

Impact of Socio-Cultural and Economic Condition on the Political Participation of Women in the Char Areas of Mandia Development Block

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Abstract

India is the largest democratic country in the world. Theoretically as well as practically it is striving to achieve a participatory as well as inclusive democracy by making special arrangement and accommodation system through the constitutional measures by promising gender neutral democracy. The issue of women's political empowerment came to the fore front of the global debate for women's right at the time of the Fourth-World conference on woman held at Beijing in 1995. The issue of political participation has been a substantive area of interest for both the sociologists and political scientists. The women in India is still lagging behind men in terms of representation and in the decision making process because of some responsible factors like masculinization, criminalization, money driven election, increasing trends of violence and character assassination, psychological barriers, patriarchal attitudes and assumptions, influence of family, culture of gender based discrimination and violence etc. The political arena is organized according to male norms, values and lifestyles. This is otherwise known as the masculine model of politics. Assam is one of the remote Northeastern states of India which is also not free from the vice of the other parts of India. It is a fact that the status of women in Assam is the worst in terms of their position in decision making bodies. The spaces for political participation of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been created from above by the actions of government. In the specific context of rural Assam, the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act which introduced reservation policy can be considered as new bold experiment in local politics, social justice and participatory development.

Key words: Political Participation, Women, Election, Power, Decentralization

Introduction

Political participation is an exercise of power, the power to effectively influence decision making processes and policies. Democratic government has to be as near as possible to the people and has to give ample scope to the people to participate in the decision-making process. Democracy values participation. Decentralization by transferring power and responsibilities enables participation. There is multi-dimensional and cross national analysis to discover the factors that facilitate women's access to political power as well as the

different obstacles which hinder their presence in the arena of power (Vianello, Minto et al. 1990). Women in the societies enjoy more freedom in the day to day living but they are marginalized in politics. It mentions that women live restricted lives (Mamta Narzary 2013). Empowerment of women is the utmost need of the hour but it is very complex phenomenon and will need a multi-dimensional, multi-pronged and multi-disciplinary handling (Promilla Kapur 2001). Indian State has set before itself the goals of Democracy, Secularism, Socialism and the interventionist role of the state was to bring about a social revolution leading to a just and equitable society. The state intervention took place basically two forms viz. Social legislation and welfare policies and programs. But the benefit of all these measures were not reaching to all sections of the society and due to which only a small number of women have benefited from these different measures adopted by the state machinery (Sadhna Arya 2000). Women can participate not only by voting, but also by becoming advocates, activists, political party members, observers, election management stakeholders as well as candidates. It also talks about free and fair election which is essential to ensure women participation in the politics. Only when institutions are democratic and representatives of all groups in society, women as well as men, minorities as well as majorities, the dispossessed as well as the affluent are stable and peace and national prosperity likely to be achieved (Department of Public Information United Nations 2005). Universal suffrage did not lead to representative legislatures. Despite the role of human development, attitudes towards gender equality varied even among societies at similar levels of human development. It varied according to factors such as religious traditions, type of state and the level of democratization. There is a direct link between the social and economic status of women in society and their participation in political institutions and elected bodies (Sarah Delys 2014).

Review of literature

There are plenty of scholarly works on women's participation in politics in India. There is gradual improvement of 2.18 % women representation than the previous general election of 1999 as showed in the 15th general election of India. Yet the gap between men and women is still very much in terms of polling of votes (Aporva Rathod 2014). Despite the constitutional promulgation, women in the Indian subcontinent continue to be grossly under-represented in the legislatures, both at the national and the state levels. Female representation in the lower house (Lok Sabha) of the Indian Parliament is still much less than the world average of 20 percent. Similarly, the number of female representatives in legislative bodies in most of the states in India is also below the 20% mark reflecting a pan-Indian gender exclusion from electoral participation and quality representation (Praveen Rai 2011). Despite the significant increase of women as voters there has been no commensurate expansion in women's representation in Parliament during India's 16th General Elections. Women fail to influence political decision making and remain marginalized as a political category. The gap between the voter participation of men and women in the General Election 2014 has narrowed down to 1.46 percentage points from 4.42 percentage points in 2009. To a large extent, this can be attributed to the patriarchal order that decides how and to what extent women access the public space both as electors and as candidates. She has justified some factors like masculinization, criminalization, and money driven election, increasing trends of violence

