population: 1484 Male : 760 Female : 724 S.C. : 426 S.T. : 0 Others : 1058
	Sample Vill : Futkibari House hold : 159 Population: 633 Male : 326 Female : 307 S.C. : 217 S.T. : 129 Others : 287		Sample Vill : Batardal House hold : 116 Population: 401 Male : 204 Female : 197 S.C. : 134 S.T. : 42 Others : 225		Sample Vill : Geramari-6 House hold : 298 Population: 1422 Male : 759 Female : 663 S.C. : 328 S.T. : 0 Others : 1094

Source (1) [www.drdadhubri](http://www.drdadhubri)

(2) Block development offices.

## Sample Chart – II



### **Limitations of the Study**

- (1) The information have been collected from the respondents and all kinds of cross-checking have done by us. Even then there may be some data gap as well as inconsistency of their reporting.
- (2) We are not able to cover more than six development blocks due to the resource and time constraints of an individual researcher. Therefore, the study which is conducted may not be claimed as representative of the Scheduled Castes people of entire rural areas of Assam. As such, it is necessary to test the validity of our findings in other districts also.
- (3) Judging the above limitations, we cannot claim to generalize a pattern or make any trend analysis.

### **1. 1. 7. Chapterization**

The Study has been divided into seven chapters:

#### **Chapter – I:**

The first chapter includes an introduction to the work, its scope and objectives, its location as well as the research method and techniques adopted for the study.

#### **Chapter – II:**

The second chapter contains the Review of Literature.

#### **Chapter – III:**

The third chapter deals with demographic profile of Scheduled Castes people in the state of Assam and the district of Dhubri and occupational pattern of Scheduled Castes people.

#### **Chapter – IV:**

The forth chapter deals with the demographic behavior of S.C. population of Dhubri district with a focus on their attitude to family planning and the adoption behavior of family planning measures. This chapter is based on the field data.

#### **Chapter – V:**

The fifth chapter contains the causes and consequences of poverty in the district with special reference to Scheduled Castes people. This chapter is also based on the field data.

**Chapter – VI:**

The sixth chapter deals with the poverty alleviation programmes and their implementation and the effectiveness of these programmes in Dhubri district and problems and hazards faced by the implementing agencies.

**Chapter – VII:**

The seventh chapter summarizes the findings of the above chapters and suggests measures for improvement of the socio-economic and demographic life of the Scheduled Castes people.

## **CHAPTER – II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2. 1. 0. Review of Literature**

There is no denying the fact that the Scheduled Castes people of Assam are socially and economically very poor. Social backwardness is due to certain socio-cultural factors which make them neglected by others. Economic backwardness is due to the dependence on the indigenous occupations. Scheduled Castes people both in rural and urban areas with very low income till have not been able to cross over the poverty line in a large measure along with bulk of the state's population.

A number of studies about the Scheduled Castes have been undertaken in the past. It is true that the problems of poor Scheduled Castes people of Assam had attracted the attention of scholars in earlier days also. For example, Sarma Thakur (1992), Hazarika (1994), Das (1986) and many others wrote on the problems of Scheduled Castes people of Assam.

#### **On Occupational Status**

DhekialPhukan (1829) while discussing the occupations of the Kaibarta people of Assam, said that a greater section of the Kaibartas such as, Nadials, Doms and Jaliya, Keots practice fishing and fish trade. There are a few rich and educated Kaibartas who engage themselves in other trade and commerce.

Mortin (1976), Barua, Gohain (1976), Choudhury (1987), Shastri (1990), Gogi (1994), Bezbarua (1999), Das (1990), Barua (2003), Risely (1891) all agree that the main occupation of the Kaibartas is fishing.

Barua (1984) has discussed about the occupation of the Scheduled Castes people of Kaibarta community of Assam. According to him traditional occupation of this community includes fish catching and selling, boat making and plying, lime making and selling, etc. Now they are engaged in agricultural activities and other trades also.

Sharma Thakur (1994) points out that the Scheduled Castes people had to face problems in the changing profession because of the changing social scenario. He observes that a few Scheduled Castes families used to live with the earnings of playing drums in festivals

and other socio-religious occupations. But now-a-days, people do not employ them in such festivals, a renowned institution mostly of the Scheduled Castes people, is fast disappearing

Athparia and Pandey (2000) made a study of Hiras in Assam state. In this study, they have given an account of the difficulties faced by the Hiras. According to him, another sadest occupation of the Scheduled Castes of Assam is the pottery industry. This occupation is confined to Hiras only. Today the Hiras are facing some problems in collecting the raw-materials popularly known as “Hira Clay” from the specified clay fields at free of cost without any obstructions. Earlier, they used to produce some particular earthen pots for cooking and other use for the common people, which have been replaced now by the modern metallic utensils and equipments available in the market. Besides this, there are some other problems of the Hiras like housing, education and unemployment. By and large, the Hiras live below the poverty line.

Das (1992) made a study about the problems of Scheduled Castes fishermen of Assam. He states that “it is a complex phenomenon and as such it is the outcome of the interaction of the diverse factor— economic and non-economic”. According to him the main economic factors are existence of middlemen agencies in the fishing industry, high interest of loan (10%) from Gaonlia Mahajan and Kabulies, encroachment of fishery area for agricultural purposes deprives of reasonable prices for their fish product in fishing market, industrial pollution of water etc. He points out that the Scheduled Castes fishermen are leading miserable life since time immemorial and are still backward. And due to lack of proper care, they are gradually vanishing from their lands.

Selvanathan (1989) in his study points out that even given the existence of alternative job opportunities, the change of occupation does not take place automatically or easily for member of Scheduled Castes.

### **On Land Holding Pattern**

Bezbarua (1999) has stated that the land holding pattern of the Kaibartas is miserable. Fishing was main occupation and very recently they have switched over to agricultural activities. The forefathers of the present generation did not care much to occupy land and the present generation is feeling the acute shortage of land.

Sing (1951) states that the Scheduled Castes people are hungry for land. Poor quality of land, small holding size, poor techniques of production and the burden of indebtedness are

some of the factors that have largely been responsible for the handicaps which the scheduled castes have been suffered for years.

### **On Social Status**

From the writing of different writers it becomes clear that the social status of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam is relatively better than that of the rest of the country.

Kumble (2002) has said that untouchability is still continuing in the country. In Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, the untouchability problem is more severe where the Scheduled Castes people are prohibited to enter the temples, riding horses, etc.

Das (1986) has argued the social status of the Scheduled Castes people in the southern states is deplorable. They are not allowed to wear sandals, silk cloths, golden ornaments, to use umbrellas and the women are not allowed to wear upper garments to cover their breasts.

Srinivas (1994) states that many untouchable families and peasant families were bounded together in enduring ways by the institution of traditional servant ship despite the wide separation of the two castes in the hierarchy. Since untouchables are very poor, it is likely that some of the traditional servant-master relationship were reinforced by the tenancy, contractual servant ship, debtor ship and other ties as well.

Dev and Lahiri (1984) have explained that atrocities on Scheduled Castes people are still taking in some part of Assam, specially in rural areas. The socio-religious and political atrocities relate to rape, molestation, arson, violence resulting in grievous hurt, discriminatory practices involving untouchability offences like denial of the use of public utility services such as hostels, restaurants etc. The economic atrocities spring from land disputes, forcible harvesting, wage dispute, bonded labour and indebtedness.

Dev and Lahiri (1984) have stated that the socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes people in other parts of India is miserable. They are looked down upon with great contempt as the remover of filth and dead bodies. As compared to the social status of the Scheduled Castes people of the other parts of India, these people have a high status in Assam. The authors have stated that Assam is one of the few states in India where caste rigidities are conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, Assam can claim the distinction of having removed untouchability from the web of social relationship. In the rural area, the upper castes do maintain an aura of superiority, yet the traditional parameters of untouchability have never found in any part of Assam.

However, some writers have put forward opposite views regarding the social status of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam. Mallik (1982) has observed that untouchability is found in the rural area of Assam. In the towns and cities, the educated and economically enriched Scheduled Castes people leave their Scheduled Castes localities and move to new localities where people belonging to various castes live side by side. Mallik has concluded that as a matter of fact deprivation of rights since centuries made Scheduled Castes people slaves and killed their self-respect. Since childhood they learn only to obey and not to question and command and this resulted in their utter poverty and exploitation.

Sharmah Thakur (2003) has stated that untouchability it is still surviving in the Hindu society as a social stigma which is traditionally attached to the Scheduled Castes population and it is associated to the nature of jobs done by them. With the spread of education, it is reduced to a significant extent in Assam.

Raju (1998) has observed that in Assam valley, the problem of untouchability did not exist at all and there are practically no untouchables worth the name.

Trivedi (1977) in his book points out that Scheduled Castes women and men have had to perform certain social duties towards the high castes which have been considered defiling. This impure moments are birth, initiation (to attain the status of a full grown member of society), puberty, menstruation, marriage, co-habitation and death. At the time of marriage, the low caste persons are called upon to perform certain menial services of carrying and disposing of the wastes.

Bania (1995) conducted a study about depressed classes. In that study he refers to the relationship between master and servant in case of seven castes. According to him the master-servant relationship has not facilitated occupational mobility.

### **On Marital Status**

Marital Status of a community represents their sex ratio, marriage system, adoption of family planning measures, etc.

Medhi (2001) has said that marriage among the Schedule Castes people does not involve much complexity; it is rather a matter of convenience for both the parties. They have Gotra divisions and avoid marriage relation within the Gotra and they also practice child and widow marriage.

Sen (1999) states that the traditional pattern of social interaction between the Scheduled Castes and the Castes Hindus reflects the idea of social distance. At present inter caste marriage between Schedule Castes and non Scheduled Castes Hindus develops.

Bezbarua (1999) has said that the percentage of inter-caste marriage among the landless people is more as compared to others. In a study he has found that only 2.76% Kaibarta people support inter-caste marriage.

### **On Health Status**

Health is one of the principal assets of every human being. Health and diseases are indispensably related to bio-cultural spectrum of a community in a particular environment. In the traditional societies, these traits are deeply rooted in socio-economic matrix.

Mahanta (1999) has argued that the common diseases of the scheduled castes people are Dysentery, Malaria, Headache, etc. Diseases like AIDS, Colour blindness, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis, Tetanus are not familiar to the people, though some educated people know these names. They use herbal medicine to cure such diseases. The Scheduled Caste people go to the doctor only at the time of emergency.

Medhi (2001) states that normally the Kaibarta villages are thickly populated. Most of the huts are made of thatch, bamboo and mud. During the rainy season the villagers suffer from various diseases. The village quack is an integral part of "health culture" of the Scheduled Castes people.

Srivastava (2003) states that 19% of the Scheduled Caste population of India are depriving themselves of health care and nutrition. For Assam, it is 45%. Here the antenatal care for S.C. women is only 15.78%. Most of them go for unsafe delivery.

### **On Religious Life**

Neog (1994) states that after the spread of Vaishnavism among the Kaibartas, a large section of them become the follower of it. These appears a mixed group, followers of Vaishnavism and Saktism simultaneously. This mixed group is about 22.55% of the total Kaibartas and they worship lots of Gods and Goddesses.

Sen (1990) states that the Kaibarta people believe that men, evil spirits and deities can cast diseases to human beings. The evil spirit such as Bira, Ghosts, Pisas are also harmful for them and they believe that if the people fail to satisfy them, they become furious and caste

epidemics to the people. For example, Ai Bhagawati, the Goddess of pox, spread pox among them.

### **On Demographic Aspects**

Demographic behavior of a community includes their fertility and mortality status, attitude towards additional children, knowledge and practice of family planning etc.

Regarding attitude towards additional children, Roy and Paswan (1995) in their study in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh have observed that the percentage of Scheduled Castes women desiring more children is slightly higher than that of other women.

Different studies have found that the knowledge and practice of family planning is lower among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people. A survey conducted by International Institute of Population Science, Mumbai and Population Research Centre, Baroda in 1983 in two districts of rural Gujrat has revealed that family planning practice is low among the Scheduled Castes in comparison to the other caste groups.

Roy and Paswan (1995) in their study in Uttar Pradesh have found that 25.3% of the total Scheduled Castes women had knowledge about all the modern methods while 39.1% of other women groups knew about all the modern methods.

Bezbarua (1999) has found in one of his study that fertility and mortality among the Kaibarta people of Assam is high.

### **On Political Status**

Choudhury and Naqvi (2006) in their book “Comment on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1989” have observed that the Government of Assam passed an Act, viz. The Assam SC/ ST Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts Act, 1978 and framed rules there under in 1983 to ensure reservation of SC/ ST (7%) in appointment to services under the state Government and public bodies. The state Government has also issued instruction from time to time for proper implementation of the Act and to ensure fulfillment of the backlog in regard of appointment of SC and ST. But it is matter of regret that this Act is not yet implemented vigorously.

Das (1986) in his study has indicated that Scheduled Castes people of Assam are accorded very low social status and they are termed as untouchables and named as Panchama. They have always been economically depressed, politically suppressed and debarred from

participation in the collective activities of the village and towns where they live. They are debarred from enjoying many public facilities. Although untouchability is now illegal, the majority of the Scheduled Castes people living in rural areas have not undergone any material change.

Yadav (2000) clearly mentions that the biggest problem for the Scheduled Castes communities today is that there is no such leader like Ambedkar who can guide the destiny of the Scheduled Castes and fight for them. Today's so called leaders of Scheduled Castes are self-centred, incompetent and are least concerned with the well-being of the Scheduled Castes. They are bonded leader of their political parties.

Dev and Lahiri (1984) have stated that among the sixteen Scheduled Castes communities of Assam, Kaibarta community is politically more articulate because of their numerical strength. The process of political mobilization of the Kaibartas had started much earlier because of their organizational activities such as All Assam Kaibarta Sanmilion, All Assam Kaibarta Mahila Sanmilion etc.

### **On Economic Status**

Das (1992) has stated that the economic condition of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam is very miserable. She points out the role of the middlemen who exploit the Scheduled Castes people in various ways as one of the major cause of low income.

Sharma Thakur (1992) states that employment is admittedly a strong power to boost up the socio-economic condition of a community. The Scheduled Castes community is, however, in this respect in a bad shape. Unemployment at the moment is chronic problem of this community as a whole and this weaker section people are worst victims.

It is true that economic growth socio-economic transformation though at a slow pace .Selvanathan (1989) in his study points out that the participation of the Scheduled Castes people in such processes is limited. The degree to which this is due to their social handicaps on the one hand or to their economic backwardness on the other is a matter of controversy. He has also noted that the social stigma of untouchability their age old subjugation and the value pattern inculcated thereby mitigate against the improvement of their economic position.

### **On Others Aspects of Scheduled Castes**

Bulletin of Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes (2000) gives a detailed account of the various developmental schemes implemented by the Directorate of Welfare of SC, Assam for upliftment of SC people. The welfare schemes implemented by this

Directorate for welfare of SC are as follows— (1) Self-help scheme for self-employment of unemployed SC Youths. (2) Self-help for SC women. (3) Family oriented income generation scheme. (4) Provisions for soft loan as seed/ Margin money under NSFDC. (5) Share capital contribution to the ASDC for SC. (6) Prevention of Atrocities Act. (7) Coaching and Allied Scheme. As per directive of the government, the ASDC for SC Ltd. is implementing the schemes like (8) National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation loan scheme. (9) National Safai Karmacharies Finance and Development Scheme. (10) National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers and their Dependents Scheme for the benefit of the poor Scheduled Castes people of the state living below the poverty line and for the Scavengers/ Safai Karmacharies.

Muthalagu, (2007) has attempted to throw some light on the process of development by examining the various schemes. He indicates that a number of development programmes like IRDP, TRYSEM, JRY, NRY, IAY, PMGY, SGSY, SGRY, etc. are in operation for the upliftment of the poor people including the SCs. According to him, the benefits derived from the above welfare schemes are only nominal and not adequate. The poor do not gain much directly from these programmes due to bribery, political influence in the allocation of fund, diffused focus and priorities, poor execution, shortage of rural infrastructure and social inequality. These programmes are not able to eradicate poverty completely and improve life condition of poor people due to limited role of government and NGOs in the execution of anti-poverty programmes.

Das (1995) makes an attempt to study the environmental awareness among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam. According to him, the Scheduled Castes people of Assam appears to have learnt to accept and live within the environmental hazards. It would naturally be a folly to expect among the Scheduled Castes people about modern values like environmental consciousness, hygienic and pollution free living, maintenance of eco-balance, preservation of natural resources, population limitation etc. According to him, nobody bothers about environmental problems.

Mali (1995) in his article tries to throw some light on the entrepreneurial activity of SC youths. According to him, the number of entrepreneurs emerging from the Scheduled Castes community is negligible as compared to other castes. The reason is that they do not have experience of occupations other than their own caste occupations. The general tendency among them is to search for wage employment opportunities and not for self-employment. They never influenced by their own family and society for entrepreneurial activity.

Bhattacharya (2000) points out that the Scheduled Castes people of Assam are culturally backward. They preserve the traditional religious belief, primitive food and drinking habit, customary dress and ornaments, folk dance, music and instruments and other items of day to day life. They are always neglected by the upper caste Hindu like Brahmin and Kalita. According to him, cultural backwardness is also responsible for their poverty and misery.

Alte (1992) in his book expresses the view that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are weakest among the weaker sections of the society. They are not only socially oppressed, but they are deprived of assets of all kinds. The economic status of these communities is very pitiable. These communities characterized by below the poverty line economic status. Poor assets ownership generally depending on agricultural labour, subsistence farming, share-cropping, leather works and other type of low income occupations

Sharma Thakur (1985) in his study has selected two Kaibarta villages of Jorhat district of upper Assam and studied diverse aspects of the villages. He divided the population into three categories namely Scheduled Castes, backward castes and advanced caste. A comparison is made between the Scheduled Castes (Kaibartas) and other castes and difference between them that has been noted. According to him the profession of Kaibartas is considered as derogatory. The traditional occupation has dual handicap, viz. social disability and economic deprivation.

## CHAPTER – III

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SCHEDULED CASTES PEOPLE IN THE STATE OF ASSAM AND THE DISTRICT OF DHUBRI AND OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN OF SCHEDULED CASTES PEOPLE

#### 3. 1. 0. State Profile

According to the Census of India 2011, the population of Assam stands at 3,12,05,576, of which 1,59,39,443 are males and 1,52,66,133 are females. The decadal growth of the State's population works out at 17.07 percent during the decade 2001-2011 as against 17.68 percent for the country as a whole. The density of the population of Assam has gone up to 398 in 2011 which was 340 in 2001 Census. The corresponding all India figure was 382 as per Census, 2011. The number of Census house used as residence houses is 63,52,226 for population size of 3,12,05,576 in the State as per Census, 2011.

**Table: 3. 1**  
**Population Trend in Assam and India**

Year	Population (in lakh)		Percentage Decadal Variation		Density (Person per Sq.Km.)	
	ASSAM	INDIA	ASSAM	INDIA	ASSAM	INDIA
1901	33	2384	–	–	42	77
1911	38	2521	17.0	5.8	49	82
1921	46	2513	20.5	0.3	59	81
1931	56	2789	19.9	11.0	71	90
1941	67	3186	20.4	14.2	85	103
1951	80	3611	19.9	13.3	102	117
1961	108	4392	35.0	21.5	138	142
1971	146	5481	35.0	24.8	186	177

1981	*180	6833	*23.4	24.7	*230	230
1991	224	8463	24.2	23.9	286	267
2001	266	10270	18.9	21.5	340	325
2011	312	12106	17.1	17.7	398	368

\*Interpolated

Source: Census of India 2011.

District-wise Demographic Profile of Assam is shown in the following Table: 3. 2

**Table: 3. 2**

**District-wise Demographic Profile of Assam, 2011 Census**

Sl No	District	Area in Sq. Km.	Population	Rural Population	Urban Population	Population Density per Sq.Km.
1	Dhubri	2176	1949258	1745557	203701	896
2	Bongaigaon	1093	738804	628994	109810	676
3	Kokrajhar	3296	887142	832201	54941	269
4	Chirang	1923	482162	446825	35337	251
5	Baksa	2454	950075	937833	12242	387
6	Goalpara	1824	1008183	870121	138062	553
7	Barpeta	2282	1693622	1546269	147353	742
8	Nalbari	1052	771639	688909	82703	733

9	Kamrup(M)	955	1253938	216927	1037011	1313
10	Kamrup(R)	3105	1517542	1375148	142394	489
11	Darrang	1585	928500	873006	55494	586
12	Udalguri	2012	831668	794094	37574	413
13	Sonitpur	5204	1924110	1750265	173845	370
14	Lakhimpur	2277	1042137	950804	91333	458
15	Dhemaji	3237	686133	637848	48285	212
16	Morigaon	1551	957423	884125	73298	617
17	Nagoan	3973	2823768	2454234	369534	711
18	Golaghat	3502	1066888	969152	97736	305
19	Jorhat	2851	1092256	871722	220534	383
20	Sivasagar	2668	1151050	1040954	110096	431
21	Dibrugarh	3381	1326335	1082605	243730	392
22	Tinsukia	3790	1327929	1063186	264743	350
23	Karbi- Anglong	10434	956313	843347	112966	92
24	Dima Hasao	4888	214102	151613	62489	44
25	Karimganj	1809	1228686	1118986	109700	679

26	Hailakandi	1327	659296	611156	48140	497
27	Cachar	3786	1736617	1421153	315464	459
	ASSAM	78438	31205576	26807034	4398542	389

Source: Census of India, 2011.

### 3. 1. 1. Scheduled Castes Population in Assam

As per 2011 census, the total Scheduled Castes population in Assam is 22,31,321 persons, which is 7.15 percent of the total population of the state. Out of them 11,45,314 persons are male population and 10,86,007 persons are females population. The highest concentration is found in Nowgaon district— 2,66,350 (Males—1,36,473; Females—1,29,877) persons followed by Cachar district— 2,64,897 (Males— 1,36,051; Females — 1,28,846) persons. Dima-Hasao district shows the lowest concentration with 4,337 persons while males are 2,340 persons and females are 1,997 persons. District wise Scheduled Castes population in Assam is shown in the following Table: 3. 3

**Table: 3.3**  
**District-wise Scheduled Castes Population in Assam**

District	Population	Scheduled Castes			Percentage of SC Population to the total population
		Person	Male	Female	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Dhubri	1949258	70395	36359	34036	3.61
Kokrajhar	887142	29570	15386	14184	3.33
Bongaigaon	738804	82784	42513	40271	11.20
Goalpara	1008183	45094	22999	22095	4.47
Barpeta	1693622	95320	49165	46155	5.62
Nalbari	771639	60216	30654	29562	7.80
Kamrup (M)	1253938	101789	52106	49683	8.11
Kamrup (R)	1517542	107827	55237	52590	7.10
Darrang	928500	40260	20566	19694	4.33
Sonitpur	1924110	109130	55817	53313	5.67
Lakhimpur	1042137	81840	41689	40151	7.85
Dhemaji	686133	44225	23006	21219	6.44
Morigaon	957423	117841	60194	57647	12.30
Nagaon	2823768	266350	136473	129877	9.43
Golaghat	1066888	62298	31807	30491	5.83
Jorhat	1092256	88665	45194	43471	8.11
Sivasagar	1151050	42347	21568	20779	3.67
Dibrugarh	1326335	58876	30517	28359	4.43
Tinsukia	1327929	37688	19443	18245	2.83
Karbi-Anglong	956313	44961	23436	21525	4.70
Dima Hasao	214102	4337	2340	1997	2.02
Karimganj	1228686	157890	81384	76506	12.85
Hailakandi	659296	70659	36369	34290	10.71
Cachar	1736617	264897	136051	128846	15.25
Assam	31205576	2231321	1145314	1086007	7.15

Source: Population census, 2011.

**Table: 3. 4**  
**Caste-wise Distribution of Scheduled Caste Population in Assam**

Name of the Caste	Population of each Caste	Percentage of total SC Population
1. Bansphore	18,312	1.1
2. Mali,Bhuimali	58,334	3.5
3. Brittial-Bania	49,367	3.0
4 .Dhupi	54,028	3.3
5. Dugla	6,502	0.4
6. Hira	49,336	3.0
7. Jal-keot	30,663	1.9
8. Jhalo-Malo	68,829	4.2
9. Kaibarta	5,43,356	32.7
10. Lalbegi	782	0.05
11. Mahara	2,438	0.1
12. Methor	15,025	0.9
13. Muchi	67,187	4.0
14. Namasudra	5,05,384	30.4
15. Patni	1,36,661	8.2
16. Sutradhar	53,208	3.2
Total	16,59,412	100.00

\*Census Report 2001, Assam, Part – VIII (i), Special Table for SCs.

Note: Population census, 2011 is silent about the caste-wise distribution of Scheduled Castes people of Assam.

### 3. 1. 2. Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Scheduled Castes of Assam

The Scheduled Caste population of Assam is characterized by having (a) un-economic land holding, (b) small capital input, (c) chronic under employment, (d) low productivity and (e) perpetual indebtednesses etc.

The Scheduled Castes have been at the lowest level of the Hindu social caste hierarchy based on birth. The social system ascribed occupations to this group which were not only low in social ordering but were also characterized by very low productivity. With ascription on the basis of birth, this group remained at the lowest end of the economic hierarchy as well. While the intensity of caste based discriminatory social practices varied in different parts of the country and was partially moderated with the penetration of impersonal market forces in varied degrees, this group remained on the fringe of traditional village society and rural economy. SC group has continued practicing lowly occupations with little exposure to educational opportunities. The major socio-economic parameters of the Scheduled Castes population with those of the general population of Assam are shown in Table: 3.5

**Table: 3. 5**

#### **Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Scheduled Castes of Assam**

Characteristics	General Population	Scheduled Caste population
1. Working population	35.8%	29.36%
2. Cultivator	52.65%	40.4%
3. Per-capita Cultivable land	1.31 hector	47.22%
4. Consumption of Electricity	112 kilowatt per annum	0.76 hectare
5. Supply of Entrepreneur	26.7%	3.9%
6. Pipe water supply	39%	7.79%
7. Poverty level	36.09%	65.9%
8. Population per Hospital bed	166	700
9. Indebtedness	39%	70%

Sources:-1. Census Report, 2001, (Assam) part – III, Special Table for SCs.

2. Annual Administrative Report, Directorate of Welfare for Scheduled Castes, Guwahati, Assam, 2002.

### 3. 1. 3. Community-wise Traditional Occupational Pattern of Scheduled Castes People of Assam

Das (1986), Hazarika (1995) and Sharma Thakur (1992) have broadly discussed about the traditional occupational pattern of Scheduled Castes people different community of Assam.

It is commonly felt that the Scheduled Castes population carry out their own specific profession or occupation, but in reality under the existing conditions they are primarily agricultural labourers and their specific occupations may be considered as subsidiary ones. Population Census, 2011 reveals that out of total population of 3,12,05,576 in the State, 11969690 are total workers. Out of the total 11969690 workers in Assam, 3138554 are Cultivators (26 percent), 903294 are Agricultural labourers (7.5 percent), 242071 are engaged in Household Industries (2.0 percent) and 4403204 are Other Workers (36.8 percent)

*Kaibarta:* The Kaibartas are the major Scheduled Caste group in Assam having total population 5,43,356 lakhs (32.7 percent) as per 2001 census. The dictionary meaning of the word KAIBARTA is to live from the products of water as KOI means ON water and BRIT means subsist or live. Their main traditional occupation is fishing and cultivation. But they do not possess agricultural land as they were depending on water based fishing industry, and did not get any opportunity to get allotted agricultural land for them neither during Ahom period nor during the British period. Nowadays, the KAIBARTA'S do not have any right over river *Beels*, *Khals* and even over *Doba's* also, as these are nowadays auctioned by the government and panchayats.

*Namasudra:* The Namasudras are the origins of Uttar Pradesh. On different occasions they migrated to different places of India. A branch of this community came to Assam and some of them converted to Christianity to save them from inhuman treatment from caste Hindus. The Namasudra population as per 2001 census stood at 5,05,384 which is 30.4 percent of the total Scheduled Caste population in Assam. The Namasudra people are found in all over of Assam. Their occupation is boating and cultivation. They have a separate class of Brahmins as their priest.

In Bengal during the period of King Gopal and other Kings of his dynasty and Raja Sitaram they were economically sound. They belonged to the aristocratic community in culture and dignity and magnitude of their livelihood was high. But afterwards due to political changes and violence of untouchability incited causing the reign of Raja Ballov Sen, who was a strong supporter of Brahmins and caste distinction, forced the Namasudras to accept the inhuman rules. Thus they were placed in the lowest class of Hindu society. Being disgusted by

such treatment a large number of Namasudras migrated to Assam and settled in Dhubri, Goalpara and Cachar districts.

*Bania:* The word BANIA implies tradesman. The BANIAS are Assamese Jewellers. In the British period they all primarily engaged themselves in making Gold ornaments and jewellery was their primary occupation. But in course of time as result of the Gold Control Act, they became handicapped and had to abandon their traditional occupation, those who had their parental land changed their occupation to agriculture. But their land holdings were small and became marginal farmers and landless labourers. Those who did not own land or did not possess cultivable land became poorer day by day.

The Bania people are found in all the districts in Assam, except Cachar district. As per 2001 census the Bania population are 49,367 which is 3.0 percent of the total Scheduled Caste population of Assam. They live in most cases in clusters. Unlike other Scheduled Castes the Banias are not backward in respect of education.

*Hira:* The Hira population as per 2001 census stood at 49,336 which is 3.0 percent of the total Scheduled Caste population in Assam. They are spread throughout Assam. Their traditional occupation is to make earthen pots. The members of this community used to exchange their pots for paddy in the villages specially in harvest season, they used to carry a full load of pots upstream the small rivers to villages and exchanged these pots for paddy and return with a full boat load of paddy which in most cases was more than the actual requirement of the family. Now this barter system is almost dead.

The Hiras cannot take to cultivation as only a few percentage of them have cultivable lands. For want of finance they cannot take to other business also. Not even 5 percent of the population of Hira community owns cultivable land. Due to their poor economic condition, majority of them cannot afford to educate their children and within teens most of them leave school to help their parents in their profession.

*Patni:* Patnis who were known as PATAUNI, NADIALS and (Adi) Mahishya had different trades like boating, fishing, basket making trading and cultivation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Patni and Kaibarta originally belonged to the same stock. They have now switched over to cultivation while fishing is their secondary occupation. At present patni as a caste is found only in Karimganj and Cachar districts of Assam. Patnis are all making endeavor to lift themselves up socially and economically. Out of the total Scheduled Caste population in Assam, Patni community have got 1,36,661 which accounts for 8.2 percent of the Scheduled Caste population in Assam as per 2001 census. Few families have come up economically, but majority are poverty stricken.

*Sutradhar:* The Sutradhar is the carpenter caste of Cachar district, Goalpara and Dhubri district. The people of the caste occupy a very low position in the society. They have been degraded because legend says that once they failed to supply fuels to the Brahmins at the time of their devotion. Ganaks perform as their priest. Their touched water is not in use amongst the caste Hindu. The Sutradhar population as per 2001 census stood at 53,208 which is 3.2 percent of the total Scheduled Caste population in Assam.

*Malo:* The Malos are said by Mr. Risley to be Dravidian boating and fishing caste, and Dr. Wise, whom he quotes, was of opinion that the Malos with the Kaibatas, are representatives of the pre-historic dwellers in the Gangatic delta. The Malos are the inhabitants of Cachar district of Assam. A few families also living in Goalpara and Dhubri districts of Assam. Out of the total Scheduled Caste population in Assam, Malo community have got 68,829 which accounts for 4.2 percent of the Scheduled Caste population in Assam as per 2001 census.

*Dhupi or Dhobi or Dhoba:* They are not original inhabitants of Assam. In Assam they have come from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. They are not the indigenous people of Assam and a great controversy arose in 1935 on the issue of their inclusion in the list of Scheduled Caste in Assam. Mr. Risley said these Dhobi and Dhoba to be of two distinct castes. Dhoba being the washerman from Bengal and Orissa and the Dhobi of Bihar. They follow the cloths washing occupation from their forefathers. The Muslim washerman is called usually Dhobi in Assam, while the term Dhoba is generally applied to the Hindu washerman. As per 2001 census report the Dhobi population strength in Assam stood at 54,028 which is 3.3 percent of the total Scheduled Castes in Assam.

*Mahara:* In the census of 1961 Vol.III Assam, PartV-A we find that Maharas are chiefly employed as Zamindars, peons, Mandals etc. their traditional occupation is Palki bearing. The legend is that the Maharas are the decendents of palki bearers engaged by the Zamindars in Bengal. This castes is peculiar to Cachar district only. Before participation they were seen only in Sylhet, but after participation of the country few families migrated to Cachar district. They are from the indigenous group of Bengal and not of Assam. Out of the total Scheduled Caste population in Assam, Mahara community have got 2,438 which accounts for 0.1 percent of the Scheduled Caste population in Assam as per 2001 census.

*Dholis or Dholas:* The Dholis or Dholas as they aer called drummers. They are immigrants from Bengal and settled in Cachar district of Assam. Some of them are cultivators and rearer of animals. This caste is said to be very degraded one. They have no Brahmin. Its priests are chosen from amongst the members of the caste itself. . As per 2001 census report

the Dholis population strength in Assam stood at 6,502 which is 0.4 percent of the total Scheduled Castes in Assam.

*Muchi:* The Muchi is a leather working class and they are mainly found in Cachar district of Assam. They are however available in other districts of Assam also. Where however they are immigrants from Bihar and Orissa. Muchi is a cobbler and leather dresser. They are an offshoot of the Chamar caste. Out of the total Scheduled Caste population in Assam, Muchi community have got 67,187 which accounts for 4.0 percent of the Scheduled Caste population in Assam as per 2001 census.

*Bhangi, Bansfor, Lalbegi:* They are scavengers from outside Assam. They are all in the employment of the municipalities and town committees. The Lalbegi is half Hindu and half Muslim in his custom and belief and is supposed to have come originally from Upper India. In Assam, sweepers and scavengers mostly come from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. All of them live in quarters allotted to them by the Municipal Boards and Municipal Corporation. As per 2001 census report the population of Bhangi community in Assam stood at 18,312 which is 1.1 percent of the total Scheduled Castes in Assam.

*Bhuimali or Mali:* The main occupation of Bhuimali or Mali now is gardening of flowers to sell in the temples and cultivation. Though they are present in Surama Valley, but a section of them settled near various Temples and other places of Assam. Their main occupation now is agriculture. Out of the total Scheduled Caste population in Assam, Bhuimali or Mali community have got 58,334 which accounts for 3.5 percent of the Scheduled Caste population in Assam as per 2001 census.

*Jal- Keot or Jalla-Keot:* Selling of fish was confined to the Kaibartas and Jal-keot in Assam and Surama Valley. But the Jal-Keot improved their relative position in the social hierarchy. Majority of them have taken to agriculture as a means of livelihood and also as a device of upgrading their position in society. As per 2001 census report the population of Jal-Keot or Jalla-Keot community in Assam stood at 30,663 which is 1.9 percent of the total Scheduled Castes in Assam.

### **3. 1. 4. Existing Occupational Pattern of Scheduled Castes People of Assam**

Datta Roy, Mazhari, Passah and Pandey (2000) and Hazarika have broadly discussed about the existing occupational pattern of Scheduled Castes people of Assam.

#### **(A) Agriculture**

A number of Scheduled Castes communities of Assam pursue agriculture as their major occupation. In this district, it appears that not more than 10 of the 16 Scheduled Castes communities are engaged in agriculture. They engage themselves in cultivation during the cultivation season keeping other months in other occupations. Bania (1995:21) opines that “many of these people are landless— their holdings are limited to 5 bighas per family— the production of which is not sufficient for maintenance of a family. They are also financially extremely weak. They subsidize their maintenance expenditure out of petty fish business”. The Scheduled Castes who fall in this category are: Jalkeot, Kaibarta or Jalia, Namasudra, Patni and Sutradhar. It is on record that the Government of Assam one decided and promised to allot 40 bighas of land to some of the Scheduled Castes for residential purpose at Guwahati. But it was not materialized so far due to some technical reasons (Bania 1995:21). It is a fact that the production from the limited cultivable land of 5 bighas is not at all sufficient for the Scheduled Castes people to maintain the family. So many of them take to Marakia system of cultivation on half to half harvest share. But this system is also gradually disappearing from the society as the land holders are themselves cultivating their land with the help of improved variety of seeds, fertilizer and loan for plough etc. from the Agriculture Department.

#### **(B) Fishery**

Next to agriculture, fishing is an important occupation of most of the indigenous Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district. It is practiced mostly by Kaibartha, Jalia, Namasudra and Jhalo-Malo. They are taking fish catching as their livelihood from ancient time. They catch different fishes in various rivers, beels, community tanks, ponds etc. and carrying it to the nearer market for sale. Earlier, fish catching and selling was exclusively done by the above mentioned communities only. But now, the fishermen from other communities mainly Muslim have taken over this age old trade from the indigenous fishermen communities of Assam. Moreover, some affluent persons from the fishermen communities began to patronize this trade. Sharma Thakur (1995:95) states that “even those poor Kaibartas who are clinging to this traditional business in spite of the odds, are suffering from the 60:40 syndrome, i.e. a sizeable share of the catch has to be given to the Mahajans who provide the

capital. The Mahajan lends money to the fishermen on that for small catches, the fishermen have to pay 40 percent to the Mahajans and for the bigger catches their percentage is 60. The poor fishermen have no alternative but to agree to the terms of the Mahajans. It is also observed that the fishing sources like rivers, beels etc. are not accessible to the poor fishermen as the same are auctioned to the big traders or Mahajans who generally prefer the fishermen of other areas than to the local ones. Consequently, the local fishermen are suffering from the economic hardship.

