

**SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS OF SCHEDULED CASTE PEOPLE IN KAMRUP  
DISTRICT OF ASSAM****Anek Lal Barman**

Assistant Professor in Education, Ramkrishna Mahavidyalaya, Kailashahar, Tripura

**Abstract**

*The Indian society is based on a caste system with vast inequalities in social, political, economic and educational spheres. The constitution of India is enriched with several provisions for scheduled castes to safeguard and promote their cultural, social, educational, and economic Interests in order to bring them in the mainstream of the society. This paper attempts the Socio-economic status of the scheduled caste people in Kamrup district of Assam. The present study has been conducted on a purposive sampling of 100 scheduled caste people. The data has been collected through field survey. The results revealed that the socio-economic status of scheduled caste people is low.*

**Keywords:** Scheduled caste, education and socio- economic status.



*Scholarly Research Journal's* is licensed Based on a work at [www.srjis.com](http://www.srjis.com) 4.194, 2013 SJIF

**Introduction:** Education is the most important element in the development of any community or country. Education has special significance particularly for the weaker section of the society. Since scheduled castes are viewed as the most deprived, disadvantage and suffering section of the Indian population. Prevalence of caste system in India is one of the most discriminatory forms of social stratification. The stratification system and subsequent hierarchy and divisions are based on birth rather than on occupation. In fact, this restrictive form of difference determines the life chances and entitlements of an individual in Indian society, irrespective of one's individual initiative, aptitude, educational attainment or skills acquired during the working life. In other words, the world of work and the world of wealth coexist rather converge with each other, creating a strong nexus between caste and class, often erasing their differences. As a

result, beyond the boundary of individual achievements and aspirations, benefits and burdens of society are shared by groups on the basis of family and caste lines. This has, in turn, created two definite groups, the privileged, twice born upper castes and the downtrodden or lowly classes. Constitutionally, this social difference was sought to be bridged through special efforts by identifying the marginalized classes as Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Various measures have been tried to bridge this gap over the years. Absence of education and lack of awareness forced the lower classes to work as manual laborers, many of them remaining working in unclean occupations for generations. Politically, the former, that is, the privileged elite due to their higher status gained more and more power and the latter, that is the downtrodden remained rather powerless and unorganized. However, since independence, the structure of constitutional democracy has opened up various new avenues, making it possible for them to move up the socio-economic ladder, as equality of opportunity and social justice has come to be recognized as the guiding Principles of development planning in independent India. With the constitutional safeguards and protection as well as better educational and economic facilities act as motivating factors for upward social mobility, these safeguards made it possible for members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be at par with non-scheduled population and enabled them to enter into mainstream of national life (Uplaonkar; 1982).

There is approximately 14 crores of scheduled caste population in India. Scheduled caste population constitutes 16.41% population in the country. This is now taken in to question of their educational development. Unfortunately studies in the education of scheduled caste did not attract attention of scholars as much as that of scheduled tribes. If the 16% percent of populations are unable to participate in the development process how can there be advancement in the country. Assam the state of north-east also having maximum number of scheduled caste population in comparison to the general population. According to the census report 2001 the total population of Assam is 2, 66, 55,528 out of which 18, 25,949 persons are belong to scheduled caste community. It is the 6.85% of total population of Assam. The literacy rate in Assam among the general and schedule caste people are increasing day by day. According to this census report 1991 general literacy and SC literacy rate of Assam was 52.89% and 53.94% respectively. But it increased to 64.28% and 66.78% after 10 years (according to 2001 census report). Through the SC literacy rate is higher than the general but it is not true in all sub-communities of the SC

community in Assam. Assam is a melting pot of different religions, races, languages and cultures. Assam is a museum of a large number of varieties of human species ever found on the earth. There are sixteen sub-communities in the scheduled caste community in Assam. They are 1) Namasudra, 2) Bansphor 3) Bhuinmali 4) Patni 5) Kaibartta 6) Jhalo-Malo 7) Dhubi, Dhupi 8) Hira 9) Jalkeot 10) Mahara 11) Sutradhar 12) Muchi-Rishi 13) Bhangi 14) Dugla, Dhull 15) Lalbegi 16) Bonia, Bittal Bania.