and character assassination, psychological barriers, patriarchal attitudes and assumptions, influence of family, culture of gender based discrimination and violence etc. as the prime reasons of the unequal participations of men and women respectively (Pamela Philipose 2014). ‘Status of Women in Assam’, is a collection of 17 essays from different scholars on the changing status of Assamese non-tribal women, which includes Assamese women belonging to the two major religious groups, Hindus and Christians and also women from the rural and tea garden communities. Bibha Baruah’s ‘Women in Administration and Politics in Medieval Assam’, discusses the role of women in politics during the medieval period; Dipti Sarma writes on ‘The Women of the Brahmaputra Valley in the Freedom Struggle’, and N.L. Dutta in his very useful work ‘The Political Status of Women in Assam Since Independence’, gives an account of the participation of women in the political processes as voters and candidates during the period 1952 to 1985 (S.L. Baruah 1992). The empowerment of women could be brought about only if it is based on granting them basic economic rights, educational rights and political rights. According to him, by leaning the half of the population of the country democracy will be crippled. Moreover, women as a group have problems, demands and aspirations, which cannot be aptly expressed by men. Different problems and issues of any country such as education, employment, health and nutrition besides the country’s foreign policy, issues of war and peace, science and technology, protection of the environment do need a women’s angle because they will affect women too, in a particular manner (Gangeswar Kalita 2012). The current attitudes towards female leadership are more egalitarian in post-industrial societies than in the developing or post-Communist world, and that these attitudes are related to women being elected to office. Further, they say that without cultural change the institutional mechanisms are not effective as such, but merely cultural change will not close the gender gap either. However, it does provide a more receptive environment for such policy reforms. In conclusion they claim that the change in attitudes is a long-term process that is linked to the process of modernization (Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris 2003). The public private divide remains as the foundation of the various forms of world democracies (Phillips and Rai 2011). “Participation of Women in the Panchayati Raj System” provides the information concerning the implementation of the new Panchayati Raj legislation in two districts of Saharanpur and Gorakhpur in U.P with a view to understand the extent of participation of the women members and women pradhans and the improvement that have occurred in their socio-economic status and empowerment after being elected to the Panchayats (G.S. Mehta 2002).

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To study the impacts of socio-economic variables on women’s participation in politics.
2. To study the challenges faced by women to participate in politics in the study area.

1.1 Female Population of Barpeta District

Out of the total inhabited villages of 1050, the total number of households was 290494 in 2001 census. The number of female headed households were 29478 (2001 census) in the district which were 501789 (2001 census) in the state.

Sex ratio (Females per 1000 males), the district average was 941 where 943 in rural and 917 in urban. Whereas the sex ratio in the district was 961, in rural it was 962 & in urban it was 947 (2001 census). The female literacy rate in the district was 47.1% where 44.4% in the rural areas and 76.5% in the urban areas as per 2001 census. The district gender gap (Male-Female Rate) was 17.7 (total). In rural it was 18.1% and in urban setting it was 13.3% as per 2001 census. Again the female work participation rate in the district in average was 14.1%, in rural 14.5 and in urban 9.4% (2001 census) and the district gender gap (Male- Female Rate) was 33.6% (total), in rural it was 33.0% and in urban it was 42.2% in 2001 census. Such a picture of the data's shows that position of women could not be satisfactory in Barpeta.

1.2 Economy

The economy of the district is agrarian in nature with about 75 percent of the work force engaged in agriculture. The sectoral income shared of the district showed that 71 percent of the income share accrues from agriculture. Around 67.2 percent of the total net cropped area is occupied by small and marginal farmers (SF/MF). The Agro-climatic condition of the district is conducive for growing various types of cereals, pulses, oil seeds, fiber crops, tuber crops and various types of summer and winter vegetables. Paddy, the main crop in the district, is grown in about 2.011 lakh hactres area followed by mustard, pulses, wheat jute and various types of summer and winter vegetables and spices (chilli, onion etc.). The average area under HYV is about 1.343 lakh hectares which forms only 43 percent of the gross cropped area and the rate of fertilizer consumption is 34 kg./ha.¹

This district ranks first in the state in the production of Potato and enjoys a virtual monopoly in production of rabi vegetables. Barpeta is also one of the major producers of fruits in the state. The secondary sector contributes 12% of the Gross District Domestic Product (GDP). The secondary sector comprises mainly the SSIs (Small Scale Industry). The total number of SSIs in the district as is 1582. The district has been designated as Industrial growth centre. However, the pace of progress has been rather slow. Almost 82 percent of the SSI units are under handicraft while 18 percent are agro based. The district is industrially backward due to deplorable communication system, shortage in power supply and lack in marketing infrastructure etc. The district also has a fair amount of sericulture units. The district has a rich tradition of household industry comprising of bell and brass metal, pottery, wood craft, mask making, ivory carving etc.