It is noteworthy to mention here that the local fishermen are exploited by the middle men (dalals). For improving the economic status of the fishermen communities, the Assam Government has taken up a number of development schemes, like Fishery Development Corporation, Fish Farming Development Agencies and Fishery Co-operative Societies. Government of Assam has also established a Fishery College at Raha, in Nowgaon district for upgrading and to train the unemployed fishermen and enthusiastic young boys in this profession. In spite of all these attempts, the fishermen are not benefited out of it. They are still in the poverty line.

#### **(C) Goldsmith and Silversmith**

One more traditional occupation of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district is goldsmith and silversmith. It was the chief occupation of the Bania/ Brital Bania since time immemorial. It is on record that this noble profession was encouraged by the Ahom kings and the Banias were allowed to access to the inner apartment of the Ahom kings and the queens (Bania 1995:25). The Banias are not only goldsmith but they are expert in silversmith also. Now, this profession has taken up by other castes groups. Before the influx of outsiders on this trade, the Banias were the main source of supply of gold and silver ornaments to the people of Assam. But at present, the Banias have almost left this profession.

#### **(D) Pottery Industry**

Another saddest occupation of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district is the Pottery Industry. This occupation is confined to the Hiras only. They are making earthen pots for cooking and other use for the common people. The members of this community used to exchange their pots for paddy in the villages specially in harvest season, they used to carry a full load of pots upstream the small rivers to villages and exchanged these pots for paddy and return with a full boat load of paddy which in most cases was more than the actual requirement of the family. Now this barter system is almost dead.

They have been carrying this occupation for their livelihood since the past. No alternative source of income was obtained by them as they got a good earning from this occupation. Earlier, the earthen pots which they produced for cooking and other use for the common people, have been replaced now by the modern metallic utensils and equipments available in the market.

In the past, the Hiras used to exchange their products in terms of food and others in the barter system. As they were happy with the traditional occupation, they did not feel for any other occupation other than the Pottery Industry. They were even not engaged in cultivation and its related occupation in the past. As such, the Hiras have neither cultivable land nor any other base for engagement. But now the Hiras are facing some problems in collecting the raw materials popularly known as “Hira Clay”. This clay is found in some specific areas of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgaon districts. Since British period the Hiras used to collect the “Hira Clay” from the specified clay fields or bathans at free of cost without any obstruction. Now, there has been a serious problem to the Hiras to collect the clay from the bathans as most of the clay areas have been occupied by some occupants who obstruct the potters to collect the clay. Due to non-availability of the “Hira Clay” the Pottery Industry has become almost dead. Besides this, there are some other problems of the Hiras like housing, education and unemployment. By and large, the Hiras live below the poverty line.

#### **(E) On Leather Work**

In Assam, a section of Scheduled Castes people who are known as Cobbler and leather dresser are completely living on leather-work. They are Muchis / Rishis who are non-indigenous Scheduled Castes. They are mostly from Bihar and engage themselves in leather-work. They move from place to place and do their daily business on leather-made things like shoe repairing and manufacturing at certain convenient places of urban and semi-urban areas. They do not possess any permanent plot of land for residential purposes. They live in the hired residential houses.

#### **(F) Terracotta**

At present, Terracotta is a profitable profession of Scheduled Caste people of Dhubri district of Assam. This is the traditional occupation of Malis. They are manufacturing various kinds of flower vases, earthen pots, vessels, various kinds of show pieces like tiger, lion, horse, camel, bull ox, cat, fish, mouse etc. They are also manufacturing different kinds of toys

like king, queen, soldier etc. which expresses the olden heritage of our country. Again, they are manufacturing various Deities throughout the year and earning huge amount of money.

### **(G) Other Occupations**

#### **(i) Cleaning**

In Assam, there are another group of Scheduled Castes people who are by profession cleaners. They are Scavengers and sweepers from outside Assam mostly come from Bihar. They are working in various offices of the Government both Central and State, Govt. and private Hospitals, Railways, Municipal Bodies and Municipal Corporation. All of them live to quarters allotted to them by the Municipal Boards and Corporation. Here, there are another cleaner groups and they are Dhobis or Dhobas. The Dhobis (Washermen) mainly earn their income by washing cloths of others.

#### **(ii) Government Service**

In Assam, a minimum portion of the Scheduled Castes people are in state government service and as well as in central government service. Most of the service holders belong to grade- III and grade-IV categories. They are servicing in various schools, colleges, offices, railways and defense department and a few sections in multinational companies outside the district. The Scheduled Castes people of Assam are enjoying reservation quota in state government service as well as in central government service.

#### **(iii) Domestic Servant**

From empirical study it is seen that the poor Scheduled Castes people keep their young boys and girls as domestic servant in the house of rich non-Scheduled Castes people on monthly wage basis. This tendency is more among the girls as compared to boys. They are working in a minimum wage, i.e. rupees five hundred to rupees seven or eight hundred per month.

#### **(iv) Daily Wage Worker**

From empirical study it is also seen that the majority of the Scheduled Castes people (more than 60 percent) are working as daily wage workers. They are non-agriculturists group and have no scope for acquiring any land for agriculture. They are working in the house of non-Scheduled Castes people and doing various activities with minimum wage Rs. 100 to 200 per day. Some of them are working in various cloth stores, glossary shops, hotels, restaurant as sale man. Some of them are taking other occupations such as vegetables sellers, tailors,

drivers, porters, rajmistri and small businessman and so on. A few sections of them are the employees of municipal bodies of different towns under sub-division.

### 3. 1. 5. Occupational Distribution of the Sample Populations

By occupation, the total population of the area can be divided into workers and non-workers. The workers are those who participate in the economic activities and the non-workers constitute the dependent population of the society. Greater is the number of non-worker population, higher is the dependency ratio. The occupation of the sample populations are divided categories into 9 categories including the one who has multiple occupations. These are: service, business, professional, skilled labour, unskilled labour, fishing, cultivator, potter and multiple occupations.

Table: 3. 6 shows the occupational distribution of the sample populations.

**Table: 3. 6**  
**Occupational Distribution of the Sample Populations**

Sl No	Nature of Work	Number of Households	Percentage
1	Service	12	5.00
2	Business	31	12.92
3	Professional	29	12.08
4	Skilled Labour	21	8.75
5	Unskilled Labour	68	28.33
6	Fishing	19	7.92
7	Cultivator	22	9.17
8	Potter	14	5.83
9	Multiple occupation	24	10.00
10	Total	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

It reveals that the majority of the households are unskilled labour (28.33 percent) followed by business (12.92 percent). The proportion of professional (electrician, bicycle maker, priest, drummer, etc) and skilled labour among the households are 12.08 percent and 8.75 percent respectively. The proportion of the service holders (5.00 percent) among the households is very low as compared to other occupations. The proportion of the multiple occupations (10.00 percent) among the households is slightly higher than the cultivator (9.17 percent). The proportion of the potters among the households is second lowest and it is 5.83 percent.

**Table: 3. 7**  
**Distribution of the Couples by the Nature of Occupation**

Nature of work	No. of Husbands	Percentage	No. of Wives	Percentage
Service	9	3.75	3	1.25
Business	30	12.50	1	0.42
Professional	28	11.67	11	4.58
Skilled Labour	21	8.75	7	2.92
Unskilled Labour	72	30.00	18	7.50
Fishing	19	7.92	—	—
Cultivator	26	10.83	—	—
Potter	10	4.17	6	2.50
Multiple occupation	23	9.58	9	3.75
Unemployed	2	0.83	185	77.08
Total	240	100.00	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

\*In case of the husbands who are dead, their occupation at the time of death is taken for consideration.

It reveals that the majority of the husbands (30.00 percent) are unskilled labour and wives (77.08 percent) are engaged in household activities. The proportion of service holders among the husbands (3.75 percent) is higher than the wives (1.25 percent). Women's participation in business (0.425 percent) is very negligible as compared to the husbands (12.50 percent). The proportion of cultivator among the husbands is 10.83 percent and unskilled labour is 30 percent. The proportion of multiple occupation among the husbands is 9.58 percent whereas it is 3.75 percent in case of wives.

### Occupational Status

The determination of occupational status of the sample population is problematic because a large section of the population in these areas does not perform a single specialized work. People often do more than one work and keep on moving in and out of agriculture and other non-skilled jobs. For example, in these areas a large number of people working in the unorganized sectors in urban areas return to their home (Villages) to participate in sowing and harvesting operations along with other members of their families. This is particularly true of the construction labour, which temporarily migrates to cities when it is free from farm operations. The lack of clear-cut specialization thus makes it difficult to classify population accurately on the occupational basis. However, the occupation of the sample population is divided into two types as temporary and permanent depending on the nature of the occupation.

**Table: 3. 8**  
**Occupational Status of Sample Population**

Sl No	Occupational Status		Number of Husband / Wife /Widow	Percentage
	1		2	3
1	Temporary Occupation	Husband	132	62.86
2		Wife	92	34.07
3		Widow	24	8.89
4	Permanent Occupation	Husband	78	37.14
5		Wife	24	8.89
6		Widow	2	0.74
7	House wife / unemployed		120	44.44

8	Unemployed widow	8	2.96
9	Total	480	200

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

\*In case of the husbands who are dead, their nature of occupation at the time of death is taken for consideration.

Table: 3. 8 shows that majority of the husbands (62.86 percent), wives (34.07 percent) and widows (8.89 percent) of sample population have followed temporary type of occupation. They have not got work every day throughout the month. Generally, they have got work 15 to 20 days in a month and in rest of the days they remain workless. They have done different types of works without any hesitation what they able to get. They generally belong to casual labour group.

In case of permanent occupation, only 37.14 percent husband and 8.89 percent wives are able to get the permanent type of work. They are generally servicemen, cultivators, businessmen and some other persons who are still following the traditional occupations. A very negligible portion of widows i.e. only 0.74 percent are in permanent occupation.

It is interesting to note that a huge portion of the respondents (44.44 percent) are house wives /unemployed. They do not go for work for various reasons in spite of their wide spread poverty. Majority of them have remained at home for looking after their children. Similarly, only 2.96 percent widows are unemployed. They are dependent either on their sons or on other members of their families.

### **Changing Occupation**

Datta Roy, Mazhari, Passah and Pandey (2000) and Hazarika (2002) state that a number of Scheduled Castes communities of Assam pursue agriculture as their major occupation. They engage themselves in cultivation during the cultivation season keeping other months in other occupations. The Scheduled Castes people who fall in this category are: jalkeot, Kaibartha, Namasudra, Patni and Sutradhar. But at present, majority of Scheduled Castes people belonging to these communities have left their agriculture occupation because they become poorer with the passing of time. As a result, they have sold their agricultural plot of land to other communities and shifted to other occupations for their survival.

Another traditional occupation of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam was carpentry. This occupation was practiced by Sutradhar only. But now, the Sutradhar have completely left this profession. People from other communities mostly Bengali have taken over this age-old profession from the Sutradhar. The finishing of the product of Bengali carpenters is far better than the finishing of the sutradhar carpenters. The sutradhar carpenters are unable to compete with the Bengali carpenters with their products in the market. As a result, they have given up their old trade and motivated to other professions. Similarly, the potters and fishermen have also shifted their age-old occupation to other occupations.

While conducting field survey it is found that many people have changed their previous occupations due to various reasons. The major reasons have been detected as financial crisis and uncertainty of profit in their previous occupations. The number of households by change of occupations is shown in table: 3. 9

**Table: 3. 9**  
**Number of Households by Change of Occupations**

Sl No	Occupational Status	Number of Households	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	Households who remain with the previous / fore-father's occupation	52	21.67
2	Households who changed the previous occupation	188	78.33
3	Total	240	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

By occupation, the total households of the area can be divided into two categories. One category is the households who remain with the previous i.e. fore-father's occupation. And another category is the households who changed the previous occupation. By collecting data on occupational distribution of households of sample area we have found that majority of the Scheduled Castes people changed their fore-father's occupation. Only 21.67 percent Scheduled Castes people are still following their traditional occupations and 78.33 percent Scheduled Castes people have changed their fore-father's occupations due to various reasons.

The households who changed their traditional occupation are more among the cultivators. The reason is that their cultivable lands are divided among their sons and daughters when they grow up and marry. Then the small plot of cultivable land is not sufficient for earning their yearly expenditure. Again, majority of them are compelled to sell their cultivable land at the time of their daughter's marriage. The fishermen have left their traditional occupation fish catching and selling due to uncertainty of profit in this profession and captured this profession by other castes groups. But some other Scheduled Castes groups whose sub-caste is Hira, Muchi, Mehtor, and Mali are still following their traditional occupations.

### **Religion**

The influence of religion extends to the very core of social behavior, attitude and values. Religion is characterized by a set of beliefs, attitudes and organization which may influence the fertility level of a couple. Several studies made in India and abroad reveal that a particular religion may be responsible for fertility differentials among the people. Religion which puts no barrier on the number of children and marriage is likely to have more children than the others

Most of the American studies have found higher fertility among the Catholic than the Protestant and Jews. Similarly, studies conducted in India have revealed that the Muslims have higher fertility than the Hindus. For example, Mukherjee & Singh (1961), Visaria (1994), Sadik (1966), Iyer (2002), Reddy (2005), Bhagat & Purjit (2005) have found higher fertility among the Muslims.

NFSH-2 (1998-99) has also found higher fertility of Muslims than the Hindus in Assam (TFR for the Hindus is 2.00 and 3.05 for the Muslims).

Davis (1951) has noted that the child-women ratio of the Muslims in undivided India was about 12%-14% higher than the Hindus. The difference in the number of children per women between Hindus and Muslims is exactly one child (3.1 for Hindus and 4.1 for the Muslims). In most of the states and union territories Muslim fertility is found to be higher than the Hindus.

Dharmaliagam & Morgan (2004) have observed that Muslim Hindu Fertility differential was pervasive across India in all major states with the exception of Madhya Pradesh. An average Muslim women is in general more likely to want to have another child for a given parity and she is less likely to use contraceptives given. Joseph (1977), Maribhat

and Frances Zaviour (2004) all agree that religion plays an important role in determining fertility of a population.

On the other hand, some studies have found that the role of religion in determining the fertility level is significant. Driver's (1963) study in Nagpur district found that the fertility of Hindu and Muslim is 4.5 and 4.6 percent respectively and the Mysore Population study (1961) has found that the fertility differentials among the Hindus and Muslims is negligible.

Vijayasri (2004) in a study made in Andhra Pradesh had noticed that the difference in fertility among the Hindus and Muslims is not significant. Fertility among the Hindus in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh is higher than the Hindus of Coastal Andhra Pradesh, similarly Muslims in Coastal Andhra Pradesh had a significantly lower fertility than among Muslims in Telangana.

According to some other researchers like Kulkarni, Alagarajan and Manoj (2005), it is not the religion but the regional factor that is responsible for fertility differential. If a population of a religion is concentrated in high fertility regions, they are likely to have high fertility on account of the regional rather than the religious factor. It is found that Christian population is relatively large in the south and the north-east, the Sikh population is relatively large in the north-west and the Muslim population is small in certain states such as Punjab, Odisha, Chattishgarh and Himachal Pradesh.

Some other scholars argue that since the minority status of a religious group can endanger the social and psychological securities of the group, they want to improve their socio-economic status by reducing family size. For example, Halli (1987) argues that the minority couples always want to limit their family size in an attempt to solidify their socio-economic position and so their fertility is lower than those of the majority of upper socio-economic levels and vice-versa. He has cited the example of American ethnic groups like Jews, higher status Blacks and the Japanese-Americans whose fertility is lower than those of the majority groups. Goldscheider and Uhlenberg (1969) have also supported this.

Cleland & Rodriguez (1993) suggest that in some countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and more recently Bangladesh – all Islamic countries by political orientation have witnessed decline in their total fertility rate. So the influence of religion on fertility depends on the support of other institution such as the state.

In our survey area, it is found that all the sample households are Hindus and no one is found whose religion is other than Hindu. Since the entire sample households are Hindus, no

analysis has been done to determine the influence of religion on fertility and mortality differentials among the Scheduled Castes which are indirectly related on the socio-economic condition and poverty among them.

### **Marital Status**

Marriage is a quasi-religious duty – a sacred institution. In Hinduism, marriage is not only permitted but praised. Vedas (c. 1500 – 1200 B. C.) condemn prolonged celibacy. Marriage is necessary for women at 16 and men at 18. Rig Veda recommends 10 children per couple. But Vedas do not advocate child or early marriages. In India, the marriage age practically is raised to 18 for girls and 21 for boys. Among all communities, a superstition exists that a large family is an auspicious and desirable thing. The Muslim religion says that the best man is he who has most wives.

The people of higher castes and the people in urban areas face less obstacles and are comparatively free for late marriage. Marriages in industrial and urban areas are performed after a specified education and training. Education takes longer time for settlement in life. Therefore, educated people generally marry at late age. But the lower castes and the people residing in the agricultural societies have to face so many taboos and superstitions against late marriage.

Marital status of a community influences the fertility level to a great extent. A community with a large proportion of unmarried, widow and separated women represent lower fertility.

Veilrose (1965) observes that a community with a high proportion of married females of child bearing age shows a higher birth rate than the one with a lower proportion of married women of such age.

It is generally found that mortality is always lower among the married males and females than the unmarried of the same sex and age. According to demographers and sociologists like Kapadia (1966), the reason for this phenomenon is the fact that marriages are selective to the health status of the persons, for those who are healthy are more likely to get married, with the result that the risk of dying is also less. Besides, marriage facilitates timely bath, timely food and systematic life. Therefore, the married persons are generally more secure and protected and they usually lead a more sober life than those who are unmarried.

**Table: 3. 10**  
**Marital Status of the Population of the Sample Households**

Marital Status	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total (Male & Female)	Percentage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Un-married	362	59.44	352	55.09	714	57.21
Married	238	39.08	250	39.12	488	39.10
Widow/ Widower	6	0.98	32	5.01	38	3.04
Devorce/ Separated	3	0.49	5	0.78	8	0.64
Total	609	100	639	100	1248	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

In our survey area it is found that total un-married male and female is 57.21 percent of sample population of which 59.44 percent is male and 55.09 percent is female. Similarly, it is found that the percentage of married male and female are almost same, it is 39.08 percent for male and 39.12 percent for female. The percentage of widower among the male is only 0.98 percent and the percentage of widow among the female is 5.01 percent, and it is 3.04 percent compared to the sample population. Similarly, the percentage of devorcee among the female is 0.78 percent while the separated men is only 0.49 percent.

#### **Age at Marriage:**

Agarwala (1972) states that age is one of the most important factors for marriage. As age at marriage increases, maturity of both husband and wife increases. So, it may affect their demographic behavior as well. Wife's age at marriage has important social, demographic and psychological importance which can profoundly influence her reproductive health. It is generally accepted that early marriage is related with higher fertility and late marriage is associated with lower fertility. On the other hand, pregnancy related complications are very high in the case of very young mothers when she remains still biologically immature. When

females marry at a lower age, they suffer a higher incidence of miscarriage, infant and child mortality than the females who marry late.

Again, he states that fertility is very much affected by age at marriage, the proportions of women married at a given time, and the spacing of births. In the USA, the marriage rate declined rapidly during the days of depression. The lowering of the age at marriage and the increase in the proportion of the women marrying, will increase the birth rate. In underdeveloped countries, marriage takes place at early age. This prolongs the period of reproduction and thereby increases the birth rate. Most of the backward countries are within the zones of hot climate. In such countries, girls attain puberty at very early age (15 years) and are capable of producing children at an earlier age as compared to their counterparts in advanced countries.

According to Benjamin (1968), the extent to which people marry at any time exercises a powerful influence on the subsequent flow of births. Late marriage and wide-spread celibacy provided one of the mechanisms by which age-specific fertility rates were brought to low levels in the populations of Western Europe. A large number of surveys conducted in India show that fertility falls with the rise in the age at marriage of the female. The Mysore Population Study (1961), for instance, reveals that those rural females who marry between ages 14 and 17 give birth to 5.9 children but those who marry between ages 18 and 21 give birth to only 4.7 children.

Majumder's (1960) Kanpur study has brought out that females marrying up to age 15 give birth to 6.9 children while those marriage after 19 give birth to only 6 children. Studies conducted in Calcutta and Madras has also found the similar result.

Mitchell (1971), Coale & Tye (1961), Bumpass (1969), Kim (1965), Kapadia (1966) and Rajen (1994) have found negative relationship between age at marriage and fertility. Agarwalla was of the opinion that the India's population would have to be fallen to an extent of 20% over a period of 25-27 years if the legal minimum age at marriage for the girls (18 years) is rigidly enforced.

However, researchers like Reddy (2003), Dandekar & Dandekar (1953), Sovani (1966), Iyer (2002), Sharmah (1991) and Goswami (1998) have found no significant association between age at marriage and fertility.

While studying the relationship between age at marriage and infant mortality Bhande & Kanitkar (1978) have found that infant mortality is the lowest where the marriage age of

mother is neither too low nor too high. This factor is related to the formation of the foetus to the mother's womb and is, therefore biological in nature.

The higher castes generally have higher mean age at marriage and the lower castes have lower mean age at marriage. In survey area it is found that the Scheduled Castes people have lower mean age at marriage. In their illiterate, traditional and superstitious society, late marriage for girls is looked down upon and is considered a curse. Therefore, the parent always tries to give marry their girl child as early as possible when she attains the age of 14 or 15 years. Male children among the Scheduled Castes people become earning members at the age of 16-17 years when they feel self-sufficient and try to establish their own families.

Table: 3. 11 shows the age at marriage of the Scheduled Castes women of the sample households.

**Table: 3. 11**  
**Distribution of the Wives by Age at Marriage**

Sl No	Wife's Age at Marriage ( in years)	Number of Wives	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	Age Up to 15 years.	84	35.00
2	Age 16 – 19 years	116	48.33
3	Age 20 – 24 years	32	13.33
4	Age 25 years and above	8	3.33
5	Total	240	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 3. 11 shows that child marriage is still practiced among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district of Assam. 35 percent respondents of the survey area are married below the legal age of marriage which is recognized by constitution as 18 years for the females. The highest percentage of women (48.33 percent) got married in the age group 16-19 years which prolongs their reproduction period. The age at marriage of only 8 sample women have found at 25 years and above which constitutes 3.33 percent of the surveyed married women.

Considering the importance of age at marriage of the women in influencing the fertility of a population which increases the number of children and indirectly responsible for poverty, it has been taken as an important variable in influencing both fertility and mortality among the scheduled Castes people of Assam.

### **3. 1. 6. Summary**

In the third chapter we have discussed about the demographic profile and occupational pattern of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam. According to the Census of India 2011, the population of Assam stands at 3,12,05,576, of which 1,59,39,443 are males and 1,52,66,133 are females. Similarly, according to 2011 census, the total Scheduled Castes population in Assam is 22,31,321 persons, which is 7.15 percent of the total population of the state. Out of them 11,45,314 persons are male population and 10,86,007 persons are female population. The highest concentration of population is found in Nowgaon district followed by Cachar district and Dima-Hasao district shows the lowest concentration. In Dhubri district, total Scheduled Castes population is 70,395 persons of which 36,359 persons are male population and 34,036 persons are female population. The percentage of SC population to the total population in Dhubri district is 3.61.

According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act 1976, there are sixteen Scheduled Castes communities in Assam. They are: Bansphor, Bhuimali/ Mali, Brittal Banka/ Bania, Dhupi/ Dhobi, Hira, Jalkeot, Jhalo/ Malo/ Jhalo-Malo, Kaibartha/ Jaliya, Lalbegi, Mahara, Mehtor/ Bhangi, Muchi/ Rishi, Namasudra, Patni and Sutradhar. Earlier, all these Scheduled Castes communities used to perform different traditional occupations. Different communities had the different traditional occupations and they were happy with their traditional occupations. But today, the situation has changed. They have almost given up their traditional occupations and shifted to other occupations due to several reasons. Different researchers and demographers have expressed their different views about the occupational status and changing occupations of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam in different ways.

But it is a fact that the Scheduled Castes people of Assam are socially and economically very poor. Social backwardness is due to certain socio-cultural factors which make them neglected by others. Economic backwardness is due to the dependence on the traditional occupations. However, growth of population, sub-division and fragmentation of land holding, pressure of population, tough competition from machine-made goods, lack of

technical knowledge of modern system of production, lack of capital money, influx of outsiders on the trade once solely meant for Scheduled Castes are the main causes of poverty, homelessness and unemployment among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam.

## **CHAPTER – IV**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC BEHAVIOUR OF SC POPULATION OF DHUBRI DISTRICT WITH A FOCUS ON THEIR ATTITUDE TO FAMILY PLANNING AND THE ADOPTION BEHAVIOUR OF FAMILY PLANNING MEASURES**

#### **4. 1. 0. Introduction**

Knowledge and practice of family planning is one of the important variables regulating fertility of a couple. Bongaarts (1997) has suggested that family planning programmes not only reduce fertility, but they also help in diffusion of knowledge about fertility regulation. Contraceptives use take place because of two reasons - for fertility control and for spacing. Initially, family planning methods were adopted only for birth control, but at present most of the newly married couples use it for spacing. The acquisition of knowledge and practice of family planning, a proximate determinant of fertility differentials, depend on different socio-economic and demographic variables. (Such as education of the mothers, occupation of the wives, total family income, live birth, age at marriage etc.) The immediate objective of the National Population Policy (2000) is to address unmet needs for contraception. Couples protection rate is an indicator of the prevalence of contraceptives practice in a population. It is defined as percent of eligible couples effectively protected against childbirth by one or other approved methods of family planning.

Different studies have found that the knowledge and practice of family planning is lower among the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes people. A survey conducted by International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai and Population Research Center, Baroda in 1983, in two districts of rural Gujrat has revealed that family planning practice is low among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in comparison to other caste group. Roy and Paswanin (1995) their studies in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh have found that 25.3% of the total SC/ST women have knowledge about all the modern methods of contraception while 39.1% of the total women in the other caste groups know the same.

#### **4. 1. 1. Family Planning**

Family planning is a constituent of population policy. Family planning is planning of the family, by the family and for the family. By family planning or planned parenthood is meant conscious family limitation or spacing of children. It means having children by choice and not by chance. It requires the adoption of some suitable methods of birth control. India has been the first country to recognize officially the importance of family planning movement. She has given family planning a special role to play and, it has been made a part and parcel of her national economic planning.

#### **4. 1. 2. Family Planning in India**

India is the first country in the world to have adopted an official policy favouring family planning. Before it did so in 1952, a number of social reformers, thinkers and voluntary organisations had desired the Government to adopt a policy of population control as a measure to protect the health of the mother. Professor Karve (1972) was the first individual to open a family planning clinic in India in 1925. But he had to pay a price and resign from his teaching job. In 1930, the Mysore Government opened a family planning clinic in the State, and in 1932 the Government of Madras opened birth control clinics in the Presidency. In the same year, the All India Women's Conference at Lucknow passed a regulation recommending that "men and women should be instructed in methods of birth control in recognised clinics". The National Planning Committee, appointed by the Indian National Congress in 1953 under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru, strongly supported family planning. In 1936, Pillai conducted a family planning course and in 1940, Sapru successfully moved a resolution in the Council of States (the upper house of the Indian Parliament) for the establishment of birth control clinics in various government hospitals to protect the health of the mothers. In 1949, the Family Planning Association of India was formed in Bombay under the presidentship of Shrimati Dhanvanthi Rama Rao and since its inception the Association has worked ceaselessly for greater family planning acceptance.

#### **4. 1. 3. Philosophy and Guiding Principles**

The Indian family planning programme depends for its success on voluntary acceptance by the people, though a process of motivation and education, of the good that accrues to individuals practicing the small family norm. The philosophy behind the programme is as follows:

- (a) The community must be prepared to feel the need for the services in order that those may be accepted when provided.
- (b) Parents alone must decide the number of children they wish to have.
- (c) People should be approached through the media they respect and through their recognized and trusted leaders.
- (d) The services should be made available to the people as near to their homes as possible.
- (e) The services will have greater relevance and effectiveness if they are made an integral part of medical and public health services, especially of the mother and child health programme.

In the early years of the family planning programme, the Government of India had adopted a “clinic approach” to family planning. It opened a number of clinics and hoped that the people would take advantage of the facilities. This approach was modified in 1962-63 and the government started giving greater emphasis to motivation and to changing the attitude, norms and values of the people. Social workers and auxiliary nurse midwives (ANM) were appointed to carry out the motivational work. Other staff, both medical and paramedical, was also appointed; the programme was made target-oriented and additional funds were made available.

#### **4. 1. 4. Why family planning?**

- (i) Family planning is a step towards the improvement of health especially of mothers and children. This will lead to great social benefit.
- (ii) It will be helpful for economic development.
- (iii) It will remove food shortage.

It will increase per capita income.

- (i) It will raise the standard of living.
- (ii) It will increase efficiency of people.
- (iii) It will reduce unemployment and underemployment.

When death rate is falling down, birth rate must fall down; otherwise, population pressure would be serious which will eat up all the benefits of the economic development.

#### **4. 1. 5. Family Planning Methods and Measures**

- (1) Abstinence.
- (2) Contraception.
- (3) Sterilization.
- (4) Abortion.
- (5) Availability and use harmless effective devices.
- (6) Motivation programme, education and propagation.
- (7) Extension services.
- (8) Training, studies and research.
- (9) Delayed marriage and permanent celibacy, and
- (10) Raising the level of education.

However, abstinence from conjugal relation is neither much approved, nor is widely practiced. There are a quite a number of contraceptive devices available, e.g. rubber contraceptive, pill, loop, abortion, sterilization, diaphragm, jelly, etc. Some of the contraceptives are not very effective, e.g. loop; and some others are highly expensive (diaphragm and jelly), while some others are inconvenient. Contraceptives have to be simple, harmless and effective.

Sterilization appears to be a very better remedy. This could be applied on both males (Vasectomy) and females (Salpinjectomy). It is a permanent cure from the occurrence of pregnancy. Abortion does not always get the approval of the society. It also requires adequate hospitalization facilities. The devices for birth control should be made available to the needy at a very low cost.

#### **4. 1. 6. Family Planning in Assam**

The Family Welfare Programme is being implemented in the state since 1956 to reduce the birth rate to stabilize the population and to improve the health of mother and child. At present Family Welfare Programme is implemented under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) a centrally sponsored programme. However, socio-economic factors such as female literacy, age at marriage of girls, status of women and discouragement of strong preference for son influence the main objective of the programme. Though the sterilization was the mainstay of family welfare programme in the past, spacing between births of two children is also an equally important aspect under the programme. The government is giving more stress on propagations of spacing methods like Copper-T, Intra Uterine Device (IUD), Conventional

contraceptives (CC) etc. Performance of Family Welfare programme is shown in the following table. During eleventh five year plan (2007-12) for implementation of various schemes of Family Welfare Programme and of better health services to the people of Assam the state share to NRHM on centrally sponsored schemes was Rs. 54361.29 lakh. The proposed outlay (State share) for NRHM is Rs.16474.00 lakh for Annual Plan 2011-12.

**Table: 4. 1**  
**Performance of Family Planning Programme in Assam**

Name of Scheme	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Target	Achievement (in %)	Target	Achievement (in %)	Target	Achievement (in %)
Sterilization	127000	63.89	6460	98.53	110000	56.88
I.U.D. Insertion	90000	57.20	4820	57.34	90000	66.74
C.C Users	90000	77.95	4800	164.92	90000	92.72
O.P. Users	90000	94.62	4800	110.81	90000	120.77

Source: Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 2011, 2012 & 2013.

The following table shows the achievements of Family welfare Programmes in ASSAM during 2012-13.

**Table: 4. 2**  
**Achievements in Family Welfare Programmes in Assam 2012-13**

Districts	Sterilization		I.U.D.		C.C. Users		O.P. Users	
	Target	Percent age of Achievement	Target	Percent age of Achievement	Target	percent age of Achievement	Target	Percent age of Achievement
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Kokrajhar	2150	31.16	3220	72.70	2800	70.82	2800	120.43

Dhubri	3100	27.68	4900	52.29	4700	113.02	4700	142.94
Goalpara	3400	19.26	3080	86.30	3700	103.38	3700	128.89
Barpeta	4100	50.66	5180	33.53	4900	120.20	4900	180.06
Morigaon	3100	46.87	3300	84.06	2900	74.93	2900	155.59
Nagaon	8000	53.86	5770	59.38	5300	46.09	5300	40.30
Sonitpur	5000	83.70	5380	30.52	4200	82.55	4200	219.98
Lakhimpur	6350	76.28	3550	47.24	3400	63.79	3400	112.71
Dhemaji	4300	96.14	2380	118.99	2800	22.82	2800	87.46
Tinsukia	8400	56.18	3740	55.48	3350	22.93	3350	92.39
Dibrugarh	8760	45.75	3800	70.32	3400	101.35	3400	164.44
Sivasagar	4300	92.51	3950	44.33	3700	97.92	3700	121.46
Jorhat	4250	96.71	3410	63.23	3700	119.22	3700	83.68
Golaghat	5350	77.87	3390	50.00	3300	154.61	3300	190.39
Karbi- Anglong	1550	12.71	2940	89.69	2800	148.00	2800	122.11
Dima Hasao	500	16.80	940	46.81	1400	31.21	1400	50.71
Cachar	7800	60.95	4820	41.10	4800	119.04	4800	88.23
Karimganj	3100	56.23	3020	80.33	3050	113.02	3050	87.21
Hailakandi	3150	29.05	2200	113.50	2200	226.59	2200	85.05
Bongaigaon	2150	36.74	2110	62.46	3200	59.09	3200	155.47
Chirang	440	52.27	1200	81.25	1900	40.84	1900	59.95

Kamrup (R)	4850	51.24	4610	71.76	5000	129.20	5000	133.62
Kamrup (M)	8000	52.95	3000	272.23	3600	45.31	3600	59.56
Nalbari	3200	29.41	3230	38.54	3700	78.24	3700	90.95
Baksa	1100	60.36	1800	67.11	1200	123.08	1200	248.17
Darrang	3400	30.35	3280	29.79	3200	76.63	3200	102.72
Udalgiri	200	163.50	1800	47.83	1800	56.00	1800	156.50
Assam	110000	56.88	90000	66.74	90000	92.72	90000	120.77

Source: Statistical Hand Book, Assam 2013.

#### 4. 1. 7. Knowledge of Contraceptive

Couples' knowledge of contraceptive determines the acceptance or non-acceptance of it. NFSH-2 (1998-99) has found that female sterilization is the most widely known (96 percent) method of contraception in Assam and 85 percent know about male sterilization. The best-known spacing method is contraceptive pill (87 percent).

Knowledge of contraceptive is found to be widespread among the sample Scheduled Castes women of Dhubri district. Out of total 240 respondents, 60 percent are aware of at least one method of contraception and the best-known method is contraceptive pill.

Table: 4. 3 shows wife's knowledge of contraception in relation to their present age.

**Table: 4. 3**

#### **Wives' Knowledge of Contraceptive with their Present Age**

Present age of the Wives	Number of Wives	Knowledge of Contraceptives			
		Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not Having Knowledge	Percentage
15 – 19	8	6	75.00	2	25.00

20 – 24	22	15	68.18	7	31.81
25 – 29	32	24	75.00	8	25.00
30 – 34	36	28	77.78	8	22.22
35 – 39	38	24	63.16	14	36.84
40 – 44	44	25	56.82	19	43.18
45 – 49	34	14	41.18	20	58.82
50 +	26	8	30.77	18	69.23
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

In the sample villages, it is found that some respondent (specially the olders) have been using some traditional methods of family planning. So far the modern methods are concerned the youngest have greater knowledge of them. Table: 4.3 shows that out of 36 women in the age group of 30 – 34, 77.78 percent women have sound knowledge while 22.22 percent women have no knowledge about modern contraceptives. Similarly, out of 26 women in the age group of 50+ and out of 34 women in the age group of 45 – 49, 69.23 percent and 58.82 percent women have expressed their ignorance about modern contraceptives respectively while women in the youngest age groups, 15 – 19, 20 – 24, 25 – 29 have sound knowledge for the same. This shows that the knowledge of modern contraceptive has been penetrating among the rural young Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district.

#### **4. 1. 8. Practice of Contraceptives**

Practices of contraceptives depend on couple's knowledge about it. NFHS-2 (1998-99) has estimated the current contraceptive users in Assam as 79 percent and 69 percent of them use a modern method. In the sample villages, it is found that 60 percent of the married women have sound knowledge of contraceptives while 54.17 percent of them use it. Out of 45.83 percent who are not currently using any contraceptive methods, Some of them are found to have an unmet need for family planning (currently married women who are not using any contraceptive but who do not want any more children or who want to wait for one or two

years for another child are known as having an unmet need for family planning). For Assam as a whole it is 17 percent (NFHS-2, 1998-99, p. 110) among currently married women.

Table: 4. 4 shows age distribution of the respondents between users and non-users of contraceptives.

**Table: 4. 4**

**Age Distribution of the Respondents between Users and Non-Users of Contraceptives**

Age-group	Number. of Respondents	Practice of Contraceptives			
		Practicing	Percentage	Not practicing	Percentage
15 – 19	8	2	25.00	6	75.00
20 – 24	22	12	54.55	10	45.45
25 – 29	32	27	84.38	5	15.62
30 – 34	36	26	72.22	10	27.78
35 – 39	38	25	65.79	13	34.21
40 +	104	38	36.54	66	63.46
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

The age-specific examination of contraceptive use among the sample Scheduled Castes women in the reproductive age group of 15 – 40+ reveals that the highest percentage of women (84.38 percent) in the age group of 25 – 29 years use any method of contraception. It is also found that contraceptive use among the women in the younger and older age groups (15 – 19, 20 – 24, and 40+) is lower than that of the middle age groups (25 – 29, 30 – 34, and 35 – 39).

#### **4. 1. 9. Factors Affecting Knowledge and Practice of Family Planning**

The socio-economic and demographic factors influencing couple's knowledge and practice of family planning methods are the follows.

