

A Study on Socio-Economic Conditions of Rabha People of Kamrup District of Assam

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ABSTRACT: Rabhas are indigenous Mongoloid community. They are found in Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya and West Bengal. The dialect spoken by the Rabha people is mostly Rabha as well as Assamese. In Assam, the Rabha people live mostly in Goalpara, Kamrup, Kokrajhar, Udalguri and Baksa districts and in some places of Bongaigaon, Chirang, Sonitpur and Karbi Anglong districts. They assert themselves a connection to the historical Koch kingdom. In the first phase, Rabha people are mainly forest dwellers. But now they are moved towards the settled urban life. Besides this, the change of modernization does not even touch them in a proper way. The Rabha people are always socio-economically backward due to their lack of knowledge and awareness towards their rights. The present study deals with the socio-economic conditions of Rabha people of Kamrup district of Assam.

Keywords: Rabha people, socio-economic condition, connection, backward.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Rabha is a scheduled tribe community of Assam, Meghalaya and West Bengal. The dialect spoken by the Rabha people is also of the same name. In Assam, the Rabhas live mostly in Goalpara and Kamrup district. In Meghalaya, Rabhas are mostly found in Garo hills districts. In West Bengal, Rabha people mainly live in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar district. Moreover, almost 70% of them live in Jalpaiguri district. The Rabhas refer to themselves as Koch and assert a connection to the historical Koch kingdom. The study is mainly concentrated on the socio-economic backgrounds of Rabha people of Kamrup district of Assam.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are so many tribes in Assam such as rabha, garo, khasi, mising, karbi, naga, boro, etc. But our main concern for the socio-economic conditions of rabha people. Rabha people are suffering from many problems i.e. poor socio-economic status, literacy problems, etc. So, rabha people are going to a lower position. Thus, there is a great necessity to study about the rabha people of Assam, so I take up this topic as my research problem.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i) To study the socio-economic conditions of Rabha people of Assam.
- ii) To study the effects of social conditions on the economic status of rabha people of Kamrup district of Assam.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected from the people who live in Boko, Chaygaon and Palasbari areas of Kamrup district. The secondary data are collected from various books, journals and various sources of internet. This study is done through mainly primary data collected from 120 sample respondents from Boko, Chaygaon and Palasbari areas of Kamrup district following the purposive sampling method.

IV. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A review is a valuable guide to define and delimit the problem, recognize its significance, suggesting promising data, gathering devices, appropriate study design and sources of data. Following are the phases of the review of related literature so far consulted by the investigator.

1. Prof. B. Mandal & Prof. M. Roy (2013) focus on the Rabha and their social movement: A case study of North Bengal. The Rabhas belong to the Indo-Mongoloid group of people and have similarities with other

- members of Boro groups such as Garos, Kochari, mech, hajong and others. They focus on how Rabha people are socio-economically backward. They discuss about their backwardness and causes of backwardness.
2. S.Bhattacharjee (2015) describes about the issues of tradition and transition among the plain land Rabhas with an anthropological observation. He focuses on how new occupational involvement and acceptance of the rituals and customs of Hindu religion had led a number of changes on social and cultural lives of plain land Rabha people.
 3. Sarkar & Mistri (2018) focus on the livelihood patterns of Rabha community in the Northern part of West Bengal. They describe that the livelihood patterns of the Rabha people are going into processes of change due to various internal and external forces. They also analyse the change of natural settings and the economic environment along with the influence of culture of the other group like Rajbangshi and social, economic and cultural lives of Rabha people are transforming in a different way.

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the present study we attempted to know about different criteria of the socio-economic conditions of Rabha people of Kamrup district. As we know that the main features of the socio-economic status are family composition, educational status, occupation, marital status, family annual income, etc. Through this, we can understand easily about the socio-economic conditions of Rabha people in the selected study area.