¹ District Report Barpeta, Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD), *Baseline Survey of Minority Concentrated Districts*, p-14

1.2 A Block wise Panchayat members Profile of Barpeta District

Sl.No	Name of Dev. Block	Total Members	Male	Female	Percentage	
					Male	Female
1	Bajali	165	77	88	46.67	53.33
2	Barpeta	121	66	55	54.55	45.45
3	Bhawanipur	187	121	66	64.71	35.29
4	Gomafulbari	77	33	44	42.86	57.14
5	Gobardhana	66	33	33	50	50
6	Pakabetbari	110	55	55	50	50
7	Chenga	99	44	55	44.45	55.55
8	Chakchaka	88	44	44	50	50
9	Rupshi	132	66	66	50	50
10	Sarukhetri	77	33	44	42.85	57.15
11	Mandia	297	143	154	48.15	51.85
	Total 11 Dev. Block	Total-1419	715	704	50.39	49.61

Source: Source: State Election Commission, Assam

The above table shows that number of female members in every development block increased significantly. Among all the development blocks, Gomafulbari development block has the highest percentage of female members and is in topped having 57% female members while the Bhawanipur development block is in the lowest percentage having only 35% female members. The district average is 49.61% and the Mandia development block's female percentage is 51.85% which is marginally ahead of the district average. However, so far as my study area is concerned there are 27 Gaon Panchayats, having altogether 297 members. Out of which total male members 143 and female 154 comprise 48.15 and 51.85 respectively. Here it has seen that after the implementation of the 73rd Amendment Act of 1992, the female elected representatives becomes more than the pre-amendment era. Although the 73rd amendment of the Constitution of India gives 33% reservation for women but the Government of Assam goes more extensively and provide 50% reservation to women to empower them politically only in the Panchayats.

1.3 Socio-Economic Profile of Mandia Development Block

The present study is confined to the Mandia Developmet Block of Barpeta District of Assam. The geographical setting of the above mention Development Block is presented below in this chapter.

Total geographical area of Barpeta district is 2282 Square km and it is the 13th smallest district by area in the state. In 2011, the population of Barpeta district is 1,693,622 of which male and female are 867,004 and 826,618 respectively. Population density of the district is 632 persons per square kilometer which is higher than the average density for the country 398 persons per square kilometer.

The Barpeta district, headed by the Deputy Commissioner, has two sub-divisions – Barpeta and Bajali. The Barpeta sub-division, with headquarter at Barpeta town is divided in to 9 Revenue Circles and 12 CD Blocks which comprises 925 villages including 10 uninhabited villages. Further, the Barpeta Sub-Division has total 11 Rural Development Blocks to cater to the needs of total 835 villages, and the Bajali Sub-Division has only 2 Rural Development Blocks with 301 villages.²The district comprises 9 towns, 6 statutory towns and 3 Census Towns. Barpeta (MB) is the most populous with 42649 persons while Uttar Athiabari (CT) is the smallest in population with 6091 persons. In the district, Barpeta Revenue Circle is the most populous having 365608 persons while Jalah (Pt) is the least populous Revenue Circle having 21538 persons. Among the CD Block, Mandia CD Block has the highest number of population with 349328 whereas the lowest is found in Jalah (Part) CD Block with 21538. While the highest number with 174 inhabited villages is found in Mandia CD block and lowest inhabited villages with 15 inhabited villages is found in Jalah (Pt) CD Block. The largest village by population is Satra Kanara NC with 30994 souls which are situated at Mandia CD Block and the smallest village is Baliparapam with 6 persons under Sarukhetri CD Block. The total number of Gaon Panchayat in the district is 150. The famous Barpeta Kritanghar is situated at Barpeta Town of this district. It is a famous religious place for Hindu pilgrims and there are many Vaisnavite Satra in the district.³

There are 11 Community Development (CD) Blocks under Barpeta District as followings;

1. Gobardhana Community Development (CD) Block
2. Bajali C.D Block
3. Chakchaka C.D Block
4. Bhawanipur C.D Block
5. Paka Betbari C.D Block
6. Sarukhetri C.D Block
7. Rupshi C.D Block
8. Barpeta C.D Block
9. Mandia C.D. Block
10. Gomafulbari C.D Block
11. Chenga C.D Block.

