

Improvement of Socio-economic Conditions through Livestock and Poultry of Rural Households: A Study of Nagaon and Morigaon Districts of Assam.

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Abstract

In the contemporary market driven economy, livestock and poultry has the prospect to improve socio-economic conditions of the rural households. The main objective of this paper is to know about the improvement of socio-economic conditions of the rural farming community whose livelihoods depend on livestock and poultry. Livestock and poultry have been playing a significant role in socio-economic development of farming community. Livestock sector including poultry has good positive impact on improvement of income and employment generation of the rural households of Nagaon and Morigaon districts of Assam. It also reduces poverty significantly in rural areas of Nagaon and Morigaon districts of Assam. In this study area, more than 75 percent of the rural households own livestock and a majority of livestock owning households are small, marginal and landless households. Due to low requirement of initial investment and operational costs, the landless and marginal rural households have tried to earn their livelihood through livestock and poultry.

Keywords: Livestock, Poverty, socio-economic conditions.

Introduction

The rural economy is mostly characterized by high incidence of poverty and unemployment, lack of adequate service provisions and infrastructures and lack of scope to develop capabilities. In Assam 85.92 percent people live in rural area and Nagaon district has the highest concentration of rural population (86.97 percent) in comparison to other districts of Assam (Census report 2011). Livestock sector is one of significant source of income and employment to millions of people in rural and semi-urban areas. The agriculture sector of India contributes 16.38 percent of GDP in 2021-22 at 2011-12 prices of the economy. Livestock and poultry is an important part of agriculture in India. For the development of the agrarian and largely subsistence economy of the country livestock and poultry sectors plays an important role. Livestock and poultry have been playing a significant role in socio-economic development of farming community. Poultry applies to chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, swans, guinea, fowl, pings, peafowl, ostrich, pheasants, quails and other game birds (Banerjee, 1986). A large number

of livestock and poultry farms have been operating on commercial basis in and around the cities and are running under proper management.

Data – Nature and Sources

The present study largely uses primary data based on a sample of 500 households collected from Nagaon and Morigaon districts of Assam. The study has used simple random sampling technique in selecting samples of the study. However the overview of the sampled households have also been analysed on the basis of secondary data wherever necessary. The primary data is collected with the help of a pre-tested structured questionnaire from sample households through personal interview method. This questionnaire was prepared and consists of questions in view of the objectives of the study. Method of data collection is the standard interview with either head of the household or whichever adult member was present during the visit and was willing to provide information as well as focused group discussion.

A household for the purpose of the survey is constituted of usual or normal members who live together under the same roof of a dwelling unit which includes besides pucca, semi-pucca and katcha structure and cook food in the same kitchen. The temporary visitors or guests in the house-hold are not to be considered a member of the household. In this study, data was collected only from those households whose principal earning source is livestock and poultry. So, the term 'sampled households' in this study represent that household of the farming community whose principal earners depend upon livestock and poultry.

Sample Design

Two districts are purposively selected for the study i.e. Nagaon and Morigaon. In Assam 85.92 percent people live in rural area and Nagaon district has the highest concentration of rural population (86.97 percent) in comparison to other districts of Assam (Census report 2011). Morigaon has higher percentage of tribal population of Assam. Morigaon is also a flood affected district as compared to Nagaon district. In both the districts concentration of the minority population are quite high. So, both these districts are chosen for the study. The sample blocks and villages have been selected purposively, but households are selected randomly. The reason behind purposive selection of villages is to study variability of data. From each village, 25

per cent households are surveyed and altogether 300 households were selected for the purpose of study. The survey was conducted over the year from 2021-22.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to know about the improvement of socio-economic conditions of the rural farming community whose livelihoods depend on livestock and poultry. Moreover, this study is to look what are the problems and prospects of livestock and poultry in strengthening the rural economy.

Changes in health and sanitation

In this study area, more than 75 percent of the rural households own livestock and a majority of livestock owning households are small, marginal and landless households. Due to low requirement of initial investment and operational costs, the landless and marginal rural households have tried to earn their livelihood through livestock and poultry. In the recent market driven economy, livestock and poultry has helped to enhance socio-economic conditions of the rural households.