### (i) Live Birth

Wife's knowledge and practice of family planning methods depend on the number of live births that the couples have experienced.

Experiences from different states reveal that contraceptive use varies differently in different states with the number of live births. In case of Bodo women in Assam, It is found that women with higher number of live births have greater knowledge and practice of contraceptive. In Uttar Pradesh contraceptive use is lower among those women who have two children while in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and West Bangle it is high among those who have more than four children ((Kulkarni, 2005: 409). Susuman (2006) has observed that married women of various tribal groups in rural Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu have not adopted contraceptive methods till they bear the desired number of children.

But, Borah (2005) has found no significant relationship between live birth and wives' knowledge of contraceptives among the Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh.

Tables: 4. 5 and Table: 4. 6 show wives' knowledge of family planning methods and couples' practice of family planning respectively in relation to the number of live births.

**Table: 4. 5**

#### **Number of Live Births and Wife's Knowledge of Family Planning**

Number of Live Birth	Number of Women	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
0	6	4	66.67	2	33.33
1	16	12	75.00	4	25.00
2	61	43	70.49	18	29.51
3	117	67	57.26	50	42.74
>3	40	18	45.00	22	55.00
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 6****Number of Live Birth and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Number of Live Birth	Number of Women	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
0	6	3	50.00	3	50.00
1	16	10	62.50	6	37.50
2	61	39	63.93	22	36.07
3	117	64	54.70	53	45.30
>3	40	14	35.00	26	65.00
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 4. 5 shows that the knowledge of family planning is higher among the women who have restricted their family size with one or two live births. It is 75.00 percent for one live birth and 70.49 percent for two live births. It has been decreasing among women with greater number live births.

The concept of using contraceptives as an instrument of spacing between two births has been penetrated among the sample population. Table: 4. 6 shows that Scheduled Castes wives with one or two children have been practicing family planning methods more (62.50 percent for one live birth and 63.93 percent for two live births) than the women with greater number live births. This is because of penetration of knowledge of family planning methods among them.

**(ii) Total Family Income**

Wife's knowledge and practice of family planning methods depends on the economic condition of the family. Generally educated couples are gainfully employed who are more conscious of using contraceptives. Families with higher income may more likely use contraception because they may be able to afford better access to contraceptive services. Alternatively, they may have higher opportunity cost of value of their time spent in leisure which may reduce their demand for children and increase contraceptive use to achieve lower desired fertility outcomes. In Ramanagaram District of Karnataka, Iyre (2002) has found

families with higher income use more and modern contraceptives than those of the others. But, Ramu (1998) says that it is not the family income but the mass media which increase the knowledge of contraceptive among the rural women.

Ibrahim & Ibrahim (1998) argue that in Egypt, over 70 percent of Egyptian women acquire their knowledge about family planning from the television and that is one of the most important factors accounting for fertility declines in Egypt in the 1980s and 1990s. In this situation total family income is not accounted.

Table: 4. 7 and Table: 4. 8. show the relationship between knowledge of family planning methods and practice of family planning respectively in relation to family income.

**Table: 4. 7**  
**Type of Family Income and Wife's Knowledge of Family Planning**

Total Family Income (Monthly)	Number of wives	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
Up to Rs. 3000	161	78	48.45	83	51.55
3001 – 6000	58	48	82.76	10	17.24
6001 – 10000	15	13	86.67	2	13.33
10001+	6	6	100	0	—
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 8**  
**Total Family Income and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Total Family income (Monthly)	Number of Couples	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
Up to Rs. 3000	161	63	39.13	98	60.87
3001 – 6000	58	49	84.48	9	15.52
6001 – 10000	15	13	86.67	2	13.33
10001+	6	5	83.33	1	16.67
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 4. 7 shows the knowledge of family planning is higher among the women in higher income group. On the other hand, Table: 4. 8 shows that practice of family planning technique is found to be similar among the wives belonging to different income groups. The only difference is that the practice of family planning is slight lower on the income group 1000+ than the previous two income groups and this happens only because of less number of the couples in this income groups. Though the monthly income in some families is not much to lead a better life, the women are aware of the positive impact of small, they acquire knowledge of using contraceptive from mass media or from neighbours which induce them to use contraceptives.

### **(iii) Age at Marriage**

The decision to use contraception may also depend on the wives' age at marriage. According to Visaria and Chari (1998), Studies on contraceptives use reveal that the women who marry in medium age may have the highest demand for contraceptives as compared to the women who marry earlier. This is one of the reasons that contraceptives use is lower among the rural women who usually marry earlier, than the urban women. NFHS- 2(1998-99), Assam also conforms it.

However, Ahmed (2004) has found in rural Bangladesh that age at marriage is not a significant determinant of contraceptive use.

Table: 4. 9 and Table:4. 10 show the relationship between age at marriage and wives' knowledge and practice of family planning methods respectively.

**Table: 4. 9**  
**Wife's Age at Marriage and Knowledge of Family Planning**

Age at Marriage	Number of Women	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
Up to 15	74	36	48.65	38	51.35
16 – 19	128	79	61.72	49	38.28
20 – 24	26	21	80.77	5	19.23
25+	12	8	66.67	4	33.33
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 10**  
**Wife's Age at Marriage and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Age at Marriage	Number of Women	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
Up to 15	74	26	35.14	48	64.86
16 – 19	128	77	60.16	51	39.84
20 – 24	26	19	73.08	7	26.92
25+	12	8	66.67	4	33.33
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 4. 9 shows that the knowledge of contraceptive is higher among the women whose age at marriage has fallen between the age group of (20 – 24). The knowledge of contraceptive is less among the women who have entered into marriage at an early age (up to 15 years).

Table: 4. 10 shows that the highest percentage of women (73.08 percent) is practicing any one of the family planning methods whose marriage has happened between the age group of (20 – 24). Similarly, the percentage (35.14 percent) of practicing family planning method is less among the newly married women.

Thus, Table: 4. 9 and Table: 4. 10 show that both knowledge and practice of family planning practices are similar among the respondents irrespective of their age at marriage.

#### **(iv) Education of the Wives**

Education of women is one of the most important determinants of fertility mortality and other demographic behavior. Educated women are well accustomed with family planning method and therefore the percentage of contraceptive use is higher among them. They are conscious of their health and the general welfare of their family which encourage them to acquire knowledge of family planning and use of it. Studies in a number of countries have found that couples with more education have a wider knowledge of contraceptives methods, use the methods better, and are better able to assimilate information about availability, correct use, side effects and cost of using it. In addition, with education have a stronger bargaining position within the family when it comes to take decision about contraception. This conclusion is supported by the studies in south India conducted in the 1960s and in the 1990s.

Ramesh and Retherford (1996), Zachariah (1984), Cochrane (1995) have also observed that education is a key factor influencing contraceptive use in India. Similarly, NFSH-2 (1998-99) has found that among the illiterates, 40 percent women use contraceptives in Assam as compared to 55 percent women completing High School and above. But among the Bodo women of Assam, education is found to be an insignificant determinant of wives' Knowledge of family planning. It is also argued that husbands' education is an important determinant of contraceptive use and it exerts an impact most particularly at low levels of husbands' and wives' schooling.

Table: 4. 11 and Table: 4.12 show the relationship between educational attainment of the wives and knowledge and practice of contraceptives respectively among them.

**Table: 4. 11**  
**Education of the Wives' and Knowledge of Family Planning**

Wives level of Education	Number of Women	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
Below U.P. level	183	107	58.47	76	41.53
Beyond U.P. level	57	37	64.91	20	35.09
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 12**  
**Education of the Wives' and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Wives level of Education	Number of Women	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
Below U.P. level	183	94	51.37	89	48.63
Beyond U.P. level	57	36	63.16	21	36.84
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 4. 11 shows that among the wives with higher educational attainment the knowledge of family planning is also found to be higher. However, Table: 4. 12 shows that in case of practice of family planning, the role of education is found to be less important.

#### **(v) Religion**

Jones and Nortman (1986) state that religion is another important factor of influencing the couples for contraceptive use. Some religion put restrictions on using contraceptives. The Catholic Church's prohibition on contraception was the principal reason for Protestant-Catholic differentials. The Mysore Population Study (1961) found that in Karnataka post-partum abstinence was on an average longer for Hindus than for Muslims with obvious contraceptives implications. Studies by Amin, Diamond & Steel (1996) have found that religion is an important predictor of contraceptive use, but primarily via the religious practices of the community rather than through individual observance.

But in this chapter, religion as variable of influencing contraceptive use has not been studied since all the sample households are Hindus only.

#### (vi) Infant and Child Mortality

Another factor to influence contraceptive practices is infant and child mortality experience. A decline in infant and child mortality generates a larger demand for contraceptive methods to regulate fertility, because of the increased survival of children to adulthood. Some other demographers, such as Ramu (1998) and Ahmed (2004) argue that with high infant and child mortality experience, couple's use of contraceptives decrease.

Table: 4. 13 and Table: 4. 14 show the relationship between infant mortality experience of the couples and knowledge and practice of contraceptives respectively among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district.

**Table: 4. 13**

#### **Infant and Child Mortality Experience and Wife's Knowledge of Family Planning**

Infant and Child Mortality Experience	Number of Respondents	Having Knowledge	Percent age	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
0	221	122	55.20	99	44.80
1	24	18	75.00	6	25.00
2	5	4	80.00	1	20.00
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 14**

#### **Infant and Child Mortality Experience and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Infant and Child Mortality Experience	Number of Respondents	Practicing	Percent age	Not Practicing	Percentage
0	221	109	49.32	112	50.68
1	24	18	75.00	6	25.00

2	5	3	60.00	2	40.00
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

It is found that knowledge of contraceptives is higher among the respondents with infant mortality experiences than the respondents without infant mortality experiences but the highest percentage of contraceptive use (75.00 percent) is found among the couples experiencing one infant and child death.

#### (vii) Wives' Labour Force Participation

Contraceptive choice may be affected by the occupations of the women. Dharmalingam and Morgan (1996) argue that women who are employed may be more likely to use contraception either for birth spacing or for birth limitation. Working women (Working in the sense of earning cash) are generally educated and more familiar with modern contraceptives. In Assam, use of contraceptives among the working Bodo women is higher than that of the non-working women. But Rupjyoti (2005) has found that there is no significant difference in using contraceptives among the educated and uneducated Adi women in Arunachal Pradesh.

Table: 4. 15 and Table: 4. 16 show the relationship between knowledge and use of contraceptives with working status of the women respectively.

**Table: 4. 15**

#### **Wife's Labour Force Participation and Knowledge of Family Planning**

Working Status	Number of Wives	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
Working Women	98	81	82.65	17	17.35
Non-working women	142	63	44.37	79	55.63
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 16**  
**Wife's Labour Force Participation and Practice of Family Planning**

Working Status	Number of Wives	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
Working women	98	54	55.10	44.90	42.86
Non-working women	142	76	53.52	66	46.48
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 4. 15 reveals that majority of the working women (82.65 Percent) have sound knowledge of contraceptives while 44.37 percent of the non-working women have the same. On the other hand, Table: 3. 16 shows that the use of contraceptives is almost similar among the women irrespective of their employment status.

#### **(viii) Nature of Husbands' Occupation**

Nature of work is always related to educational attainment. The husbands who are daily labours, unskilled labours, cultivator, fisherman, etc. are generally less educated. Men who are employed in skilled occupations may encourage their wives to use contraceptives more because they want fewer or better quality children but the case is reverse if the men work in domestic industries.

In the present study, occupations of the husbands have been classified into two categories – unskilled labour and non-unskilled labour, because in the sample villages, unskilled labour/daily labour is found to be the main occupation of the families.

Table: 4. 17 and Table: 4. 18 show the knowledge and use of contraceptives in relation to sampling (living) husbands' occupation respectively.

**Table: 4. 17**  
**Nature of Husband's Occupation and Wife's Knowledge of Family Planning**

Husband's Occupation	Number of Husbands	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
Unskilled labour/ Daily labour	72	43	59.72	29	40.28
Other than Un-skilled labour	168	101	60.12	67	39.88
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 18**  
**Nature of Husband's Occupation and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Husband's Occupation	Number of Husbands	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
Unskilled labour/ Daily labour	72	31	43.06	41	56.94
Other than Un-skilled labour	168	99	58.93	69	41.07
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 4. 17 shows that the knowledge of contraceptives is almost same among the husbands belonging to different employment categories. But Table: 4. 18 shows that contraceptives use is higher among the other professionals (58.93 percent) than the unskilled labours (43.06 percent). The negligible difference regarding knowledge of family planning method among the un-skilled labour and other professionals may be because of the fact that the un-skilled labour come close to different people for daily working purposes which may change their outlook about the methods of family planning. In case of practicing family

planning methods, other professionals are practicing more (58.93 percent) than the un-skilled labour (43.06 percent) because of their solvency.

Presence of an extended family may influence the decision to use contraception. It is conventionally argued that female members of an extended family such as mother and mother-in-law have an important role to play in influencing the couple's decisions about using contraception. In extended families less privacy is observed which may influence their use of contraception.

Table: 4. 19 and Table: 4. 20 show the relationship between number of family members and knowledge and practice of family planning method among the sample couples respectively.

**Table: 4. 19**  
**Number of Family Members and Wife's' Knowledge of Family Planning**

Number of family members	Number of families	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
1 – 6	172	113	65.70	59	34.30
7 – 10	62	53	85.48	9	14.52
11+	6	6	100	—	—
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 20**  
**Number of Family Members and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Number of family members	Number of families	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
1 – 6	172	95	55.23	77	44.77

7 – 10	62	32	51.61	30	48.38
11+	6	3	50.00	3	50.00
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 4. 19 shows that women's knowledge of family planning increases with increasing family members but the Table: 4. 20 shows that the percentage of using contraceptives is almost similar among the women irrespective of the number of family members.

#### (x) Effective Married Life Lived

It is generally thought that the use of contraceptives among the currently married women is less than those of the others. The currently married couples think that use of contraceptives may affect their reproductive life. In case of the Bodos effective married life lived plays no significant role in determining couple's knowledge of family planning.

Table: 4. 21 and Table: 4. 22 show the relationship between effective married life lived by the couples and knowledge and practice of contraceptive use among the sample couples respectively.

**Table: 4. 21**

#### **Effective Married Life Lived and Wife's Knowledge of Family Planning**

Effective married life lived (in years)	Number of Wives	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
0 – 9 years	42	24	57.14	18	42.86
10 – 19 years	78	46	58.97	32	41.03
20+ years	120	74	61.67	46	38.33
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 22**  
**Effective Married Life Lived and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Effective married life lived (in years)	Number of Wives	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
0 – 9 years	42	21	50.00	21	50.00
10 – 19 years	78	42	53.85	36	46.15
20+ years	120	67	55.83	53	44.17
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 4. 21 and Table: 4. 22 show that women with longer effective married life lived have greater knowledge of family planning while no difference is observed among them regarding the use of contraceptives.

**(xi) Availability of Medical Facilities**

Use of contraceptives in most cases depend on the availability of medical facilities because family planning methods and services are provided primarily through a network of governmental hospitals and urban family welfare centers in urban areas and Primary Health Centers (PHC) and sub-centers in rural areas. Family Planning services are also provided by private hospitals and clinics, as well as non-governmental organizations. Sterilization camps organized from time to time also provide sterilization services. People living in urban areas can easily avail family planning services than those living in remote areas.

Medical facilities of the sample villages are not satisfactory. The people of 9 villages out of 12 sample villages have to cover 5 km or more distance for any kind of medical assistance which may influence their contraceptives use.

**Table: 4. 23****Distance from the Nearest Health Facility and Wife's Knowledge of Family Planning**

Distance (km)	Number of Respondents	Having Knowledge	Percentage	Not having Knowledge	Percentage
0 – 5 km	43	24	55.81	19	44.19
6 – 10 km	95	56	58.95	39	41.05
10+ km	111	64	57.66	47	42.34
Total	240	144	60.00	96	40.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

**Table: 4. 24****Distance from the Nearest Health Facility and Couples' Practice of Family Planning**

Distance (km)	Number of Respondents	Practicing	Percentage	Not Practicing	Percentage
0 – 5 km	43	24	55.81	19	44.19
6 – 10 km	95	50	52.63	45	47.37
10+ km	111	56	50.45	55	49.55
Total	240	130	54.17	110	45.83

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

It is seen from the Tables: 4. 23 and Table: 4. 24 that the physical distance of the villages from the medical centers is not an important determinant to influence the villagers to acquire knowledge and practice of family planning. Because of improved transportation and communication system they can frequently visit to the health centers with the help of public transport / own vehicles or by other way. So, although there is a physical gap between urban and rural areas, the communication gap is reduced substantially.

### (xii) Knowledge of Family Planning

In addition to the above variables, affecting both knowledge and practice of family planning, the knowledge of family planning itself affects the practice of family planning.

Table: 4. 25 shows the relationship between knowledge and practice of family planning among the sample Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district.

**Table: 4. 25**

#### **Wife's Knowledge and Couple's Practice of Family Planning**

Number of Women	Number of Couples	Number of Couples
Having Knowledge 144 (60 percent)	Practicing F. P. 113 (71.53 percent)	Not practicing F.P. 31 (21.53 percent)
Not having knowledge 96 (40 percent)	Practicing F.P. 17 (17.71 percent)	Not practicing F.P. 79 (82.29 percent)
Total 240 (100 percent)	130 (54.17 percent)	110 (45.83 percent)

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table: 4. 25 reveals that out of 144 respondents having sound knowledge of family planning, 113 (71.53 percent) use of it, while out of 96 respondents without having sound knowledge of family planning, 17 (17.71 percent) use the same.

#### **4. 2. 0. Summary**

In this Chapter, we have discussed about the demographic behavior of Scheduled Castes people of Assam as well as Dhubri District. We have also focused on their attitude towards family planning and the adoption behavior of family planning. Different studies have found that the knowledge and practice of family planning is lower among the Scheduled Castes people. The reason is that majority of them are poor and illiterate. They do not understand the effect of large family on income. They consider family planning to be a curse.

Family planning has great social benefits. It is helpful for economic development and raises the standard of living. There are various family planning measures in Assam. Some of

them are abstinence, contraception, sterilization, abortion and so on. While conducting field survey, it is found that knowledge of contraceptive is widespread among the sample Scheduled Castes women of Dhubri district. Out of total 240 respondents, 60% are aware of at least one method of contraception and the best-known method is contraceptive pill.

There are so many socio-economic and demographic factors which influences couple's knowledge and practice of family planning methods. Some of them are: (i) live birth (ii) total family income (iii) age at marriage (iv) education of the wives (v) religion (vi) infant and child mortality (v) number of family member (vi) effective married life Lived and so on.

Use of contraceptives in most cases depend on the availability of medical facilities because family planning methods and services are provided primarily through a network of governmental hospitals and urban family welfare centers in urban areas and Primary Health Centers (PHC) and sub-centers in rural areas. Medical facilities of the sample villages are not satisfactory. The people of 9 villages out of 12 sample villages have to cover 5 km or more distance for any kind of medical assistance which may influence their contraceptives use.

Wife's knowledge and practice of family planning methods depends on the economic condition of the family. Generally educated couples who are gainfully employed are more conscious of using contraceptives. Families with higher income are more likely use contraception because they may be able to afford better access to contraceptive services. Alternatively, they may have higher opportunity cost of their time spent in leisure which may reduce their demand for children and increase contraceptive use to achieve desired lower fertility outcomes.

Similarly, Education of women is another most important determinants of fertility, mortality and other demographic behavior. Educated women are well accustomed with family planning method and therefore the percentage of contraceptive use is higher among them. They are conscious of their health and the general welfare of their family which encourage them to acquire knowledge of family planning and use of it.

Again, religion is another important factor of influencing the couples for contraceptive use. Some religion put restrictions on using contraceptives.

From the above analysis, it is found that knowledge and practice of family planning among the sample scheduled castes women depend on different socio-economic and demographic variables. But the long run impact of these variables on knowledge and practice of family planning among the scheduled castes women can't be ascertained from this analysis.

## **CHAPTER – V**

### **THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF POVERTY IN THE DISTRICT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SCHEDULED CASTES PEOPLE**

#### **5. 1. 0. Concept of Poverty**

Poverty is a malady that has affected a section of the people even in rich countries. Poverty has been understood differently by different people in different times. According to Random House Dictionary, poverty is “the state or condition of having little or no money, goods or means of support; condition of being poor, lack of something specified, deficiency of desirable ingredients, qualities; scantiness and insufficiency (1996). In ordinary parlance, it is equated with squalor, misery and destitution.

Poverty is the greatest challenge for economic development of country. There cannot be an acceptable definition of poverty which can be broadly accepted everywhere. There are large differences among the definition of poverty accepted in various countries of the world. For example, the concept of poverty in the United States of America would be significantly different from India because the average man is able to afford a much higher level of living in the United States. In India, the general accepted definition of poverty emphasizes minimum level of living rather than a reasonable level of living. In spite of these differences, poverty can be defined as a social phenomenon in which a section of the society is unable to fulfill its basic needs or necessities of life. In India, it is broadly agreed that poverty can be termed as a situation where the section of population is unable to arrange the minimum level of living or certain minimum consumption standard.

For determining minimum standard, the following three approaches are used—

#### **(a) Cost of Basic Needs Approach**

This approach sets the poverty line at the cost of a basic diet for the mean age, gender and activity groups plus a few essential non-food items. A survey then establishes the proportion of people living in households with consumption (or sometimes income) below this line.

### (c) Food Share Method

The method derives the cost of a consumption plan to acquire just sufficient nutrients. If the cost of basic nutrients is a third of total consumption, the poverty line is fixed at three times the cost.

When the poverty line is defined by adopting any of these three approaches, this gives the number of poor in the society. So, when poverty is defined in terms of income or consumption then it is called income poverty. For example, in India forty percent (40%) of the population was below the poverty line in 1995.

But there is debate for fixing the minimum standard. After discussion, a study group set up by Planning Commission in July 1962 recommended a standard of private consumption expenditure of rupees 20 (at 1960-61 prices) per capita per month as the bare, minimum amount common to both rural and urban areas. Later on, the planning commission has adopted the definition of poverty provided by the 'Task Force'. In its report the Task Force has defined the poverty line as the midpoint of the monthly per capita expenditure plus having a daily calorie intake of 2400 per person in rural areas and 2100 in urban areas.

There is a debate on the minimum calorie requirement. Most acceptable figures are 2400 calories per person per day in rural areas and 2200 per person per day in urban areas. The expenditure level of households to obtain the desired calories serves as the poverty line. To adjust the poverty line over a period of time, price variations have to be considered and an appropriate price deflator has to be selected. In recent years, poverty line as per Government of India is approximately Rs. 300 per month. According to Government it is enough money to buy 2200 calories of food per day from the public distribution system. Two types of standard are common in economics— the absolute and relative.

In absolute standard, minimum physical quantities of cereals, pulses, milks, ghee etc. are determined for a subsistence level and then the price quotations convert the physical quantities into monetary terms. Aggregating all the quantities a figure expressing per capita consumption is determined. The population which level of income or expenditure is below the figure is considered to be below the poverty line.

To measure the relative standard, the income distribution of the different groups is estimated and then a comparison is made between the top 5 to 10% with the bottom 5 to 10% and it reflects the relative standard of poverty. Generally, relative standard exists in affluent society. For under develop country like India, there is existence of mainly absolute standard.

Besides income poverty, there is also another type of poverty which is known as human poverty. Some development economists have agreed that although income focuses on an important dimension of poverty but it gives only partial picture. To get a complete idea of poverty, we should enlarge the study the poverty in terms of deprivation. So, according to human poverty, poverty is a denial of choice and opportunities for living a tolerable life.

It includes those choices and opportunities which deprive a man to lead a long, healthy, and creative live and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, respect and self-respect of others. To calculate human poverty HDR, 1997 introduced a human poverty index (HPI). HPI constructed by the HDR focuses on the deprivation in the following three elements of live— longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living. But HDR, 2001 has made a small change in the formula of HPI and the new formula has the following three dimensions—

- (1) Deprivation of a long and healthy life— measured by the probability at birth not surviving to age forty (100 times).
- (2) Deprivation of knowledge — measured by adult illiteracy rate.
- (3) Deprivation of a decent standard of living — measured by un-weighted average of population not using improved water sources and under-weight children under age five.

$P_1, P_2$  and  $P_3$  are used as symbols for representing dimension

$$\therefore \text{HPI} = [(P_1^3 + P_2^3 + P_3^3) \div 3]^{1/3}$$

Where

$P_3 = \frac{1}{2}$  (population not using improved water sources) +  $\frac{1}{2}$  (un-weighted children under five).

As far as India is concerned, out of 90 developing countries for which the HPI was prepared, India is ranked 55. More than one third of Indian population has been suffering from human poverty as reported by HDR 2001.

### **5. 1. 2. Class Base of the Poor**

In an egalitarian society removal of poverty has to be accorded a high priority. But before any government decides its policy measures to solve the poverty problem, it must identify the poor. In India, unfortunately no serious attempt has been made by the

governments in this direction. Using the NSS data Minhas, Bardhan, Dandekar and Rath and a few others have attempt to identify the poor.

According to their findings, a large bulk of the poor belongs to:

- (i) Agricultural labour households without land holdings which form about 60 percent of all agricultural labour households.
- (ii) Agricultural labour households with very small holdings which constitutes about 40 percent of all agricultural labour households.
- (iii) Non agricultural rural labour households without land holdings including village artisans progressively losing their traditional employment; and
- (iv) Small land operators, with cultivating holdings of less than two hectare, and particularly less than one hectare.

As regards the urban poor, Dandekar and Rath (1970) state: “The urban poor are only an overflow of the rural poor, into the urban area. Fundamentally, they belong to same class as the rural poor. However, as they live longer enough in urban poverty, they acquire characteristics of their own. Little is known of their life and labour in the growing cities.”

### **5. 1. 3. Incidence of Poverty in India**

In order to determine the strategy of development of the country, it is quiet essential to make an appropriate estimate of incidence of poverty in India. But appropriate and reliable data for the estimation of the extent of poverty is not available in India. However, on the basis of NSS data on consumption expenditure various estimates of the extent of poverty have been made Minhas, Dandekar and Rath, Bardhan and Ahluwalia. But due to the differences in their concept of poverty, their results very widely. Let us now discuss the findings of these estimates.

#### **Ojha’s Estimate of Poverty**

Ojha (2010) has estimated the number of persons below the poverty line on the basis of an average calorie intake of 2,250 per capita per day. In Ojha’s word “compared, to 1960-61, the nutritional deficiency in rural areas widened considerably in 1967-68. As compared to only 52% of the rural population in 1960-61, 70% of the population in 1967-68 was to be below the poverty level”

### **Dandekar and Rath's Estimated of poverty**

Dandekar and Rath's (1971) Estimate the poverty line taking 2,250 calories as desired minimum level of nutrition. In their estimate they concluded that 40% of the rural population and a little more than 50% of the urban population live below the poverty line.

### **B. S. Minhas' Estimate of Poverty**

Estimate made by B. S. Minhas (1974) on the basis NSS data reveals that if one regards the level of capita annual expenditure of Rs. 240 as the minimum, then in 1967-68, 50.6% of the populations live below poverty line.

Bardhan (2009) estimates the poverty line considering Rs. 15 per capita per month at 1960-61 prices for the rural poverty line and Rs. 18 for the urban line. Bardhan estimated that the percentage of population below poverty line rose from 38% in 1960-61 to 55% in 1968-69.

### **Ahluwalia's Estimate of Poverty**

Ahluwalia (2005) estimates the poverty line by taking poverty line of Rs. 15 per month at 1960-61 prices for rural areas and Rs. 20 per month for urban area. He estimates that in 1973-74, about 46.1% of rural population was below the poverty line.

### **Tendulkar's Estimate of Poverty**

According to the Planning Commission, in 2011-12 for rural areas, the national poverty line by using the Tendulkar (2013) methodology is estimated at Rs.816 per capita per month in villages and Rs.1,000 per capita per month in cities. This would mean that the persons whose consumption of goods and services exceed Rs. 33.33 in cities and Rs.27.20 per capita per day in villages are not poor. The Commission said that for a family of five, the all India poverty line in terms of consumption expenditure would amount of Rs. 4,080 per month in rural areas and Rs.5,000 per month in urban areas. The poverty line however will vary from state to state.

The percentage of persons below poverty line in 2011-12 has been estimated at 25.7% in rural areas, 13.7% in urban areas and 21.9% for the country as a whole. The percentage of persons below poverty line in 2004-05 was 41.8% in rural areas, 25.7% in cities and 37.2% in the country as a whole. This estimate shows that the poverty ratio in the country has declined to 21.9% in 2011-12 from 37.2% in 2004-05 on account of increase in per capita consumption.

### **Gupta's Estimation of Povert**

Gupta (1997) followed the conceptual methodology recommended by Planning Commission appointed Expert Group. S. P. Gupta estimates of poverty show that poverty has increased in the 1990 and the incidence of poverty in 1998 in the rural areas was as high as 45.58%. in urban areas it was 45.25%, it shows that there was no significant decline in poverty even in urban areas during the post-reform period.

### **55<sup>th</sup> Round NSSO Estimation of Poverty**

By using the 55<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO (1999- June 2000) data covering the period July 1999 to June 2000, two separate estimations have been made by Planning Commission. According to these estimates poverty declined from 54.9% in 1973-74 to 26.1% in 1999-2000. It is expected that it will become 19.3% in 2007.

#### **5. 1. 4. Causes of Poverty**

Poverty is not a thing given by nature. It is produced by the human beings in the process of development. The causes of poverty are understood differently by different people. Some of the important causes are —

##### **(a) Poverty is the Result of Fate**

According to this understanding, poverty is considered as predetermined. It is fixed by God and it is beyond the control of man. It is understood as a punishment by the poor themselves.

##### **(b) Over-population**

Over-population is another cause of poverty. Over-population creates many problems such as food shortage, housing shortage, inflation, rising unemployment, high rate of illiteracy, etc. It lowers the per capita income of the family as well as the standard of living of the people. According to Malthus poorer are responsible for their poverty and misery because they have failed to restrict their numbers.

##### **(c) Poverty is the Consequence of Class-exploitation**

Society is divided between the rich and the poor, between the strong and the weak, between the haves and have-not, between the privileged and the unprivileged and between the elites and masses. There is a constant conflict between the two classes. The formers always exploit the later and as a result they cannot improve their conditions.

**(d) Illiteracy**

Illiteracy is the number one cause of poverty. Illiterate peoples are generally fatalist. They consider their children as the gift of God. They do not accept the family planning programme and considers it to be a curse. Uneducated and illiterate people are not interested in scientific education.

**(e) Backwardness is the Cause of Poverty**

Technological backwardness, communicational backwardness, educational backwardness etc. are other causes of poverty. People suffering from these cannot improve their condition and efficiency and hence the low-standard of living.

**(f) Poverty is Caused by Insufficient Capital**

Another cause of poverty is insufficient capital. Capital formation depends on savings and savings depend on income. If the income is low then people is unable to start new business and cannot improve their entrepreneurial activities which will uplift their standard of living in future.

**(g) Injustice and Unjust Social Order**

Poverty is the result of injustice and unjust social order. It is a historically created condition. It is the making of man and of the institutions created by man in history.

**(h) Joint Family System**

In a joint family system, most of the members are only parasites and they have to be supported by only one or two earning members. Thus, unemployment and disguised unemployment become rampant. The consequence is poverty.

**(i) Faulty Educational System**

Faulty educational system which is neither production-oriented nor job-oriented is another major cause of poverty. It is simply aggravating unemployment which ultimately creates poverty. Datta Ray, Mazhari, Passah, and Pandey (2000) state that Galbriath in 1969 outlined the flowing factors which were considered to be probable causes of poverty.

- i. The people are poor because they prefer it that way.
- ii. The country is naturally poor.
- iii. The country is poor because of colonial oppression.

- iv. Poverty is the consequence of class-exploitation.
- v. Poverty is caused by insufficient capital.
- vi. Over-population is the causes of poverty.
- vii. Poverty is caused by incompetent policy.
- viii. Poverty is caused by ignorance.

### **5. 1. 5. Causes and Consequences of Poverty of Scheduled Caste People of Dhubri District**

Causes and Consequences of poverty of Scheduled Caste people of Dhubri District are based on empirical study. No data is available for that. So this chapter is completely based on field data.

Majority of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are poverty victim. The causes of the poverty victim are close inter-linkages between socio-cultural and economic factors. They are as follows:

#### **(A) Socio-cultural Factors**

##### **(i) Joint Family System**

Joint family system is still prevailing among the Scheduled Castes people of this region. This characteristic is also seen among the other communities of this region. In Scheduled Castes joint family, the number of children is always ignored. Poverty is widespread in a Scheduled Castes joint family because in such a family, a person always welcomes further additions to his family size to supplement his family income. This large number of children creates a heavy burden on the income of the family. Thus, lack of knowledge rather than lack of willingness are the main obstacles to the spread of poverty among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district.

##### **(ii) Universality and Practice of Early Marriage**

Marriage is universal among the Scheduled Castes people of this region. In general unmarried men and women of this community do not enjoy a respectable social status in the society. Thus, almost all men and women of marriageable age of this community enter into wed lock.

Again, Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district used to marry at an early age. This early marriage is a common characteristic of this community which gives them a longer span of reproductive activity. It is likely that between 15 to 20 years of age every 8 out of 10 girls are married. Thus, the early marriage is a very common factor for the high rate of growth of population among this community.

Again, the puberty of women starts at an early age of about 15 due to tropical climate. Thus, women in this region start fertilizing very soon after they enter reproduction stages. This creates large number of births.

### **(iii) Illiteracy**

Illiteracy is very high among the Scheduled Castes people of this region. Illiteracy is very high due to poorness. Children without getting educational facilities start to help their parents in work and raise the family earnings and, therefore, prove to be assets to the family. Female children are confined to the kitchen rather than going to school. When the children of the poor Scheduled Castes people cannot go to school for education and instead have to work in the fields of landlords and look after their cattle, there are very slim chances that such children when they grow up will be able to break the vicious circle of poverty in future.

### **(iv) Superstition**

In Dhubri district, majority of the Scheduled Castes people are fatalist. They consider their children as the gift of God. They believe that God has created them and given two hands, two legs and a mouth to feed. As a result, they produce children one by one. They do not understand the effect of large family on the income of the family.

People belonging to this community are ignorant about biology of reproduction, need of birth control and devices of birth control. They consider family planning program to be a curse, as this is against the God's will. As a result, they create large number of births whose ultimate result is wide spread poverty.

### **(v) Dowry System**

Dowry system is still prevailing among the Scheduled Castes people of this region. This system is also prevailing among the other communities of Dhubri district. People of this community have to offer gold, wooden furniture and other things as dowry in their daughter's marriage. In some cases, the groom party demand hand cash and other costly articles like bike, car, colour television, refrigerator etc. In such a situation, the father of the bride is

compelled to sell his property for collecting money. When this phenomenon is happens in case of poor Scheduled Castes, they become helpless and as a result they loss everything within a night and become poorer. Therefore, this dowry system is one of the most important causes of poverty of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district.

#### **(vi) Various Festivals**

Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are very joyous. Like other people, Scheduled Castes people of this region are admirer of festivity. They observe various traditional festivals in a year. Some of the colourful festivals are Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Kati Puja, Manosha Puja, Shitola Puja, Hoodum Puja, Ganga Puja, Dol Puja etc. Some of these festivals are very expensive and continue to two/ three/ four and more days. During to the festival days, people of this community used to purchase new cloths for their children and for themselves and remain workless till the end of the festivals.

#### **(vii) Exploitation by Other Communities**

The Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are very poor. They are ignorant and uneducated. The non- Scheduled Castes people of this region are always taking opportunity to cheat them. They are always depriving them from their legal right. There is a tendency among the poor Scheduled Castes people of this region to keep their young boys and girls as domestic servant in the house of rich non-Scheduled Castes people on monthly wage basis. This tendency is more among the girls as compared to boys. They are working in a minimum wage, i.e. rupees five hundred to rupees eight hundred per month.

#### **(viii) Influx of Outsiders on the Traditional Occupation of Scheduled Castes**

Fishing is an important occupation of Kaibarta, Jalia, Namasudra and Jhalo-malo communities of Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district. Earlier, fish catching and selling was exclusively done by the above communities only. They were satisfied with their occupation and easily earned their livelihood which was enough to look after their families. But now, other communities mainly Muslim have taken over this age-old trade from the indigenous fishermen communities of this region

### **(B) Economic Factors**

#### **(i) Unemployment**

Employment is admittedly a strong power lever to boost up the socio-economic conditions of a community. The Scheduled Castes Community is, however, in this respect in a

bad shape. Unemployment at the moment is chronic problem in the country as a whole and the weaker sections of the community are worst victims. The picture of employment of Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district is very pathetic. In this district, there is no big or small industry. The Scheduled Castes people of this area are completely dependent on state Government service. But majority of them are unable to compete with other castes people. Only a few persons are able to succeed. But both The Central Government and the State Government of Assam have made arrangements for reservation of services and posts in favour of the Scheduled Castes on the basis of population. For Assam it is 7%. A negligible portion of Scheduled Castes people of this region are getting government jobs on the basis of reservation quota mainly on Grade III and Grade IV categories.

#### **(ii) Minimum Wage Rate**

As per our primary data collection, the average daily wage rate of skilled, unskilled and other agricultural labours is very low in rural areas of Dhubri district. In some areas, this average rate is less than the state's average rate. And this mostly happens in Scheduled Castes dominated areas of Dhubri district. The reason is that the number of the work seekers is huge in this area as compare to work provider. As a result, they are compell to work in less wages rather than remain workless.