Out of which one Community Development Block viz., Mandia Development Block is selected for the study which fall within Char area and located at the Southern part of Barpeta District. The district is widely acclaimed as the backward district within which the Mandia Development is the most backward development block. There are 27 Gaon Panchayats under Mandia Development Block. The name of Gaon Panchayats under Mandia Development Block as followings:

1. Agmandia Jadavpur GP
2. Alopai Majarcahr GP
3. Baghbar GP
4. Baghmara Char GP
5. Bamundongra GP
6. Bhatkuchi GP
7. Chasra GP
8. Chatala GP
9. Dharmapur Bhatnaipati GP
10. Dighirpam GP
11. Gajia Medhirtary GP
12. Gobindapur GP
13. Jaipur Sikartari GP
14. Janata GP
15. Jania GP
16. Kadamtala GP
17. Kadong GP
18. Mandia GP
19. Manikpur GP
20. Moinbori GP
21. Ramapara
22. Satrakanara GP
23. Sitoli GP
24. Sonabari GP
25. Sonapur Rubhio GP
26. Tarakandi GP
27. Uzirarchar

² Duary, Nabakumar., (2008), *Traditional Hira Potters of Lower Assam* (An article), published in India Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge, vol. 7, No1, January 2008, p-1-3

³ Ibid., p-3

1.4 Socio-Economic Profile of Cross-Section Respondents

Since the study is confined to only twenty (20) Gaon Panchyat of Mandia Development Block then it is obvious to give an introductory analysis of all the Gaon Panchayats with their respective profile. Following are the list of Gaon Panchayats with population. Total population of the study area i.e. Mandia Development Block is 349328 where male is 179275 and female is 170053. Out of total population below 6 years of age total population is 73799 where boy child is 37602 and girl child is 36197. Out of total population Schedule Caste is 6047 and Schedule Tribe is 50. Total literate population is 135216 where male constitutes 77731 and female is 57485 and total illiterate population is 214112 where male constitutes 101544 and female is 112568. Out of total population work force is 109270 where male constitutes 88389 and female constitutes 20881.

Since the political participation at any level of any individual is largely influenced and determined by many socio-economic factors. The universe under which the study is undertaken is composite in character. The respondents of the study areas are of having diverse socio-economic backgrounds. A detailed analysis of the data collected from the field has been analyzed. This gives a complete picture about the socio-economic background of respondents, exposing the social strata to which they do belong. The analysis is done using the data on the basis of some determinant factors such as age, family size, marital status, religion, caste, income, education and occupation of their parents and their educational background etc.

Table 1.4.1.1 Age profile of the respondents

The political participation also largely determined by age of the participants. The following table presents the details of the age group of the respondents.

G.P	Age profile of the respondents				Total
	18-30 Yrs	31-40 Yrs	41-50 Yrs	51-60 Yrs	
Alopati Majarchar	4	3	2	1	10
Baghmara Char	3	4	2	1	10
Kadamtala	5	2	3	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	6	3	1	0	10
Chasra	4	4	1	1	10
Jaipur Sikartari	4	5	1	0	10
Uzirarchar	5	2	2	1	10
Ramapara	4	3	2	1	10
Manikpur	3	5	1	1	10
Moinbori	4	3	3	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	4	3	2	1	10
Bamundongra	5	3	1	1	10
Bhatkuchi	4	3	1	1	10

Baghbor	6	3	0	1	10
Satrankanara	4	3	2	1	10
Gobindapur	3	5	2	0	10
Dighirpam	3	4	3	0	10
Mandia	5	2	2	1	10
Sitoli	4	2	3	1	10
Jania	5	3	1	1	10
Total	85	66	35	14	200
Percentage	42.5%	33%	17.5%	7%	100

Source: Field study

The table shows that the age of the majority of the respondent's age range between 18 to 30 years that comprises (42.5%), 33% belong to the age group of 31-40 years; 17.5% belong to the age group of 41-50 years while only 7% belong to the age group of 51-60 years. A person's capacity to hold a position is very much dependent on his / her age. Politics is not recognized as a career in our society; more so when it is the question of women pursuing it, especially in rural areas.