Kamrup district is such a district where various castes, community and race peoples are living together from since long back. But they are not equally developed so far as their education, socio-economic conditions, social status etc. are concerned. They are deprived of facilities and opportunities provided by the government. In this district the total literacy rate is 80.59% in general peoples and scheduled castes are 74.16% and 67.25% respectively (according to 2001 census report). So, it showed the scheduled caste people are lagging behind than general people. Therefore, it is the duty of the government and the concerned citizens to know the problems faced by the scheduled castes and to make the facilities available for the upliftment of the scheduled caste in the district.

**Objective of the study:** i) To study the socio- economic status of scheduled caste people in Kamrup district of Assam.

**Methodology:** To consider the sample of the present study, the researcher took up the 300 scheduled castes people in Kamrup district of Assam separately by adopting purposive sampling technique. Out of 300 sample 100 from Kaiborta community, 100 from Namosudra community and 100 from Malo community.

**Tools:** In the present study, the researcher has selected carefully and judiciously the following tools for collection of required data:

1. Socio-economic status scale of Dr. Kuppuswamy with some modifications.

**Result and Discussion:** The Socio-economic status (SES) is an important determinant of health and nutritional status as well as of mortality and morbidity. Socio-economic status also influences the accessibility, affordability, acceptability and actual utilization of various available health facilities. The Index of Status Characteristics used occupation, source of income, education, house type and dwelling area, which are then rated on a seven point scale. This index

used three indicators namely a) residential address of the household, b) the occupational position of its head and c) the years of school the head of the family had completed.

**Table 1: Monthly income source of all family members**

Monthly income	Frequency	Percent
1000-2499	15	5.0
2500-4999	130	43.3
5000-9999	100	33.3
10000-19999	40	13.3
20000-49999	15	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table shows that monthly income source of all family members are Rs.1000-2499 is only 5%, Rs.2500 - 4999 is 43.3%, Rs. 5000 - 9999 is 33.3%, Rs. 10000 - 19999 is 13%, and Rs.20000 - 49999 is only 5%. The majority of the family income is Rs.2500 - 4999 is belongs 43.3%. From the above table it's revealed that their monthly income is very low as because most of them are depends on agriculture and small business.

**Table 2: Education of either husband or wife who is more educated among them**

Education	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	12	4.0
Just literate but no schooling	23	7.7
Below primary but attended school at least one year	52	17.3
Primary pass but below 10th class	68	22.7
10th pass but under graduate	96	32.0
Graduate	43	13.6
Post-graduate	6	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the above table it is showed that education of either husband or wife only 4% is illiterate, 7.7% just literate but no schooling, 17.3% is below primary but attended school at least one year, 22.7% is primary pass but below 10<sup>th</sup> class, 32% is 10<sup>th</sup> pass but under graduate, 13.6% is graduate and only 2% is post-graduate. It is found from the observation that majority of them are 10<sup>th</sup> pass. The reason behind may be after completing 10<sup>th</sup> class they have to engaged for earning of their livelihood then they left their education.

**Table 3: Occupation of either husband or wife**

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Self employed with income <5000	14	4.7
Self employed e.g. shops, Readies or petty business with income >5000	113	37.7
Service at shops, home, transport, own cultivation of land and catching fish	130	43.3
Service in Private sector or independent business employing 2-20 persons	24	8.0
Service in central/State/Public undertakings or owner of a company employing	19	6.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table evident that the occupation of either husband or wife 4.7% is self employed with monthly income is less than Rs. 5000, 37.7% is self employed e.g. shops, Readies or petty business with income greater than Rs. 5000, 43.3% is Service at shops, home, transport, own cultivation of land and catching fish, 8% is Service in Private sector or independent business employing 2 - 20 persons and only 6.4% is Service in central/State/Public undertakings or owner of a company employing. It is found from the above table that majority of the people Service at shops, home, transport, own cultivation of land and catching fish. Because all of them are residing in a rural area and having cultivation land to cultivate of their own.