#### **(iii) Indebtedness**

Indebtedness is another chronic remarkable problem amongst the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district as in other areas of Assam. The rural Scheduled Castes people are very poor. Their income is very low and therefore they cannot save money. As per our primary data collection, 50% of the rural Scheduled Castes families is in chronic indebtedness. They usually take loan from village Mahajan on high rate of interest (monthly interest basis) to start small business. Almost lion share of profit of their business goes on recovery of their loan and therefore they cannot improve their economic condition

#### **(iv) Lack of Skilled Personnel**

The Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district is also suffering from an acute shortage of skilled labour. Most of the labours are unskilled. They are unable to compete with the machine made goods. Earlier the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district used to produce some particular earthen pots for cooking and other use for the common people which have been replaced now by modern metallic utensils and equipments available in the market.

#### **(v) Lack of Entrepreneurial and Managerial Talents**

About the availability of entrepreneurial and managerial talents among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district, the picture is very gloomy. There is lack of initiatives and entrepreneurship among the Scheduled Castes people on the part of local talents to start a new industries within the region for which there is sufficient development potential.

#### **(vi) Geographical Isolation of the District and it's Difficult Terrain**

Geographical isolation is a characteristic feature which always goes against the development strategy of this area. From the very early period this area was neglected by the state government partly due to its geographical isolation which restricted capital flow into the development of this area. Further, lack of contact, lack of attention and lack of close supervision by the state as well as centre are all the results of geographical isolation of this area.

### **5. 1. 6. The Sample Population**

The size of population shapes the quality of life in terms of level of income, education, type of family, family size, infant mortality, life expectancy, etc. Socio-economic and cultural aspects of population growth constitute an important area of study in the developing countries like India. These countries are either at the pre-demographic transitional phase or in the transitional phase. We should comprehend the nature of and the factors affecting population growth, so that suitable intervention could be made to achieve the desired results.

The socio-economic and demographic factor that determine the demographic behavior and socio-economic condition of a group of population are education, income, type of family, family size, age of marriage of the wife etc.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to visualize the present socio-economic and demographic life of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district.

#### **Education**

Educational attainment of the people is one of the three components of the Human Development Index (HDI) prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Education is one of the important indirect or distant variables affecting demographic behavior concerning marriage, fertility, mortality, migration as well as participation in the labour force. Uneducated people do not realize the bed effect of unreasonably expanded families on the

standard of living. They are ignorant and do not know about the methods of contraception for restricting the size of the family. Education takes longer time for settlement in life. Therefore, educated people marry at a late age and thus, their fertility is reduced. Education makes people more conscious about the standard of living. If an educated people is confronted with the choice of either a boy or a car, the couple will prefer a car to a boy, provided the couple is more standard of living conscious. Educated women are more free and may have several duties outside the home or may be engaged in service. They may be spending more of their time outside their home. Therefore, they do not have much time to look after their expanded families. Thus, they prefer smaller families. Similarly educated mothers are able to judge the seriousness of an illness and thus can arrange appropriate modern treatment for a sick child in time. Educated families are well informed about the nutrition and hygiene and their understanding of rational child feeding and child care can prevent some of the most common infant and childhood diseases. Hence, paternal education (particularly of mothers) is regarded as one of the important variables influencing both fertility and mortality. Kerala is a case in this point. Also, in most of the northern states, where women are professionally engaged, fertility rate is quite low.

According to Caldwell and MacDonald (1981), “mother’s education is a powerful tool which helps them in breaking some of the traditional norms and makes them relatively more independent in taking decision about the family situation.

The rapid decline in fertility and infant mortality in Bangladesh and Indonesia in the past two decades and the decline in fertility in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in India in the 1980s and 1990s are primarily due to increasing female education.

Adhak (1996). also found that the infant and childhood mortality is higher among the illiterate women than that of the literates.

Kisher and Bernet (1970), Mohendra and James (2002), Mhloye (1991), Gbolahan (1985) and Aziz, & Khan (1992). state that education of women plays an important role in declining fertility both in India and Bangladesh.

The Mysore Population Study (U.N.O.,1961) reveals that the average number of children born to women in Bangalore city who were illiterate or educated up to middle standard was higher than that of women who were educated up to high school level.

Retherford, Robert and Romesh (1996), Bharati (1990). Hussain (1970), Ruzicka and Kanitkar (1986), Bhagat and Purjit (2005) study in Maharashtra found that among all other

socio-economic factors, female education is considered to be one of the important factors influencing fertility.

Female education also plays an important role in determining fertility among the Muslims. Rajan (2005), Jain (1981) and Janowitz (1976) state that in states and union territories with lower Muslim fertility invariably have higher female literacy and those states with high Muslim fertility compared to Hindu, have low female literacy levels. Thus, female education can be used as an influencing variable in fertility transition among the Muslims.

Kulkarni & Minja (1998) have observed that educated women are not only favourably associated with family planning devices, but also use modern contraceptives as compared to the illiterate and less educated women

Arnold and Kanitkar (1998), Mukherjee and Sing (1961), Driver (1963), Ghosh (1987), Rele (1982), Koko (1987), Zachariah (1984), Cochrane (1988), Dreze and Murthy (2001), Chakraborty (1996), Sharmah Thakur (2001), Das (2001), Chakrabort (1988), Sharmah (1991), Goswami (1998) and Borah (2005) have supported that female literacy greatly influence the fertility level of a couple.

Still, there is another group of economists, who state that it is not the education of the female but the educational and cultural environment that determines how many children a couple should have. Individuals are not the sole decision-makers in this regard. Guilmo and Rajan (2001) state that it is not the individual characteristics like education, rather than the place in which a women live that matters more in the decision on the number of children. No matter the couple is poor and illiterate, living in a certain geographical area under a particular setting itself results in fewer number of children being born to the couples.

Munchi and Myaux (2000) state education may influence the fertility of an individual, but not the community as a whole.

Bhat and Rajan (1990) have shown that the illiterate women in Kerela have fewer children as compared to the illiterate women in Madhya Pradesh and any other parts of India. So, education is not the only factor influencing fertility, it depends on the other factors as well.

Betillie (2003) argues that the recent fertility transition in many developing countries is increasingly getting attention as it does not confirm to economic and social development. Economic factors become poor indicators of recent fertility decline.

The above analysis shows that the level of education especially the women is an important, if not sole, determinant of fertility of a population. Therefore, it is necessary to find out the present status of education of the sample households in general and of the respondents in particular, to study the demographic behavior and income of the sample population (Scheduled Castes).

Table: 5. 1 shows the educational qualification of sample husband and wives.

**Table: 5. 1**  
**Level of Education of the Sample Husbands and Wives**

Sl No	Level of Education	Number of Sample Husbands	Percentage	Number of Sample Wives	Percentage
1	Illiterate	82	34.17	112	46.67
2	Literate up to Lower Primary Level ( Class I to V)	54	22.50	38	15.83
3	Literate up to Upper Primary Level (Class VI to VIII)	24	10.00	50	20.83
4	Literate up to Secondary Level (IX to X)	62	25.83	32	13.33
5	Literate up to Higher Secondary Level (XI to XII)	16	6.67	8	3.33
6	Graduate	2	0.83	Nil	—
7	Post-graduate	Nil	—	Nil	—
8	Technical Education	Nil	—	Nil	—
9	Vocational Education	Nil	—	Nil	—
10	Total	240	100.00	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 1 shows that illiteracy among the sample wives is more than the sample husbands. Illiteracy among the sample husbands is 34.17 percent and illiteracy among the sample wives is 46.67 percent. 15.83 percent of the sample women have received lower primary education while 22.50 percent of the sample husbands have received lower primary education. The number of the sample wives who have received upper primary education is more than the sample husbands who have received upper primary education. It is 20.83 percent for sample wives and 10.00 percent for sample husbands. In case of secondary level of education, 25.83 percent sample husbands have received secondary education while only 13.33 percent sample wives received the same. Only 3.33 percent of sample wives have received higher secondary level of education and it is 6.67 percent in case of sample husbands. Only a very small portion of sample husbands 0.83 percent have found to be graduate while it is zero in case of sample wives. It is interesting to note that either any one of the sample husbands or any one of the sample wives has found who received post-graduation, technical education and vocational education. Over all, the scenario of education among the sample husbands and wives is very pathetic. Therefore, the Scheduled Castes people of this locality have not yet realized the influence of education on fertility, mortality, attitude to additional children, knowledge and practice of family planning etc.

The educational status of the children of sample couples is shown in the Table: 5. 2

**Table: 5. 2**  
**Educational Status of Children of the Sample Couples**

Level of Education	Male Children	Percentage	Female Children	Percentage
Not starting education (Age group: 0-5 years)	24	11.88	10	5.00
Illiterate (Never gone School)	12	5.94	14	7.00
Attending in Lower Primary Schools ( Class I to V)	88	43.56	72	36.00
Attending in Upper Primary Schools (Class VI to VIII)	21	10.40	50	25.00
Attending in Secondary	26	12.87	42	21.00

Schools (Class IX to X)				
Attending in Higher Secondary Schools (Class XI to XII)	18	8.91	8	4.00
Attending in Colleges	10	4.95	4	2.00
Attending in Universities	1	0.50	Nil	—
Attending in Technical Education	2	0.99	Nil	—
Attending in Vocational Education	Nil	—	Nil	—
Total	202	100.00	200	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table: 5. 2 reveals that 11.88 percent male and 5.00 percent female children of sample couples have not yet started their education. They belong to age group between 0-5 years. Likewise 5.94 percent male and 7.00 percent female children have never gone to school. They are totally illiterate. The highest percentage of male and female children of sample area has attending in lower primary school. It is 43.56 percent for male and 36 percent for female. Similarly, 10.40 percent male and 25.00 percent female have attended in upper primary school. 12.87 percent male and 21.00 percent female are attending in secondary level of education where as it is 8.91 percent male and 4.00 percent female in case of higher secondary level of education. The college going children is very low among them. It is 4.95 percent for male and 2.00 percent for female. In our survey area, it is found that only one 0.50 percent male student and no one female student is studying in university. Like that only 0.99 percent male and no female children are attending in technical education. Neither female nor male children are found in survey area who is receiving vocational education.

**Table: 5. 3**  
**Status of Dropped out Children of Sample Couples**

Number of Male Children		Percentage	Number of Female Children		Percentage	Number of Male and Female Children		Percentage
Dropped out	73	36.14	Dropped out	42	21	Dropped out	115	28.61
Total	202		Total	200		Total	402	

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 3 shows the status of dropped out children of sample couples. The percentage of dropped out children at various levels of education is 28.61 percent considering the students as dropped out who have left the education before graduation. The percentage of male dropped out is higher in comparison to female dropped out. It is 36.14 percent for male and 21 percent for female. The reason is that the female children are generally married at an early age. The parents are generally started searching bridges for their daughters after 14 or 15 years of age. The status of dropped out at different levels of education is discussed below.

**Table: 5. 4**  
**Distribution of Dropped out Children of Sample Couples**

Sl No	Status of Dropped out Children	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total (Male & Female)	Percentage
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Dropped out at lower primary level	16	21.92	14	33.33	30	26.08
2	Dropped out at upper primary level	26	35.62	10	23.81	36	31.30

3	Dropped out at secondary level	17	23.29	12	28.57	29	25.22
4	Dropped out at higher secondary level	10	13.69	4	9.52	14	12.17
5	Dropped out at college level	4	5.48	2	4.76	6	5.22
6	Total	73	100	42	100	115	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 4 reveals that the percentage of dropped out children is higher at upper primary level than the lower primary level. It is 31.30 percent for upper primary level and 26.08 percent for lower primary level. Similarly, the dropped out at secondary level is almost double than the dropped out at higher secondary level. It is 25.22 percent for secondary level and 12.17 percent for higher secondary level. The reason is that after completion of secondary level of education the parents of poor Scheduled Castes people engage their children in earning activities. The dropped out of college going children is 5.22 percent among them.

In case of male dropped out, the highest male dropped out is at upper primary level 35.62 percent followed by the secondary level 23.29 percent. Likewise, the male dropped out at primary, higher secondary and college level are 21.92 percent, 13.69 percent and 5.48 percent respectively.

The female dropped out is higher at lower primary level which is 33.33 percent. The reason is the neglect of girl children. The rate of dropped out at upper primary (23.81 percent) and secondary level (28.57 percent) is also high because at this stages the girl children are confined at home for cooking purposes. The female dropped out at higher secondary and college level is 9.52 percent and 4.76 percent. A small proportion of girl children of poor Scheduled Castes are going to college are also worst sufferer.

There are mainly two reasons for lower dropped out at college level. Firstly, only those students move for higher education which have the ability to somehow manage the expenditure of higher education by their parent. Secondly, only meritorious students move for higher education. It is seen from the field study that the tendency is more among the students who are less meritorious to leave the education after passing 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> standard.

While conducting field survey we also tried to find out the reasons for dropped out of students at different level of education. Table: 5. 5 shows the reasons for dropped out of students at different level of education.

**Table: 5. 5**  
**Reasons for Dropped Out at Different Level of Education**

Sl No	Dropped out due to	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total (Male & Female)	Percentage
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Financial crisis	28	66.66	41	80.39	69	74.19
2	Failure	12	28.58	9	17.65	21	22.58
3	Sickness	2	4.76	1	1.96	3	3.23
4	Total	42	100	51	100	93	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 5 shows the reasons for dropped out of children of sample couples. From table it is clear that huge percentage of children of sample couples has dropped out at different levels of education due to financial crisis. Out of total dropped out, 74.19 percent children have dropped out due to financial crisis. The reason is that the poor Scheduled Castes people consider their children as asset. When they grow up and liable to contribute to work, then they are generally engaged to work to increase the family income instead of sending school. Again, the percentage of dropped out children due to financial crisis is high among the female children than the male children. It is 80.39 percent for female and 66.66 percent for male. One reason is that the female children are generally neglected with the ideology that one day they will have to give marry and will go to other's house. The other reason is that the female children are confined at home for cooking purposes and look after their small kids in absence of their parents.

Similarly, out of total dropped out children, 22.58 percent has dropped out due to failure. Out of total male and female dropped out, 28.58 percent male and 17.65 percent

female children have dropped out due to failure. The rate of dropped out due to failure is very high at the secondary level of education for both male and female children.

In our survey area, the rate of dropped out due to sickness is found to be very negligible. It is 4.76 percent for male and 1.96 percent for female when compared with the total male and total female dropped out children.

### **Income**

Income is an important background determinant of economic condition of a family. Standard of living, consumption pattern, access to medical treatment as well as family planning devices depends on the income level of the family. It is generally said that higher income is related to lower fertility and lower mortality. In the low income families, children are treated as asset. Therefore, large number of children are always well come in these families which decreases the per-capita income of these families. As a result, standard of living is low in these families. On the other hand, the standard of living is high in the higher income families. Families with higher income can provide better and immediate medical facilities to the sick children which reduce infant and child mortality.

Leibenstein (1957), Coale and Hoover (1958), Friedman (1959), Rele (1982), Reddy (2005), Spengler (1982), Visaria (1999), Bardhan and Srivastava (2002) Sundaram and Tendulkar (2005) Borg (1989) Birdsall and Jamison (1983) have found negative relationship between income and fertility.

A study conducted (2005) by the Department of economics, Dibrugarh University, Assam have found negative relationship between income and fertility level among the tea garden labours and Bodo women in Assam.

In an article, Choudhury (2006) states that poverty as well as low income is one of the main determinants of higher fertility in North-East India.

On the other hand, Chakraborty (1994) Choudhury (1977), Freedman and Thornton (1982) have found no significant relationship between income and fertility.

From the above discussion, it is clear that income plays an important role in determining the standard of living, consumption pattern and fertility of a couple. In the present study the sample households have been distributed on the basis of total monthly income and per capita monthly income.

**Table: 5. 6**  
**Distribution of Sample Households by Total Family Income (Monthly)**

Sl No	Level of Family Income (Per Month)	Number of Households	Percentage
1	Up to Rs. 1000	38	15.83
2	Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2000	81	33.75
3	Rs. 2001 to Rs. 3000	42	17.50
4	Rs. 3001 to Rs. 4000	25	10.42
5	Rs. 4001 to Rs. 5000	23	9.58
6	Rs. 5001 to Rs. 6000	10	4.17
7	Rs. 6001 to Rs. 7000	6	2.50
8	Rs. 7001 to Rs. 8000	4	1.67
9	Rs. 8001 to Rs. 9000	2	0.83
10	Rs. 9001 to Rs. 10000	3	1.25
11	Rs. 10000 +	6	2.50
12	Total	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014

It is generally difficult to measure the income and expenditure of the rural mass as they do not maintain the records of income and expenditure and they do not have any regular source of income except the salary earners. The income of the people varies from season to season and time to time. In calculating the average monthly income of a sample family under the present study, summation of money wage earned through primary and secondary sources by the husbands, the wives and the other members of the family and imputed money value of the household products have been taken into account.

Table: 5. 6 reveals that 15.83 percent of sample households have monthly income of less than Rs.1000 or up to Rs. 1000.00. They are very low income group and have no way to

earn money. They are generally beggar, widow, old and sick persons. They are generally old persons and have lost their manpower for doing hard work. They are passing their life by doing some low profitable business like begging, wood selling, muri and chira selling etc.

33.75 percent and 17.50 percent of sample households have monthly income of less than Rs. 2000.00 and Rs. 3000.00 or up to Rs. 2000.00 or Rs.3000.00 respectively which is not sufficient to meet the necessary expenditure of a family with two or three children. They are generally un-skilled labours and have no permanent plot of land for agriculture. Again, they are unable to get the work throughout the month. They usually get work 15 to 20 days in a month and remain workless in rest of the days of the month.

10.42 percent, 9.58 percent and 4.17 percent of sample households have monthly income of less than Rs.4000.00, Rs.5000.00 and Rs.6000.00 or up to Rs.4000.00, Rs. 5000.00 and Rs. 6000.00 respectively. They are generally skill labours and have permanent source of income. Besides, some of them have small plot of land for agriculture.

2.50 percent, 1.67 percent and 0.83 percent of sample households have monthly income of less than Rs.7000.00, Rs.8000.00 and Rs.9000.00 or up to Rs.7000.00, Rs. 8000.00 and Rs. 9000.00 respectively. They have some additional source of income besides permanent source of income. They have also some plot of own land for agriculture.

1.25 percent and 2.50 percent of sample households have monthly income of less than Rs.10000.00 or up to Rs.10000.00 and Rs.10000.00 and above respectively. They are generally service holders, pensioners, established businessmen etc.

**Table: 5. 7**  
**Distribution of the Households by Per Capita Family Income (Monthly)**

Sl No	Per Capita Family Income (Per Month)	Number of Household	Percentage
1	Up to Rs. 100	21	8.75
2	Rs. 101 to Rs. 200	22	9.17
3	Rs. 201 to Rs. 300	28	11.66
4	Rs. 301 to Rs. 400	27	11.25

5	Rs. 401 to Rs. 500	41	17.08
6	Rs. 501 to Rs. 600	27	11.24
7	Rs. 601 to Rs. 700	20	8.33
8	Rs. 701 to Rs. 800	13	5.45
9	Rs. 801 to Rs. 900	9	3.75
10	Rs. 901 to Rs. 1000	11	4.58
11	Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2000	12	5.00
	Rs. 2001+	9	3.75
12	Total	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

In Table: 5.7, sample households have been presented on the basis of per capita monthly income (computed by dividing the total monthly family income by the total number of members of the family). Per capita income is the only basis with which the economic condition of a family can be studied. It is found that 82.93 percent of the households have per capita income of less than Rs.800.00 or up to Rs. 800.00 per month. Only 17.08 percent or slightly less households have per capita monthly income of more than Rs. 816.00. According to the Planning Commission (2011-12, Tendulkar's Methodology), people living in the rural areas whose per capita monthly income is less than Rs.816.00 are treated as poor. In the sample villages, more than 82.93 percent households live below the poverty line which is much more than the state average.

### **APL and BPL families**

On the basis of income, the sample households are divided into two groups viz. APL and BPL families. The APL families are provided district ration cards for issuance of APL rice, kerosen oil, sugar and iodized salt as per quantum of allocation in each month. The BPL families are provided BPL cards for issuance of PDS items at subsidized rates. Besides, the Government of Assam is also providing various facilities to the BPL families like dwelling house under IAY scheme, tube well, well, electricity, gas etc. for improving their economic condition.

Table: 5. 8 shows the number of APL and BPL families of the sample households.

**Table: 5. 8**  
**Number of APL and BPL Families of the Sample Households**

Sl No	Type of Families	Number of Families	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	APL Families	37	15.42
2	BPL Families	203	84.58
3		240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 8 reveals that out of 240 Scheduled Castes families, only 15.24 percent families belong to APL category (above poverty line) and rest 84.58 percent families belong to BPL category (below poverty line). So, in survey area it is found that majority of the families belong to BPL category.

### **Type of Family**

Family is a basic social organization which directly or indirectly influences the economic condition and demographic behaviour of the couples. In Indian society there are two types of families. One is joint family and another is nuclear family. The normative pattern of family in India is an extended family or joint type where more than one married couples live together in a dwelling. A nuclear family, on the other hand, comprises of a man, his wife and his unmarried children and in a few instances one or more such persons as widowed mother, father or sister.

It is generally believed that fertility in a joint family is higher than that of a nuclear family. Frank (1954) and Ramu (1989) state that the number of children in a joint family is higher than the nuclear family. Their argument is based on extended family's ability to extend financial support and help in child rearing to the newly married couples.

Similarly, Mukhapadhaya (2000) has noticed that in Karnataka, fertility in the joint families is higher than the nuclear families.

But quite a good number of researchers have found an inverse result. Mahadevan (1979) and Agrawalla (1964) have found that the wives of the nuclear families have higher fertility than those of the joint families.

Nag (1967) has also concluded that fertility in nuclear families is higher than the extended families because of higher coitus frequency.

Gayal (1974), Chatterjee (1979), Coale (1960), Sadik (1966), Eva (1972), Mukherjee (1962) Pott and Dutt (1958) Blake (1961) and in Assam, Goswami (2000) and in Arunachal Pradesh Borah (2001) have also found that the nuclear families have higher fertility.

But, Driver (1963) has stated that the role of family type in influencing the fertility level is significant.

While studying the relationship between family type and mortality, Adak (1996) argued that the extended families have higher infant mortality than the nuclear families among the Khasi women of Meghalaya.

Table: 5. 9 shows the distribution of sample households by the type of family.

**Table: 5. 9**

**Distribution of Sample Households by Family Type**

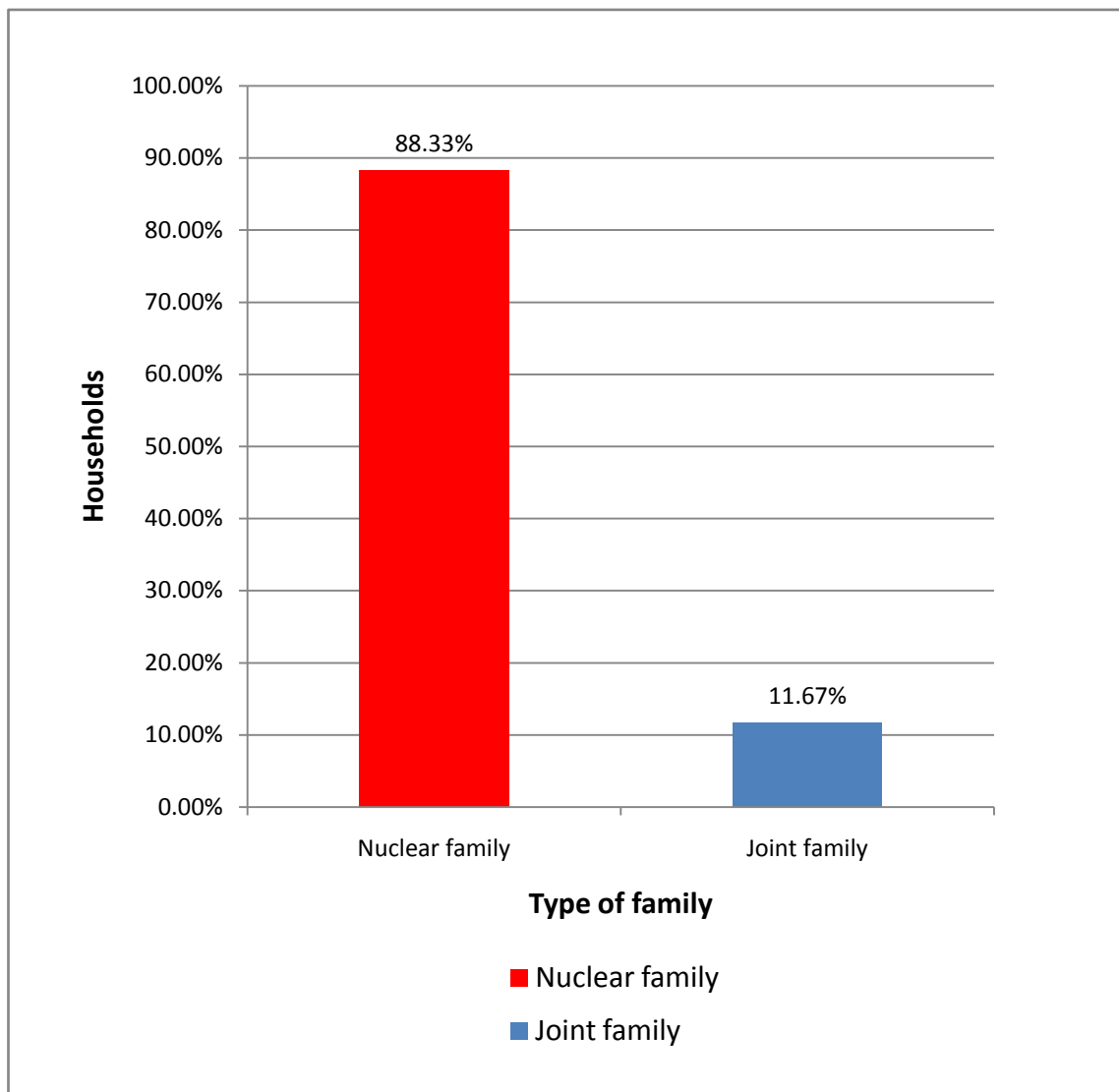
Sl. No	Type of Family	Number of Sample Households	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	Nuclear family	212	88.33
2	Joint family	28	11.67
3	Total	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 9 shows that the dominant form of family structure in the sample villages is nuclear, i.e. 88.33 percent of the total households belong to nuclear family and only 11.67 percent of the total households belong to joint family. One reason of greater number of nuclear families is the quarrel among the family members mainly among the wives with the issue of earning. Another reason of greater number of nuclear families may be due to gradual breakup of the joint families.

Type of family of the survey area is shown in the diagram: Fig. 5. 1 below

## Type of Family of the Survey Area



**Fig: 5.1**

The relationship between type of family and number of live birth is shown in Table: 5. 10

**Table: 5. 10**  
**Type of Family and Number of Live Births**

Type of Family		Number of Live Births								Total	Number of Live Births per 100 Respondents
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6			
Nuclear	Number of Respondents	7	22	58	44	24	12	6	173	267.05	
	Number of Live Births	0	22	116	132	96	60	36	462		
Joint	Number of Respondents	4	6	9	12	16	12	8	67	346.27	
	Number of Live Births	0	6	18	36	64	60	48	232		
Total	Number of Respondents	11	28	67	56	40	24	14	240	289.17	
	Number of Live Births	0	50	134	168	160	120	50	694		

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 10 shows that the number of live births per 100 women residing in the joint families is higher (346.27) than those of the nuclear families (267.05).

### Family Size

In the common parlance, family size refers to the total number of persons in a family, but in demography, family size refers to the total number of children a couple bears in their reproductive period. Family size may influence the fertility, mortality, standard of living and consumption pattern of the couples. According to Frank (1954), the size of a family is associated with the nature of the work. Some occupation may call for a bigger family which is one of the main causes of the predominance of joint families in the rural agricultural sector where fertility is found to be higher than the other sectors. Agrawal's (1970) study has found

7.37 live births among the cultivators as against 6.63 of the service holders. Adak (1996) has also found that the Khasi women having more than 10 live births showed the highest percentage of infant and child mortality than the others having less than.

Table: 5. 11 shows the distribution of the sample household by family size.

**Table: 5. 11**  
**Distribution of Sample Households by Family Size**

Sl No	Family Size	Number of Households	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	1-2	16	6.67
2	3-4	84	35.00
3	5-6	72	30.00
4	7-8	48	20.00
5	9-10	14	5.83
6	11 +	6	2.50
7	Total	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 11 shows that out of 240 sample households, 35 percent households have family members of 3-4 which is the predominant family size. These families include only one or two children besides the couple. Similarly, 30.00 percent of the sample households have family members of 5-6 which is near to the predominant family size. These families generally include three or four children besides the couple. 20 percent sample households have family members of 7-8 which is consists of couple, their three or four children and parent. 5.83 percent sample households have family members of 7-8 which is consists of couple, their three or four children, parent and one or two unmarried brothers and sisters. Only 2.50 percent of the sample households have family members of 11+. This family generally consists of couple, their two-three children, parent and their one or two married brothers along with their children.

## Type of Houses

Housing condition is an important determinant of social and economic status of a family in the society which is indirectly related to income of the family. The modern concept of housing is not only a physical shelter but also an immediate surrounding of it. Besides the shelter, house is a place where a family can develop physically, mentally and socially. A house is healthy if it provides physical protection and shelter, place of cooking and eating, washing and excretory functions, prevention of the spread of communicable diseases, protection from noise, pollution, heat and cold, encourages personal development and mental health. Overcrowded housing condition may disturb couple's privacy which ultimately affects fertility levels. Similarly, high mortality and morbidity rate are observed in those houses where the housing condition is sub-standard. The respiratory infections like whooping cough, tuberculosis, influenza and skin diseases are common among the respondents living in an unhygienic condition.

Housing condition is a qualitative variable and in the study of poverty it is taken as dummy variable. It is also found that the pucca houses in the sample villages have the minimum basic amenities of life as compared to the semi-pucca and kutcha houses. So the housing condition of the pucca houses are assumed as good housing condition and the semi-

Table: 5. 12 shows the distribution of sample households on the basis of type of house.

**Table: 5. 12**

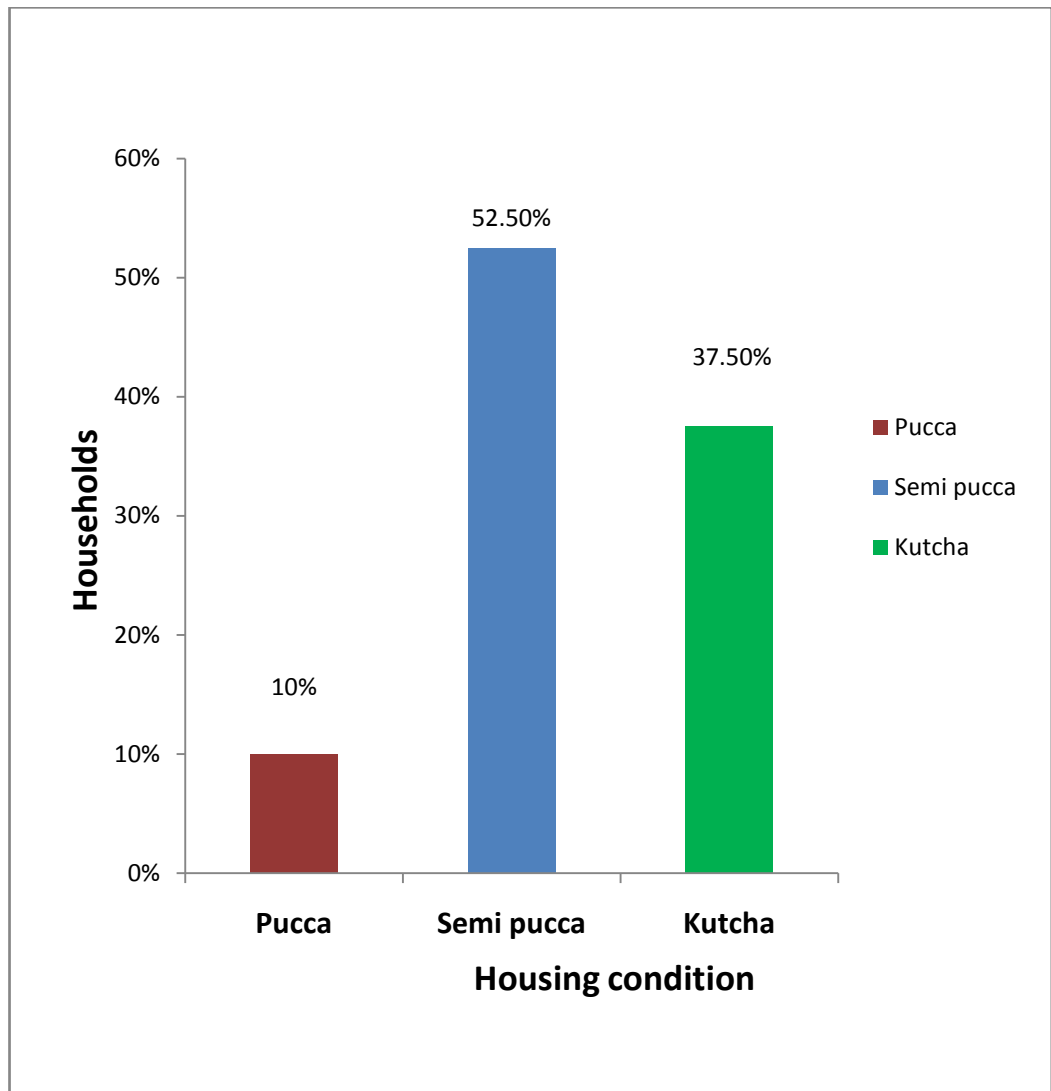
### Distribution of Sample Households by Type of House

Sl No	Housing Condition	Number of Households	Percentage of total Households
	1	2	3
1	Pucca	24	10
2	Semi pucca	126	52.50
3	Kutcha	90	37.50
4	Total	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

It is observed from the table that only 10 percent families of the sample households are living in pucca houses. More than 50 percent families i.e. 52.50 percent families of the sample households are living in semi-pucca houses. Semi-pucca houses are those houses which are given under the IAY scheme (Indra Awaas Yojana) by the government. All the beneficiaries of IAY are living in below poverty line. 37.50 percent families of the sample households are living in kutcha houses. The sample households who are living in kutcha houses also belong to BPL category but they are still unable to get the IAY houses and some of them are in waiting list of receiving the IAY houses. The kutcha houses are made of wood, bamboo, thatch, cane, reed, mud, etc. The kutcha houses have raised earthen plinths with wooden or bamboo poles supporting the thatched roofs. The walls are made of reed or split bamboo plastered with a mixture of mud and cow-dung. Thus, in total (kutcha and semi-pucca) 90 percent families of the sample households are living in below poverty line.

## Housing Condition of Survey Area



**Fig: 5.2**

Distribution of households by housing condition of survey area is given in the Table: 5. 13

**Table: 5. 13**  
**Distribution of the Households by Housing Condition**

Type of Facilities			Number of Families	Percentage
Bathroom	1	Pucca	27	11.25
	2	Kutchha	20	8.33
	3	No Bathroom / open	193	80.42
Source of water	1	Tape (Individual)	6	2.50
	2	Tape (Common)	16	6.67
	3	Well (Individual)	20	8.33
	4	Well (Common)	14	5.83
	5	Tube well (Individual)	118	49.17
	6	Tube well (Common)	38	15.83
	7	Surface water (pond, river, spring)	28	11.67
Latrine	1	Pucca	39	16.25
	2	Kutchha	49	20.42
	3	Open space	152	63.33
Source of lighting	1	Electricity	92	38.33
	2	Kerosene	148	61.67
Source of cooking energy	1	Fire wood & other (Cow-dung)	216	90.00
	2	Kerosene	-----	-----
	3	Gas	24	10.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

In Table: 5.13 the sample population have been distributed in accordance with availability of certain facilities. It appears from the table that the housing condition of the surveyed population is far from satisfactory as most of the households do not enjoy the basic amenities of life, such as pucca bathroom, pucca latrine, pure drinking water, etc.

Table: 5. 13 shows that the percentage of households having pucca bathroom is 11.25 percent. Only 8.33 percent households have kutchha bathroom while 80.42 percent households

don't have any bathroom facilities. Individual hygiene and methods of sanitation play a key role in keeping good health of the people of a community including their children. In the sample villages, only 16.25 percent households have pucca latrines and 20.42 percent households have kutchra latrines. More than 50 percent i.e. 63.33 percent households do not possess latrines and they use the nearby jungles or fields for this purpose. The children use any corner of the courtyard to release the stool.

Only 9.17 percent households have pipe water facilities of which 2.50 percent households have own pipe water facilities and 6.67 percent households have government pipe water facilities which is supplied by the Public Health Department of the state.

Similarly, 14.16 percent households fetch water for household uses from wells of which 8.33 percent households have own wells and 6.67 percent households use common wells which are made by six ring-wells supplied by the government. Again, 49.17 percent households have their own tube wells while 15.83 percent households use common tube wells (supplied by government) which are generally stay in a public place. 11.67 percent of the households are still using surface water (pond, river, spring) for household uses and drinking purposes.

In the surveyed villages, 38.33 percent households have electricity and 61.67 percent households use kerosene for lighting. Regarding the type of fuel used for cooking, fire wood is the most common type. As many as 90 percent households use fire wood and others mainly cow-dung as a source of fuel and only 10 percent households use L.P.G. But it is to be noted that among the L. P. G. connection holder families, few of them have received free government L.P.G. connection under the Randhanjyoti scheme of the government

### **Asset Holding**

Asset holding position of a family depends upon the economic status of that family. Again, the economic status of a family depends upon the income of that family. Larger the income of a family, asset will be larger of that family. Therefore, present asset holding position of a family depicts the poverty victimization picture of that family.