1.4.1.2 Marital Status of the respondents

G.P	Marital status of the respondents				Total
	Married	Unmarrie d	Separated /Divorce d	Wido w	
Alopati Majarchar	8	2	0	0	10
Baghmara Char	10	0	0	0	10
Kadamtala	10	0	0	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	10	0	0	0	10
Chasra	9	1	0	0	10
Jaipur Sikartari	8	0	1	1	10
Uzirarchar	9	0	1	0	10
Ramapara	10	0	0	0	10
Manikpur	10	0	0	0	10
Moinbori	9	0	1	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	10	0	0	0	10
Bamundongra	9	0	1	0	10
Bhatkuchi	10	0	0	0	10
Baghbor	9	0	1	0	10
Satrankanara	10	0	0	0	10
Gobindapur	10	0	0	0	10
Dighirpam	10	0	0	0	10

Mandia	10	0	0	0	10
Sitoli	10	0	1	0	10
Jania	10	0	0	0	10
Total	190	3	6	1	200
Percentages	95%	1.5%	3%	0.5%	100

Source: Field study

Marital status of a woman entering politics is an decisive factor as it is indicative of women's i) mental strength and ii) her ability to face challenges in political life in addition to domestic burden. A married woman faces number of challenges both at home and outside home before she enters politics than an unmarried woman does. The study shows only 1.5% out of the total respondents are unmarried, 95% are married; 3% are divorced/separated representatives, 0.5% is widow.

1.4.1.3 A Educational Qualification

G.P	Educational qualification profile of the respondents						Total
	Illiterate	Up to UP	Up to HSLC	Up to HS	Up to UG	Graduate	
Alopati Majarchar	2	2	2	3	0	1	10
Baghmara Char	0	3	4	2	1	0	10
Kadamtala	0	3	2	3	2	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	2	3	2	1	2	0	10
Chasra	1	2	5	0	1	1	10
Jaipur Sikartari	2	3	2	2	1	0	10
Uzirarchar	1	3	1	2	2	1	10
Ramapara	3	1	2	2	2	0	10
Manikpur	1	4	2	2	1	0	10
Moinbori	2	3	2	2	1	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	0	2	2	4	2	0	10
Bamundongra	1	4	2	1	1	1	10
Bhatkuchi	2	1	3	2	2	0	10
Baghbor	1	1	4	2	1	1	10
Satrankanara	0	1	4	4	1	0	10
Gobindapur	0	3	2	4	0	1	10
Dighirpam	1	4	1	3	1	0	10
Mandia	0	4	3	0	3	0	10
Sitoli	2	0	4	3	0	1	10
Jania	0	2	2	3	2	1	10

Total	21	49	51	45	26	8	200
Percentages	10.5%	24.5%	25.5%	22.5%	13%	4%	100

Source: Field study

It may be observed from the table above that out of the total respondents 10.5% are illiterate, while 25.5% belongs to the Upper Primary level; 24.5% pursued their study life up to Matriculation level; 22.5% up to Higher Secondary level; 13% up to the Undergraduate level while only 4% complete their graduation.

1.2 Religion of the respondents

G.P	Religious profile of the respondents				Total
	Hindu	Muslim	Christians	Others	
Alopati Majarchar	0	10	0	0	10
Baghmara Char	0	10	0	0	10
Kadamtala	0	10	0	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	0	10	0	0	10
Chasra	1	9	0	0	10
Jaipur Sikartari	0	10	0	0	10
Uzirarchar	0	10	0	0	10
Ramapara	5	5	0	0	10
Manikpur	1	9	0	0	10
Moinbori	5	5	0	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	0	10	0	0	10
Bamundongra	0	10	0	0	10
Bhatkuchi	5	5	0	0	10
Baghbor	5	5	0	0	10
Satrankanara	4	6	0	0	10
Gobindapur	3	7	0	0	10
Dighirpam	0	10	0	0	10
Mandia	4	6	0	0	10
Sitoli	2	8	0	0	10
Jania	6	4	0	0	10
Total	41	159	0	0	200
Percentage	20.5%	79.5%	0%	0%	100

Source: Field study

Due to diverse cultural set up, and their diverse social standing with reference to certain social variables like education customs and habits, it becomes necessary to identify the respondent's cultural group. Hindu and Muslim are the two major cultural groups comprising 20.5% and 79.5% respectively.