**Table 4: Family possessions**

Items	Frequency	Percent
Mobile	65	21.7
Mobile, TV	74	24.7
Mobile, TV, Sanitation	75	25.0
Mobile, TV, Sanitation, Refrigerator	77	25.7
Mobile, TV, Radio, Sanitation, Credit Card	8	2.7
Mobile, Sanitation, News Paper, Credit, Refrigerator, Radio	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table indicates that 21.7% is having only mobile phone of their family, 24.7% are having both mobile and television, and 25% are having mobile, TV and sanitation, 25.7% are having Mobile, Television Sanitation and Refrigerator, 2.7% are only having Mobile Television, Radio, Sanitation and credit card and only 0.3% are having mobile, sanitation, news paper, credit

card refrigerator and radio of their family. So, we can assume that due to their poor economic condition they did not avail they require possession at home.

**Table 5: Living in a type of house**

<b>Types of house</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Own jhuggi	109	36.3
Own house with 1-2 rooms or Rented/Govt. house with 3-4 rooms	150	50.0
Own house with 3-4 rooms or Rented/Govt. house with 5 or more rooms	41	13.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is cleared from the field survey that 36% people are residing of their own *jhuggi*, 50% are living of their own house with one to two rooms and only 13.7% are living of their own house with three to four rooms. So, we can concluded that majority of them are living of their own house with one to two rooms only, may be they could not extent more due to their economic problems.

**Table 6: Possession of a vehicle or equivalent**

<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1 or more cycles (not baby cycle)	169	56.3
1 or more scooter(s)/Bullock cart (s)	83	27.7
1 Car /Tractor/Truck	5	1.7
None of the above	43	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table evident that 43% peoples do not have any cycles or scooters or car of their family, 56.3% people is having only cycles and only 1.7% are having car of their family. It is found that majority of them are having cycles because it's a low price they can afford for it.

**Table 7: No. of earning members in the family (Nuclear/Joint)**

<b>No. of earning members in the family</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Only 1 family member earning	291	97.0
2 or both husband and wife earning	7	2.3
3 or more members earning and income pooled	2	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table indicated that 97% families they have only one earning member at their family and 2.3% family have both husband and wife are earning and only 0.7% family they only three earning member of their family. From the above table it has been observed that only the husband is earning for their livelihood and other members are depends on him only.

**Table 8: No. of children head of the family has/had**

No. of children	Frequency	Percent
More Than Six	2	0.7
Five	36	12.0
Four	71	23.7
Three	83	27.7
Two	93	31.0
One	15	5.0
Total	300	100.0

The above table shows that 0.7% family had six numbers of children, 12% had five numbers of children, 23.7% family head had four numbers of children, 27.7% family head had three numbers of children, 31% family head had two numbers of children and 5% family head had only one number of children. It is found that majority of the family head had two numbers children perhaps they may conscious about their family planning.

**Table 9: Facility of some essentials in the family**

Facility	Frequency	Percent
only water	71	23.7
Both tap water supply and electricity	226	75.3
None is present	3	1.0
Total	300	100.0

The above table indicated that 1% family does have neither water supply nor electricity facility of their family, 23.7% family have only water supply facility of their family and 75.3% family have both water supply and electricity facility of their family. It is cleared from the field survey the 24.7 % family does not have electricity facility of their family because yet to be reached of their village.

**Table 10: Education of children (in relation to head of the family)**

Education of children	Frequency	Percent
>50% children ever gone/going to school/college	2	0.3
All children going/ever gone to school/college	299	99.7
Total	300	100.0

The above table evident that 0.3% children never went for school and 99.7% children are going to school. Majority of the head of the family children are going to school may be parents are more conscious about education of their children.

