

# Housing Condition, Family Type and Family Size of Some Surveyed Scheduled Castes Villages of Dhubri District of Assam

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**Abstract:** In Assam, majority of the Scheduled Castes people live in villages, a small proportion of them are in towns. For centuries these depressed classes have been denied basic civic rights. 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 of life. The backwardness of the Scheduled Castes people 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 socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district reveals a disheartening picture. Illiteracy and population growth is very high among them. 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. The objective of the study is to study the housing condition and family pattern of the Scheduled Castes people of Dhubri district of Assam and to suggest remedial measures for improving their quality of life on the basis of the findings. The methodology of the study will be based upon mainly the primary data which will be collected from the field survey.

**Key Words:** housing, family, people, size, scheduled castes, life, etc.

## I. INTRODUCTION

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.

*Objectives:*

(1) To study the housing condition and family pattern of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam in general and in particular of Dhubri district of Assam.

(2) To suggest remedial measures for improving living condition and maintaining family size of the poor Scheduled Castes people 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.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study is based upon the primary as well as secondary data collect from different sources. The secondary data is collected from various sources like newspapers, books, journals, Statistical Hand Book of Assam, Economic Survey of Assam etc. In addition to this, relevant materials are also collected through the internet as well. Primary data is collected from the field survey. Only the most necessary and appropriate primary data have undertaken for the purpose of the study in order to make the study very simple and easily understandable.

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 block respectively. 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.

## III. DISCUSSION

It is generally believed that fertility in a joint family is higher than that of a nuclear family. Frank, Lorimer, Ramu, G. N. 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, R. 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 and Agrawalla, S. N.

have found that the wives of the nuclear families have higher fertility than those of the joint families.

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

Gayal, Chatterjee., P.K. Coale, A. J., Sadik, Nafisa., Eva, M., Mukherjee., Pott and Dutt, Blake and in Assam, Goswami, S., and in Arunachal Pradesh Rupjyoti have also found that the nuclear families have higher fertility.

But, Driver, E. D. has stated that the role of family type in influencing the fertility level is significant.

While Studing the relationship between family type and mortality, Deepak Kr. Adak argued that the extended families have higher infant mortality than the nuclear families among the Khasi women of Meghalaya.

*Distribution of sample households by family type*

Table: 1

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, 2018.

Table: 1 shows that the domain form of family structure in the sample villages is nuclear, i.e. 88.33% (212) of the total households belong to nuclear family and only 11.67% (28) 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.

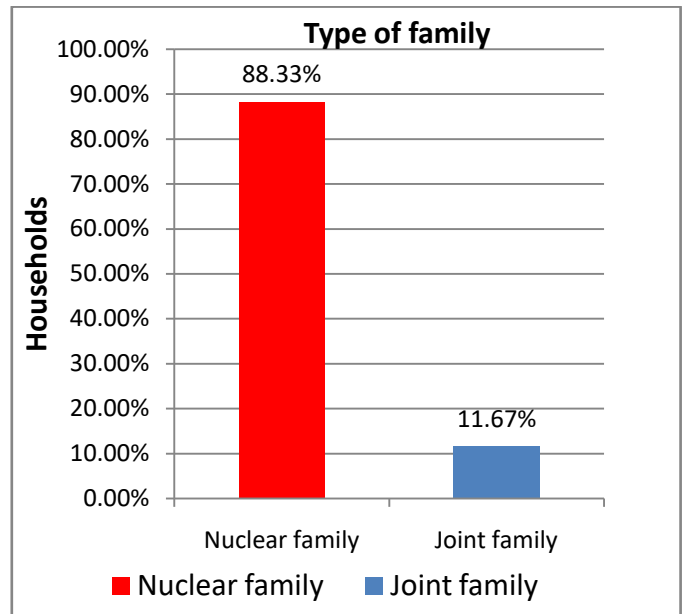
*Type of family and number of live births*

Table: 2

Type of family		No. of live births								No. of live births per 100 respondents
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	
Nuclear	No. of respondents	7	22	58	44	24	12	6	173	267.05
	No. of live births	0	22	116	132	96	60	36	462	
Joint	No. of respondents	4	6	9	12	16	12	8	67	346.27
	No. of live births	0	6	18	36	64	60	48	232	
Total	No. of respondents	11	28	67	56	40	24	14	240	289.17
	No. of live birth births	0	50	134	168	160	120	50	694	

Source: Field Survey, 2018

It is postulate that the presence of extended family or the existence of a kinship net work to share the cost of child rearing is an important non-proximate determinant of fertility. Hajnal has argued that in north-west Europe in the past, the cost of rearing children were solely born by the parents only, by contrast, the ‘Asiatic’ pattern involved in joint households, where the costs of child rearing were born by many, and hence parents had high fertility. Mukhapadhaya and Oppeng in Karnataka have also found high fertility in joint families than the nuclear families. On the other hand, some researchers have observed that presence of extended family may reduce fertility, because there is a lack of privacy. Nag, Gayal, Mahadevan, Mitchell, Chakravorty, Borah have found higher fertility in the nuclear families than the joint families.