It is generally difficult to give the accurate account of assets of the rural Scheduled Castes people because they do not want to give the actual information of their assets like gold, silver etc. which we cannot want to see for accuracy. From our experience, it is found that majority of the rural Scheduled Castes people tries to conceal their actual assets with the

thinking that if they have showed more assets, they will not get benefit from the government in future.

However, the following table gives an account of some of the assets of sample households which are totally counted by believing in their words and some other assets which are counted from our query and empirical study.

**Table: 5. 14**  
**Status of Assets Holding of Sample Households**

Sl No	Name of Assets	Number of Households	Percentage
1	Car	1	0.42
2	Bike	7	2.92
3	Colour T.V.	32	13.33
4	Refrigerator	2	0.83
5	Bicycle	194	80.83
6	Fan	60	25.00
7	Radio	32	13.33
8	D.V.D / V.C.D.	44	18.33
9	Home theatre	48	20.00
10	Watch	152	63.33
11	Mobile phone	202	84.17
12	Gold	35	14.58
13	Gold below 10 gram	24	10.00
14	Gold above 10 gram	11	4.58
15	Silver	81	33.75
16	Silver below 20 gram	37	15.42
17	Silver above 20 gram	44	18.33

Source: Field Survey, 2014

In Table: 5. 14 the sample populations have been distributed in accordance with availability of their assets holding position. In our surveyed villages, only one household (0.42 percent) is found who has a Maruti 800 car for private use and only two households (0.83 percent) have the refrigerators. Only 13.33 percent, 25 percent, 13.33 percent, 18.33 percent,

and 20 percent households have colour T.V., fan, radio, D.V.D. / V.C.D. and music system respectively. Majority of the households i.e. 80.83 percent and 63.33 percent households have the bicycle and watch respectively for domestic uses. It is surprise that while conducting survey it was found that 84.17 percent households have mobile phone. They have somehow managed a mobile phone.

In case of ornaments, 15.58 percent and 33.75 percent of the households have the valuable ornaments like gold and silver respectively. But out of 15.58 percent gold ornament holders, only 4.58 percent of them have above 10 gram and rest 10 percent households have minimum gold ornament below 10 gram. Similarly, 33.75 percent of the households have the silver ornament of which 15.42 percent households have below 10 gram and 18.33 percent households have above 10 gram.

#### **5. 1. 7. Summary**

In this Chapter, we have discussed about the causes and consequences of poverty of Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri District of Assam. Poverty is not a thing given by nature. It is produced by the human beings in the process of development. The causes of poverty are understood differently by different people. According to some people, poverty is considered as predetermined. It is fixed by God and it is beyond the control of man. It is understood as a punishment by the poor themselves. But according to some other people, there are so many reasons which are responsible for poverty. Some of the reasons are man made and these are high population growth, illiteracy, faulty education system etc.

Besides, there are several other reasons which are responsible for poverty. Among them high population growth and faulty education system are considered as some of major causes of poverty. High population growth creates many problems such as food shortage, housing shortage, inflation, rising unemployment, high rate of illiteracy, etc. It lowers the per capita income of the family as well as the standard of living of the people. Similarly, faulty educational system which is neither production-oriented nor job-oriented is another major cause of poverty. It is simply aggravating unemployment which ultimately creates poverty.

Causes and Consequences of poverty of Scheduled Caste people of Dhubri district are based on empirical study. This chapter is completely based on field data. Majority of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are poverty victim. The causes of poverty victim

of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district are close inter-linkages between socio-cultural and economic factors.

We have taken into consideration several socio-economic and demographic factors such as education, income, type of family, family size, age of marriage of the wife etc. while considering the consequences of poverty of the Scheduled Caste people of Dhubri district. From the field survey it is clear that over scenario of education among the sample husbands and wives is very pathetic. The Scheduled Castes people of this locality have not yet realized the paramount importance of education.

Similarly, Income is an important background determinant of economic condition of a family. Standard of living, consumption pattern, access to medical treatment as well as family planning devices depends on the income level of the family. From the field survey, it is found that 15.83 percent of sample households have monthly income of less than Rs.1000 or up to Rs. 1000.00. They are very low income group and have no way to earn money. Only 1.25 percent and 2.50 percent of sample households have monthly income of less than Rs.10000.00 or up to Rs.10000.00 and Rs.10000.00 and above respectively. They are generally service holders, pensioners, established businessmen etc.

It is also found that the dominant form of family structure in the sample villages is nuclear, i.e. 88.33 percent of the total households belong to nuclear family and only 11.67 percent of the total households belong to joint family. One reason of greater number of nuclear families is the quarrel among the family members mainly among the wives with the issue of earning. Another reason of greater number of nuclear families may be due to gradual breakup of the joint families.

One interesting thing is that while conducting survey it was found that 84.17 percent households have mobile phone. They have somehow managed to possess a mobile phone whereas most of these families have no basic facilities like drinking water, latrine, electricity etc.

## CHAPTER – VI

### POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

#### 6. 1. 0. Introduction

The poverty alleviation programmes which are in operation in the country mainly from Sixth Five Year Plan may broadly be categorized into two parts. The first part includes self-employment programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA). The other part covers wage employment programmes. During Sixth and Seventh Plans (upto four years of Seventh Plan) two popular wage employment Programmes continued in the country-National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Gurantee Programme (RLEGP). In the year, 1989 NREP and RLEGP were merged together to Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) which was a major wage employment programme in the country at that time.

For uplifting the quality of life of rural people so many schemes have been sponsored both by the Central and the State Government. The Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Government of Assam executes mostly the poverty alleviation programmes along with some co-related schemes covering the rural and urban areas which directly help in the development of quality of life both in urban and rural areas. While implementing the schemes under Rural Development Programme special attention has been given for-

(a). SC/ST: Upliftment of the socially backward community like SC & ST. Out of the total target 50 percent target is fixed for SC/ST under Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), a self employment scheme, under housing scheme Indira Awas Yojona (IAY) 60 percent of the allocation is earmarked for SC/ST (GOA, 2011-12).

(b). Minorities: From the year 2006-07, as per recommendation of the Sachar Committee for minorities, special provision in rural development programmes has been given for welfare of the religious minority communities. 15 percent of the total national budget for IYA and SGSY is allocated for minorities (GOA, 2011-12).

(c). Women: Development of women is equally important as for the male counterpart of the population. 40 percent of the total target under SGSY is fixed for women beneficiaries

for self employment. In case of wage employment, equal wage is provided for women for women and men worker (GOA, 2011-12).

(d). Disables: For providing assistance to the disables, 30 percent of the target is kept reserved in all the programme like IAY,SGSY,and MGNREGA (GOA, 2011-12).

Accordingly, under rural development sector some programmes /schemes were introduced which were of the following nature.

- (1) Self-employment programme.
- (2) Wage employment programme.
- (3) Social-Welfare schemes.

### **6. 1. 1. Self-Employment Programme**

Self employment programme for the rural people living below poverty line under which self-employment is provided through bank loan and subsidy after selecting the interested rural youth providing training etc. The IRDP has undergone a series of changes with the evolvement of time and at present it is named as SGSY. However, the SGSY is under further modification stage to National Rural Livelihood Mission to provide better services to the rural people. The SGSY is a centrally sponsored scheme of 90:10 cost sharing. This programme emphasizes more on group approach than individual approach. Under this programme, the self-help groups are developed through series of activities and then graded and arrangements are made for their bank loan with subsidy.

The focus of SHG-Bank linkage programme is seen to be picking up its importance lately in the State of Assam. However, the programme has gathered momentum from the year 2001-02 onwards. Till the end of March 2013, in total 540566 SHGs have been bank linked in the State out of which 259548 SHGs were credit linked. Cummulative position of bank linked SHGs is presented in the Table: 6. 1

**Table: 6.1**  
**Self-Help Groups Financed by Banks**

(Rupees in lakh)

Year	Total bank linked SHGs		Deposited linked		Credit linked	
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
2004-05	122304	20975.75	79592	3409.05	42712	17566.70
2005-06	269917	48239.13	175565	9846.77	94352	38392.36
2006-07	230902	58040.52	121474	5261.61	109428	52778.91
2007-08	257863	57417.70	142147	6044.72	115716	51372.98
2008-09	305132	77365.49	166740	7485.51	138392	69879.98
2009-10	374745	92724.79	210890	9123.46	163855	83601.33
2010-11	433954	118051.17	240032	11195.29	193922	106855.88
2011-12	499183	139741.00	272822	10928.00	226361	128813.00
2012-13	540566	164138.86	281018	12228.90	259548	151909.96

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14.

### **SHG-Bank Linkage under SGSY**

Up to the end of March 2013, as many as 2.59 lakh plus SHGs have been covered under the ambit of bank credit in the State out of which 1,34,107 SHGs have been covered by SGSY programme. Till the end of March 2010, as many as 1.64 lakh SHGs have been covered under bank credit out of which only 84,678 SHGs were given loans by banks under the afore-mentioned programme. Cumulative progress of SHG-Bank linkage programme under SGSY is shown in the following Table: 6. 2

**Table: 6. 2**  
**SHG-Bank Linkage under SGSY**

(Rupees in lakh)

Year	Total Credit Linked SHGs		Total Credit Linked SHGs under SGSY	
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
2004-05	42712	17566.70	20388	11273.74
2005-06	94352	38392.36	48235	25024.66
2006-07	109428	52778.91	54735	36549.70
2007-08	115716	51372.98	54790	31006.57
2008-09	138392	69879.98	69144	45898.88
2009-10	163855	83601.33	84678	55161.36
2010-11	193922	106855.88	102166	74784.79
2011-12	226361	128813.00	123473	94423.50
2012-13	259548	151909.96	134107	106687.46

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14.

Again, NABARD, Assam Regional Head Office has extended grant assistance of Rs. 416.06 lakh to 119 NGO-SHPI (Self Help Promoting Institutes) projects for promotion and credit linkage of 16409 SHGs in the state up to 31<sup>st</sup> Oct, 2012. Moreover, Rs.85.00 lakh were sanctioned to three NGOs in four backward districts Dhemaji, Dima-Hasao, Karbi-Anglong and Kokrajhar under Women SHG Development Fund. Another significant step of NABARD particularly where the NGOs and Bank network is weak, is the scheme for associating Individual Rural Volunteers (IRVs) in promotion and linkage of SHGs. This scheme is currently implemented through Assam Gramin Vikash Bank (AGVB), Langpi Dehangi Rural Bank(LDRB) and State Bank of India. NABARD has sanctioned grant assistance of Rs. 135.18 lakh to utilize the services of 751 IRVs in 25 districts for promotion and credit linkage of 7510 SHGs with banks. So far 4010 SHGs have been promoted through 136 IRVs and 1337 SHGs have been credit linked.

In addition, a new concept of Joint Liability Group (JLG) lending has been evolved with a view to increase the flow of credit to the small borrowers having limited or no collateral to offer wherein social collateral substitutes the physical collateral in respect of small loans. Of late the commercial banks like Indian Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI, UCO Bank and Assam State Co-operative Apex Bank have also adopted JLG mode of financing the mid segment clients. JLG mode of financing has also been adopted for financing production credit and handloom weaving activities.

The Government of India Launched Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), a credit cum subsidy programme, with effect from 1.4.1999 by reviewing and restructuring the following programmes.

- (i) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
- (ii) Development of Rural Youth for Self Employment (DWCRA).
- (iii) Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM).
- (iv) Supply of Improved Toolkits in Rural Areas (SITRA).
- (v) Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY).
- (vi) Millions Well Scheme (MWS).

The objective of the programme was to bring the existing poor families above the poverty line by covering all aspects of self-employment viz., organization of the rural poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their capacity building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure build up, technology, credit and marketing. Generally, the list of BPL households identified through BPL census duly approved by the Gram Sabha will form the basis for identification of families for assistance under SGSY. Under SGSY, the financial assistance is received in the form of subsidy from government and credit from bank. Generally, women and weaker sections are the targeted areas of poverty alleviation effort under SGSY. The programme is financed on 75:25 costs sharing between the Centre and State. However, this ratio is 90:10 for the northeastern states.

In Dhubri district total number of SHGs formed since 1.4.1999 was 15164 and it was 135 in the year 2012-13. Out of 15164 SHGs, the total number of SHGs taken up economic activities since 1.4.1999 was 6347 and in the year 2012-13 it was only 40. The number of women SHGs formed since 1.4.1999 was 7576 and in the year 2012-13 it was 62. The total

number of women SHGs taken up economic activities was 607 in 2011-12 and this information is not available in the year 2012-13.

**Table: 6. 3**  
**District-wise Financial Performance under SGSY in Assam, 2012-13**  
(Rupees In lakh)

District	Opening Balance as on 1.4.12	Central fund received	State fund received	Misc/ Other receipts	Total fund available	Total Expenditure
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Kokrajhar	39.39	–	9.41	5.54	54.34	0.20
Dhubri	35.74	–	30.53	15.00	81.27	66.41
Goalpara	4.80	–	–	–	4.80	4.60
Barpeta	338.61	–	–	7.49	346.10	161.05
Morigaon	44.66	–	23.23	–	67.89	63.99
Nagaon	78.82	–	16.07	13.93	108.82	98.56
Sonitpur	13.19	–	–	103.87	117.06	116.56
Lakhimpur	119.01	215.18	–	–	334.19	202.18
Dhemaji	168.13	–	8.12	–	176.25	134.91
Tinsukia	257.39	–	–	–	257.39	257.08
Dibrugarh	14.96	–	–	8.03	22.99	18.82
Sivasagar	41.23	–	–	27.44	68.67	21.20
Jorhat	2.99	–	–	146.28	149.27	131.83
Golaghat	253.30	–	–	17.23	270.53	111.90
KarbiAnglong	13.84	–	–	16.46	30.30	24.88
Dima-Hasao	12.27	–	–	14.44	26.71	21.82
Cachar	841.90	–	–	–	841.90	677.75
Karimganj	438.07	–	–	–	438.07	303.10
Hailakandi	22.70	–	–	10.56	33.26	6.40
Bongaigaon	185.68	–	–	11.23	196.91	191.28

Chirang	54.30	–	–	6.98	61.28	48.94
Kamrup (R)	59.71	–	7.11	15.00	81.82	58.50
Kamrup (M)	8.92	—	–	22.25	31.17	24.25
Nalbari	1023.00	–	–	–	1023.00	223.21
Baksa	26.30	–	–	13.20	39.50	19.99
Darrang	31.33	–	–	8.98	40.31	28.80
Udalguri	33.07	–	–	9.06	42.13	41.63
Assam	4163.31	215.18	94.47	472.97	4945.93	3059.84

Source: Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 2013

### 6. 1. 2. Wage employment

The National Rural Employment Programme introduced during 6<sup>th</sup> Plan have undergone several round of modifications to Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), EAS, JGSY SGRY, NREGA and finally Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act (MGNREGA) in 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. All these programmes/schemes were implemented for giving wage employment opportunities to the rural poor during their lean agricultural season when they require wage employment for boosting their purchasing power to supplement their income requirement for livelihood. There are two broad divisions of expenditure under wage employment programme. The presently implemented MGNREGA, has 60 percent wage component and 40 percent material component. The material is spent for purchase of material which also comprise with the profit share of the suppliers what generally come from the rural areas giving them indirect employment. The wage portion is 100 percent paid to the job-card holders through their bank/post office account. To minimize the leakage /misuse /misutilisation of fund under NREGA management information system (MIS) is made compulsory.

During the year 2010-11 numbers of job card issued and numbers of household provided employment under MGNREGA in Assam were 37.69 lakh and 14.32 lakh respectively. In 2010-11, an amount of Rs.382.22 crore has been spent for wage under MGNREGA, against Rs. 637.36 crore during 2009-10. The poor performance during 2010-11 is due to various reasons as briefly noted.

- (i) Unprecedented heavy rainfall with extended monsoon.
- (ii) Engagement of block officials in beneficiary oriented schemes of other departments.
- (iii) Imposition of model code of conduct due to Assembly Election.

The system of Bio-Matric Card has been introduced for easy withdrawal of the wages against the work from the Bank/Post office account by the Job Card holders. During the year 2012-13, total job card holders were 39.85 lakh (cumulative from 2006-07) of which 1247507 job card holders demanded works and 1234827 job card holders were provided with employment out of which 9807 job card holders provided 100 days employment. Total person days generated were 313.42 lakh of which 81.480 lakh person days were created by women.

**Programme details of MGNREGA as on 2013-14**

- (i) Total no of job card holders – 41.47 lakh (cumulative)
- (ii) Total no of household provided employment – 12.52 lakh
- (iii) Total man days generated – 296.03 lakh
- (iv) Women participated in the programme – 29.04%
- (v) Total assets created – 17688 nos.

The wage portion of fund not only increase the purchasing power of the rural people, but also directly adds to the GDP of the State. Another objective of the MGNREGA programme is to create rural infrastructure.

**Table: 6. 4**  
**District- wise Physical Achievements under MGNREGA in Assam, 2012-13**  
(Rupees in lakh)

Name of the District	Employment Generated Mandays				
	SCs	STs	Others	Total	Women
1	2	3	4	5	6
Kokrajhar	61691	1163653	1320974	25463318	998260
Dhubri	16182	1470	1083289	1100941	302903
Goalpara	61199	333026	897792	1292017	437227

Barpeta	15796	9775	521491	547062	162245
Morigaon	305377	429022	2232415	2966814	402960
Nagaon	249329	136937	2714971	3101237	477297
Sonitpur	139783	200198	1794489	2134470	659175
Lakhimpur	34304	247782	612704	894790	206887
Dhemaji	30817	357299	956544	1344660	424160
Tinsukia	10715	55707	651142	717564	169814
Dibrugarh	35451	121866	1016978	1174295	337178
Sivasagar	63741	76720	1706203	1846664	446678
Jorhat	55294	131804	630491	817589	127539
Golaghat	17615	38603	334188	390406	90427
KarbiAnglong	28758	572413	164859	766030	245491
Dima-Hasao	2473	103850	10013	116336	38537
Cachar	71843	6698	670809	749350	112862
Karimganj	31044	2731	155324	189099	21166
Hailakandi	56220	13703	528092	598015	104705
Bongaigaon	39381	11138	693040	733559	260028
Chirang	59293	360120	335410	754823	298412
Kamrup (R)	54483	64930	640595	760008	134722
Kamrup (M)	23653	41711	88279	153661	62413
Nalbari	26222	12146	440788	479156	55317
Baksa	306087	1582971	1693709	3582767	1264940
Darrang	27340	1719	539036	568095	80066
Udalguri	56052	418042	532282	1006376	226673
Assam	1880143	6496034	22965925	31342102	8148082

Source: Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 2013.

From the above Table 6.4, it is clear that total mandays generated in Assam is 8148082 lakh during the financial year 2012-13 of which 1880143 lakh mandays generated for Scheduled Castes people. In Dhubri district total mandays generated for Scheduled Castes people is 16182. The highest mandays for Scheduled Castes people is generated in Morogaon district and the lowest mandays for Scheduled Castes people is generated in Dima-Hasao district during the financial year 2012-13.

**Table: 6. 5**  
**District-wise Job Cards Issued and Employment Provided in Assam, 2012-13**

District	Job Cards issued	Households demanded employment	Households provided employment	Households provided 100 days employment	Disabled persons provided employment
Kokrajhar	180440	59920	59550	66	146
Dhubri	193494	50500	50412	100	9
Goalpara	146465	63890	63370	88	30
Barpeta	249263	21941	21526	36	243
Morigaon	142682	84196	83650	1152	24
Nagaon	213209	95522	95234	3456	53
Sonitpur	230112	116689	113136	61	773
Lakhimpur	164304	31896	31798	256	61
Dhemaji	116028	45842	45383	28	91
Tinsukia	117408	34566	34565	407	22
Dibrugarh	131023	60098	59825	309	156
Sivasagar	121954	65290	65037	1604	116
Jorhat	106508	45287	41434	51	9
Golaghat	129908	26992	26411	29	21
KarbiAnglong	205940	73491	73295	3	14

Dima-Hasao	39902	8495	8484	0	1
Cachar	195116	38247	38078	35	14
Karimganj	174769	12228	12173	0	4
Hailakandi	118462	38272	38045	49	14
Bongaigaon	114970	33611	33631	134	95
Chirang	107951	29862	29800	562	21
Kamrup (R)	196462	29928	29849	67	33
Kamrup (M)	37332	7507	7466	58	0
Nalbari	104139	17799	17639	55	4
Baksa	178633	93589	93443	1061	244
Darrang	150215	20796	20654	17	26
Udalguri	118467	41023	10939	123	15
Assam	3985156	1247507	1234827	9807	2293

Source: Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 2013.

### **Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)**

The Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana (PMRY) was a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The programme was effective up to March 2008 and thereafter a new scheme under the nomenclature, 'Prime Minister Employment Generation Program' (PMEGP) has been introduced by merging the PMRY and REGP with the objective of providing employment to the educated unemployed youth. The scheme facilitates self-employment through setting up of industries/service and business ventures with a limited amount of Bank loan with subsidy on the recommendation of Task Force Committee constituted for the purpose. The KVIC is the nodal agency for implementing the PMEGP scheme at the national level and at the State level the scheme is implemented by the state KVIC Directorate, State KVIB and the District

Industries and Commerce Centers and Banks. The Government subsidy under the scheme is being routed through the KVIC to the identified Banks.

**Table: 6. 6**  
**MGNREGA Statistics of Dhubri District**

Sl No			Percentage
1	Empyoyment Provided to Household: Persondays [ in Lakh]	0.50105 Lakh	–
2	Total	10.93	–
3	SCs	0.16	1.45
4	STs	0.01	0.13
5	Women	3	27.5
6	Others	10.75	98.42
7	Total works taken up	2592	–
8	Works completed	23	–
9	Works in progress	2596	–

Source: nrega.nic.in

The following Table 6. 7 shows the Block-wise number of registered Women and BPL families in MGNREGA in Dhubri district.

**Table: 6. 7**  
**Block-wise Number of Household Registered in MGNREGA in Dhubri District**

Sl No	Blocks	SC	Percentage	ST	Percentage	Others	Percentage	Total
1	Agomani	45	0.32	0	0	13876	99.68	13921
2	Bilasipara	135	1.11	71	0.58	11986	98.31	12192
3	Birsing Jarua	21	0.12	0	0	17032	99.88	17053
4	Chaper Salkocha	40	0.28	4	0.03	14190	99.69	14234

5	Debitola	2	0.02	3	0.03	9732	99.95	9737
6	Fekamari	321	1.83	9	0.05	17193	98.12	17523
7	Gauripur	9	0.05	2	0.01	18468	99.94	18479
8	Golakganj	213	1.54	1	0.01	13656	98.46	13870
9	Jamadarhat	2	0.02	0	0	8238	99.98	8242
10	Mahamaya	1045	7.56	2	0.01	12775	92.43	13822
11	Mankachar	364	2.37	248	1.62	14739	96.01	15351
12	Nayeralga	54	0.46	0	0	11713	99.54	11767
13	Rupshi	41	0.36	1	0.01	11450	99.63	11492
14	South Salmara	165	1.41	2	0.02	11511	98.57	11678

Source: [www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)

Table: 6. 7 shows that in Mahamaya development block, the highest number of Scheduled Castes households (7.56 percent) is registered in MGNREGA and in Jamadarhat development block, the lowest number of Scheduled Castes households (0.02 percent) is registered in MGNREGA. The reason is that Jamadarhat development block is minority (Muslim) dominated block.

**Table: 6. 8**  
**Block-wise Number of Registered Women and BPL Families in MGNREGA in Dhubri District**

Block	BPL	Percentage	SC BPL	Percentage	ST BPL	Percentage	Others	Total	Women	Percentage
Mahamaya	221	1.6	1438	6.48	2	0.01	20737	22177	8319	37.15
Bilasipara	75	0.62	223	1.03	141	0.65	21221	21585	8354	38.7
Birsing Jarua	1146	6.72	47	0.16	0	0	300050	30097	10678	35.48
Chaper Salkocha	0	0	76	0.3	4	0.02	24878	24958	10520	42.15

Debitola	0	0	3	0.01	7	0.03	22975	22985	10361	45.08
Fekamari	0	0	445	1.69	12	0.05	25917	26374	9638	36.54
Gauripur	2423	13.11	10	0.03	2	0.01	29354	29366	8200	27.92
Golakganj	3	0.02	315	1.66	1	0.01	18708	19024	5345	28.1
Jamadarhat	2577	31.2	3	0.03	0	0	1187	11881	3238	27.25
Agomani	948	6.81	87	0.33	0	0	26063	26150	10114	38.68
Rupshi	2	0.02	79	0.43	1	0.01	18409	18489	4890	26.45
Nayeralga	0	0	54	0.38	0	0	14344	14398	2113	14.68
Mankachar	0	0	378	2.11	362	2.02	17168	17908	6416	35.38
South Salmara	274	2.35	268	1.79	2	0.01	14702	14972	3382	22.59

Source: [www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)

In Dhubri district, the highest Scheduled Castes BPL families (6.48 percent) which is registered in MGNREGA is found in Mahamaya development block and the lowest Scheduled Castes BPL families (0.01percent) which is registered in MGNREGA is found in Debitola development block.

**Table: 6. 9**  
**Block-wise employment generation of Dhubri district during the financial year 2013-14**

Blocks	HH issued job cards				Number of HH provided employment				EMP provided	Number of person days generated				
	SCs	STs	Others	Total	SCs	STs	Others	Total	Number of Women	SCs	STs	Others	Total	Women
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Agomani	45	00	13786	13831	0	0	139	139	77	0	0	1262	1262	461



Table: 6. 9 shows that the highest number of job cards (1045 numbers) has issued to Scheduled Castes households in Mahamaya development block where as the lowest number of job cards (02 numbers) has issues to Scheduled Castes households in Debitola and Jamadarhat Development blocks. But only one Scheduled Castes household in chapar-Salkocha development block and seven Scheduled Castes households in South salmara development block have provided employment.

### **Major Problems Related to Poverty Alleviation Programme:**

Muthalagu (2007) has discussed on “Kuruksheetra” – A Journal on Rural Development about the poverty eradication in India under anti-poverty programmes. He has pointed out some problems which are related to MGNREGA. Some of the problems are:

#### **(a) Problems of awareness**

Most respondents were aware of the MGNREGA in some way. But awareness was lowest among Adivasis, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Other problems related to awareness are:

- (i) In many areas, the guidelines had not been received or were not available in Assamese / local language.
- (ii) The idea that MGNREGA is demand-driven has still not permeated among local officials in most areas.
- (iii) Workers were mostly unaware about their specific rights and the processes that are required to avail of the right.

#### **(b) Problems related to job cards application and distribution**

- (i) Panchayat members who were responsible for creating awareness were mostly overworked and underpaid.
- (ii) Job cards were sometimes not available.
- (iii) Receipts were not provided when applications were submitted.
- (iv) Joint families were registered as one household, because of problems with the definition of ‘household’.
- (v) Money was being charged for application forms in some cases.
- (vi) Female head households were sometimes denied access to job cards.

**(c) Problems related to application for work**

- (i) Many workers were not aware that they need to apply for work after receiving the job cards
- (ii) Dated receipts were not being given to workers.
- (iii) Often work was provided not on the basis of applications, but simply when the local authority decided to set up a work and therefore mobilized workers.

**(d) Problems related to identification of works**

- (i) Local authorities and panchayats lacked adequate technical support to identify appropriate works and estimate labour and other requirements.
- (ii) Works were being identified in centralized fashion without participation in Gram Sabhas. Top-down approach of earlier schemes was still in continuation.
- (iii) In some cases even when local people had made their wishes clear, the preferred work was not chosen.
- (iv) Too much focus on roads and big ponds instead of creating productive assets which meet local needs.

**(e) Problems related to worksite facilities**

- (i) Drinking water was not being provided and there was no effort to ensure provision of shades in the vicinity for resting.
- (ii) Machines (Truck, Tractor, G C P ) were being used on some sites.
- (iii) In most worksites, there was no creche or provision for first aid.

**(f) Problems related to payment of wages**

- (i) In many cases, workers did not receive the minimum wage even for a full day's work.
- (ii) Significant underpayment was observed in some areas.
- (iii) As payment was based on groups there were some cases of fudging of muster rolls leading to listing of more workers and hence a reduction of per worker wage.

**(g) Problems related to muster rolls**

- (i) Muster rolls have not been displayed and were not available for public inspection even at the offices.

(ii) Generally muster rolls were treated as secret, which was in complete violation of the MGNREGA guidelines for transparency. This was primarily due to lack of awareness of the local officials about the guidelines.

### 6.1.3. Social Welfare Schemes

**(a) Indira Awas Yojana (IAY):** IAY is an important poverty alleviation scheme of the Government of India. Under IAY, house is provided to the shelter less/houseless families living below poverty line. For the purpose, a permanent wait list of the BPL families, requiring housing assistance, has been prepared in 2007. All IAY beneficiaries are being selected from this wait list. During the year 2010-11, the target was fixed at 170849 number of houses against which 156911 number of houses were completed and the remaining houses were under construction. The achievement is 91.84 percent and it is higher than the 2009-10. Besides the normal provisions of 60 percent reservation for SC and ST, special target of 15 percent is given to the minorities communities as per the directions of the Government of India under this programme. During the year 2010-11, 99834 number of houses were allotted to the SC/ST and 30289 numbers of the minority communities against 102880 to SC/ST and 29807 to minorities respectively during 2009-10. During the year 2011-12, against the targeted 166913 number of houses 143770 (86.57 percent) number of houses were completed and the remaining houses were under various stages of construction. The expenditure incurred for construction of houses was Rs. 91573.69 i.e. 75.03 percent out of total fund available Rs. 122050.56 percent. During the year 2012-13 the target was 184408 number of houses against which 98900 number of houses were completed.

**Table: 6.10**

**Physical Achievement and Financial Achievement of IAY in Assam for the Annual Plan 2010-11 to 2013-14**

Year	Unit	Physical Achievement		Financial Achievement (Rs. in Lakh)	
		Target	Achievement	Fund Available	Expenditure
2010-11	No of Houses	170849	165171	105895.10	87226.80
2011-12	No of Houses	166913	165784	136691.90	91214.95
2012-13	No of Houses	184408	98900	100540.127	71207.97

<b>IAY for BPL Families: 2013-14</b>		
Particular	Target	Achievement
(i) Total Number of House constructed/under construction	167729	Under progress
(ii) IAY Houses provided to Women bebeficiary	70% of target	
(iii) Unit cost of the IAY Houses	Rs.75,000/-	

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14.

**Table: 6.11**  
**Block-wise IAY (SCs / STs & Others) Beneficiaries of Dhubri District**

Sl No	Blocks	Household	BPL Household	IAY Beneficiaries		
				SCs	STs	Others
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Agomani	13831	948	135	71	11984
2	Bilasipara	12190	75	21	0	16801
3	Birsing Jarua	16822	1144	40	4	14115
4	Chaper-Salkocha	14159	0	321	9	17092
5	Debitola	9661	0	9	2	18256
6	Fekamari	17422	0	213	1	13502
7	Gauripur	18267	2412	2	0	7966
8	Golakganj	13716	3	1045	2	12746
9	Jamadarhat	7968	2537	54	0	11694
10	Mahamaya	13793	221	39	1	11105
11	Mankachar	15259	0	165	2	11506
12	Nayeralga	11748	0	364	248	14647

13	Rupshi	11145	2	2	3	9654
14	SouthSalmara	11673	274	45	0	13786

Source: [www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)

**(b) National Social Assistance Programme (NASP):** It is a Central Sector Scheme to promote social security through financial support to the BPL families. The components of the scheme are (Indra Gandhi National OLD Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), Indra Gandhi National Disable Pension Scheme (INGDPS), Indra Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and Annapurna. It is a Central Sector Scheme and the fund is borne by the Government of India on 100% basis but the State Government has to pay the minimum mandatory provision under IGNOAPS @ Rs. 500/- against the Govt. of India share of Rs. 200/- per month to the BPL beneficiaries under the age group of 60-79 years and 80 years respectively. The pensioner benefit of Rs. 300/- per month is provided to the IGNDPS who are at the age group of 18 – 79 years with 30 percent disabilities. Similarly, IGNWPS (BPL widows) in the age group of 40 – 79 years and above are also provided @ Rs. 300/- per month as pensioner benefit. As regards NFBS, one time assistance of Rs. 20,000/- is provided to the family who has lost their “primary” bread earner (male or female). As regard Annapurna, BPL family who has attained the age of 65 years and above and not covered under old age pension are provided 10 kg. rice per month.

**Table: 6. 12**

**Physical and Financial Achievement under NSAP During 2012-13.**

Component	Physical Achievement			Financial Achievement (Rs. in Lakh)	
	Unit	Target	Achievement	Fund Released	Expenditure
IGNOAPS	NO. of beneficiaries	785836	785836	12725.454	12725.454
IGNWPS	NO. of beneficiaries	63810	63810	1610.287	1557.122
IGNDPS	NO. of beneficiaries	24383	24383	466.056	412.896
ANNAPURN	NO. of beneficiaries	26640	26640	93.38652	93.38652

NFBS	NO. of beneficiaries	20180	20180	1435.867	1392.70
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Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14

**(c) Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF):** It is also a scheme of 100% Government of India's grant to redress regional imbalances in development. The programme has two funding windows (i) Development grant (ii) Capacity building fund. The Planning Commission, Government of India has selected 13 districts for inclusion of this programme and these are Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Baksa, Chirang, Cachar, Dhemaji, Dima-Hasao, Goalpara, Hailakandi, Karbi-Anglong, Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur, and Morigaon. Out of 5044 targeted schemes under BRGF, achievement was made only in 1520 number of schemes in 2012-13.

#### 6. 1. 4. State Plan Schemes

**(a) District Development Plan:** It has been implemented in all the 21 PRI districts of the State since 2007-08. During the year 2012-13, Rs.12204.00 lakh was allocated and Rs. 11648.61 lakh released to different Zilla Parishads of the State for taking up schemes approved by District Planning Committee. Schemes of all 12 sectors/sub-sectors have been taken up under DDP for creation of development infrastructure both in rural and urban areas. The fund is now being utilized through the Urban Local Bodies and Rural Local Bodies. Previously, the schemes were implemented through line departments. The schemes are flexible under the DDP for economic growth and development of the underdeveloped areas. From the year 2011-12 funding pattern has changed for implementing agencies. The rural areas fund has shared by Gaon Panchayat (50 percent), Anchalic Panchayat (30 percent) and Zilla Parishad (20 percent). The 100 percent fund for urban areas is utilized by the municipality bodies and town committees.

**(b) Chief Minister Assam Vikash Yojana:** Under this schemes fund released for providing rickshaw and goods carriers to the BPL families of rural areas who are willing to undertake the activities of rickshaw and goods carrier pulling. The department had fixed the target for 2010-11 to provide 4414 numbers of rickshaw and 6334 numbers of goods carrier, designed by Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati.

**(c) Vocational Training:** The Vocational Training Programme is being continued by the Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Assam to provide assistance to the interested unemployed youth of the State for self employment. The following table shows the

target and achievement for the year 2011-12 and 2012-13 under the Vocational Training Programme

**Table: 6.13**  
**Vocational Training Programme**

Year	Physical Target (in nos)			Financial Target (in Lakh)			Number of Trainees sponsored			Number of trainees completed training		
	Gen	SCSP	TSP	Gen	SCSP	TSP	Gen	SCSP	TSP	Gen	SCSP	TSP
2011-12	520	520	135	50.00	50.00	14.00	520	520	135	520	520	135
2012-13	310	350	67	30.00	Nil	Nil	310	Nil	Nil	310	Nil	Nil

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14.

**(d) Mukhyamantrir Karmajyoti Aachani:** The basic objective of the scheme is to uplift the economic status and skill development of traditional artisans through financial assistance from the government. Traditional trade like manufacturing of decorative textile, black smithy, pottery, carpentry, toy making, etc are covered under the scheme. The scheme is under implementation from the year 2005-06 under the sponsorship of the Government of Assam. During the year 2012-13, 1903 artisans were benefited with a financial assistance of Rs.178.62 lakh. The scheme is still in progress with a physical target of 4621 SHGs and individual trained person with a financial target of Rs. 595.00 lakh for the year 2011-12.

**(e) Mukhya Mantrir Anna Suraksha Yojana:** Under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TDPS), a total of 19.06 lakh families are covered as per target fixed by the Planning Commission of Government of India based on the population as well as family status of 1993-94 and no extra target for inclusion of more deserved families is taken into consideration by the Central Government. Hence, to bring the deserved poor families i.e. lowest strata of APL families under the ambit of food security, the Anna Suraksha Yojana has been launched under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam.

At present twenty lakh families are being benefited under the scheme. Initially 10,000 per Legislative Assembly Constituency were selected by notified Selection Committees under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner or the Principal Secretary but now the target has been increased to 15,000 families per Legislative Assembly Constituency. Such identified families are being provided 20 kgs of subsidized rice at BPL rate to each beneficiary upon production of distinctive ration card to be issued by the concern department. In rural areas, the beneficiaries are selected by the selection committee comprising of Block Development Officer as Chairman and another five members including one PRI member and one social worker and in urban areas the committee is headed by the local Revenue Circle Officer and another five members to select the beneficiaries for the scheme.

#### **6. 1. 5. Mid Day Meal Scheme**

The Government of India has launched a countrywide programme of nutrition support to primary education commonly known as Mid-Day-Meal Scheme on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1995 through the State Governments in order to give boost to universalization of primary education by increasing enrolment, attendance and retention in primary education and to improve the standard of education. In Assam this scheme has been started on January, 2005. The scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and underwent changes from time to time increasing the nutritional level for children. In 2006, the nutritional norm was revised to 450 calories and 12 gram protein. In 2007, the scheme was extended to cover children of upper primary classes (Class VI to Class VIII) and the name of the scheme was changed from 'National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education' or 'National Programme of Mid Day Meal in Schools'. The nutritional norm for upper primary stages was fixed at 700 calories and 20 gram of protein.

