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Role of Subsidiary Occupation in Transforming Agrarian Structure: The study based on No. 1 Gazpuria Village in Dibrugarh District of Assam, India

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Abstract

Occupation signifies a set of activities usually associated with the earning of the individuals. Occupation is a specific activity which an individual continually pursues for the purpose of obtaining steady flow of income. Subsidiary occupation may be defined as auxiliary occupations of an individual. The occupation which helps to an individual with the main considered as well as primary occupation. In an agrarian society, cultivating the land is primary occupation or source of wealth. Such a society may acknowledge other means of livelihood and work habits apart from main cultivation. In this paper an endeavour has been made to examine the role of subsidiary occupation in increasing level of income and strengthening agrarian economic structure and transformation as well.

The study has been confined as case study in the No. 1 Gazpuria village of Dibrugarh district of Assam. The village is exclusively inhabited by OBC and MOBC population. Both primary secondary data have been used in the present paper. The head of the family were the respondents in this study. The study revealed that majority of the inhabitant of the studied village have small tea-garden as their subsidiary occupation. Whose primary occupation is only rice cultivation. The study also revealed that subsidiary occupations have played a very significant role in increasing income level which help them in smooth running their family, which is a positive sign of development as well as transformation of agrarian community.

Keywords: *Occupation, Subsidiary Occupation Agrarian Community, Transformation.*

Introduction:

Occupation signifies a set of activities usually associated with the earning of the individuals. Occupations are roles performed by the individuals within society that are defined by the nature of work. Different types of occupations have different types of social assessment associated with different privileges and at the same time economic benefits. The social role performed by the adult members of society that directly or indirectly yields social and financial consequences and constitutes a major focus in the life of an adult that can be considered as occupation. In defining occupation, Hall (1969:4) in his book "occupation and the social structure" states that it must be inclusive in two ways. It must first include the great variety of activities that can legitimately be called occupations and second, suggest the fact that an occupation has multiple consequences for the individual and society. Everett Hughes

States that “an occupation in essence is not some particular set of activities, it is the part of an individual in any on going set of activities. The system may be large or small, simple or complex” (ibid:5). Hughes emphasizes not in order to minimize the financial side but also emphasizes on social relationships surrounding on occupation. Thus, means that occupations are a major component of social structure.

Subsidiary occupation may be defined as auxiliary occupation of an individual. The occupation which helps to an individual with the main considered as well as primary occupation. It may be considered as aiding occupation also, which assist to income structure of individuals. Thus, subsidiary occupation helps in transformation of socio-economic structure of a society and community as well. Basically, social transformation implies a fundamental change in a society in form, nature and appearance. It is a process of profound and radical change that orients people of the society in a new direction. It refers to the change of society’s systematic characteristics. This incorporates the change of existing parameters of a social system including technological economic, political and cultural restructuring. In this context social transformation requires a shift in collective consciousness of a society in the sphere of local, state, national or global, so that reality is refined by consensus (oxford dictionary online).

The agrarian community or agricultural society is any society whose economy is based on agricultural production, producing and maintaining crops and farmland. Cultivating in the land is the primary occupation or source of wealth of agrarian community. The agrarian society involves the social, economic and technical elements that affect production in agricultural sector. These factors are used to measure the productivity level of farmers, the distribution of their income and the social position of the rural population. Such a society may acknowledge other means of livelihood and work habits apart from their main cultivation. Hence, in this paper an endeavor has been made to understand different types of work habits as well as subsidiary occupations of the agrarian community under studied and the role of subsidiary occupation in increasing level of income for strengthening agrarian economy and agrarian transformation as well.

Objective of the study:

The basic objectives of the present paper are

1. To highlight the subsidiary occupation of agrarian community under study.
2. To focus the role of subsidiary occupations in transformation of agrarian structure.

Methodology:

The field of study:

The field of present study has been confined as case study in the No. 1 Gazpuria village in Dibrugarh district of Assam, India. Assam, a north-eastern state of India, the state of Assam covers an area of 78,438 sq. kilometers land with 3,12,05,576 population (Census Report 2011). The state is bounded the Himalayan foot hills and bordering states of Bhutan and Tibet on the North, the south of it, there are Myanmar (Burma) and its hills and to the west, Bangladesh. At present the state of Assam has 33 districts including BTAD (Bodoland territorial areas Districts) four districts and 78 subdivisions. The Dibrugarh district is situated on the southern bank

and the upper reaches of the river Brahmaputra and lies in the north eastern corner of Assam. The total area of the district is 3381.00 sq.km with 3330.36 sq.km rural areas and 50.64 sq.km. urban areas. The total population of Dibrugarh district is 13,26,335 of which 6,76,434 are males and 6,49,901 are females. The rural population of the district is 10,82,605 and urban population is 2,43,730. The average literacy rate in Dibrugarh district is 76.05% whereas male literacy rate is 82.82% and female literacy is 68.99% (census:2011).