**Table 11: Employment of a domestic servant at home**

Employment of servant	Frequency	Percent
Employed no servants for domestic work	258	86.0
Employed 1-2 part time servants on salary for domestic work	31	10.3
Employed > 3 part time servants on salary for domestic work	11	3.7
Total	300	100.0

The above table revealed that 86% family did not employed servants for domestic works, 10.3% family employed 1-2 persons part time servant on salary for domestic works and only 3.7% family employed more than three people as part time servants for domestic works. It is cleared majority of the family they are not employed servants for domestic works may be they themselves are engaged at domestic works.

**Table 12: Members of family gone abroad in last three years (official or personal)**

	Frequency	Percent
None	300	100.0

The above table indicated that no one of family members gone abroad in last three years, neither official nor personally.

**Table 13: Possession of agricultural land for cultivation**

Agricultural land	Frequency	Percent
No agricultural land	89	29.7
Own agricultural land 1-5 acres	194	64.7
Own agricultural land 6-20 acres	17	5.7
Total	300	100.0



The above table revealed that 29.7% family does not have agricultural land, 64.7% family they are possess own agricultural land 1-5 acres and only 5.7% family are possessing 6-20 acres agricultural land of their own. It is found that majority of them are possess agricultural land.

**Table 14: Possession of non-agriculatural land/land for housing or other type of land**

<b>Agricultural/ housing land</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Own non-agricultural land/land for housing < 25 Sq. Yards	1	3
Own agricultural land/land for housing 25 - 500 Sq. Yards	80	26.7
Own agricultural land/land for housing 501 - 1000 Sq. Yards	218	72.7
Own non-agricultural land/land for housing >1000 Sq Yards	1	3
Total	300	100.0

The above table revealed that only 0.3% people do not land for agriculture and for housing of their own. 26% people they have 25-500Sq Yards land for both housing and agriculture. 72% people have 501-1000Sq Yards for both housing and agriculture land of their own and only 0.3% people have greater than 1000 Sq. Yards land of their own for both housing and agriculture. From the observation we may concluded that majority of them are having both housing and agriculture land of their own.

**Table 15: Presence of milch cattle's in the family for business or non-business purpose**

<b>Milch cattle</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Does not own any milch cattle	95	31.7
Own 1 milch cattle	72	24.0
Own 1-3 milch cattles	114	38.0
Own 4 or more milch cattles	19	6.3
Total	300	100.0

The above table revealed that 31.7% does not have any milch cattle of their own and 24% have only one milch cattle at their family and 38% have three milch cattle at their family and 6.3% have only 4 milch cattle at family of their own. It is found that majority of the family members they have milch cattle at their family. As because people in rural area they can pet animals due to available grassing field.

**Table 16: Presence of non milch cattles or pet animals in the family**

<b>Pet animal</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
None	149	49.7
Own 1	104	34.7
Own 2 or more	47	15.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table indicated that 49.7% family they do not have non milch cattle at their family and 34.7% family they have only one non milch cattle at their family and 15.7% family have more than two non milch cattle at their family. It is found that majority of them are not non milch cattle at their family may be they did not get any benefit from them.

**Table 17: Rented House**

<b>Rent house</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Does not own any	299	99.7
Owens 1	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table evident that only 0.3% families are given their house at rent. It can assumes that majority of them are living in rural area where everyone have of their own houses.

**Positions held (besides the positions as employee) by any one member of the family.**

**Table18: Social position in the society**

<b>Social position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Does not hold any such position	263	87.7
Holding position as member only of executive or other committees of official or non-official organization	35	11.7
Holding position of 1-2 official or not-official organizations viz. president/ chairman/ Secretary/ Treasurer etc.	2	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table indicated that 87.7% family does not have any member who is holding social neither official nor organizational and only 11.7% family members they are holding social position as member only of executive or other committees of official or non-official organization and only 0.7% holding position of 1-2 official or not-official organizations viz. president/chairman/Secretary/ Treasurer etc. From this observation we can conclude that majority of them did not have social position in the society.