The scheme covers not only Government, Governmental aided and local body school but also the children studying Education Guarantee Scheme and alternative and Innovative Education Centres. The Scheme was further revised in April 2008 to extend the scheme to recognized as well as unrecognized Madrasas / Maqtabs supported under Sarva SHiksha Abhijan.

As per Economic Survey Assam, 2013-14, during the Annual Plan 2012-13, State share of expenditure incurred on Mid Day Meal was Rs. 5103.22 lakh. For the Annual Plan 2013-14, an amount of Rs. 5500.00 lakh is proposed as State share for the Mid Day Meal Scheme.

### **6. 1. 6. Welfare of Scheduled Castes**

The Directorate of Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Assam was setup in 1989 under the administrative control of the Department of WPT & BC, Government of Assam with a view to uplift the socio-economic condition of the poor SC people in the State.

The Directorate of Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Assam has been implementing various welfare schemes for all round development of the Scheduled Castes people including implementation and monitoring of the point 11 (A) of 20 point programme.

The main thrust of the schemes for the Scheduled Castes people are:

- (1) Promotion of literacy among the SC people with emphasis on female education.
- (2) Promotion of employment/ self-employment through family oriented income generation schemes and
- (3) Some grants-in-aid schemes for benefit of the SC people.

The welfare schemes implemented by this Directorate for welfare of Scheduled Castes people of Assam have taken from the 'Bulletin' of Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes published by the Government of Assam on 2007-2008 (Number-XVII).

The welfare schemes implemented by this Directorate for welfare of SC are as follows:

#### **(1) Pre-matric Scholarship**

Pre-matric scholarship is provided to SC students of class I to X as per norms fixed by the Government. The parents/guardians whose annual income does not exceed Rs.1800/- and students securing 40% marks or more in the annual examination are given priority for this scholarship.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.75.00 lakhs and Rs.99.90 lakhs were utilized against 44264 and 57735 numbers SC students respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.325.05 lakhs has been utilized against 190712 numbers of SC students.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.130.00 lakhs is allocated against 85000 numbers of students under the scheme.

Source: GOA, 2007-2008,

**Note:** The Directorate of Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes has not published any Bulletin after 2007-2008 as the Government of Assam has not sanctioned any fund for publication of Bulletin.

## **(2) Stipend for Craftsman Training in ITI**

Students undergoing training in various trades in different ITIs of Assam are provided stipends as per Government rules and procedure.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.4.00 lakhs and Rs. 2.99 lakhs were utilized against 273 and 105 numbers of SC trainees respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.17.58 lakhs has been utilized against 1310 number of SC students.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.20.00 lakhs is allocated against 700 numbers of trainees under the scheme.

## **(3) Grants to Non-Govt. Educational Institution**

This scheme aims to assist the educational institutions at the venture stage. The institutions situated in SC predominant areas are selected for this grants.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.4.00 lakhs and Rs. 15.00 lakhs were utilized against 8 and 22 numbers of institutions respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.30.00 lakhs has been utilized against 69 numbers of institutions.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.50.00 lakhs is allocated against 75 numbers of institutions under the scheme.

## **(4) Grants to Cultural Activities Including Educational Tour**

The objective of this scheme is to grow interest in cultural activities and to provide opportunity to the students for acquiring knowledge by undertaking educational tours to the places of historical importance.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.6.00 lakhs and Rs. 10.00 lakhs were utilized against 3000 and 1000 numbers of students respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.21.00 lakhs has been utilized against 6000 numbers of students.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.5.00 lakhs is allocated against 500 numbers of students under the scheme.

#### **(5) Financial Incentive for Inter-Caste Marriage**

The objective of the scheme is to form a casteless society. Cash award is given to each married couple and their parents, when such marriage take place between general caste (caste Hindu) and the scheduled caste people.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.5.00 lakhs and Rs. 10.00 lakhs were utilized against 100 and 100 numbers of couples respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.22.00 lakhs has been utilized against 340 numbers of couples.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.10.00 lakhs is allocated against 100 numbers of couples under the scheme.

#### **(6) Self-help Scheme for Self-employment of Un-employed SC Youths**

Under this scheme training in repairing of radio/TV, motor driving, tailoring, computer etc. are provided to SC unemployed youths for the development of skills and to make themselves fit for self employment.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.10.00 lakhs and Rs. 10.00 lakhs were utilized against 200 and 250 numbers of trainees respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.24.00 lakhs has been utilized against 525 numbers of trainees.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.50.00 lakhs is allocated against 500 numbers of trainees under the scheme.

#### **(7) Computer and Data Processing Training**

Under this scheme computer training is provided to SC unemployed youths for self-employment.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.5.00 lakhs and Rs. 10.00 lakhs were utilized against 50 and 100 numbers of trainees respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.19.00 lakhs has been utilized against 217 numbers of trainees.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.49.00 lakhs is allocated against 500 numbers of trainees under the scheme.

#### **(8) Self-help Scheme for SC Women**

This scheme aims to provide training to the unemployed SC women for their self-employment through training in various trades like cutting, tailoring, knitting and embroidery, weaving, beautician course, food preservation etc. through the registered institutions of the state.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.4.00 lakhs and Rs. 20.00 lakhs were utilized against 93 and 381 numbers of trainees respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.24.00 lakhs has been utilized against 474 numbers of trainees.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.50.00 lakhs is allocated against 800 numbers of trainees under the scheme.

#### **(9) Pre-matric Scholarship to the Children of Those Parents Engaged in Unclean Occupation**

This is a centrally sponsored scheme with 50-50 share between the State and the Central government. Under this scheme pre-matric scholarship is provided to the children of those parents engaged in unclean occupation.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.20.07 lakhs and Rs. 42.76 lakhs were utilized against 2037 and 4284 numbers of students respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.137.16 lakhs has been utilized against 13163 numbers of students.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.60.00 lakhs (SS-30.00+CS-30.00) is allocated against 6000 numbers of students under the scheme.

#### **(10) Post-matric Scholarship**

The post-matric scholarship is provided to all SC students of college level and above.

During 2005-06 and 2006-07 Rs.472.86 lakhs and Rs. 478.82 lakhs were utilized against 17691 and 17550 numbers of students respectively.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.1774.59 lakhs has been utilized against 85045 numbers of students.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.510.00 lakhs (SS-5.00+CS-505.00) is allocated against 5991 numbers of students under the scheme.

**(11) Financial Assistance to Meritorious SC Girls Students**

The Government of Assam sanctioned Rs.30,00000/- (Rupees thirty lakhs ) for the financial year 2012-13 among the meritorious girls students belonging to Scheduled Castes Community for financial assistance @ Rs.10,000/- (Rupees ten thousand) in order of merit as per their performance in HSLS/HSSLC examination, 2012. The Girls students who have secured 60 percent and above in the HSLC/HSSLC examination, 2012 are considered under this scheme from entire Assam. It is interesting to note that no such girl student is found in few districts of Assam and Dhubri is one of them.

**Table: 6. 14**  
**Financial Assistance to Meritorious Girls Students for the Year 2012-13**

Sl No	Districts	Number of Meritorious Girls Students (Selected)	Year of Passing	Amount (in Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5
1	Dhubri	0	2012	10,000/-
2	Kokrajhar	0	2012	10,000/-
3	Bongaigaon	08	2012	10,000/-
4	Goalpara	01	2012	10,000/-
5	Barpeta	12	2012	10,000/-
6	Nalbari	14	2012	10,000/-
7	Kamrup (Rural)	126	2012	10,000/-
8	Kamrup (Metro )	0	2012	10,000/-
9	Darrang	04	2012	10,000/-
10	Sonitpur	16	2012	10,000/-
11	Lakhimpur	18	2012	10,000/-
12	Dhemaji	0	2012	10,000/-

13	Morigaon	04	2012	10,000/-
14	Nagaon	22	2012	10,000/-
15	Golaghat	01	2012	10,000/-
16	Jorhat	36	2012	10,000/-
17	Sivasagar	07	2012	10,000/-
18	Dibrugarh	03	2012	10,000/-
19	Tinsukia	05	2012	10,000/-
20	Karbi Anglong	02	2012	10,000/-
21	Cachar	05	2012	10,000/-
22	Chirang	05	2012	10,000/-
23	Udalguri	03	2012	10,000
24	Hailakandi	03	2012	10,000
25	Baksa	03	2012	10,000
26	Karimganj	02	2012	10,000
27	Morigaon	04	2012	10,000

Source: The Assam Tribune (2013):”The Daily English News Paper, Published from Guwahati, Monday, July 15, p. 5

#### **(12) Book-Bank for Medical/Engineering/Veterinary/Agricultural etc**

Under the scheme text books are provided free of cost to the SC students of Medical/Engineering/Veterinary/Agricultural etc. college of the State.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.8.00 lakhs has been utilized against 30 numbers of students.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.40.00 lakhs (SS-20.00+CS-20.00) is allocated against 850 numbers of students under the scheme.

**(13) Grants to Non-official Organizations doing Welfare Works among SC People**

The purpose of the scheme is to help non-official voluntary organizations to perform humanitarian and social works with a view to improve the qualities of lives of the SC people

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.6.00 lakhs has been utilized against 24 numbers of organisations.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.10.00 lakhs is allocated against 25 numbers of organizations under the scheme.

**(14) Share Capital Contribution to the ASDC for SC**

The Assam State Development Corporation for SC Ltd. Is jointly owned by the State and the Central Government. The Corporation aims to provide various avenues for self-employment of the SC people below the poverty line in addition to offering financial assistance to those with income level twice below the poverty line.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.52.00 lakhs has been utilized.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of State share Rs.25.00 lakhs and Central share Rs. 24.02 lakhs is allocated under the scheme.

**(15) Prevention of Atrocities Act**

This is a centrally sponsored scheme with 50:50 share between the State and the Central Government. The aim of the scheme is to provide protection against atrocities to the SC/ST people.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.2.80 lakhs has been utilized.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of State share Rs.5.00 lakhs and Central share Rs. 5.00 lakhs is allocated under the scheme.

**(16) Coaching and Allied Scheme**

The objective of the scheme is to improve the representation of the SC people in various posts and services through pre-examination training for preparing SC candidates for various competitive examinations held by the APSC, UPSC and other recruitment bodies.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of (Central share Rs.5.00+State share Rs. 5.00 lakhs) 10.00 lakhs is allocated under the scheme.

**(17) Construction of SC boys Hostel**

This scheme provides for hostel facilities to the SC boys students in the State. This is a centrally sponsored scheme with 50:50 cost sharing basis between the State and the Central Government.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.18.00 lakhs has been utilized against 18 numbers of hotels.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.100.00 lakhs (Central share 50.00+ State share 50.00 lakhs) is allocated under the scheme.

**(18) Construction of SC Girls Hostel**

This scheme provides for hostel facilities to the SC girls students in the State. This is a centrally sponsored scheme with 50:50 cost sharing basis between the State and the Central Government.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.13.00 lakhs has been utilised against 18 numbers of hotels.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.100.00 lakhs (Central share 50.00+ State share 50.00 lakhs) is allocated under the scheme.

**(19) National Scheme for Liberating and Rehabilitation of Scavengers**

As a result of conversion of dry latrines to sanitary latrines many of the sweepers and scavengers were thrown out of their unclean occupation and become jobless. To provide gainful employment to such jobless scavengers, the scheme was implemented in the seventh five year plan and named as National Scheme for Liberating and Rehabilitation of Scavengers. The scheme was initially implemented by the Municipal Administration Department and subsequently implemented through the Assam State Development Corporation for SC Ltd.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.15.00 lakhs is allocated under the schemes as State share and Rs.200.00 lakhs is proposed as Central share.

**(20) Up-gradation of Merit**

This is a central sector scheme with 100 percent central assistance from the Government of India. The aim of this scheme is to upgrade the merit of SC students through special institutions in various educational institutions in Assam.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.13.00 lakhs has been utilized.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.50.00 lakhs is allocated under the scheme.

### **(21) Infrastructural Development Scheme**

This is a central scheme under special central assistance. The main objective of this scheme is to provide financial assistance for creating infrastructure in SC predominant areas. The scheme include construction/repairing of village link road/educational institutions/office building of public organization/development of village industries.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan (2002-07) an amount of Rs.59.02 lakhs has been utilized.

During the year 2007-08 an amount of Rs.500.00 lakhs is allocated under the scheme.

### **6.1.7. Some Scheme Implemented by Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes**

The Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes Ltd. was established in the year 1975 registered under the Companies Act, 1956 with an authorized share capital of Rs. 1.00 crore which was subsequently raised to Rs. 10.00 crore, to be contributed by the Government of Assam and Government of India at the ratio of 51:49.

As per directive of the Government the Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes Ltd. is implementing the following schemes for the benefit of the poor Scheduled Castes people of the state living below the poverty line and for the Scavengers/Safai Karmacharies.

#### **(i) Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme**

The Corporation is implementing the scheme out of Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan released by the Ministry of Social Justice & Employment, New Delhi. The details of the schemes implemented during 2002-03 to 2006-07 are shown below.

**Table: 6. 15**  
**Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme**

Sl No	Financial Year	Amount Received	Amount Utilised	Number of Beneficiaries
1	2002-03	224.99	224.99	9167
2	2003-04	113.00	113.00	3314
3	2004-05	299.34	299.34	12072

4	2005-06	166.00	166.00	6356
5	2006-07	307.19	307.19	3170
	Total	Rs. 1110.52	1110.52	34079

Source: GOA, 2007-08

## (ii) National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation Loan Scheme

As channelizing agency, State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes Ltd. is implementing the scheme under NSFDC loan schemes from the year 1992-93 for providing self-employment to the unemployed Scheduled Castes youth of the State living below the poverty line. For implementation of the schemes the NSFDC, New Delhi, has released Rs.12.98 crore during the year 1992-93 to 31.12.06. The Corporation assisted 2537 numbers of beneficiaries under NSFDC Regular Term Loan and Micro Credit Finance scheme. The details of the fund received and utilized along with numbers of beneficiaries are shown below.

**Table: 6. 16**  
**(a) NSFDC Regular Schemes**

Sl No	Financial Year	Amount Received	Amount Utilised	Number of Beneficiaries
1	1992-1993	384.75	Nil	Nil
2	1993-1994	Nil	9.27	8
3	1994-1995	Nil	59.73	83
4	1995-1996	Nil	68.95	109
5	1996-1997	Nil	12.70	17
6	1997-1998	Nil	33.62	70
7	1998-1999	Nil	0.91	1
8	1999-2000	Nil	14.93	16
9	2000-2001	Nil	57.64	40
10	2001-2002	722.11	52.38	27
11	2002-2003	Nil	357.30	186

12	2003-2004	Nil	88.67	49
13	2004-2005	Nil	2.85	3
14	2005-2006	Nil	Nil	Nil
15	2006-2007	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Total =	1108.86	759.04	609

Source: GOA, 2007-08

Apart from the regular Term Loan schemes the Corporation has also been implementing Micro Finance Schemes for the year 2001-02 and onwards. The deals of the fund received and utilized along with numbers of beneficiaries are shown below.

**Table: 6. 17**  
**(b) NSFDC (MCF) Loan Schemes**

(Rs. in lakh)				
Sl No	Financial Year	Amount Received	Amount Utilised	Number of Beneficiaries
1	2001-2002	191.62	Nil	Nil
2	2002-2003	Nil	152.20	1904
3	2003-2004	Nil	39.42	24
4	2004-2005	Nil	Nil	Nil
5	2005-2006	Nil	Nil	Nil
6	2006-2007	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Total =	191.62	Rs. 191.62	1928

Source: GOA, 2007-08

**(iii) National Safai Karamcharies Finance & Development Loan Scheme**

As channelising agency, The Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes Ltd. is implementing the scheme under NSFDC loan schemes for the benefit of the Safai Karamcharies of the State from the year 2000-01 and received Rs. 659.16 lakhs for implementation of the schemes and could utilize Rs. 169.39 lakhs to cover 229 numbers of

beneficiaries. The details of the fund received and utilized along with numbers of beneficiaries are shown below

**Table: 6. 18**  
**NSKFDC Schemes**

(Rs. in lakh)

Sl No	Financial Year	Amount Received	Amount Utilised	Number of Beneficiaries
1	2000-2001	99.15	Nil	Nil
2	2001-2002	99.15	39.78	44
3	2002-2003	460.86	56.46	85
4	2003-2004	Nil	53.44	73
5	2004-2005	Nil	5.76	6
6	2005-2006	Nil	3.60	1
7	2006-2007	Nil	10.27	20
	Total	659.16	169.31	229

Source: GOA, 2007-08

**(iv) National Scheme for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers and their Dependents (NSLR) Scheme**

As per guide line issued by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, New Delhi, the Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes Ltd. is also implementing the scheme for benefit of the poor scavengers family and their dependents since 1993-94 as per directive of the Government of Assam. The Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes Ltd. has received Rs. 535.13 lakhs (Rs.77.58 lakhs for training and Rs.457.55 lakhs for Rehabilitation) for implementation of the scheme during the period from 2000-01 to 2006-07 and assisted 3728 numbers of beneficiaries shown as below.

**NSLRS Training Programme**

To motivate the scavengers and their dependents to get relieved from their age old unclean occupation and to develop their skill on different trades and business activities, the

Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes Ltd. has trained 2890 numbers of scavengers during the period from 2000-01 to 2006-07. The required fund for implementing the scheme is received from the Ministry as Grants-in-aid.

**Table: 6. 19**  
**NSLRS Training Programme**

(Rs. in lakh)

Sl No	Financial Year	Amount Received	Amount Utilised	Number of Beneficiaries
1	2000-2001	56.58	20.69	1970
2	2001-2002	Nil	21.66	780
3	2002-2003	Nil	Nil	Nil
4	2003-2004	21.00	Nil	Nil
5	2004-2005	Nil	Nil	Nil
6	2005-2006	Nil	4.01	140
7	2006-2007	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Total	77.58	46.36	2890

Source: GOA, 2007-08.

### 6. 1. 8. The Sample Population

In the surveyed villages, it has been found that the performance of MGNREGA is very poor. Job cards have issued almost to all the poor scheduled castes households but employment have not provided to them so far. Only one household of surveyed area is able to get work for 12 days till the end of the month, October 2014. The slogan for 100 days work to all BPL families of the country is under pipe line now. List of permissible works under MGNREGA are: (a) Road connectivity, (b) Flood control, (c) Water conservation & Water harvesting, (d), Drought proofing, (e) Micro Irrigation, (f) Provision of Irrigation facility to Land Development, (g) Renovation of Traditional Water bodies and (h) Land Development etc.

But in our survey area only road connectivity scheme of MGNREGA is implemented and no other schemes have been introduced so far. In Assam during 2013-14, total number of

job card holders were 41.47 lakh (cumulative) and total number of households provided employment were 12.52 lakh. Average mandays generated were 23.64 days and total mandays generated were 296.03 lakh. In Dhubri district, 193494 numbers of job cards have been issued and 1100941 mandays have been created of which 16182 mandays for SC, 1470 mandays for ST, 302903 mandays for women and 1083289 mandays for others respectively during the financial year 2012-13.

In our sample villages, job cards issued to S.C. households, employment provided to S.C. households and mandays generated for Scheduled Castes people is given below.

**Table: 6. 20**  
**Status of Employment Generation of Sample Households**

SL No.	Household Category.	Number of Households	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	Job cards issued	198	82.50
2	Employment provided	1	0.42
3	Mandays generated	12	5.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 5. 20 shows that 82.50 percent households have issued job cards but only 0.42 percent households have provided employment. While conducting survey, a question was placed to all about the performance of MGNREGA. The response was hundred per cent negative. In our sample villages, only 5.00 percent mandays have been created under Chapar-Salkocha development block.

**Table: 6. 21**  
**IAY Beneficiaries of Sample Households**

Sl No	Household Status / IAY Beneficiaries	Number of Households	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	APL Category	37	15.42

2	BPL Category	203	84.58
3	IAY Beneficiaries	110	54.19
4	IAY Non-beneficiaries	93	45.81

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

In our sample villages, 84.58 percent of the households are BPL category and rest 15.42 percent of the households are APL category. Out of 84.58 percent BPL families, 54.19 percent BPL families have received houses under IAY scheme and rest 45.81 percent BPL families have not yet received houses under IAY scheme. But some of them (IAY non-beneficiaries) are in wait list.

**Tube well / Well / Tara Pump Beneficiaries:** Presently some schemes are being implemented by the department for welfare of the masses. Under the scheme, the government is providing Tube well with 60 fit iron pipe, Tara pump (deep well ) with 100 fit iron pipe and six ring well to the BPL families for providing drinking water facilities. The number beneficiaries of these articles in sample villages is given in the following Table: 6. 22

**Table: 6. 22**

**Tube well / Well / Tara Pump Beneficiaries of Sample Villages**

Sl No	Articles	Number of households	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	Tube well beneficiaries	92	45.32
2	Well beneficiaries	14	6.90
3	Tara pump beneficiaries	6	2.96
4	None of these	91	44.82
5	Total	203	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 6. 22 shows that out of 84.58 percent BPL families, 45.32 percent families have received free Tube well and 6.90 percent families have received free well supplied by the Public Health Department. Only 2.96 percent BPL families of survey area have received the Tara pump (deep well) while 44.82 percent of the BPL families have not yet received any of the above facilities.

**Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS):** The Targeted Public Distribution System is introduced to provide food grains to the poor families of the State under Minimum Need Programme of Government of India. Under TPDS, the poor families are identified and distributed food grains at the fair price shop in a transparent and accountable manner. Various commodities which are distributed per month under different schemes in the sample villages are shown in the following Table: 6. 23

**Table: 6. 23**

**Different Poverty Alleviation Schemes of Sample Villages**

Sl No	Schemes	Number of Households	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	Above Poverty Line (APL) Schemes	37	15.42
2	Below Poverty Line (BPL) Schemes	203	84.58
3	Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)	38	18.72
4	Randhan Jyoti Scheme	4	1.97
5	Mukhyamantrir Karmajyoti Achani	—	—
6	Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY)	28	13.79
7	Mukhyamantrir Annaq Suraksha Yojana	13	35.14

Source: Field Survey, 2014

In our sample villages, 15.42 percent of the households are in APL category. The APL families are provided with APL rice, kerosene oil, sugar and iodized salt as per quantum of allocation in each month. Again, 84.58 percent households are in BPL category having distinct ration cards for issuance of PDS items at subsidized rates. These BPL families are provided with 35 kg of rice per family at the rate of Rs.7.00 per kg. In our sample villages, 18.72 percent households are taking benefit of AAY scheme. Under this scheme, the selected beneficiaries are provided with 35 kg of Rice per family per month at a highly subsidized rate of Rs. 3.00 per kg.

In the sample villages, out of total BPL families only 1.97 percent BPL families have been provided with LPG connection at free of cost under Randhan Jyoti Scheme. For skill development and upliftment of traditional artisans through financial assistance Mukhyamantrir Karmajyoti Achari has been launched in the state from the year 2005-06. This scheme covers all the traditional trade, viz. manufacturing of decorative textile, black smithy, pottery, carpentry, toy making etc. In our surveyed villages, it has been found that no one traditional artisan is benefited by this scheme. Again, 13.79 percent BPL households have provided free of cost electricity connection with two bulbs and a meter under the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY).

Out of the total 37 APL families, 35.14 percent families are in the lowest strata of APL families under the ambit of food security (Anna Suraksha Yojana). Such identified families have been providing 20 kg of subsidized rice at BPL rate to each beneficiary upon production of distinctive ration card issued by the concerned department.

**The Self-Help Group (SHG):** The self-Help Group is a viable organization set up to disburse micro-credit to the rural people for the purpose of making them enterprising and encouraging to enter into entrepreneurial activities. The formation of SHGs is ultimately a micro credit project but an empowerment process. Therefore, SGSY is said to be a mother programme of all poverty alleviation programmes. The objective of the programme is to uplift economic status of the rural people living below poverty line by providing sustainable economic activities with bank loan and government subsidy to the SHGs. The cumulative progress of SHG-Bank linkage programme under SGSY of sample villages is shown in the following Table: 6. 24

**Table: 6. 24**  
**Physical Achievement under SGSY in Sample Villages**

Sl No	Status of Self-Help Groups (SHGs)	Number of SHGs
	1	2
1	Men SHGs formed	1
2	Women SHGs formed	4
3	Men SHGs taken up Economic Activities	—
4	Women SHGs taken up Economic Activities	3

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table: 6. 24 shows that in sample villages only one man SHG has formed which has not taken up economic activity so far whereas four women SHGs have formed of which three have taken up economic activities so far.

**Schemes / Programmes for Fishermen:** For enhancement of the fish production in the state and upliftment of socio-economic condition of the poor fishermen various schemes / programmes are implemented in the state during the last five years. The present status of beneficiaries under different schemes in the sample villages are shown in the following Table: 6.25

**Table: 6. 25**  
**Status of Fishermen Beneficiaries of Sample Villages**

Sl No	Schemes	Number of Beneficiaries	
1	CM's Special Employment Generation Programme	Supply of Boat	—
		Supply of Net	6
		Supply of Bicycle with Aluminium Seed Container	3
2	Mukhyamantrir Matsya Mitra Asoni	—	
3	Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)	—	

4	National Welfare Fund for Fishermen	Saving-cum- Relief	—
		Fishermen's Insurance	4

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Under the Chief Minister's Special Employment Generation Programme, provision of fishing tools like nets, boats, bicycle, etc. are distributed at free of cost to the poor fishermen for generating employment and increasing fish production. In our sample villages, only 9 beneficiaries have been found under this scheme of which 6 are able to get fishing net and 3 are able to get bicycle.

A fishing ban period has been imposed from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 15<sup>th</sup> as per Assam Fishery Rules 1953 and Assam Fishery Rules (Amendment) 2005. Active fishermen by profession, living below poverty line and who had no other means of livelihood during the lean period have been provided one time financial assistance @ Rs.10000/- to each fishermen for sustenance during the lean period. Again, under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, the department has been implementing various schemes, viz. , construction of new ponds, development of low-lying areas, beels / wet lands, fresh water prawn farming, kuchia culture, establishment of fish feed mills etc. But, in the sample villages no beneficiaries were found under these two schemes.

The objective of the Savings-cum- Relief Scheme is to provide financial assistance to the fishermen during the lean fishing period. The contribution by the fisher folk is Rs. 600/- which is collected over a period of 9 months. The accumulated amount is distributed among the fishermen in three equal installments at the rate of Rs.600/- per month. Again, under Fishermen's Insurance Scheme, fisher folk licensed, identified or registered with the state government could be insured for Rs.1.00 lakh against death or permanent disability and Rs. 0.50 lakh for partial disability. In the sample villages, only 4 beneficiaries were found who had been insured under the Fishermen's Insurance Scheme.

**Scheme Implemented for Upliftment of SC People:** The Directorate of Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Assam has been implementing various welfare schemes for all round development of the Scheduled Castes people including implementation and monitoring of the point 11 (A) of 20 point programme. The present status of such S.C. welfare schemes in the sample villages are given in the following Table: 6. 26

**Table: 6. 26****Status of SC Welfare Schemes of Sample Villages**

Sl No	Schemes	Beneficiaries
	1	2
1	Pre-matric Scholarship	46
2	Stipend for Craftsman Training in ITI	—
3	Financial Incentive for Inter-Caste Marriage	3
4	Self-help scheme for Self-employment of Un- employed Youths	—
5	Computer and Data Processing Training	—
6	Pre-matric scholarship to the children of those Parents engaged in unclear occupation	—
7	Post-matric scholarship	28
8	National scheme for Liberating & rehabilitation of Scavengers	—
9	Coaching & Allied scheme	—
10	Book-Bank for Medical/Engineering/Veterinary/Agriculture etc.	—

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table: 6. 26 shows that in the sample villages only 46 students (of which 29 are males and 17 are females) have received Pre-matric Scholarship in different classes. In the sample villages, no beneficiary has found so far who has benefited under the schemes- Stipend for craftsman Training in ITI, Self-help scheme for self-employment of unemployed youths, Computer and Data Processing Training, Pre-matric scholarship to the children of those parents engaged in unclear occupation, National Scheme for Liberating & Rehabilitation of Scavengers, Coaching and allied scheme and Book-Bank scheme for Medical/Engineering/Veterinary/Agriculture etc. respectively.

Three couples were found who have received Rs.10000/- each for inter caste marriage under the Financial Incentive for Inter-Caste Marriage scheme. The Post-matric scholarship is provided to all SC students of college level and above. Under this scheme, 43 students had benefited of which 27 were male students and 9 were female students.

Besides the above schemes, as per directive of the Government the ASDC for SC Ltd is implementing some other schemes for the benefit of the poor Scheduled Castes people of the state living below poverty line for the Scavengers / Safai Karmcharies. Status of implementation of such schemes in the sample villages is given below.

**Table: 6. 27**

**Status of Schemes Implemented for Scavengers / Safai Karmcharies in Sample Villages**

Sl No	Schemes	Beneficiaries
	1	2
1	Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme	—
2	National Scheduled Castes Finance & Development Corporation Loan Scheme (NSFDC)	—
3	NSFDC (MCF) Loan Schemes	—
4	National Safai Karamcharies Finance & Development Loan Scheme	—
5	NSLRS Training Programme	—
6	NSLRS Training Programme	—

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, New Delhi has allocating special central assistance (SCA) on Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan to the Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes for all round development of the poor Scavengers / Safai Karmcharies. But in our surveyed areas, no one beneficiary has found who has benefited by the above mentioned special schemes. It should be noted that in our survey area, only four families were noticed who are scavenger. But they left their traditional occupation and engaged in other occupations and never availed the benefit of NSLRS scheme.

Again, there are some central schemes under central assistance whose objectives are to provide financial assistance for creating infrastructure in SC predominant areas. An account of such infrastructure development in sample villages is given in the table: 6. 28

**Table: 6. 28**  
**Distribution of Infrastructure Development in Sample Villages**

Sl No	Schemes	Type of Infrastructure	Number of Infrastructure
	1	2	3
1	Construction of SC boys' Hostel		—
2	Construction of SC Girls' Hostel		—
3	Infrastructure Development Scheme	Community Hall	2
		Village Link Road	1
		Educational Institution	1

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

In the sample villages, it has been found that no hostel has been constructed for SC boys or girls by the Assam State Development Corporation for S C Ltd. under the scheme. But in case of Infrastructure Development Scheme, some works have been done under the scheme. Two community halls and one lower primary school building which are situated in SC concentrated area have been constructed by the Assam State Development Corporation for S C Ltd. Similarly, ASDC has sanctioned of Rs. 100000/- for repairing a village link road of SC inhabited village.

In our survey area, there was no institution of higher education like College as our survey area was village areas. Therefore, no question of construction of hostel for SC boys or girls was arisen. But there was more need of construction of community hall, village link road, educational institution, etc. in the Scheduled Castes inhabited villages.

The block president who generally moved for these schemes are generally non Scheduled Castes people. Therefore, it may be due to less effort from his or her end or there may be other reasons.

**Indebtedness:** Indebtedness is an important problem causing miseries to many of the Scheduled Castes people like other sections of the backward communities. One of the causes of indebtedness is the inherent poverty of the Scheduled Castes population. The Scheduled Castes people are in the habit of taking loan from the village money lenders at an exorbitant rate of interest rather than taking loan from other sources viz. bank, LIC, Co-operative Societies etc. which provide loan to the needy persons at a cheaper rate of interest. They

generally take loans to purchase bullocks, to purchase articles (including both food materials and clothes) for their survival, to construct and repair houses, medical treatment, petty business matters, to perform rites connected with death, marriage ceremonies and other festivals.

The main reason of taking loan from the village money lenders is that they face difficulties to follow the complicated procedures of the banks or other government agencies due to their illiteracy and ignorance. Another problem is that the Scheduled Castes people cannot take loan offered by the government department as they cannot offer sufficient security for obtaining such loan. In our field study, it is found that sometimes the village money lenders come forward to provide loans to the needy persons at the time of their disaster against standing crops at high rate of interest of 5 percent to 10 percent rate of interest per month.

The Table: 6. 29 shows the status of indebtedness of the sample households.

**Table: 6. 29**  
**Status of Indebtedness of Sample Households**

Sl No	Loan taken from Financial Institutions	Number of Households	Percentage	Subsidy Loan	Rate of interest (Yearly)
1	Bank	9	3.75	—	10 – 15
2	SHG	8	3.33	—	24 – 36
3	Bandhan	17	7.08	—	24 – 36
4	Village money lender	47	19.58	—	48 – 84
5	Not availing loan	159	66.25	—	—
6	Total	240	100.00	—	—

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

The government of Assam and Assam State Development Corporation for S.C. have provided subsidy loan under various schemes for upliftment of socio-economic condition of the poor Scheduled Castes people. But in surveyed villages, it is found that no poor SC person has benefited under any subsidy loan scheme. Out of the total households, only 33.74 percent households have availed loan (non-subsidy) from different sources. Among them only 3.75

percent households have availed loan from different commercial banks who are either servicemen or pension holders. Similarly, 3.33 percent households and 7.08 percent households have taken loan from other sources like Self-help Group, Bandhan, etc. respectively. Again it is found that 19.58 percent loan holders have taken loan from the village money lender / Gaonlia Mahajan at high rate of interest (4 percent to 7 percent) per month to fulfill their emergency need.

Out of 66.25 percent households who have not taken loan, only 4.40 percent households have approached to the bank for loan but they were unable to provide security while the remaining never approached to the Bank for loan. While asked them about the reason for not approaching to the financial institution, majority of them remained silent. A few of them replied that they have never thought about the loan.

Majority of the loan holders have taken loan at high rate of interest due to unavoidable circumstances. The purpose of loan of the loan holders is given in the Table: 6. 30

**Table: 6. 30**  
**Distribution of Purpose of Loan of the Sample Households**

Sl No	Purpose of Loan	Loan Holders	Percentage
	1	2	3
1	For purchasing durable goods	6	7.41
2	For purchasing land	5	6.17
3	For business purpose	14	17.28
4	For medical treatment	21	25.93
5	For house building construction / renovation	11	13.58
6	For daughter's marriage	23	28.40
7	For other purpose	1	1.23
8	Total	81	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Table: 6. 30 shows that 7.41 percent loan holders of the sample households have taken loan for purchasing durable goods like motor bike, colour T.V., bicycle, mobile etc. Again, 6.17 percent of the total loan holders have taken loan for purchasing land, taking others land as sukta bandhak and for purchasing bull for ploughing. Like that, 25.93 percent of the total loan holders have taken loan from village mahajan at high rate of interest for medical treatment of their family members in emergency, while 13.58 percent have availed loan from bank or other financial institutions for renovation or constructing dwelling house.

28.40 percent of the loan holders have taken loan from village money lenders or from other sources at high rate of interest for their daughter's marriage because they have to offer a good amount to the bridegroom family as dowry. It is interesting to note that in the sample villages, it was found that only 1.23 percent has taken loan for contesting in the panchayat election who contested as G.P. member.

### **6. 1. 9. Summary**

The poverty alleviation programmes which are in operation in the country mainly from Sixth Five Year Plan may broadly be categorized into two parts. The first part includes self-employment programme and the second part covers wage employment programmes. For uplifting the quality of life of rural people so many schemes have been sponsored both by the Central and the State Governments. The Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Government of Assam executes mostly the poverty alleviation programmes along with some co-related schemes covering the rural and urban areas which directly help in the development of quality of life both in urban and rural areas.

Schemes for rural development which are centrally sponsored schemes (cost sharing basis by the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 90:10) are (a) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act (MGNREGA), (b) Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), (c) Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), (Integrated wasteland Development Project (IWDP/HARIYALI) etc. There are some other State plans which have been implemented in all 25 districts of the State. The schemes are flexible for economic growth and development of the underdeveloped areas. Some of these schemes are (a) Chief Minister Assam Vikash Yojana, (b) Mukhya Mantrir Anna Suraksha Yojana, (c) Randhan Jyoti Scheme, (d) The Antyodaya Anna Yojana, etc.

Besides, The Directorate of Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Assam has been implementing various welfare schemes for all round development of the Scheduled Castes people including implementation and monitoring of the point 11 (A) of 20 point programme. The main thrust of the schemes for the Scheduled Castes people are: (1) promotion of literacy among the SC people with emphasis on female education, (2) promotion of employment/ self-employment through family oriented income generation schemes and (3) some grants-in-aid schemes for benefit of the SC people. Some of these schemes are: (a) Pre-matric Scholarship, (b) Post-matric Scholarship, (c) Construction of SC Boys and Girls Hostel, (d) National Scheme for Liberating & Rehabilitation of Scavengers, etc.

While conducting field survey it was noticed that awareness was lowest among the Scheduled Castes people regarding poverty alleviation programmes like MGNREGA. Other problems that were related to MGNREGA were: (a) job cards were sometimes not available, (b) many workers were not aware that they need to apply for work after receiving the job cards, (c) money was being charged for application forms in some cases, (d) female headed households were sometimes denied access to job cards, (e) joint families were registered as one household, because of problems with the definition of 'household', etc.

In our field survey, all the IAY beneficiaries have reported us that they had received Rs.3000.00 to Rs. 5000.00 less than the actual sanctioned amount. Some beneficiaries told us that they had to give Rs.2000.00 to Rs.3000.00 as bribe to the Gaon panchayat member for listing their names in the proposal. Therefore, some very poor BPL families who were unable to offer Rs.2000.00 or Rs.3000.00 as bribe are still unable to get the houses under IAY scheme while some other beneficiaries had already received double in different names of their family members. In our field survey, another important thing noticed was that many poor families had not received any IAY house because they have no ID number.