The livelihood of the family largely influenced by health and sanitation facilities. Access to safe drinking-water is essential to health, a basic human right and a component of effective policy for health protection. The importance of water, sanitation and hygiene for health and development has been reflected in the outcomes of a series of international policy forums. These have included health-oriented conferences such as the International Conference on Primary Health Care, held in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan (former Soviet Union), in 1978. Water is the most important one among all essential commodities. In this present study, it considered six sources of drinking water: Tap, Well, Hand-pump, Tube-well, River/Pond and others. Table -1 indicates that 45 percent of the selected households have pure drinking water sources. Bathroom and Sanitation facility are the prime determinants of standard of living that influence economic condition of rural people. A household is considered to have access to safe sanitation if it has some type of flush toilet or latrine, connection to a piped sewer system or connection to a septic system or ventilated improved pit or composting toilet, provided that they are not shared (according to the MDG guidelines). Only 35 percent sampled households have their sanitation facility within their boundary. Only 40 percent households have financial capacity to take medical advice and necessary medical treatment in the time of their need. It reveals deplorable conditions of the households who take livestock and poultry as their main source of earning.

Table 1: Impact on health and sanitation after taking Livestock or Poultry or both as a source of livelihood

Heads	Facilities available or not (in percentage) in the sampled Households	
	Available	Not available
Sources of Pure Drinking water	45	55
Sanitation facility	35	65
Medicinal facility	40	60

Source: Field Survey.

Literacy and Educational Pattern

Education is one of the most important factors that influence human behavior and development of self consciousness. It helps in generating awareness, makes an individual well informed about the overall changes taking place all around. Possession of education could help to acquire necessary skills and knowledge for empowerment. Literacy rate is defined as percentage of literates among the population aged seven years and above. According to this field survey, average literacy rate of sampled households is 53.07 per cent in which 65.01 per cent of males and 41.06 per cent of females reported as literate. Female literacy rate is not at all satisfactory.

Sex	Overall
Male	65.02
Female	41.06
Total	53.04

Source: Field survey.

	Overall		All Sample Households*
	2001 [#]	2011 [#]	
India	64.83	74.04	-
Assam	63.25	73.18	-
Nagaon	61.73	72.37	55.01
Morigaon	58.53	68.03	51.07

Census of India (2001, 2011).

Highest Educational levels of the Members of the Sampled Households

Table 4 shows the highest educational attainment of households whose earning source is livestock and poultry. The education status of the members of the households reveals that the percentage of the illiterate households is 45 in Nagaon and corresponding percentage of illiterate households is 49 in Morigaon district.

Table 4: Educational Attainment of the Head of the Household (in percentage)						
District	Illiterate	Non-matriculate	10th Passed	Graduate	Post Graduate	Total
Nagaon	45	20	25	7	3	100
Morigaon	49	19	27	5	Nil	100
Overall	47	19.5	26	6	1.5	100

Source: Field survey.

Only 7 percent sampled households have graduate members in their household in Nagaon district and only 5 percent households have graduates in Morigaon district. On the other hand, only 3 percent households have members with postgraduate degree in Nagaon district and none in Morigaon district. It is evident that majority of the households have very low educational status in both the districts of Assam.

Housing and Civic Amenities

Adequate housing provides protection against exposures to agents and vectors of communicable diseases, as also protection against avoidable injuries, poisonings, and thermal and other exposures that may contribute to chronic diseases and malignancies (WHO 1988).

Type of House

In this study, type of house is classified as per National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) definition. House type of sampled households is presented in table-5. The NSSO household level survey data (NSSO, 2014:50) show that in Assam 26.6 per cent of houses are pucca-type as compared to just 5 per cent for sampled households found in the present study, 58 per cent are of semi-pucca type as compared to 37.5 per cent for sampled households and 15.3

per cent houses are of kutchha type as compared to 57.5 per cent for sampled households found in the present study.

District	Pucca	Semi-Pucca	Kutchha	Total
Nagaon	07	35	58	100
Morigaon	03	40	57	100
Overall	05	37.5	57.5	100

Source: Field survey.

Electrification of Houses

Table 6 presents the percentage of houses under electricity connection among sampled households of Morigaon and Nagaon districts of Assam.

District	Availability of electricity		Total
	Yes	No	
Nagaon	72	28	100
Morigaon	64	36	100
Overall	68	32	100

Source: Field survey.