**Table19: Parental support in the form of non-movable property**

	Frequency	Percent
No agricultural land but a house/plot 25-100 sq yards	88	29.3
1-20 acres of agricultural land or -a house /plot 100-500 sq yards or both.	212	70.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table revealed that 29.3% family they did not had agricultural land but they have 25-100 sq yards for housing and 70.7% family they had parental support of non movable property for both 1-20 acres for agricultural land and 100-500sq yards for housing land. From this observation we made a conclusion that cent percent had at least housing land from parental support and majority of them have both housing and agricultural land.

**Table 20: Summary of socio-economic status of scheduled caste**

community	Frequency			Total frequency	Percent		
	High level	Moderate Level	Low level		High level	Moderate Level	Low level
Malo	11	31	58	100	11.0%	31.0%	58.0%
Kaiborty	07	32	61	100	7.0%	32.0%	61.0%
Namasudra	10	40	50	100	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>34.3%</b>	<b>56.3%</b>

Here, I have used the formula for the classification of socio-economic level that is  $I = \sum W_i X_i$  Where,  $W_i$  is the weightage of each variables and  $X_i$  is  $I^{th}$  variable, where 0.333 is low level, 0.3333I 0.666 is moderate and I 0.666 is high level .It is revealed from the table that the socio-economic status of three communities Malo is 11%, Kaiborta is 7% and Namosudra is 10% belongs to the high socio-economic level. In moderate level Malo is 31%, Kaiborta is 32% and Namosudra is 44% respectively. In low level Malo is 58%, Kaiborta is 61% and Namosudra is 50% respectively. From the above observation we can concluded that the scheduled caste of the three communities are belongs to low level of socio-economic status in the society. As because their monthly income is low found in the table no. 5.48 and education level is also quite poor, basically they depend on agriculture and small business. It is also clear from the review of other searcher that the majority of scheduled caste community is still living below poverty level.

**Conclusion:** From the above discussion and observation it is found that the socio-economic status of SC people is low. Their backwardness is caused by the financial problems. For this problem they failed to achieve education of their children. That is why SC people are not equally developed with others. If the sizable population is lagging behind a country cannot be developed. Scheduled caste people occupy the bottom rung of the social ladder. Devoid of education, information and the necessary motivation, they are not in position to take advantage of reservation policy and other programmes evolved to improve their situation. Constitution of India has specific provision to bring scheduled caste into the mainstream of the national life. That they should be helped to develop is not merely a matter of compassion or charity. It is a developmental necessity. Development is as strong as its weakest section of population is able to forge ahead.

## REFERENCES

- Aggarwala, Y. S. (1992). *Educating scheduled castes*. New Delhi: NIEPA.
- Bahadur, K. P. (1995). *Caste tribes and culture of india (Assam)*. Jalandhar: Paul publisher.
- Bam Dev Sharda. (1991). *“Tribes Caste and Harijan Structure Inequalities and Mobility*. Delhi: Ajanta publication.
- Barman, N. C. (1992). *Law relating to protection of backward classes in Assam*. Allahabad: North eastern law house.
- Bhumali, A. (2007). *Development. Of Schedule Caste*. New Delhi: Serials Publications.
- Chatterjee, S. K. (1996). *The Scheduled Caste in India Vol. IV*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- Chauhan, B. R. (1975). *Scheduled Castes and Education*. Meerut: Annu Publication.
- Choudhury, P. (1994). *Socio- cultural aspec of Assam*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
1. Chouhan, S. K. (1994). *Caste Status and Power: Social Stratification in Assam*. New Delhi: Asia Publishing House.
  2. Daimari, P. (2008). *Economic Development of Assam: problems and prospects*. Guwahati: EBH Publisher.
  3. Das, B. (1986). *A glimpse of Scheduled Caste and their Socio-economic Development of Assam*. New Delhi: Omsons Publication.