While conducting the survey it was seen that the sample households were unaware about all the schemes except a few schemes. As a result, they never moved to any where for achieving the benefit of these schemes. The lower level officials who were in-charge of selecting the beneficiaries also concealed the benefit of these schemes from the actual beneficiaries. Three couples who received financial incentive for inter-caste marriage reported that they actually received only Rs. 5000.00 each instead of Rs. 10000.00.

The loans offered by the banks and the subsidies given by the government departments have not been availed by the Scheduled Castes people for whom the provisions are made. This

happens due to lack of real field work and survey on the part of the departments concerned and corruption. Hence, in spite of provisions for loan and subsidies or subsidized-grants, the vast majority of them are deprived of these provisions.

## Chapter – VII

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Findings

This chapter summaries the findings of the study and put forward some suggestions on the basis of these findings.

The study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter contains an introduction to the work, its scope and objectives, its location as well as the research method and techniques adopted for the study.

The second chapter deals with the review of literature.

The third chapter shows the demographic profile of Scheduled Castes people in the state of Assam and the district of Dhubri and occupational pattern of Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district of Assam. The main findings in this chapter are:

- (1) Regarding the nature of occupation, it is found that unskilled labour is the main occupation of the Scheduled Castes people. In case of permanent occupation, only 37.14 percent husband and 8.89 percent wives are able to get the permanent type of work.
- (2) In case of changing occupations, majority of the Scheduled Castes people (78.33) changed their fore-fathers' occupation due to various reasons.
- (3) Regarding the marital status, it is found that the percentage of married male (39.08) and female (39.12) are almost same. The percentage of widow (5.01) is higher than the percentage of widower (0.98).
- (4) Child marriage is still practiced among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district of Assam. 35 percent respondents of the survey area are married below the legal age of marriage. The highest percentage of women (48.33 percent) got married in the age group 16-19 years which prolongs their reproduction period, which is indirectly responsible for poverty.
- (5) In case of religion, it is found that all the sample households are Hindus and no one is found whose religion is other than Hindu.

In the fourth chapter, the demographic behavior of Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district and couples' attitude towards family planning and adoption behavior of family planning measures have been analyzed. The main findings in this chapter are:

- (1) The knowledge of contraceptives is wide spread among the ever-married Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district of Assam. About 60 percent of the females have knowledge of at least one modern method of contraceptives and the best-known method is contraceptive pill.
- (2) Both knowledge and practice of family planning are found to be similar among the respondents irrespective of their number of live birth.
- (3) Knowledge of family planning is found to be the highest among the couples with monthly income of Rs.10,000/- plus and practice of family planning is the highest among the couples with monthly income of Rs. 6001 – 10000/-.
- (4) Both knowledge and practice of contraception are almost similar among the women irrespective of their age at marriage.
- (5) With higher educational attainment, the knowledge of family planning is also found to be higher. However, in case of practicing of family planning, the role of education is found to be less significant.
- (6) The working women have sound knowledge of contraceptives as compared to the unemployed while the use of contraceptives is almost similar among the women irrespective of their employment status.
- (7) Women's knowledge of family planning increases with increasing family members but the percentage of women using contraceptives is almost similar among the women irrespective of the number of family members.
- (8) Females with longer effective married life lived are found to have higher knowledge of family planning while no difference is observed among them regarding use of contraceptives.
- (9) The availability of medical facilities plays no role in influencing the knowledge and practice of family planning among the sample couples.

The fifth chapter shows the causes and consequences of poverty among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district. The main findings in this chapter are:

- (1) The educational attainment among the scheduled Castes is not at all satisfactory. Female education is much lower than that of the male. Graduate level of education among the people is eye catching. No husband or wife was found to be post-graduate or technically educated. Over all, the scenario of education among the sample husbands and wives is very pathetic
- (2) The percentage of male (36.14) dropped out is higher than the female (21.00) dropped out. The reason is that the female children are generally neglected and set married at an early age.
- (3) The dropped out at secondary level is almost double than the dropped out at higher secondary level. The female dropped out is higher at lower primary level. The reason is the neglect of girl children.
- (4) Out of the total families, majority of the families (84.58 percent) belong to BPL category (below poverty line).
- (5) The dominant family type is found to be nuclear among the Scheduled Castes.
- (6) It is found that more 50 percent families of the sample households are living in semi-pucca houses and only 10 percent families are living in pucca houses. More than 80 percent semi-pucca houses are given by the government under the IAY scheme (Indra Awaas Yojana)
- (7) 11.67 percent of the households are still using surface water (pond, river, spring) for household uses and drinking purposes.
- (8) In the sample villages, more than 20 percent households have kutchra latrines and more than 60 percent households do not possess any latrines. They use the nearby jungles or fields for this purpose.
- (9) In the surveyed villages, as many as 90 percent households use fire wood and others mainly cow-dung as a source of fuel for cooking and only 10 percent households use L.P.G. for this purpose.
- (10) In the surveyed villages, 38.33 percent households have electricity and 61.67 percent households use kerosene for lighting.
- (11) Regarding the assets holding position, it is surprise that more than 80 percent of the households have Mobile phones. They have somehow managed to possess a Mobile phone.

In the sixth chapter, poverty alleviation programmes and their implementation and the effectiveness of these programmes in Dhubri district have been discussed in detail. The main findings in this chapter are:

(1) Among the sample respondents, it is observed that more than 80 percent households belong to BPL category and rest of the households belong to APL category. Out of the total BPL families, more than 50 percent BPL families have received houses under IAY scheme and rest of the BPL families have not yet received houses under IAY scheme. But some of them (IAY Non-beneficiaries) are in wait list.

(2) It is also noticed that there is a huge corruption in selecting the IAY beneficiaries.

(3) It is observed that more than 80 percent households have been issued job cards but only less than one percent households have been provided employment.

(4) While conducting field survey a question was put to all about the performance of MGNREGA. The response was almost hundred percent negative. We have identified so many problems which are related to MGNREGA. Some of them are:

(a) Problems of awareness

(b) Problems related to job cards application and distribution

(c) Problems related to application for work

(d) Problems related to identification of works

(e) Problems related to worksite facilities

(f) Problems related to payment of wages

(g) Problems related to muster rolls

(5) It is observed that out of total BPL families only less than two percent BPL families have been provided LPG connection at free of cost under Randhan Jyoti Scheme.

(6) Out of the total BPL households only less than twelve percent BPL households have been provided free of cost electricity connection with two bulbs and a meter under the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY).

(7) It is also found that no one traditional artisan of the surveyed villages have been benefited by the skill development scheme.

(8) It is found that only one SHG by men and four SHGs by women have formed among the sample respondents.

(9) Under Chief Minister's Special Employment Generation Programme, only 9 fishermen have benefited under this scheme and only 4 beneficiaries have been found who are insured under the Fishermen's Insurance Scheme.

(10) Among the sample villages, no beneficiary has found who has benefited under the schemes- Stipend for craftsman Training in ITI, Self-help scheme for self-employment of unemployed youths, computer and data processing training, pre-matric scholarship to the children of those parents engaged in unclear occupation, National Scheme for Liberating & Rehabilitation of Scavengers; Coaching and Allied scheme and Book-Bank scheme for Medical/Engineering/Veterinary/Agriculture etc. respectively. But, under Pre-matric and Post-matric Scholarship Schemes only 46 and 43 Scheduled Castes students have benefited respectively.

(11) The loans offered by the banks and the subsidies given by the government departments are not availed by the Scheduled Castes people for whom the provisions are made. This happens due to lack of real field work and survey on the part of the departments concerned and corruption.

(12) Among the sample respondents, more than twenty five percent of the total loan holders have taken loan from village mahajan at high rate of interest in emergency.

(13) More than sixty percent households who have not taken loan have approached to the banks for availing loan but they were unable to get loan due to non providing security against loan.

(14) It is also noticed that under Infrastructure Development Scheme, only two community halls and one lower primary school building have been constructed by the Assam State Development Corporation for SC Ltd.

(15) Similarly, it is also noticed that ASDC has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 100000/- for repairing only one village link road.

## Suggestions

In the light of the findings of the study, the following suggestions we would like to make for the improvement of the socio-economic condition and demographic life of the scheduled castes people of Dhubri district of Assam.

(1) It is observed that majority of the households have unskilled labour. But the income earned from this profession is not sufficient and certain. Therefore, to improve the socio-economic condition of the unskilled labours, it is necessary to improve their skill. For this purpose, special training should be given to them according to their eligibility. Government should take strong steps for properly utilizing the Special Component Plan which is announced for the overall development of the poor Scheduled Castes People of Assam in general.

(2) Fishing is found to be another main occupation of the Kaibartas of Assam. But the income earned from it is very negligible to run the families. It is because of the fact that technology and procedure they use for catching, storing and marketing fish are crude and outdated. To improve the socio-economic condition of the Kaibartas, it is necessary to modernize fish catching and fish selling technology so that their productivity can increase and the sustainability of their fish trade can be ensured. For this purpose, special training should be given to the Kaibartas in fish catching, fish storing, fishing instrument making etc. They are also expert in producing cane and bamboo products. But due to financial problems they cannot produce it at a large scale. Agro-farming training should be given to them. Raw materials like, nylon, yarn, bamboo and cane, takau and other items may be provided at subsidized rate. Necessary marketing facilities may also provide to them.

(3) It is found that child marriage is still practiced among the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district of Assam. So, special campaign should be organized to create awareness among them for enhancing the female age at marriage. All the development plans including the Special Component Plan and Special Assistance Programme meant for the Scheduled Castes people should stress on raising the age at marriage so that fertility of the scheduled Castes women comes down.

(4) The mortality levels including the infant mortality is very high among the Scheduled Castes people of Assam. Therefore, it is suggested that to reduce mortality (specially infant mortality) among them special attention should be given to improve female education,

institutional deliveries and vaccination programme. Awareness should also be created among the rural mass for safe delivery.

(5) Womens' labour force participation is found to have great influence on fertility as well as couple's attitude to extra children. Since most of the respondents in the sample villages are found to be semi-literate or illiterate, government jobs are not available to them. But, the women folk are good in weaving, net making, handicraft, etc. In this connection, special training should be introduced for Scheduled Castes women to improve their skill in these trades, which will not only enhance their family income but also reduce fertility.

(6) The most popular method of family planning among the sample Scheduled Castes women is found to be the contraceptive pill, which is used for spacing. Permanent method of family planning like sterilization (both male and female) is not popular among them. Thus, the government's family planning measures should give more emphasis on permanent method of family planning and for this purpose free sterilization camps should be organized from time to time specially in the remote areas.

(7) The percentage of dropped out children is higher at upper primary level than the lower primary level. Similarly, the dropped out at secondary level is almost double than the dropped out at higher secondary level. To create healthy atmosphere in education sector, proper infrastructure and other facilities need to be provided for minimizing drop out ratio in pre-primary, primary and secondary level of education.

(8) Use of contraceptives in most cases depends on the availability of medical facilities. Medical facilities of the sample villages are not satisfactory. Therefore, it is suggested that government should open more Primary Health Centers (PHC) and sub-centers in remote areas so that people of this localities can easily access the facilities.

(9) It is observed in the Scheduled Castes villages that the son preference is the strongest motivating factor behind desiring additional children especially among the illiterates. This traditional mind set of the people must be changed to reduce fertility among them. Therefore, the government should create awareness among the illiterates through NGOs that there is no difference between son and daughter.

(10) It is found that 37.50 percent families of the sample households are living in kutcha houses. The households who are living in kutcha houses also belong to BPL category but they are still unable to get the IAY houses. It is also found that there is huge corruption for selecting IAY beneficiaries from panchayat level to officer level. During survey time it was

clear that more than 20 percent IAY beneficiaries are not the actual beneficiaries. They actually belong to APL category. They somehow managed the officer and get the IAY houses. Therefore, it is necessary that the government should immediately bring transparency in the scheme in selecting the IAY beneficiaries so that only the actual beneficiaries come out for selection. Together the government should take strong steps against the persons who are involved in corruption while selecting the IAY beneficiaries.

(11) During survey it was found that only 6.67 percent households have got government supplied pipe water facilities which is supplied by the Public Health Department of the State. Again, 11.67 percent of the households are still using surface water (pond, river, spring) for household uses and drinking purposes. Therefore, it is suggested that the Public Health Department of the State should spread the free water supply scheme in more areas so that more and more people can take the benefit of it.

(12) It is found that in surveyed villages, less than 40 percent households have electricity and more than 60 percent households use kerosene for lighting. Therefore, it is suggested that electrification facility should be increased so that more and more households can be electrified. Again, it is found that more than 90 percent households use fire wood and others mainly cow-dung as a source of fuel and only 10 percent households use L.P.G. for cooking. Hence, the government should take steps to give L.P.G. connection to more and more families under the Randhanjyoti scheme.

(13) It is found that more than 80 percent households have been issued job cards but only less than one percent households have been provided employment. In some areas it was also found that the bank pass books of MGNREGA beneficiaries were in the hands of the gaon panchayat member. Even the gaon panchayat members had taken signature of beneficiaries on withdrawal forms in advance. So, it is suggested that this system must be changed. The government must rectify the loopholes of the scheme so that actual beneficiaries are not exploited by the middlemen. The government should also take strong steps so that all the rules and regulations of MGNREGA scheme are strictly followed.

(14) The formation of SHGs is not ultimately a micro credit project but an empowerment process. The empowerment of women through SHGs would give benefit not only to the individual women but also for the family and community as a whole through the collective action for development. The SHGs empower women both socially and economically. They encourage women to participate in decision making in household, community and local

democratic sector and prepare women to take up leadership position. Besides, it provides lean season wage employment and increases saving habit among people. Therefore, it is suggested that benefits of the SHGs should be highlighted among the rural SC people so that much more people may be attracted to it. For this reason some training programmes and workshop facilities should be provided in the rural areas, especially for SC women. The NGOs and government should take necessary steps for marketing the goods produced by SHGs. Periodic training at regular interval to group members regarding self-management issues is to be necessarily imparted with the help of experienced resource persons.

(15) The Scheduled Castes people are in the habit of taking loan from the village money-lenders at an exorbitant rate of interest. The main reason of taking loan from the village money lenders is that they face difficulties to follow the complicated procedures of the banks or other Government agencies due to their illiteracy and ignorance. Therefore, it is suggested that the government should direct the bank authorities to provide loan with easy procedure and easy documentation.

In the planning and implementation of poverty reduction programmes, the bureaucracy plays the most important role. They are involved in detailed planning, allocation of allotted funds for the lower tiers of the administration and line departments, flow of funds, approving the plans and projects prepared by the lower tiers and monitoring inputs, outputs and outcomes of development interventions. Since the weaknesses in implementation are the root cause of failure and sub-optimal performance of programmes, it brings into focus the functioning of the bureaucracy in terms of its accountability, transparency and interface with the civil society.

From the aforesaid discussion it could be inferred that without reforming the bureaucracy and changing their mindset, the development interventions are unlikely to be effective and efficient. Furthermore, specific reforms need to be designed to make development administration responsible, transparent, accountable and culpable.

Lastly, a whole-hearted effort of the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Gaon Panchayats, dynamic role of the educated youths, Mahila Samities, etc are required for a drastic change in the socio-economic and demographic life of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam.

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## APPENDIX

### (1) Administrative Setup of Dhubri District (After formation BTAD)

Table: A. 1

Sl No	Administrative Divisions	Numbers
1	Sub-divisions	3
2	Revenue Circles	9
3	Number of Villages	1091
4	Number of Gaon panchayats	168
5	Number of Community Development Blocks	14
6	Number of Anchalik panchayat	14
7	Number of Zila parishad	1
8	Number of Mahakuma Parisad	3
9	Number of Municipal Board	1
10	Number of Police Stations	10
11	Number of Police Outposts	8
12	Number of Tehsils	7
13	Number of Sub-Tehsils	2
14	Number of Towns	9

Source: Census of India, 2011

Dhubri district comprises three sub-divisions and 14 Community Development Blocks. Sub-division wise Community Development Blocks of Dhubri district are:

#### (A) Dhubri Sub-division

- (i) Agomani Development Block
- (ii) Golakganj Development Block
- (iii) Gauripur Development Block

(iv) Rupshi Development Block

(v) Debitola Development Block

**(B) Bilasipara Sub-division**

(i) Mahamaya Development Block

(ii) Nayeralga Development Block

(iii) Bilasipara Development Block

(iv) Chapar-salkocha Development Block

**(C) South Salmara Sub-division**

(i) Birsing Jarua Development Block

(ii) Jamadarhat Development Block

(iii) South salmara Development Block

(iv) Fekamari Development Block

(v) Mankachar Development Block

We have categorized these blocks into three groups, on the basis of their level of development i.e. rank. These three heads are:

(1) Highly developed

(2) Moderately developed and

(3) Least developed blocks respectively

Seven development indexes of blocks have been used for categorized these blocks. These development indexes are:

(i) Number of LP and UP Schools

(ii) Number of branches of banks and Micro finances

(iii) Literacy rate of population

(iv) Health status

(v) Irrigational status

(vi) Road condition

(vii) Agricultural productivity

(2) Number of Lower Primary (LP) and Upper Primary (UP) Schools of Different Development Blocks of Dhubri District of Assam, 2014

Table: A. 2

Sl No	Name of development Block	No of L P School	No of U P School	Total	Rank
1	Chapar-salkocha Dev.Block	119	13	132	Rank-4
2	Nayeralga Dev. Block	73	15	88	Rank-12
3	Mahamaya Dev. Block	97	18	115	Rank-9
4	Bilasipara Dev. Block	69	24	93	Rank-11
5	Gauripur Dev. Block	156	43	199	Rank-1
6	Debitola Dev. Block	93	17	110	Rank-10
7	Golakganj Dev. Block	90	26	116	Rank-8
8	Agomani Dev. Block	166	33	149	Rank-3
9	Rupshi Dev. Block	35	11	46	Rank-14
10	Fekamari Dev. Block	132	31	163	Rank-2
11	Jamadarhat Dev. Block	53	17	70	Rank-13
12	South-salmara Dev. Block	89	30	119	Rank-7
13	Mankachar Dev. Block	113	18	131	Rank-5
14	Birsing jarua Dev. Block	103	26	129	Rank-6

Source: D.E.E.O. Office Dhubri, 2014.

(3) Number of Branches of Different Banks and Micro Finances in Different Development Blocks of Dhubri District of Assam, 2014

Table: A. 3

Sl No	Name of development Block	SBI	UCO	UBI	AGV B	Other	Micro Finan	Total	Rank
1	Chapar-salkocha	2	2		2		1	7	2

	Dev.Block								
2	Nayeralga Dev. Block	1			1			2	6
3	Mahamaya Dev. Block	1	2					3	5
4	Bilasipara Dev. Block	1	1	1	2	1	2	8	1
5	Gauripur Dev. Block	2	1	1	2		1	7	2
6	Debitola Dev. Block		1		1			2	6
7	Golakganj Dev. Block	2			2		1	5	3
8	Agomani Dev. Block	1	1		2			4	4
9	Rupshi Dev. Block	2	1		1			4	4
10	Fekamari Dev. Block	1	1		1			3	5
11	Jamadarhat Dev. Block			1		1		2	6
12	South-salmara Dev. Block	1	1		1			3	5
13	Mankachar Dev. Block	1			1			2	6
14	Birsing jarua Dev. Block			1	1			2	6

Source: Lead Bank, Dhubri, 2014.

(4) Literacy Rate in Different Development Blocks in Dhubri District of Assam

(As per 2011 Census)

Table: A. 4

Sl No	Name of development Block	Literacy Rate	Rank
1	Chapar-salkocha Dev. Block	62	Rank-3
2	Nayeralga Dev. Block	47.02	Rank-12
3	Mahamaya Dev. Block	56.03	Rank-6
4	Bilasipara Dev. Block	61.08	Rank-14
5	Gauripur Dev. Block	60.37	Rank-5

6	Debitola Dev. Block	49.36	Rank-9
7	Golakganj Dev. Block	62.99	Rank-2
8	Agomani Dev. Block	64.94	Rank-1
9	Rupshi Dev. Block	50.22	Rank-7
10	Fekamari Dev. Block	46.94	Rank-13
11	Jamadarhat Dev. Block	46.71	Rank-14
12	South-salmara Dev. Block	49.03	Rank-10
13	Mankachar Dev. Block	50.01	Rank-8
14	Birsing Jarua Dev. Block	48.06	Rank-11

Source: N.I.C., Dhubri, 1014.

(5) Details of CHC, PHC, and Sub-centre under Different Development Blocks of  
Dhubri District of Assam, 2014

Table: A. 5

Sl No	Name of Development Block	Number of CHC	Number of PHC	Number of SC	Total	Rank
1	Chaper-salkocha dev. Block	1	1	17	19	Rank-7
2	South-salmara dev. Block	1	1	24	26	Rank-2
3	Jamadarhat Dev. Block	0	0	13	13	Rank-10
4	Birsing Jarua Dev. Block	0	0	16	16	Rank-8
5	Agomani Dev. Block	2	1	25	28	Rank-1
6	Nayeralga Dev. Block	0	0	13	13	Rank-10
7	Mahamaya Dev. Block	0	0	14	14	Rank-9
8	Golakganj Dev. Block	0	1	19	20	Rank-6
9	Rupshi Dev. Block	0	0	14	14	Rank-9

10	Gauripur Dev. Block	1	1	19	21	Rank-5
11	Fekamari Dev. Block	0	0	15	15	Rank-8
12	Debitola Dev. Block	0	0	13	13	Rank-10
13	Mankachar Dev. Block	1	1	20	22	Rank-4
14	Bilasipara Dev. Block	0	1	22	23	Rank-3

Source: Joint Director Office of Health, Dhubri, 2014

(6) Block-wise Cultivable area and Irrigated area under Different Development Blocks of  
Dhubri District of Assam, 2010-11

Table: A. 6

(Area in hectare)

Sl No	Name of Development Block	Cultivable Area (in Hectare)	Irrigated Area ( In Hectare)	Percentage of Irrigated Area	Rank
1	Chapar-salkocha Dev. Block	4597	589	12.81	Rank-9
2	Nayeralga Dev. Block	3102	252	8.12	Rank-14
3	Mahamaya Dev. Block	4990	939	18.82	Rank-7
4	Bilasipara Dev. Block	5307	1297	24.44	Rank-1
5	Gauripur Dev. Block	6785	1343	19.79	Rank-4
6	Debitola Dev. Block	5010	1069	21.33	Rank-3
7	Golakganj Dev. Block	5915	1126	19.04	Rank-6
8	Agomani Dev. Block	6114	1198	19.59	Rank-5
9	Rupshi Dev. Block	5200	1128	21.69	Rank-2
10	Fekamari Dev. Block	3610	344	9.53	Rank-11
11	Jamadarhat Dev. Block	3007	248	8.25	Rank-13
12	South-salmarra Dev. Block	1190	146	12.27	Rank-8

13	Mankachar Dev. Block	3960	382	9.65	Rank-10
14	Birsing Jarua Dev. Block	2199	195	8.87	Rank-12

Source: Office of the Executive Engineer, Irrigation Office, Dhubri, 2014

(7) Block-wise and category-wise Length of Roads under P.W.D. in Dhubri District of Assam, 2010-11

Table: A. 7

(Road in K.M.)

Sl No	Name of Development Block	Black Topped Road (in k. m.)	Gravel Road (in k. m.)	Average	Rank
1	Chapar-salkocha Dev, Block	44.10	30.31	37.21	Rank-6
2	Nayeralga Dev. Block	13.96	20.42	17.19	Rank-12
3	Mahamaya Dev. Block	50.35	27.13	38.74	Rank-5
4	Bilasipara Dev. Block	55.049	29.20	42.12	Rank-2
5	Gauripur Dev. Block	58.10	28.03	43.07	Rank-1
6	Debitola Dev. Block	27.81	20.04	23.93	Rank-8
7	Golakganj Dev. Block	50.19	30.38	40.29	Rank-3
8	Agomani Dev. Block	55.00	25.38	40.19	Rank-4
9	Rupshi Dev. Block	26.94	22.04	24.49	Rank-7
10	Fekamari Dev. Block	16.63	20.90	18.77	Rank-11
11	Jamadarhat Dev. Block	12.93	19.06	15.99	Rank-13
12	South-salmara Dev. Block	21.01	20.10	20.56	Rank-10
13	Mankachar Dev. Block	20.58	21.05	20.82	Rank-9
14	Birsing Jarua Dev. Block	13.81	17.90	15.86	Rank-14

Source: Office of the Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Dhubri, 2014.

(8) Block-wise Production of Summer Paddy, Winter Paddy and Wheat as per final forecast for the year 2010-11, Assam under Different Development Blocks of Dhubri

District

Table: A. 8

(Area in Hectare, Production in MT)

Dev. Blocks	Col – 1 (Summer Paddy)			Col – 2 (Winter Paddy)			Col – 3 (Wheat)			Average Prod per Hect	R an k
	Area in Hect	Prod in MT	Prod per Hect	Area in Hect	Prod in MT	Prod per Hect	Area in Hect	Prod in MT	Prod per Hect		
Agomani	5900	13747	2.33	3532	6698	1.90	900	1080	1.20	1.81	1
Golakganj	5700	13281	2.33	3373	6140	1.82	1200	1440	1.20	1.78	3
Gauripur	4800	11184	2.33	2899	5303	1.83	2000	2400	1.20	1.79	2
Rupshi	5200	12116	2.33	3058	5023	1.64	600	720	1.20	1.72	4
Debitola	4800	11184	2.33	2898	4747	1.64	500	600	1.20	1.72	4
Mahamaya	4000	9320	2.33	2813	3715	1.32	800	954	1.19	1.61	5
Bilasipara	4700	10951	2.33	3399	4310	1.27	1200	1440	1.20	1.60	6
Nayeralga	3000	6990	2.33	2228	2825	1.27	1200	1440	1.20	1.60	6
Chapar-salkocha	4550	10601	2.33	3282	4013	1.22	800	954	1.19	1.58	7
Birsing jarua	2000	4660	2.33	898	1161	1.29	1200	1440	1.20	1.61	5
Jamadarhat	2000	4660	2.33	842	1024	1.22	1200	1440	1.20	1.58	7
South-salmara	1000	2300	2.30	505	614	1.22	1200	1440	1.20	1.57	8
Fekamari	3500	8155	2.33	1630	1916	1.18	585	702	1.20	1.57	8
Mankachar	3805	8851	2.33	1740	2118	1.22	500	600	1.20	1.58	7

Source: District Agricultural Office, Dhubri, 2014

## (9) Rank of Blocks

Table: A. 9

Dev. Blocks	Rank of LP & UP Schools	Rank of Bank & Micro Finance	Rank of Literacy Rate	Rank of Irrigated Area	Rank of Health Status	Rank of Road Condition	Rank of Agricultural Production	Total
Agomani	3	4	1	5	1	4	1	19
Golakganj	8	3	2	6	6	3	3	31
Gauripur	1	2	5	4	5	1	2	20
Rupshi	14	4	7	2	9	7	4	47
Debitola	10	6	9	3	10	8	4	50
Mahamaya	9	5	6	7	9	5	5	46
Bilasipara	11	1	4	1	3	2	6	28
Nayeralga	12	6	12	14	10	12	6	72
Chapar-salkocha	4	2	3	9	7	6	7	38
Birsing jarua	6	6	11	12	8	14	5	62
Jamadarhat	13	6	14	13	10	13	7	76
South-salmara	7	5	10	8	2	10	8	50
Fekamari	2	5	13	11	8	11	8	58
Mankachar	5	6	8	10	4	9	7	49

The blocks whose rank between 19 and 31 have fallen in the first category, whose rank between 38 and 49 have fallen in the second category and whose rank between 50 and 76 have fallen in the third category.

**Highly developed blocks****Rank**

(1) Agomani Development Block

19

(2) Gauripur Development Block	20
(3) Bilasipara Development Block	28
(4) Golakganj Development Block	31
<b>Moderately developed Blocks</b>	<b>Rank</b>
(1) Mankachar Development Block	49
(2) Mahamaya Development Block	46
(3) Rupshi Development Block	47
(4) Chapar-salkocha Development Block	38
<b>Least developed blocks</b>	<b>Rank</b>
(1) South-salmara Development Block	50
(2) Jamadarhat Development Block	77
(3) Fekamari Development Block	58
(4) Birsing jarua Development Block	62
(5) Nayeralga Development Block	72
(6) Debitola Development Block	50

Two blocks have been randomly chosen from each category i.e. altogether six blocks have been chosen and these six blocks are:

**(A) Highly developed blocks**

- (1) Agomani Development Block
- (2) Bilasipara Development Block

**(B) Moderately developed Blocks**

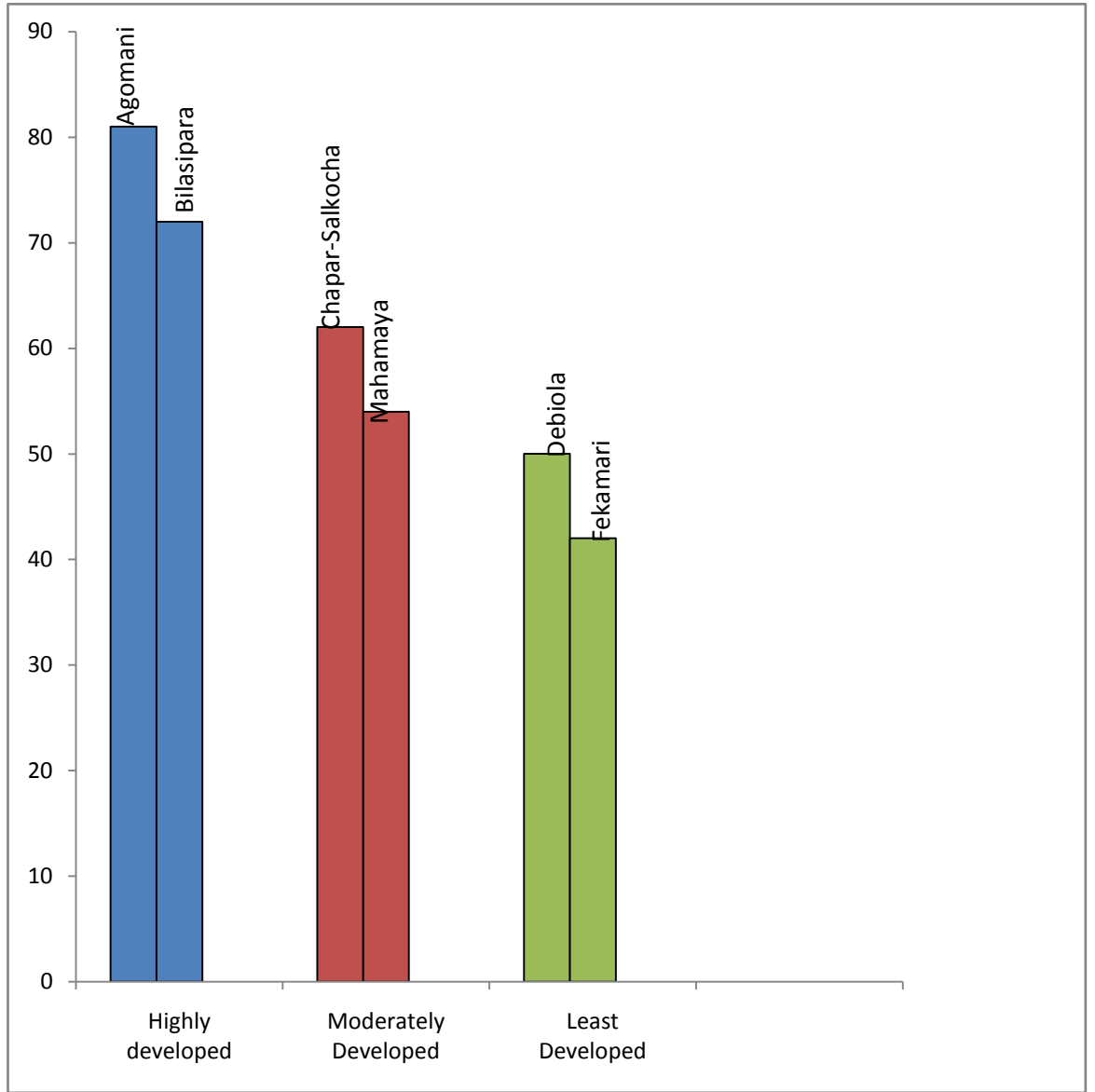
- (1) Chapar-salkocha Development Block
- (2) Mahamaya Development Block

**(C) Least developed blocks**

- (1) Debitola Development Block
- (2) Fekamari Development Block

(10) Selected Sample Blocks from three categories

Fig: A. 1



Blocks Category

## (11) Agomani Development Block at a Galance

Table: A. 11

Sl No	Agomani Development Block		List of Gaon Panchayats
1	Total Household	18392	(1) Agomani
2	Number of G.Ps.	13	(2) Bhamandangao
3	Total Villages	67	(3) Bidyadabri
4	Total Population	102389	(4) Boterhat
5	Total Male Population	52782	(5) Chagolia
6	Total Female Population	49616	(6) Halakura
7	Total S.C. Population	5783	(7) Kaimari
8	Total S.T. Population	32	(8) Pokalagi
9	Other Caste Population	96589	(9) Ranpagli (10) Satrasal (11) Shernagar (12) Sindurai (13) Sonakhuli

Source: [www.drdadhubri](http://www.drdadhubri)

## (12) Bilasipara Development Block at a Galance

Table: A. 12

Sl No	Bilasipara Development Block		List of Gaon Panchayats
1	Total Household	11624	(1) Ananda Nagar
2	Number of G.Ps.	10	(2) Bangalipara
3	Total Villages	79	(3) Bahir suapata
4	Total Population	69193	(4) Futkibari

5	Total Male Population	35309	(5) Baghmari
6	Total Female Population	33884	(6) Hakama
7	Total S.C. Population	2391	(7) Hatipota
8	Total S.T. Population	2272	(8) Lakhiganj
9	Other Caste Population	64530	(9) Masaneralga (10) Raniganj (11) Udmari

Source: [www.drdadhubri](http://www.drdadhubri)

(13) Chapar-Salkocha Development Block at a Galance

Table: A. 13

Sl.No	Chapar-Salkocha Development Block		List of Gaon Panchayats
1	Total Household	13902	(1) Bahalpur
2	Number of G.Ps.	12	(2) Barunitara Batoldol
3	Total Villages	142	(3) Chirakuta Tilapara
4	Total Population	81296	(4) Dhirerchar Tarangapur
5	Total Male Population	41265	(5) Bashbari
6	Total Female Population	40031	(6) Lalimari Krishnakali (7) Geravita
7	Total S.C. Population	3141	(8) Hatipota
8	Total S.T. Population	4209	(9) Pukhuripara
9	Other Caste Population	73946	(10) Puthimari (11) Rangamati (12) Salkochai

Source: [www.drdadhubri](http://www.drdadhubri)

## (14) Debitola Development Block at a Galance

Table: A. 14

Sl No	Debitola Development Block		List of Gaon Panchayats
1	Total Household	13249	(1) Alomganj
2	Number of G.Ps.	11	(2) Asharikandi
3	Total Villages	189	(3) Boraibari
4	Total Population	82423	(4) Debitola
5	Total Male Population	42338	(5) Geramari
6	Total Female Population	40085	(6) Kazigaon
7	Total S.C. Population	3732	(7) Monglajhora
8	Total S.T. Population	15879	(8) Polashguri
9	Other Caste Population	62812	(9) Silairpar (10) Tipkai (11) Uttar Geramari

Source: [www.drdadhubri](http://www.drdadhubri)

## (15) Fekamari Development Block at a Galance

Table: A. 15

Sl No	Fekamari Development Block		List of Gaon Panchayats
1	Total Household	17643	(1) Bharuakata
2	Number of G.Ps.	14	(2) Borairalga
3	Total Villages	74	(3). Fekamari
4	Total Population	101747	(4) Fulerchar
5	Total Male Population	52028	(5) Gotabari Khopati
6	Total Female Population	49719	(6) Hazirhat

7	Total S.C. Population	3691	(7) Kanaimara
8	Total S.T. Population	148	(8) Kathalbari
9	Other Caste Population	97908	(9). Kukurmara (10) Maliralga (11) Manullahpara (12) Molakhowa (13) Puran Diara (14) Sukchar

Source: [www.drdadhubri](http://www.drdadhubri)

(16) Mahamaya Development Block at a Galance

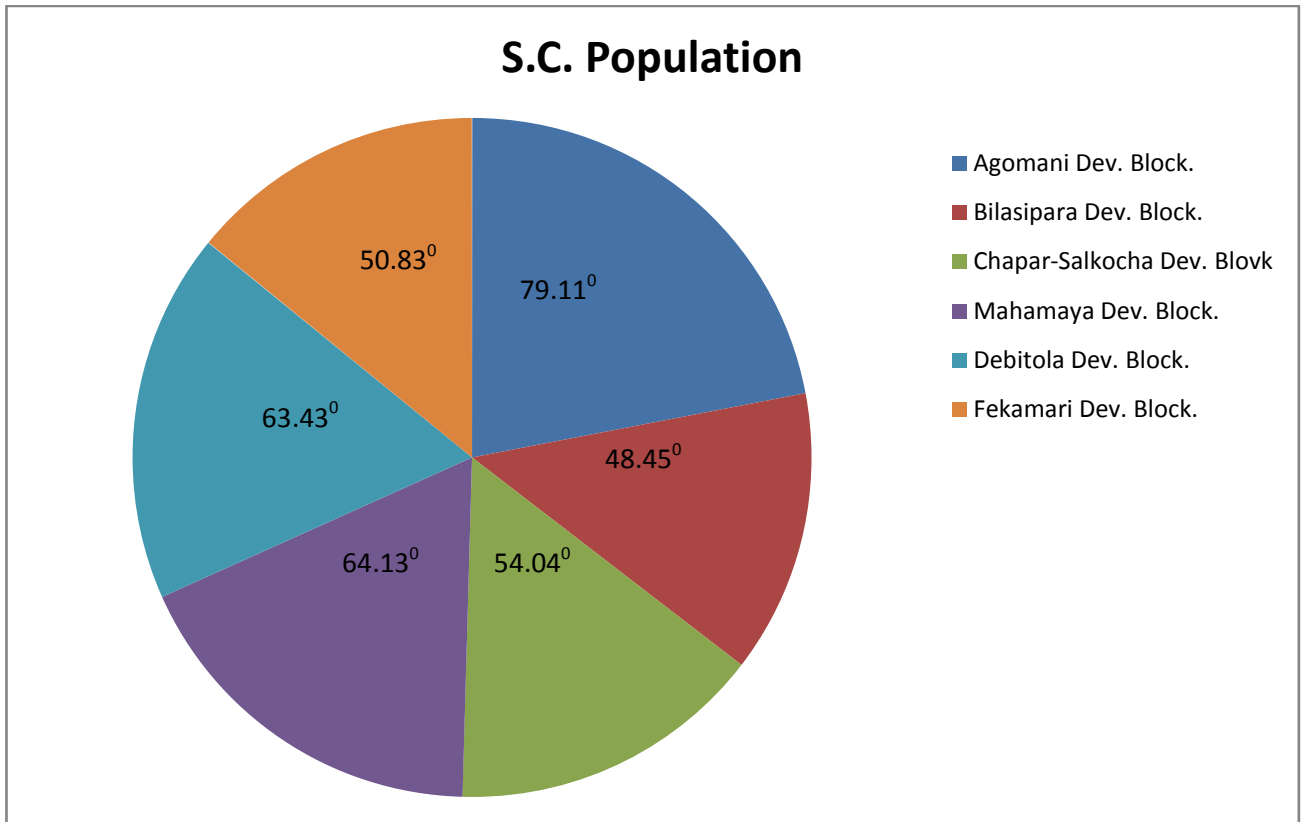
Table: A. 16

Sl No	Mahamaya Development Block		List of Gaon Panchayats
1	Total Household	14433	(1) Barkanda
2	Number of G.Ps.	12	(2) Bagribari
3	Total Villages	146	(3) Gobardhanpara
4	Total Population	86918	(4) Jalabila
5	Total Male Population	44442	(5) Kadomtola
6	Total Female Population	42476	(6) Mahamaya
7	Total S.C. Population	3978	(7) Panbari
8	Total S.T. Population	196	(8) Sadhubasha
9	Other Caste Population	82744	(9) Saltari (10) Sankosh (11) Sonamoyee (12)Tushpara

Source: [www.drdadhubri](http://www.drdadhubri)

(17) Percentage of SC Population in six Development Blocks of Dhubri District

**Fig: A. 2**



**Pie Diagram**

Percentage of total SC Population in Agomani Development Block (5.65%)

Percentage of total SC Population in Bilasipara Development Block (3.46%)

Percentage of total SC Population in Chapar-Salkocha Development Block (3.86%)

Percentage of total SC Population in Mahamaya Development Block (4.58%)

Percentage of total SC Population in Debitola Development Block (4.53%)

Percentage of total SC Population in Fekamari Development Block (3.63%)

## (18) Sample Villages

Table: A. 17

Block Category	Name of the Blocks	Sample villages	Under Gaon Panchayat
Highly Developed Blocks	(1) Agomani Development Block	(1) Kaldoba-1	Agomani
		(2) Choto Dighaltari	Boterhat
	(2) Bilasipara Development Block	(1) Futkibari	Futkibari
		(2) Anandanagar	Anandanagar Bangalipara
Moderately Developed Blocks	(1) Chapar-Salkocha Development Block	(1) Baniapara-1	Salkocha
		(2) Batardal	Barunitara Batardal
	(2) Gauripur Development Block	(1) Dharmasala-3	Dharmasala
		(2) Bhelakoba	Durahati
Least Developed Blocks	(1) Fekamari Development Block	(1) Hatsingimeri	Fulerchar
		(2) Kurkurmara-1	Kukurmara
	(2) Debitola Development Block	(1) Asharikandi	Asharikandi
		(2) Geramari-6	Geramari

Source: [www.drdadhubri](http://www.drdadhubri)

We have chosen 2 villages as sample villages from each block of all three categories so as to give maximum geographical coverage. Agomani development block comprising 13 goan panchayats and 67 villages. Out of 67 villages, we have randomly chosen two villages as sample villages and the sample villages are (1) Kaldoba-1 and (2) Chota Dighaltari. The first one goes under Agomani gaon panchayat and the second one goes under Boterhat gaon panchayat. Like that, Bilasipara development block consists of 10 gaon panchayats and 79 villages. Among them two villages have been randomly chosen as sample villages and the sample villages are (1) Futkibari and (2) Anandanagar where first comes under Futkibari gaon panchayat and the second one comes under Anandanagar Bangalipara gaon panchayat.