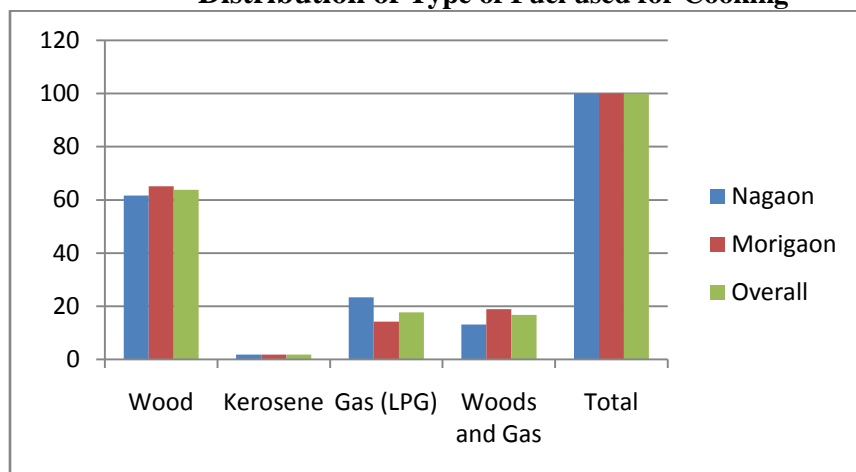
Type of Fuel Used for Cooking

The data related to different types of fuel used for cooking summarized in the table 7 revealed that 63.80 per cent households used wood for domestic cooking and very few 17.65 per cent use gas (LPG). The table exhibits that both wood and gas were used fuel only by 16.74 per cent of total respondents. About 1.81 per cent use kerosene. The over dependence on wood in both the districts is clear from this study.

District	Wood	Kerosene	Gas (LPG)	Woods and Gas	Total
Nagaon	61.68	1.80	23.35	13.17	100
Morigaon	65.09	1.82	14.18	18.91	100
Overall	63.80	1.81	17.65	16.74	100

Source: Field survey.

Figure: 01
Distribution of Type of Fuel used for Cooking



Source: Field survey

Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCCE) of the Sampled Households

Income is a major determinant to study the respondent's living standard which helps in determining their position in the societal process. Per capita consumption expenditure is now used to determine the extent of absolute poverty of a household. Per capita consumption expenditure provides a quick, rough estimate of the total amount of goods and services available per person for consumption expenditure. Work helps to improve life condition and material wellbeing. The average value of MPCCE households with livestock and poultry as occupation is presented in table-8.

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCCE) among Sample Households.

MPCI (Rs.)	Percentage Distribution
Below 1010	39.5
1010-2000	40.5
2000-3000	5.0
3000-4000	4.0
4000-5000	3.0
5000-6000	2.5
6000-7000	2.0
7000-8000	1.5
8000-9000	0.5
9000-10000	0.5
10000 and above	1.0
Total	100

Source: Field survey.

Very few households are found earning more than Rs.5000 as monthly per capita income (MPCI). Only 2 per cent households are found in this present study earning between Rs. 6000-Rs.7000. The percentage of households earning monthly per capita income between Rs. 7000-Rs.8000, Rs.8000- Rs.9000 and Rs.9000 – Rs.10000 are only 1.5 per cent, 0.5 per cent and 0.5 per cent respectively. On the other hand, only 1 per cent households have earned Rs.10000 and above as monthly per capita income. As per the recommendation of Expert Group (Rangarajan) 2014, households of rural Assam which per capita consumption expenditure are below Rs. 1009.66 are considered as living below poverty line. As per study, about 40% people are living below the poverty line. Hence the majority of the sampled households are living a backward life with extreme poverty.

Recommendation and Conclusion

Since independence, government has adopted various policies based on top down approach and the impact of these policies are not fruitful and far from expectation. Therefore, there is need for more participatory and bottom up approach for the improvement of socio-economic condition of the poor and marginalized section of society. Hence, statutory body should provide the necessary support through interventionist approach in distributing goods for building a just society. To solve the problem of shortage of fund of such households, short term loan for livestock and poultry farming should be made easily accessible and available. Government should also increase veterinary services by supplying necessary vaccine and medicine at lower price and by establishing new veterinary care centers in remotest area of the State as the study reveals that rural families faced lots of challenges due to lack of proper vaccine in rearing poultry farming Government should also take proper initiative like increasing social awareness about livestock and poultry farming as business and all kinds of training for efficient management. Proper training facilities regarding production will increase the capability to do work properly. Feed cost should be minimized and feed should be available for the poultry farming at reasonable price. Marketing facilities should be more profitable and to make it local market with good transportation and selling opportunities should be established efficiently. More research should be taken place to improve the quality of breed, feed, vaccine, to know the actual demand and supply condition and there by disseminate the information.

Assam is a rural state of India as about 85 percent (according to 2011 census) of the population reside in rural areas of Assam. The rural economy mainly depends on agriculture and its allied activities to a great extent. In respect of nutrition, milk, poultry meat and eggs are excellent sources of protein. Livestock and poultry rearing can create a great opportunity for the rural women and youth in income generation. Socio-economic development can be achieved with the help of livestock and family poultry farming. There is a wide scope to earn income through livestock and poultry. It would be helpful for income generation, women empowerment, and nutritional improvement for the rural family as well as strengthening rural economy.

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