

Socio-Economic Condition of Fishers Community

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Abstract

The present study reflects the socio economic status of fishers community in Kumri beel located in Goalpara district in west direction near the Brahmaputra river of Assam and about 11 km distance from the Goalpara town. In this study the levels of literacy, income, and occupation were assessed and labouring was found to be the best choice of earning among the people.

Keywords: Socio-economic status, literacy, income, occupation.

1. Introduction

Wetlands are one of the essential natural resources. In India 1-5 % of wetlands are occupying the geographical area of the country, hold about a fifth of the known biodiversity (National Wetland Atlas: Assam). In Assam floodplain lake-like wetland with static wetlands are known as beels. The floodplain wetlands typically symbolize the lentic component of floodplains (Sugunan and Bhattacharjya, 2000). Among the Indian states, Assam has the maximum number and the largest water area under floodplain wetlands mainly associated with the Brahmaputra and Barak River (Sugunan and Bhattacharjya, 2000).

Goalpara district is situated in the south western part of Assam between 25°33' to 26° 12' N latitudes and 90°07' to 91°05' E longitudes. Kumri beel is situated in Goalpara district in west direction near the Brahmaputra river and about 11 km distance from the Goalpara town, 1 km from Naranarayan bridge and 5 km north-east of Paglatek Mandir. The beel lies between the latitude 26°11'27" N and longitude 90°33'44" E.

Fisheries sector contributes considerably to the economy and general livelihood of the people. As per National Fishers Development Board, fishers sector provide livelihood of about 14 million people in India. It has been recognized as a potent employment maker and powerful income source leading to the growth of subsidiary industries as it provides the source of cheap and nutritious food.

As per FAO 2007 (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), fishing communities are frequently described by sub-standard living conditions, low levels of education, and lack of services like schools, health care and infrastructure such as roads to access markets.

Keeping in view of all these reasons, the present study was an effort to assess the socio-economic dimensions of fishers community in Kumri beel.

2. Objective

The objective of the study is to find out the socio-economic profile of the people in Kumri beel.

3. Methodology

Generally two methods are used in the collection of data - primary and secondary method. The primary data were collected using interview and questionnaire method. On the other hand, secondary data were collected from the published research papers, books and internet for the study. 25 respondents were selected for the study through interviewing method. Random sampling method was followed to collect the required information.

4. Results

The analysis of socio-economic attributes like age, gender, family type, occupation, annual income, sanitary condition and educational status are given in the following tables.

4.1 Age:

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 30	8	32
31-40	12	48
41-50	3	12
51 and above	2	8
Total	25	100

Interpretation: From the above table it can be seen that 32% of respondents are the age group of below 30, 48% of respondents are the age group of 31-40, 12% respondents are the age group of 41-50 and 8% respondent are the age group of 51 and above.

4.2 Gender:

Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	16	64
Female	9	36
Total	25	100

Interpretation: From the above table it is found that majority of the respondents are male (64%).

4.3 Family type:

Family type	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Joint family	14	56
Nuclear family	11	44
Total	25	100

Interpretation: From the above table it can be seen that 56% have joint family and 44% have nuclear family.

4.4 Occupation:

Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Service	1	4
Fishers	2	8
Agriculture	2	8
Labour	20	80
Total	25	100

Interpretation: The standard of living of people depends on their occupation. From the above table it can be seen that majority of the respondents are labour (80%) as there are no employment opportunities exist in the village.

4.5 Annual income:

Annual income	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 10,000	22	88
10,001 to 20,000	2	8
20,001 to 30,000	1	4
Above 30,001	0	0
Total	25	100

Interpretation: From the above table it can be seen that majority of them are Below Poverty Line (88%). It reflects the poor economic condition of the people in village, which was not enough to maintain their normal livelihood.

4.6 Sanitary Condition:

Sanitary Condition	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	25	100
No	0	0
Total	25	100

Interpretation: From the above table it can be seen that all respondents have sanitary condition which was built under the Pradhan Mantri Sauchalay Yojana.

4.7 Educational status

Educational status	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Graduate and above	1	4
Intermediate (H.S)	2	8
Matriculation (H.S.L.C.)	1	4
Primary	4	16
Can read and write	2	8
Can read only	1	4
Illiterate	14	56
Total	25	100

Interpretation: Education is an important socio-economic factor. It allows individuals to make precise decisions and choices. Education develops person's potential to play productive roles in the society. From the above table it can be seen that literacy rate of the people in the present study is very poor and majority of the respondents are illiterate (56%).

4.8 Housing type

Housing type	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Katcha house	13	52
Semi Katcha house	7	28
Pucca house	5	20
Total	25	100

Interpretation: From the above table it can be seen that 52% respondents has Katcha house made of bamboo with mud floor followed by semi katcha house made of mud floor with wooden wall (28%) and pucca house made of brick (20%). It can be seen that majority of them have katcha house and therefore this can be a sign of the poor living conditions of the people in the study area.

5. Conclusion

The overall economic condition in the beel is poor as majority of the people are labour as it is the simple way of earning without any investment. The results show that the income level is too low and thus villagers were unable to fulfill their minimum requirements. Most of the people in the beel have katcha house made of bamboo with mud floor and the housing type is one of the most important sign which can be used to assess the economic well-being of any community (Goswami M, *et al* 2002). Literacy rate of the fishers was found to be very poor and most of them have low level of formal education. Such a low level of literacy rate could be an attribute to social status as the literacy and socio-economic status are interdependent to each other. The beel offers vast potential for employment generation with other additional sources of income as the beel is rich in fish diversity. Villagers are not fully engaged in fishing business and most of the fishermen are unknown about the modern capture fisheries techniques. It has been noticed that there is no coverage of any welfare programmes for the fishermen except the sanitary condition. Therefore, urgent needs of welfare programmes are required for the development of socio-economic status of the fishers in Kumri beel.

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