The relationship between type of family and number of live birth is shown in Table: 2

Table: 2 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 Lorimar Frank, 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 study has found 7.37 live births among the cultivators as against 6.63 of the service holders. Deepak Kr. Adak 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: 3 shows the distribution of the sample household by family size.

*Distribution of sample households by family size*

Table: 3

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%

Table: 3 shows that out of 240 sample households, 35% (84) 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% (72) 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% (48) sample households have family members of 7-8 which is consists of couple, their three or four children and parent. 5.83% (14) 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% (6) 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 the spread of communicable diseases, protection from noise, pollution, heat and cold, encourages personal development and mental health. Overcrowding 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-pucca and kutcha houses are taken as bad housing condition.

Table: 4 shows the distribution of sample households on the basis of type of house.

*Distribution of sample households by type of house*

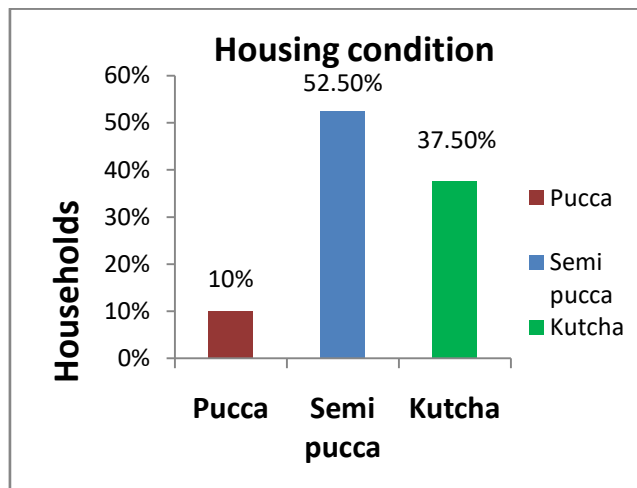
Table: 4

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, 2018.

It is observed from the table that only 10% (24) families of the sample households are living in pucca houses. More than 50% families i.e. 52.50% 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% (90) 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 (kutchha and semi-pucca) 90% (216) families of the sample households are living in below poverty line.



Distribution of the households by housing condition

Table: 5

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, 2018.

In table: 5, 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 shows that the percentage of households having pucca bathroom is 11.25% (27). Only 8.33% (20) households have kutchha bathroom while 80.42% (193) 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% (39) households have pucca latrines and 20.42% (49) households have kutchha latrines. More than 50% i.e. 63.33% (152) 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% (22) households have pipe water facilities of which 2.50% (6) households have own pipe water facilities and 6.67% (16) households have govt. pipe water facilities which is supplied by the Public Health Department of the state.

Similarly, 14.16% (34) households are fetch water for household uses from wells of which 8.33% (20) households have own wells and 6.67% (16) households use common wells which are made by six ring-wells supplied by the government. Again, 49.17% (118) households have their own tube wells while 15.83% (38) households use common tube wells (supplied by Govt.) which are generally stay in a public place. 11.67% (28) of the households are still using surface water (pond, river, spring) for household uses and drinking purposes.

In the surveyed villages, 38.33% (92) households have electricity and 61.67% households use kerosene for lighting. Regarding the type of fuel used for cooking, fire wood is the most common type. As many as 90% (216) households use fire wood and others mainly cow-dung as a source of fuel and only 10% (24) 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 Govt. L.P.G. connection under the Randhanjyoti scheme of the government.

#### IV. SUGGESTIONS

(1). It is found that 37.50% families of the sample households are living in kutchha houses. The households who are living in kutchha 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 is clear that more than 20% IAY beneficiaries is not the actual beneficiaries. They actually belong to APL category. They somehow managed officer and get the IAY houses. Therefore,

it is necessary that the government should immediately make 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 step against the persons who are involved in corruption for selecting the IAY beneficiaries.

(2). In survey area it is found that most of the households do not enjoy the basic amenities of life, such as pucca bathroom, pucca latrine, pure drinking water, etc. The children use any corner of the courtyard to release the stool. Hence, the government should create awareness among the people that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it is very shame for us to send our mother and sister in open space to give up stool. Consequently, the government should also make time bound scheme for facilitating the toilet facilities to those families in minimum cost. The government should also construct the public toilet in village areas also in a minimum distance. Then only we can expect some changes in scenario.

(3) In survey areas it is found that only 6.67% households have got govt. pipe water facilities which is supplied by the Public Health Department of the State. Again, 11.67% 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. The Public Health Department of the State should give tube wells or wells to those individuals who are still using surface water like pond, river and spring water for household uses and drinking purposes. Besides, in these areas, the Public Health Department should give the facilities of common wells and common tube wells in public places in a minimum distance.

(4). It is found that in surveyed villages, 38.33% households have electricity and 61.67% households use kerosene for

lighting. Therefore, it is suggested that electrification should be increased so that more and more households can be electrified. Again, it is found that more than 90% households use fire wood and others mainly cow-dung as a source of fuel and only 10% households use L.P.G. for cooking. Hence, the government should take step to give L.P.G. connection to more and more families under the Randhanjyoti scheme of the govt.

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