The No. 1 Gazpuria village is situated under Gazpuria gaon Panchayat of Khowang Development Block which is within the jurisdiction of Moran revenue circle of Dibrugarh district. There are two Lower Primary Schools in the village. The first one is established in the year 1940 and another is established in the year 1972. There are two Angan Wadi Centres along with these Lower Primary Schools of the village. Besides, one cultural community hall, one Medical sub-Centre and one sub Post Office are also there in the village. There are 1068 populations in the village. Out of 1068 populations 556 i.e. 52.06% are male populations and 512 i.e. 47.94% are female populations (source: Field Data).

Respondents: There are 259 families in the studied village. All the head of the families were the respondents in the present study. Out of 259 respondents 227 i.e. 87.64% were male and 32 i.e. 12.36% were female respondents in this study.

Collection of Data: Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. The primary data are collected with the help of interview, interview scheduled and observation method. The secondary data are collected from various books and journals, government records from the offices concerned and by using internet.

Results and Discussion:

Subsidiary occupation is an important indicator of socio-economic status of an individual through income level in a society. Hence, in this study, this variable was considered as a parameter for understanding socio-economic profile of the agrarian community under studied. In this context researcher put first question to the respondents whether they have subsidiary occupation or not? In responding the query 233 respondents i.e. 89.96% have provided positive answer that they pursued small tea garden, various petty business and other occupations like car-driver, wage earner, masons, electrician etc. as subsidiary occupation, where as only 26 i.e. 10.04% respondents replied that they have no any subsidiary occupations at present.

For the first group of respondents i.e. 233, the researcher put another question to know subsidiary occupations in detail, which are pursued by this group of respondents. The following table-1 shows the subsidiary occupations of the respondents under studied.

Table-1
Subsidiary Occupation of Respondents

Occupations	Respondents	%
Small Tea Garden	202	86.70

Petty Business	19	8.15
Any Other	12	5.12
Total	233	100%

Source: Field Data

Any other: Car Driver, Wage earner, Mason, Electrician etc.

It is evident from the above table -1 that majority of the respondents i.e. 202 consisting 86.70% have small tea garden as their subsidiary occupation whose primary or main occupation is rice cultivation only. The table shows that the number of respondents 19 consisting 8.15% are engaged in various types of petty business like small grocery shop, vegetable selling etc. as their subsidiary occupations. Number of respondents 12 i.e. 5.12% are practice any other category occupations as their subsidiary occupations.

It has been observed in the field situation that the respondents whose subsidiary occupation is small tea garden, they produces green tea leaves and sell their producing green leaves to the company tea garden factory and thereby earn money. Some middle men as well contractors purchase these green leaves from the village level small tea growers and supply these to the company factories with some profits. This group of respondents opined that the income earning from these subsidiary occupations highly help them in increasing their income level and thereby they able to combat with the problems faced by them in their family life. Hence, it is felt essential to examine the income of the respondents earn through subsidiary occupations, for understanding more clearly about agrarians economic structure under studied. The following table -2 depict monthly income of the respondents earned through subsidiary occupations.

Table -2
Monthly Income of the Respondents from subsidiary Occupations

Income (in Rs.)	Respondents	%
Up to – 5,000	13	5.58
5,000 – 10,000	23	9.87
10,000 – 15,000	47	20.17
15,000 – 20,000	122	52.36
20,000 – 25,000	17	7.30
25,000 – 30,000	11	4.72
Total	233	100%

Source: Field Data

From the above table -2 it is clear that out of 233 respondents 122 respondents i.e. 52.36% in the income range Rs. 15,000 – Rs. 20,000. Followed by 47 respondents i.e. 20.17% respondents lies in the subsidiary income group between Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000. The table shows that number of respondents 23 i.e. 9.87% are in the subsidiary income group Rs. 5000 – Rs. 10,000. Whereas 13 respondents i.e. 5.58 are in the subsidiary income range up to Rs. 5000 and 11 respondents i.e. 4.72% are found in the subsidiary income range from Rs. 25,000 – Rs. 30,000.

It is observed during field work that the subsidiary income highly helps the inhabitant of the studied village in raising their income level and smooth running their family life as well. In this context for more clear the observed situation researcher put another question to the respondents to know whether subsidiary occupation help them in changing their socio-economic position? Responding the query majority of the respondents i.e. 92.11% provided positive opinion. They feel that subsidiary occupation as well as income greatly help them in transforming their socio-economic position and social structure as well. But only 7.89% respondents are ignorant about the statement. So, they provided negative opinion to query. They are still engaged in lower level occupations like wage earner etc.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion it may be concluded that economic profile of a particular community as well as society basically based occupational structure and income of the individuals. In the present age of development, agrarian community has been pursuing various types of subsidiary occupations apart from their primary agricultural occupation. The study reflects that besides primary occupations, subsidiary occupations plays very significant role in transformation of agrarian structure. The income earns from subsidiary occupation help the agrarian community in increasing their overall income and thereby uplifting their standard of living. Besides, the central and state government have also been provided various facilities through proper plan manner for the development of agrarian community. Of course, a few of them are still lagging behind in the present scenario of development. In this context, Panchayat and Rural Development department should play a definite role by creating awareness for uplifting the agrarian community, which may lead rapid transformation of agrarian structure and national development as well.

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