Table 1: Family type

Type of family	Number
Nuclear family	32
Joint family	87
Extended family	1
Total	120

Table no.1 shows that maximum number of respondents are living in joint family. The Rabha people are still living in joint family. They believe in unity. They are not even concerned about their family planning and they still believe in living together so that they can handle all obstacles of their lives with family members.

Table 2: Age of the Rabha people

Age Group	Number
Below 10 years	5
10-30 years	40
30-50 years	62
50-70 years	9
Above 70 years	4
Total	120

From the above table, we can say that majority of the respondents fall in the age group between 30-50 years. And a few number of respondents lie below 10 years and above 70 years. The main cause of this decreasing number is the medical facilities and welfare programmes do not reach to the all Rabha people.

Table 3: Marital status of the respondents

Marital status	Number
Married	75
Unmarried	30
Widow	15
Divorced	0
Total	120

From the table no. 3, we can see that the early marriage system is seen among the Rabha people. In the Rabha society, unmarried and widow are seen and give them equal respect like the others. But divorced or separated Rabha people are not seen frequently in the Rabha community.

Table 4: Educational status of the respondents

Level of Education	Number
Illiterate	40
Lower Primary	28
Upper Primary	25
High School	10
Higher Secondary	9
Graduation	5
Post-Graduation	2
Professional course	1
Total	120

From table no. 4, we can say that the highest number of respondents are illiterate people. A few number of respondents completed their graduation and post-graduation degree. The Rabha people are not concerned about professional course. They believe in traditional education system.

Table 5: Occupational status of the respondents

Type of occupation	Number
Cultivators	30
Agricultural labourer	55
Household industry worker	25
Govt.Service	3
Other workers	7
Total	120

Table no. 5 shows that 55 respondents out of 120 respondents are engaged in agricultural sector. Only a few number of respondents are engaged in govt.job and other services. The Rabhapeople are not aware about their education and they even not think about govt. job security as well as future life plans. They like to live for today not for future.

Table 6: Annual family income of the respondents

Income in Rupees	Number of Respondents
Below 10,000	30
10,000-20,000	60
20,000-30,000	20
30,000-40,000	8
Above 40,000	2
Total	120

Table no. 6 shows the annual family income of Rabha people. Maximum number of respondents fall below poverty line. The highest number of respondents have the annual family income ranges between 10,000-20,000. Due to low annual income, the standard of living of Rabha people is very low.

Table 7: Preferred place of treatment by the respondents

Place of treatment	Number of respondents
Govt. Hospital	80
Private Hospital	15
Traditional method	20
Don't go anywhere	5
Total	120

Table no. 7 indicates that the highest number of people prefer to go to govt. hospitals for treatment. Some people are still believe in superstitious practices. Some respondents want to go to private hospitals for better treatment but they cannot afford to go there due to money.

CAUSES OF LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF RABHA PEOPLE OF KAMRUP DISTRICT:

In the present study, the investigator asked some questions to the respondents to know about their social and economic conditions. The investigator makes face to face conversation with the respondents and observes the lifestyles of the respondents. The investigator sums up with some causes of low socio-economic conditions of Rabha people of Kamrup district-----

- i) Lack of awareness
- ii) Lack of knowledge about govt. schemes
- iii) Believe in superstitious practices
- iv) Maximum number of people fall below poverty line
- v) Lack of educational facilities
- vi) Lack of attention from government's side
- vii) Lack of proper representation etc.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the present study, we find that the Rabha people are socio-economically backward. The educational, occupational status, annual family income, health conditions of Rabha people are not upto the mark. They still believe in traditional practices and beliefs. Now-a-days, the youth of Rabha people are shifted from traditional agricultural practices to government job and business. For this, the sources of their livelihood are now diversified. In modern days, there is a great need to overcome from the backwardness to self-sufficiency situations for the people of Rabha. They can feel immensely that they have capacities and efficiency like other social groups to achieve something different. They can prove themselves to get equal social status like other social groups.

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