Table 1.3 Occupation of the respondents

G.P	Occupation profile of the respondents				Total
	Housewife	Service	Cultivation	Others	
Alopati Majarchar	8	0	1	1	10
Baghmara Char	7	0	2	1	10
Kadamtala	6	0	2	2	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	8	1	1	0	10
Chasra	6	1	2	1	10
Jaipur Sikartari	8	1	1	0	10
Uzirarchar	8	1	0	1	10
Ramapara	9	0	0	1	10
Manikpur	8	0	1	1	10
Moinbori	8	1	1	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	10	0	0	0	10
Bamundongra	9	0	1	0	10
Bhatkuchi	9	0	1	0	10
Baghbor	8	0	1	1	10
Satrankanara	7	1	0	2	10
Gobindapur	9	0	1	0	10
Dighirpam	8	0	1	1	10
Mandia	7	1	0	2	10
Sitoli	9	1	0	0	10
Jania	8	0	1	1	10
Total	160	8	17	15	200
Percentages	80%	4%	8.5%	7.5%	100

Source: Field study

The table shows that 80% are engaged in the household activities, 4% are engaged in minor service such as Anganwadi Workers/Helpers and some other government jobs like ASHA etc.; 8.5% are engaged in agricultural sectors and the rest 7.5% are engaged in the tailoring/weaving and some other minor jobs.

Table 1.4 Occupation of husbands of the respondents

G.P	Occupation profile of the husbands				Total
	Cultivation	Govt. Service	Job in private sector	Business	
Alopati	6	1	0	3	10

Majarchar					
Baghmara Char	8	0	1	1	10
Kadamtala	9	0	0	1	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	8	0	0	2	10
Chasra	7	1	0	2	10
Jaipur Sikartari	8	0	1	1	10
Uzirarchar	9	0	1	0	10
Ramapara	5	1	3	1	10
Manikpur	9	0	0	1	10
Moinbori	6	1	1	2	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	7	0	1	2	10
Bamundongra	6	1	2	1	10
Bhatkuchi	8	0	1	1	10
Baghbor	6	0	1	3	10
Satrankanara	8	1	0	1	10
Gobindapur	7	1	1	1	10
Dighirpam	8	1	0	1	10
Mandia	6	1	1	2	10
Sitoli	8	0	0	2	10
Jania	6	0	2	2	10
Total	145	9	16	30	200
Percentage	72.5%	4.5%	8%	15%	100

Source: Field study

The table presents that out of the total respondents 72.5% of the representative's husbands are engaged in cultivation; 4.5% are engaged in government service; 8% are engaged in different jobs under private sectors while 15% are engaged in business.

Table 1.5 Annual Household income of the respondents

G.P	Income Range of the respondents				Total
	Below 1 lakh	1-2 Lakhs	2-3 lakhs	3-4 lakhs	
Alopati Majarchar	8	1	1	0	10
Baghmara Char	9	1	0	0	10
Kadamtala	8	2	0	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	10	0	0	0	10
Chasra	8	2	0	0	10
Jaipur Sikartari	10	0	0	0	10

Uzirarchar	10	0	0	0	10
Ramapara	9	1	0	0	10
Manikpur	9	1	0	0	10
Moinbori	10	0	0	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	8	2	0	0	10
Bamundongra	7	2	1	0	10
Bhatkuchi	8	2	0	0	10
Baghbor	10	0	0	0	10
Satrankanara	9	1	0	0	10
Gobindapur	8	2	0	0	10
Dighirpam	9	1	0	0	10
Mandia	7	2	1	0	10
Sitoli	8	2	0	0	10
Jania	6	2	2	0	10
Total	171	24	5	0	200
Percentages	85.5%	12%	2.5%	0%	100

Source: Field study

The above table presents that the study area is really a socio-economically backward area. It presents that 85.5% respondent's annual income is less than one lakh, 12% respondent's income ranges between one to two lakhs; 2.5% respondent's annual income between two to three lakhs.

Table 1.6 Social group wise fragment profile of the respondents

G.P	Social Group Profile				Total
	Schedule Caste	General	Schedule Tribe	Others	
Alopati Majarchar	0	10	0	0	10
Baghmara Char	0	10	0	0	10
Kadamtala	0	10	0	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	0	10	0	0	10
Chasra	1	9	0	0	10
Jaipur Sikartari	0	10	0	0	10
Uzirarchar	0	10	0	0	10
Ramapara	5	5	0	0	10
Manikpur	1	9	0	0	10
Moinbori	5	5	0	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	0	10	0	0	10

Bamundongra	0	10	0	0	10
Bhatkuchi	5	5	0	0	10
Baghbor	3	6	1	0	10
Satrankanara	4	6	0	0	10
Gobindapur	3	7	0	0	10
Dighirpam	0	10	0	0	10
Mandia	4	6	0	0	10
Sitoli	2	8	0	0	10
Jania	6	4	0	0	10
Total	39	160	1	0	200
Percentage	19.5%	80%	0.5%	0%	100

Source: Field study

The above table shows that out of the total respondents 19.5% belongs to Schedule Caste; 80% belongs to General Caste and there are only 0.5% Schedule Tribe population in the study area.