Similarly, two villages i.e. (1) Baniapara-1 and (2) Batardal have been randomly chosen as sample villages from Chapar-salkoca development block which comprising 12 gaon

panchayats and 142 villages where first one goes under Salkoca gaon panchayat and second one goes under Barunitara Batardal gaon panchayat. From Gauripur development block, we have randomly chosen two villages as sample villages which comprising 15 gaon panchayats and 84 villages. The sample villages are (1) Dharmasala-3 and (2) Bhelakoba where Dharmasala-3 comes under Dharmasala gaon panchayat and Bhelakoba comes under Durahati gaon panchayat.

Likewise, we have randomly chosen (1) Hatsingimari village and (2) Kukurmara-1 village as sample villages from Fekamari development block which consists of 14 gaon panchayats and 74 villages. The first one goes under Fulerchar gaon panchayat whereas the second one goes under Kukurmara gaon panchayat. Like that, Debitola development block consists of 11 gaon panchayats and 189 villages. Among them two villages have been randomly chosen as sample villages and the sample villages are (1) Ashrikandi and (2) Geramari-6 where first comes under Ashrikandi gaon panchayat and the second one comes under Geramari gaon panchayat.

Category wise selected sample villages from six development blocks are as follows:

<b>Highly Developed Blocks</b>	<b>Sample Villages</b>
(1) Agomani Development Block	(A) Kaldoba-1 (B) Choto Dighaltari
(2) Bilasipara Development Block	(A) Futkibari (B) Anandanagar
<b>Moderately Developed Blocks</b>	<b>Sample Villages</b>
(1) Gauripur Development Block	(A) Dharmasala-3 (B) Bhelakoba
(2) Chapar-Salkocha Development Block	(A) Baniapara-1 (B) Batardal
<b>Least Developed Blocks</b>	<b>Sample Villages</b>
(1) Fekamari Development Block	(A) Hatsingimari (B) Kukurmara-1
(2) Debitola Development Block	(A) Asharikandi (B) Geramari-6

## Problems faced by the Scheduled Castes People of Dhubri District in Assam and their Remedies

Manoranjan Roy\*

### Abstract

*According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders (amendment) Act, 1976 there are sixteen Scheduled Castes communities in Assam. These are Bansphor, Bhuimali/ Mali, BrittalBanka/ Bania, Dhupi/ Dhobi, Hira, Jalkeot, Jhalo/ Malo/ Jhalo-Malo, Kaibartha/ Jaliya, Lalbegi, Mahara, Mehtor/ Bhangi, Muchi/ Rishi, Namasudra, Patni and Sutradhar. Out of the sixteen Scheduled Castes, some are indigenous and they are distinguished as Assamese Scheduled Castes, others are non-Assamese. The Assamese Scheduled Castes are: Brittal Banka/ Bania, Dhupi/ Dhobi, Hira, Jalkeot, Dugla/ Dholi, Kaibartha and Mali. The Bansphor, Lalbegi, Mahara, Mehtor/ Bhangi are non-indigenous Scheduled Castes of Assam. They are non-agriculturist group and have no scope for acquiring any land for agriculture. They are generally under the employment of municipal bodies of different towns. The Muchi/ Rishis are also non-indigenous Scheduled Castes. They are mostly from Bihar and engage themselves in leather-work. They move from place to place and do their daily business on leather-made things like shoe repairing and manufacturing at certain convenient places of urban and semi-urban areas. They do not possess any permanent land for residential purposes. They live in the hired residential houses. Though the Bhuimali is listed as Scheduled Castes in Assam but there is no record of such communities in Assam. The Namasudra, Patni, Sutradhar and Jhalo-Malo who are included in the list of Scheduled Castes of Assam are Bengali speaking communities and mostly concentrated in the Barak valley districts and Dhubri district.*

**Keywords :** Poverty, Malnutrition, Illiteracy, Discrimination

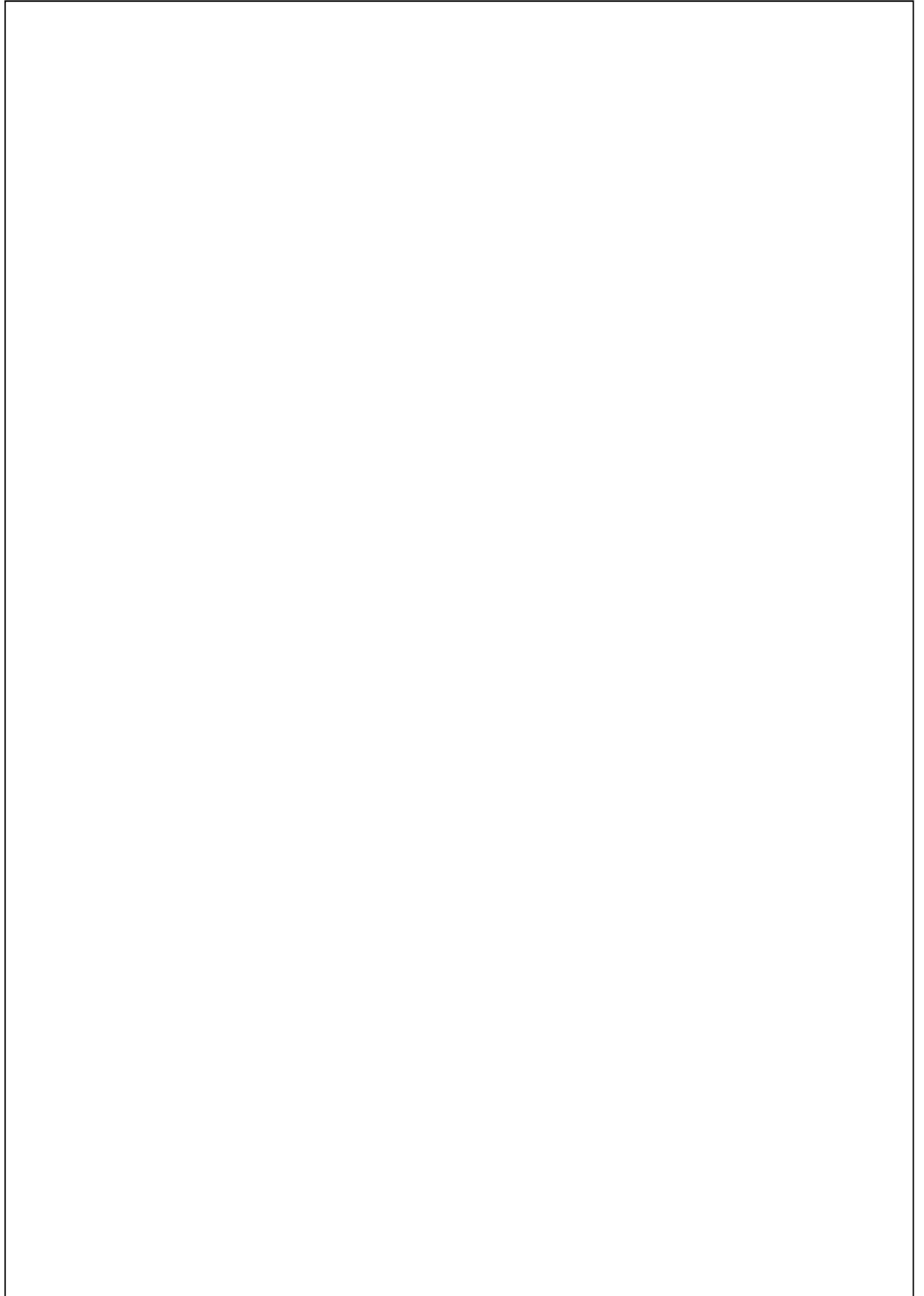
### Introduction :

According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders (amendment) Act, 1976 there are sixteen Scheduled Castes communities in Assam. These are Bansphor, Bhuimali/ Mali, BrittalBanka/ Bania, Dhupi/ Dhobi, Hira, Jalkeot, Jhalo/ Malo/ Jhalo-Malo, Kaibartha/ Jaliya, Lalbegi, Mahara, Mehtor/ Bhangi, Muchi/ Rishi, Namasudra, Patni and Sutradhar.

Out of the sixteen Scheduled Castes, some are indigenous and they are distinguished as Assamese Scheduled Castes, others are non-Assamese. The Assamese Scheduled Castes

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and the problems faced by the Scheduled Caste people of  
**India :**

young men

belonging to the people. For example, in Bihar, the  
 and they believe that if the people fail to satisfy them, the  
 passes to human beings. The evil spirit such as Bura, Chosa  
 (1980) states that the Kairatis people believe that men, evil  
 worship lots of Gods and Goddesses.

of Sakismamuljaneonaj. This mix group is about 22.22% of  
 them become the follower of it. These aspects a mix group  
 (1984) states that after the spread of Vishnavism among the  
 the Scheduled Caste people.

suffer from various diseases. The village doctor is an inter  
 of the huts are made of thatch, bamboo and mud. Duran  
 (1981) states that normally the Kairatis villages  
 doctor only at the time of emergency.

They use herbal medicine to cure such diseases. The sche  
 of Tetanus are not familiar to the people, though some educat  
 ional, Malaria, Headache, etc. Diseases like AIDS, Cholera  
 (1988) has argued that the common diseases of the sched  
 marriage between them develops.

and the Caste- Hindus reflects the idea of social div  
 (1988) states that the traditional pattern of social interactio  
 and widow marriage.

caste divisions and avoid marriage relation within the Caste  
 such complexity, it is rather a matter of convenience to  
 (1988) has argued that the caste divisions among the members of

low and partly due to social disability and illiteracy. The people are largely because they are confined to certain low occupations. They are made to feel that they are born to suffer. The environment of these people is in no way conducive to the nation generally live in slums. The life of these people is such as these outcasts who are poor, illiterate and underprivileged forms.

are not given equal status with others. Untouchability confined classes are utilized by the upper classes for their benefit and these depressed classes have been denied basic civic rights. 15,734 persons are males and 30,474 persons are females. The population of the state. Out of the total Scheduled Caste states population of Dibrui district is 63,208 persons while Dibrui district is 16,37,344 persons. Out of 16,37,344 district is one of the districts of the state Assam. According to

each village. Thus, altogether 240 households have been chosen. From these 12 villages, 20 households have been chosen so as to give maximum geographical coverage. That altogether six blocks are chosen. We have chosen 2 villages. Several blocks are included. Then two blocks are randomly chosen, moderately developed and least developed block respectively. These blocks into three heads, on the basis of their level of development. The district consists of three sub-divisions and 14 development blocks.

The study very simple and easily understandable.

	♂	♀	Male	Female
Education	High school	High school	High school	High school
	College	College	College	College
	No. of	No. of	No. of	No. of

Table 1: Level of education of the sample husbands and wives

are unskilled wages.

and etc. The number of college going students is also a condition of the bride, referred to in the example.

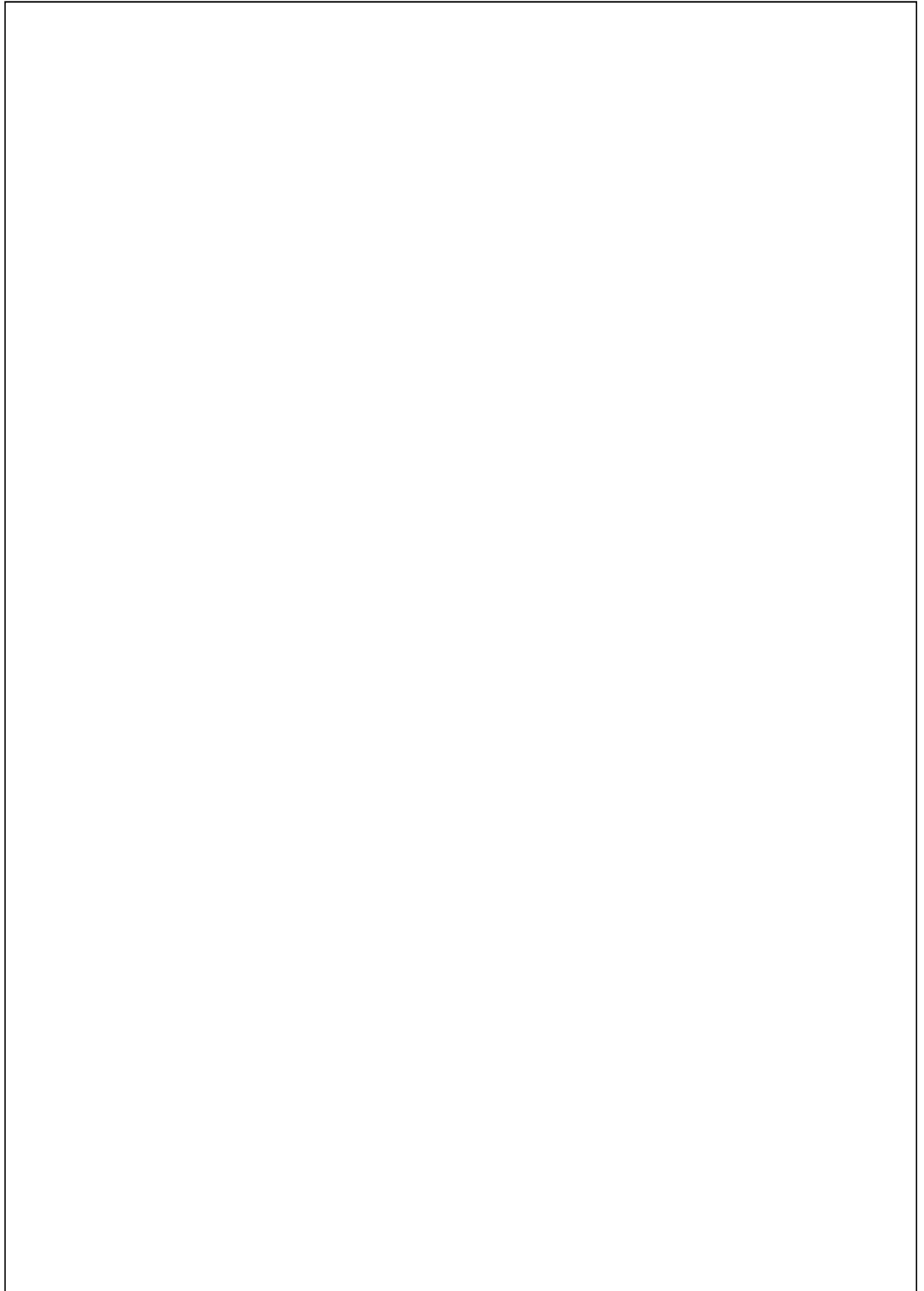
The main reasons for drop-outs are lack of proper school drop-outs increases among this community as cooking purposes. As the primary and middle stage of education to this family. Female children are confined to the kitchen by their parents in work and raise the family earnings and children belonging to this community without getting education is lowest as compared to the literacy rate of 20% of the population of this region. According to 2001 census, literacy rate is 60% importance of education. Literacy is very high in district of Assam. Scheduled Caste people of Dibrugarh district is considered as the major problems among the scheduled people of problems among the scheduled Caste people of Dibrugarh.

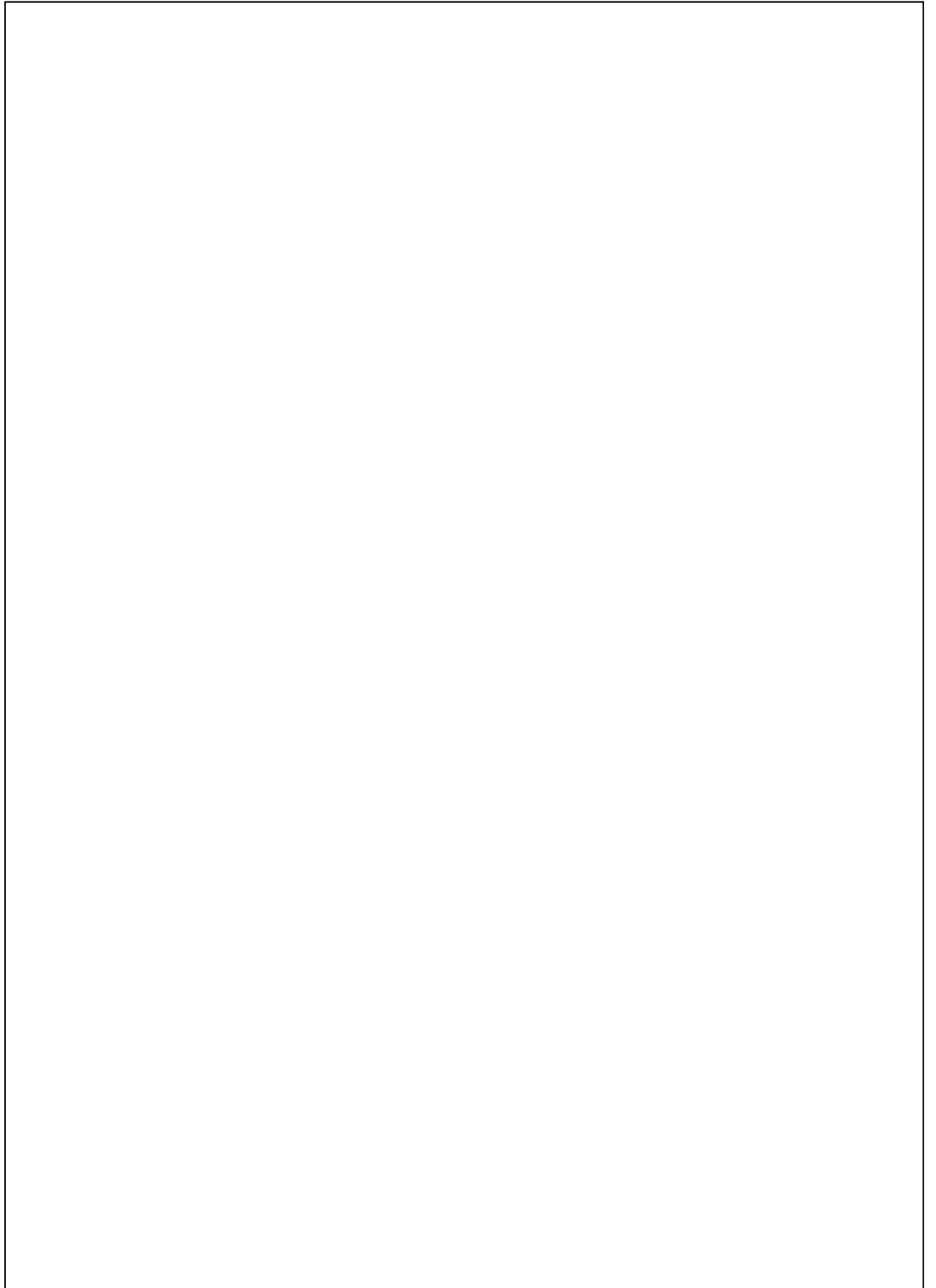
people, purging, poor sanitation, relief in microfinance and functioning of social sector especially among women and women's group system, organization of various groups, creating order their socio-economic development among them most scheduled Caste people of Dibrugarh district are facing a

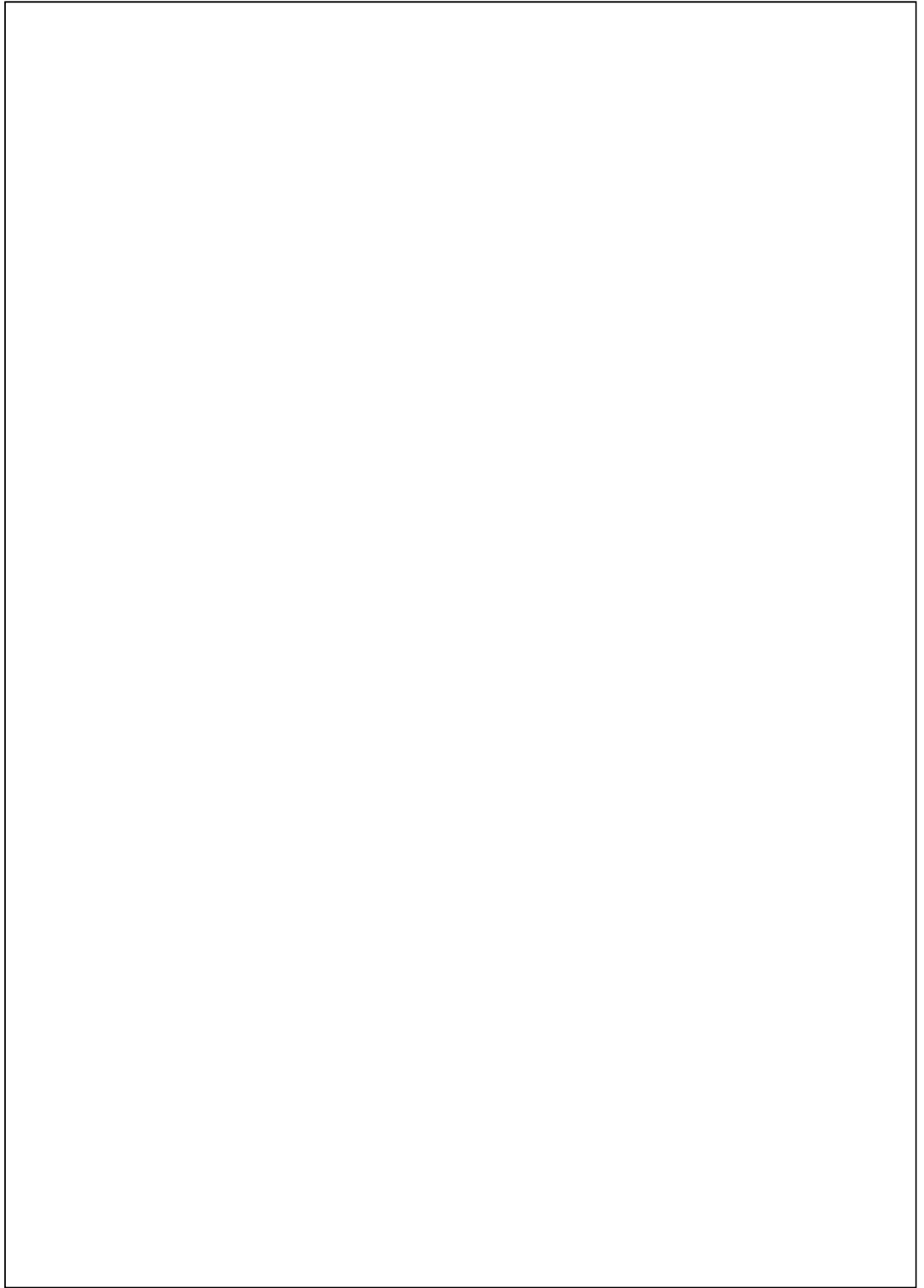
... of education on ...  
 moreover, the ...  
 the ... of education among the ...  
 who received post-secondary education ...  
 that either you or of the ... or you or ...  
 to be ... it is zero in case of ...  
 of ... Only a very small portion of ...  
 the ... received higher secondary level of education  
 while only 13.33% (35) ... received the  
 secondary level of education, 52.83% (95) ...  
 1.83% (20) for ... and 10.00% (54) for ...  
 is more than the ... who have received ...  
 education. The number of the ... who have received  
 education while 55.20% (24) of the ...  
 is 40.90% (115). 12.83% (38) of the ...  
 among the ... is 34.17% (85) and ...  
 is that ... among the ... is more than  
 34 dead ...

TABLE

	540	100.00%	540
Education	Nil	—	Nil
Education	Nil	—	Nil
6	Nil	—	Nil
	5	0.83%	Nil







... further... children...  
 stated in the 2. C. alleges that the son preference is  
 all the son's.

possibility and people's participation in maintaining the  
 kind water facilities should be provided in all scheduled  
 out the constitutional and welfare meant for them.

attention should be given by all concerned to make the  
 scheduled castes targeted areas.

should be given to develop the educational and infrastru-  
 ctural schemes and concessions to the poor students to solve  
 the problem of their children for better education. 20. Government  
 economic condition of the 2. C. people is miserable, they

are female dropped out children.

1.00% (5) for male and 1.00% (1) for female when com-  
 pared with the rate of dropped out due to sickness is 10  
 a high at the secondary level of education for both ma-  
 le and female dropped out due to non-success. The rate of drop-  
 out of total male and female dropped out, 58.28% (15) male  
 and 55.28% (51) was dropped  
 at small kids in absence of their parents.

It is that the female children are confined at home for coo-  
 ping that one day they will have to give marry and will go to  
 for male. One reason is that the female children are gener-  
 ally female children than the male children. It is 80.30% (5  
 . Again, the percentage of dropped out children due to

५ (1979): "Eastern India", Vol-V, p. 226.

५ (1979): "Assam Bazar", Bazar, 1979, Part-V, p. 88

etc.

States people should be made aware of the health hazards  
of the gas.

To give L.P.G. connection to more and more families  
only 10% households use L.P.G. for cooking. Hence, the  
rest 90% households use fire wood and other mainly co-  
al so that more and more households can be electrified  
and use kerosene for lighting. Therefore, it is suggested that  
it is that in surveyed villages, 38.33% households have  
people of Assam.

Massive change in the socio-economic and demographic  
parameters, dynamic role of the educated youths, massive  
effort of the Government, Non-Governmental  
ment to fulfill the educational needs of the people.

So, literacy must increase among them and this is also the  
the major hindrances of the poor scheduled States people  
and take strong steps to remove corruption in providing  
and loan with easy procedure and easy documentation.  
Therefore, it is suggested that the government should direc-

Castes Population of Assam

literacy Rate in different development Blocks in Dibrugarh district

BOOK Assam 2013, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Gauhati

Department of Economic Research and Statistics

### ANNEXURE: I (Interview schedule)

## SOCIAL EXCLUSION, ECONOMIC MARGINALISATION AND INCIDENCE OF POVERTY: “A Case Study of the Scheduled Castes People of Dhubri District of Assam”.

Name of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Investigation: \_\_\_\_\_ Village: \_\_\_\_\_

Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name of the respondent:

2. Father's/ Husband's name:

3. Present marital status: Married  Unmarried

Widow  Divorced

4. Religion: Hindu  Christian  Muslim

Budhist  Others

5. Sub-caste: Kaibartha  Namosudra  Hira  Sutradhar

Mali  Muchi  Bania  Dhobi

Jalkeot  Jhalo  Malo  Lalbegi

Mahara  Bhangi  Bansphor  Patni

6. Age:

a) Present age of the respondent:

b) Age at puberty:

c) Age at the marriage of the respondent:

d) Age of effective married life:

e) Present age of the husband:

f) Age at marriage of the husband:

7. Type of Family: Nuclear:  Joint:

8. No. of Family members:

Male (Adult): \_\_\_\_\_ Female (Adult): \_\_\_\_\_  
Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Male (Children): \_\_\_\_\_ Female  
(Children): \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \_\_\_\_\_

G.Total: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Education of the respondent and her husband:

a) Illiterate:

Respondent:  Children (M):   
Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_ Children (F): \_\_\_\_\_  
Number: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Literate up to Lower Primary level (class I to V):

Respondent:  Children (M):   
Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_ Children (F): \_\_\_\_\_  
Number: \_\_\_\_\_

c) Literate Up to Upper Primary level (class VI to VIII):

Respondent :  Children(M):   
Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_ Children (F): \_\_\_\_\_  
Number: \_\_\_\_\_

d) Literate up to Secondary level (class IX to X):

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_ Children (M): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_ Children (F): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

e) Literate up to Higher secondary Level (class XI toXII):

Respondent:  Children (M):   
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband:  Children (F):   
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

f) Graduation:

Respondent:  Children (M):   
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_ Children (F):   
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

g) Post-graduation:

Respondent:  Children (M):   
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_ Children (F): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

h) Technical:

Respondent:  Children (M):   
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband:  Children (F):   
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Dropped out children:

(a).No of male dropped out children : \_\_\_\_\_

.Education completed up to (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Class passed: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ Class passed \_\_\_\_\_

Dropped out due to: Financial crisis  Un-success  Sickness 

(b) No of female dropped out children: \_\_\_\_\_

.Education completed up to (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Class passed: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ Class passed \_\_\_\_\_

Dropped out due to: Financial crisis  Un-success  sickness 

## 11. Occupation of the respondent:

a) Nature of the main occupation:

Service  Professional  Business Skilled labour  Unskilled labour  Fishing Cultivator  Too old to work  Potter Unemployed/ Housewife:  Other: b) Occupational status: Temporary:  Permanent: 

c) Supplementary Occupation, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

## 12. Occupation of the Husband:

a) Service  Professional  Business Skilled labour  Skilled labour  Fishing Cultivator  Too old to work  Potter Unemployed  Other b) Occupational status: Temporary:  Permanent :

c) Supplementary Occupation, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

d) Previous occupation:

Income earning member of the family	Income from main source	Income from Supplementary Source	Total Income
Respondent			
Husband			
Total			

13. (i). Type of Family: (a) APL:  (b) BPL :

(ii).Are you satisfied with the performance of MGNREGA? Yes:  No:

(iii).How many working days have you got in the last year and present year so far under MGNREGA?

(a). Last year: Working days:  
Year: \_\_\_\_\_

(b).Present year: Working days:  
Year: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Whether any loan? Yes  No

a) If Yes, Whether – Bank:  Village Mahajan:

b) If Bank- Subsidy loan:  n-subsidy loan :

c) If Village Mahajan, Rate of interest- Monthly  Yearly:  @:

d) If No,Whether approach to the authority of the financial Institution? Yes  No

(i). If Yes, reasons for not getting: \_\_\_\_\_

(ii). If No, reasons for not approaching: \_\_\_\_\_

e) Purpose of loan: \_\_\_\_\_

(i). Total amount of loan received : Rs \_\_\_\_\_

(ii). Outstanding balance: \_\_\_\_\_

(iii). Loan amount utilized. \_\_\_\_\_

15. (a) Land holding: Land owner  Landless

If land owner,

(i) Area of Land: \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) Area of cultivable land: Own: \_\_\_\_\_ Lease: \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Other asset holding: Electricity: Yes:  No:

Car:  Bike:  Colour T.V.:  Refrigerator :

Bicycle :  Fan :  Radio:  D.V.D / V.C.D :

Home theatre:  Watch :  Mobile phone :

Gold : Yes  No  If Yes , Quantity : \_\_\_\_\_

Silver : yes  No  If Yes , Quantity : \_\_\_\_\_

16. Housing Condition:

a) Type of House: Pucca  Semi-pucca  Kutcha

b) No. of living rooms:

c) No. of beds:

d) Separate bedrooms from the respondent: Yes  No

e) Separate kitchen: Yes  No

f) Bathroom facility: Pucca  Kutcha  Open

g) Toilet facility:      Pucca                      Kutcha                      Open  
 h) Whether house received under Indra Awas Yojana (IAY): Yes  No   
 If yes, Sanctioned amount  Actual Amount received  Year.

17. Sources of Drinking water:

a) Water tape (separate) :  water tape (common) :  Well   
 (separate):  
 tube well (separate) :  tube well (common):  well (common)   
 :  
 Pond/ River/ Spring:   
 b) If water tape:      Own       Govt. free supply   
 c) If tube well:      Own       Govt. free supply   
 d) If well:      Own       Govt. free supply

18. Fuel used for cooking:

Fire wood  Kerosene  Coal  Gas  Other

19. (a) No. of live births ever born:

Son ..... Dautghter ..... Total .....

(b) No. of existing children:

Son ..... Datghter ..... Total .....

(c) No. of still births:

Son ..... Daughter ..... Total .....

{d) No. of Miscarriages .....

20. Was there any birth in your household since January, 2012      Yes:  No:

If yes, 1. Month ..... Year ..... Male :  Female :

2. Month ..... Year ..... Male:  Female:

3. Month ..... Year ..... Male :  Female :

21. Was there any death in your household since January, 2012 Yes : No:

a) If yes, how many Male:  Female :

b) Month ..... Year .....

c) Age at death .....

d) Causes of death: Old Age :  General illness:  Accident:   
Other  (specified)

22. (a) Do you want more children? Yes:  No

(b) If yes, how many more?

23. Reasons for wanting more children:

- a) To make home happier
- b) Desire for a son
- c) Desire for a daughter
- d) To ensure family survival
- e) Husband wants more

24. Reasons for not wanting more children:

- a) Satisfied with the present family size
- b) Difficult to obtain the basic necessities
- c) Present standard of living will be adversely affected
- d) Unable to education to children
- e) Family property is inadequate to support additional children
- f) Health does not permit

25. How many children should one have? ..... Son:  Daughter:

26. Do you know that birth control is possible? Yes:  No :

27. Do you consider birth control desirable? Yes :  No :

28. Name some of the contraceptive devices you know. Do not know :

- (a) (b)
- (c) (d)

29. Do you approve the use of contraceptives? Yes :  No:  Indifferent :

- a) If yes, why? .....
- b) If no, why? .....

30. Do you/ your husband practice contraception ?

Yes :  No :  Not particular :

If yes ,

a) Which methods? .....

b) If sterilized when and where the operation was done  
.....

c) If contraceptive are not used, are you interested to use in future?

Yes :  No :  Indifferent :

31. (a) Have you heard about AIDS? Yes :  No :

(b) Do you know how AIDS is transmitted? .....