1.7 Political Participation wise profile of the respondents

Table 2.7.1 Age wise political participation of the respondents

G.P	Age wise profile of the respondents				Total
	18-30 Yrs	31-40 Yrs	41-50 Yrs	51-60 Yrs	
Alopati Majarchar	4	3	2	1	10
Baghmara Char	3	4	2	1	10
Kadamtala	5	2	3	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	6	3	1	0	10
Chasra	4	4	1	1	10
Jaipur Sikartari	4	5	1	0	10
Uzirarchar	5	2	2	1	10
Ramapara	4	3	2	1	10
Manikpur	3	5	1	1	10
Moinbori	4	3	3	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	4	3	2	1	10
Bamundongra	5	3	1	1	10
Bhatkuchi	4	3	1	1	10
Baghbor	6	3	0	1	10
Satrankanara	4	3	2	1	10
Gobindapur	3	5	2	0	10
Dighirpam	3	4	3	0	10
Mandia	5	2	2	1	10

Sitoli	4	2	3	1	10
Jania	5	3	1	1	10
Total	85	66	35	14	200
Percentage	42.5%	33%	17.5%	7%	100

Source: Field study

The above table shows that political participation is highest in the age group of 18-30 followed by 33% in the 31-40 years, 17.5% in the age group of 41-50 years followed by 7% in the age group of 51-60 years.

Table 2.7.2 Educational Qualification wise political participation of the respondents

G.P	Educational qualification profile of the respondents						Total
	Illiterate	Up to UP	Up to HSLC	Up to HS	Up to UG	Graduate	
Alopati Majarchar	2	2	2	3	0	1	10
Baghmara Char	0	3	4	2	1	0	10
Kadamtala	0	3	2	3	2	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	2	3	2	1	2	0	10
Chasra	1	2	5	0	1	1	10
Jaipur Sikartari	2	3	2	2	1	0	10
Uzirarchar	1	3	1	2	2	1	10
Ramapara	3	1	2	2	2	0	10
Manikpur	1	4	2	2	1	0	10
Moinbori	2	3	2	2	1	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	0	2	2	4	2	0	10
Bamundongra	1	4	2	1	1	1	10
Bhatkuchi	2	1	3	2	2	0	10
Baghbor	1	1	4	2	1	1	10
Satrankanara	0	1	4	4	1	0	10
Gobindapur	0	3	2	4	0	1	10
Dighirpam	1	4	1	3	1	0	10
Mandia	0	4	3	0	3	0	10
Sitoli	2	0	4	3	0	1	10
Jania	0	2	2	3	2	1	10
Total	21	49	51	45	26	8	200
Percentages	10.5%	24.5%	25.5%	22.5%	13%	4%	100

Source: Field study

The above table shows that highest participation in politics has been observed upper primary 24.5% level to matriculation 25.5% followed by undergraduate and graduate level. It is found that respondents of graduate and undergraduate (pursuing graduation) are more concerned about jobs rather than actively involved in politics.

Table 2.7.3 Religion wise political participation of the respondents

G.P	Religion wise profile of the respondents				Total
	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Others	
Alopati Majarchar	0	10	0	0	10
Baghmara Char	0	10	0	0	10
Kadamtala	0	10	0	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	0	10	0	0	10
Chasra	1	9	0	0	10
Jaipur Sikartari	0	10	0	0	10
Uzirarchar	0	10	0	0	10
Ramapara	5	5	0	0	10
Manikpur	1	9	0	0	10
Moinbori	5	5	0	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	0	10	0	0	10
Bamundongra	0	10	0	0	10
Bhatkuchi	5	5	0	0	10
Baghbor	5	5	0	0	10
Satrankanara	4	6	0	0	10
Gobindapur	3	7	0	0	10
Dighirpam	0	10	0	0	10
Mandia	4	6	0	0	10
Sitoli	2	8	0	0	10
Jania	6	4	0	0	10
Total	41	159	0	0	200
Percentage	20.5%	79.5%	0%	0%	100

Source: Field study

The above table shows that political participation is higher among Muslims 79.5% followed by Hindus 20.5%.

Table 2.7.4 Marital status wise political participation of the respondents

G.P	Marital Status Profile of the respondents				Total
	Married	Unmarried	Separated/ Divorced	Widow	
Alopati Majarchar	8	2	0	0	10
Baghmara Char	10	0	0	0	10

Kadamtala	10	0	0	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	10	0	0	0	10
Chasra	9	1	0	0	10
Jaipur Sikartari	8	0	1	1	10
Uzirarchar	9	0	1	0	10
Ramapara	10	0	0	0	10
Manikpur	10	0	0	0	10
Moinbori	9	0	1	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	10	0	0	0	10
Bamundongra	9	0	1	0	10
Bhatkuchi	10	0	0	0	10
Baghbor	9	0	1	0	10
Satrankanara	10	0	0	0	10
Gobindapur	10	0	0	0	10
Dighirpam	10	0	0	0	10
Mandia	10	0	0	0	10
Sitoli	10	0	1	0	10
Jania	10	0	0	0	10
Total	190	3	6	1	200
Percentage	95%	1.5%	3%	0.5%	100

Source: Field study

The table shows that out of the total respondents 95% are married followed by unmarried 1.5% followed by separated and widows. The unmarried women have to face more constraints from their male guardian than the married women in the study areas.

Table 2.7.5 Caste wise political participation of the respondents

G.P	Caste wise profile of the respondents				Total
	SC	General	ST	Others	
Alopati Majarchar	0	10	0	0	10
Baghmara Char	0	10	0	0	10
Kadamtala	0	10	0	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	0	10	0	0	10
Chasra	1	9	0	0	10
Jaipur Sikartari	0	10	0	0	10
Uzirarchar	0	10	0	0	10
Ramapara	5	5	0	0	10
Manikpur	1	9	0	0	10
Moinbori	5	5	0	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	0	10	0	0	10
Bamundongra	0	10	0	0	10

Bhatkuchi	5	5	0	0	10
Baghbor	3	6	1	0	10
Satrankanara	4	6	0	0	10
Gobindapur	3	7	0	0	10
Dighirpam	0	10	0	0	10
Mandia	4	6	0	0	10
Sitoli	2	8	0	0	10
Jania	6	4	0	0	10
Total	39	160	1	0	200
Percentage	19.5%	80%	0.5%	0%	100

Source: Field study

The above table shows that participation is more women belonging to the general category 80% followed by Schedule caste 19.5% followed by Schedule tribe 0.5%.

Table 2.7.6 Income wise political participation of the respondents

G.P	Income wise profile of the respondents				Total
	Below 1 lakh	1-2 lakhs	2-3 lakhs	3-4 lakhs	
Alopati Majarchar	8	1	1	0	10
Baghmar Char	9	1	0	0	10
Kadamtala	8	2	0	0	10
Dharmapur Bhatnaipati	10	0	0	0	10
Chasra	8	2	0	0	10
Jaipur Sikartari	10	0	0	0	10
Uzirarchar	10	0	0	0	10
Ramapara	9	1	0	0	10
Manikpur	9	1	0	0	10
Moinbori	10	0	0	0	10
Agmandia Jadavpur	8	2	0	0	10
Bamundongra	7	2	1	0	10
Bhatkuchi	8	2	0	0	10
Baghbor	10	0	0	0	10
Satrankanara	9	1	0	0	10
Gobindapur	8	2	0	0	10
Dighirpam	9	1	0	0	10
Mandia	7	2	1	0	10
Sitoli	8	2	0	0	10
Jania	6	2	2	0	10
Total	171	24	5	0	200
Percentage	85.5%	12%	2.5%	0%	100

Source: Field study

The above table shows that 85.5% respondent's income is below 1 lakh followed by 12% earn between 1 to 2 lakh whereas only 2.5% respondents earn 2 to 3 lakhs. It indicates that the study area is really a socio-economically backward area.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed the historical background, administrative set up, physical feature, demography including census report of Barpeta district containing sex ratio, literacy rate etc. We have also discussed agriculture, economy, communication, Block wise profile of the respondents including the socio-economic profile of the respondents. It has been observed that the study area is socio-economically backward. In the next chapter political participation of women in India as well as Assam is discussed in details.

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